

REGIME CHANGE AND SHIFTING MODERNIZATION PATTERNS: PROFESSIONAL TRAJECTORIES IN THE FIELD OF PSYCHOLOGY DURING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY ROMANIA*

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Abstract: Throughout the 19th and the 20th century the modernization process that Romania has undergone has revolved around two major poles, the Western pattern of development, and the Soviet one that has been enforced at the end of the Second World War. The regime change experienced after 1945 has shown however that the new leaders needed to rely on some of the existing administrative, technical and scientific cadres in order to implement the new political, social and cultural programme. The careers of Alexandru Roșca and Mihai Beniuc, two psychologists that have been trained in Western Universities and worked at the Institute of Psychology in Cluj, followed the same path that the country was on. Having manifested clear left-wing sympathies during the interwar period, they have managed to maintain their professional status and even gained access to important political positions; therefore, they have contributed to the implementation of two consecutive modernization projects.

Keywords: Romania, Regime Change, Cluj Psychology School, Modernization, 20th century politics.

The artisans of each political regime change are faced with the same dilemma: what is the extent to which they must replace the political leadership and to what degree they can rely on the existing professional elite, the administrative,

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technical or bureaucratic cadres, in order for the new regime to establish itself as the only centre of authority¹.

The rulers of any ascending party will therefore develop specific strategies that would allow them to seize power, especially if the regime that they intend to install is a totalitarian one. As the recent history of Romania has shown, after the coup of 23rd of August 1944, the political and cultural paradigm shift has been made possible by a combination of political practices. The exclusion of the old bourgeoisie class from all decision making positions, and sometimes its physical extermination, did not mean that the new regime could not integrate important figures in the interwar intelligentsia.

This article aims to examine the professional trajectory of Alexandru Roșca and Mihai Beniuc, two psychologists, representatives of the Cluj psychology school, from the interwar period throughout the communist era, and to determine and understand the nature of their intricate collaboration with the new regime. Being part of the same generation of intellectuals born during the first decade of the 20th century, they both had significant contributions to implementing a new modernization programme. Their careers present important similarities that is why we have decided to analyse them together, while trying to determine the important connections that they have established with the communist regime, during the tormented years that followed the end of the Second World War.

In order to do that, we must analyse the role of the intellectuals and their intricate connections to a political regime. The French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, has defined the intellectual as a bi-dimensional being, one that must belong to an autonomous intellectual field, independent from religious, political or economic constraints and also, one that must invest the authority acquired in this field of cultural production in a political action. He has pointed out the fact that the autonomy of the intellectuals is always at risk, as they are dominated by different agents that can financially control and manipulate them. Bourdieu also argued that the lack of autonomy of the social sciences was the result of the will of its least appreciated representatives by the rest of the community that tend to collaborate with parties, the state or different external powers, in his opinion, this type of patronage having devastating effects on the quality of the research².

Bourdieu's perspective and Julian Benda's opinion that, during the 20th century, intellectuals have abandoned their position as guardians of the universal

¹ Fitzpatrick, 1979, 3-5.

² Bourdieu, 1991, 655-665.

values, becoming partisans of different political ideologies³ prove extremely useful when approaching this problem. This methodological framework will help us determine the professional trajectories of Alexandru Roșca and Mihai Beniuc, who have both placed themselves in the service of the communist regime, discretely during the interwar period and publicly afterwards, even though politics did not seem something that would draw the attention of the intellectuals in the field of psychology. All to the contrary, as documents show, especially during the first half of the 20th century, the representatives of the Romanian scientific, cultural and literary world were publicly defining their political views and positioning themselves according to them⁴. Also, in the case of Mihai Beniuc, it is interesting that he was chosen to implement the important changes at the Writers Union in Romania, despite being a minor, though talented poet, but not at all a big personality of the Romanian culture.

The Western Modernization Path: The School of Psychology in Cluj during the Interwar Period

The Interwar Period was the time psychology has become an autonomous science. It was then when the two most important psychology schools in Romania have been established; the one in Bucharest was led by Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, and the one in Cluj by the professor Florian Ștefănescu-Goangă. Goangă had been trained in the laboratory of experimental psychology set up in Leipzig, by the notorious German researcher, Wilhelm Wundt (1879). At that time, this institution was a renowned scientific centre where worldwide researchers were being trained⁵.

The tradition of studying in Western universities dated back to the first half of the 19th century. That period coincided in Romania with the efforts to create a modern state; being confronted with a rural society and aware of the political, economic and social retardation, the national elite oriented towards the western model of development. Consequently, intellectuals and state officials trained in Universities abroad got in contact with the newest education trends⁶. This exposure to western knowledge shaped their way of thinking society and the ways to improve it.

³ Benda, 2008.

⁴ Boia, 2011, 254-258.

⁵ Roșca, Bejat, 1976, 91.

⁶ Nastasă, 2006, 210-214.

For the field of psychology, Ștefănescu-Goangă's and Rădulescu-Motru's theoretical instruction laid the foundation for the way research was going to be conducted throughout the next half of century; the integration of the German methodology and the themes it approached marked the first stage of the process of alignment to the Western scientific trends.

1922 was the year that the Institute of Experimental, Comparative and Applied Psychology in Cluj began its activity. As head of this laboratory that was part of the Ferdinand University of Cluj, Ștefănescu-Goangă formed a team of young scholars with whom he closely collaborated, the institute proving its productivity and social engagement through numerous studies and publications.

Liviu Rusu, Nicolae Mărgineanu, Lucian Bologa, D. Todoranu, Alexandru Roșca and Mihai Beniuc were the most important disciples, part of the working group assembled by the master, whom Goangă has oriented towards different aspects of psychology. Researchers in Cluj covered topics that were centred around issues the interwar society faced, such as the psychological development of children, reading options among the young generations, the importance of professional evaluation and guidance, the problem of juvenile delinquency, intellectually underdeveloped and superiorly gifted children were among the topics addressed by the Psychology Institute in Cluj, that can be found on its list of publications.

By the end of the 20s, these young researchers were sent abroad for specialization and training programmes. In 1928, Nicolae Mărgineanu went to Vienna, in 1929 visited Germany, Leipzig, Hamburg and Berlin, and from 1932 to 1934 he went to the United States and England, specializing in psychology, in psychometrics and factor analysis.

In a time when medical science opened to the problems of society, leading to the appearance of social medicine, which included a significant preventive component⁷, psychology seems to have followed the same path. On the other hand, during the interwar period it was introduced the legislation that made the use of school observation sheets compulsory, since discovering students personality and their character was as important as monitoring their physical evolution. Therefore, for children in elementary schools these tools allowed teachers to observe their mental and emotional state. Also, the success of eugenic ideas among the medical elite⁸ and the anthropometry has influenced the way investigations were conducted in psychology.

⁷ Borowy et alii., 2008, 9.

⁸ Turda, 2014, 58.

This analysis will follow the professional development of the two researchers, Alexandru Roșca and Mihai Beniuc, as they managed to have important careers both during the monarchy and after the change of the regime, at the end of the Second World War. What differentiated these two from the rest of their colleagues was a certain affinity for the socialist movement that they have successfully exploited in order to maintain their status and to gain access to positions they had not occupied throughout the interwar period. That is why their contact with the Communist Party and their contribution to design and implement a new modernization project encompasses many unknown factors that we will try to unveil and understand.

Psychology and Politics: The Threads of a Complicated Relationship

Alexandru Roșca was born on August 23rd 1906, in the village of Calata, Cluj County, in a peasant family. He attended the classes of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University in Cluj and in 1930 obtained his PhD certificate with the thesis *Measuring Intelligence and Mental Debility*. Soon after, his academic career, which had begun during his student years, moved forward quickly as he was appointed Assistant Lecturer⁹. Between 1929 and 1931 the young researcher was sent by Ștefănescu-Goangă in a series of study trips to Germany, France, Belgium and Switzerland to specialize in juvenile delinquency and the psychology of mentally defective individuals. The result of this connection to Western science trends and the consequent assimilation of research topics and methods was the publication of pioneering papers on these issues, over the next several years. The experience that he has thus gained and the methodologies and concepts applied in the most important European psychology schools enabled Roșca to conduct valuable researches and to publish studies on the situation of gifted children, those with disabilities, as well as on young offenders and teenagers with behavioural disorders¹⁰.

According to the information in the archives, during the time he worked as an Assistant Professor, Roșca was attracted to the socialist movement in the university; so in 1934, he accepted Tudor Bugnariu's¹¹ proposal to form the Cluj

⁹ Berar, 2010, 15-16.

¹⁰ Roșca, 1930; Roșca 1931a; Roșca 1931b; Roșca 1932.

¹¹ Tudor Bugnariu (1909-1988) was a Marxist philosopher, professor at the University in Cluj; in 1935, he was trialed and condemned to serve 10 month in prison because of his

branch of the Association of Friends of the USSR, alongside Mihai Beniuc, V. Novac, C. Drăgulescu and others. Soon after its organization, being under enormous pressure from the Rector of the University, Florian Ștefănescu Goangă, its members were forced to withdraw from the association by issuing written statements of resignation. "All university employees submitted these resignation statements, except for Beniuc who at that time was completing his military service and told me to do as I thought best. Following the resignation, after six months, in October 1934, this association as well as other socialist associations has become illegal and on this occasion my home has been searched", Roșca explained in a 1956 autobiography¹².

Despite his public dissociation from the communist movement, Roșca continued to manifest obvious socialist affinities, since throughout the 30s and afterwards, during the war, he has financially contributed to the Red Aid (Ajutorul Roșu) through his colleagues and acquaintances, Zoe Bugnariu, Mihai Beniuc or Vasile Munteanu.

In 1943, Alexandru Roșca, together with Mihai Beniuc și M. Kernbach, was given the task to organize the Patriotic Front inside the University. During the same year, Roșca was accused of engaging in left-wing political activity and was detained by the state's Security Service in Sibiu. He had been imprisoned along with Zevedei Barbu¹³, Anatolie Chircev and lawyer Elias, what has remained known as the antifascist group from Sibiu. After a month behind bars, they were released for lack of evidence, at the trial Roșca being summoned to appear as witness for the defence.

The Coup of 23rd of August 1944 and the consequent rise to power of the Romanian Communist Party has brought important professional changes for Alexandru Roșca. From that moment on, Roșca began assuming increasingly more important tasks inside the communist movement in Transylvania. He claimed to have been in contact with the County Committee of the Communist Party in Sibiu, which co-opted him. However, the psychologist has joined the party in 1944, being admitted with the October Revolution class, and becoming in charge of the

public statements regarding the causes of the 1934 worker's strike. Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale (hereinafter A.N.I.C.), Fond 95, rola 502, dosar 53, ff. 247-284.

¹² A.N.I.C., Fond CC al PCR, Secția Cadre, Dosar R/56, f. 16.

¹³ <http://www.universitystory.gla.ac.uk/biography/?id=WH24132&type=P>, accessed on 26 of October 2016. Zevedei Barbu (1914-1999) was an important sociologist and social psychologist. He studied at the University of Cluj, where he obtained a PhD in Psychology; he was Lucian Blaga's assistant at the Department of Philosophy and Culture and a Marxist thinker, member of the then illegal Communist Party. See also Blaga, 2015, 361.

Patriotic Union and from December 1944 of the organization of the ARLUS in Sibiu¹⁴.

By the time the University returned from Sibiu to Cluj, in 1945, Roșca was already a lecturer. He has come to accumulate a significant number of functions both within the party structures and also inside the University. Becoming the secretary of the ARLUS county committee, the secretary of the University communist cell which was organized between 1944 and 1945, during the refuge in Sibiu, president of the Romanian-Soviet Institute, president of the local Red Cross and member of the Central Committee of the Red Cross, vice president of the County Council of Trade Unions, he has also held several positions inside the University.

The situation has caused frustrations among the other members of the teaching staff, as it is evidenced in a full denunciation made by one of them, in which Roșca was being heavily criticized for his activity and for the attitude he displayed towards the old team of professors.

The main accusation was that Roșca was not as intransigent as the anonymous author of the complaint would have expected from a person that was supposed to purge the University of its bourgeois representatives.

According to an informative note on Roșca's political and scientific activity, issued in May 1950, the psychologist was accused of careerism, because he had monopolized the most important positions inside the University. Although the author of this denunciation has remained unknown, one can assume that it was Pavel Apostol, member of the Department of dialectical materialism, as he stressed with extreme dissatisfaction the fact that the department did not have an office. Also his detailed knowledge of the way the University was organized and especially of Roșca's daily activities point to someone in his immediate vicinity, a close colleague, with a certain level of instruction and the capacity to understand his papers and relate them to the new ideological canons¹⁵. The anonymous author continued by listing the positions held by Alexandru Roșca: he was Director of studies and deputy rector, Dean of two out of the eight faculties of the University, Professor and Director at the Institute of Psychology, President of student's assistance office, during the exam period being appointed president of the eight promotion committees and President *ex officio* of the commission in charge of printing academic courses.

¹⁴ A.N.I.C., Fond CC al PCR, Secția Cadre, dosar R/56, f. 16.

¹⁵ A.N.I.C., Fond CC al PCR, Secția Cadre, dosar R/56, ff. 38-40.

A possible explanation for this accumulation of positions inside the University and also inside the Communist Party might have been the shortage of politically prepared cadres in Ardeal. As Virgiliu Țărău has argued, at the beginning of the year 1945, according to the discussions between the communist leaders from Bucharest and those in Cluj, not only was there a lack of trained members in the region, but there was also a poor coordination of the party's actions. Following the instructions received from the centre, local communist authorities opened the doors of the party towards the workers in factories. As a result, they were faced with an avalanche of requests which significantly increased the number of members, even though the receiving procedures were extremely bureaucratic and complicated¹⁶.

Taking into consideration the fact that Tudor Bugnariu, one of the pillars of the left-wing group inside the University during the interwar period, had become mayor of the city¹⁷, and with Mihai Beniuc quartered in Bucharest, there is no wonder that Alexandru Roșca had become the available person for the party, as he was also a respectable and well-known researcher. This is consistent with the arguments used by the communist authorities while conducting the investigation regarding Roșca's exclusion, in 1951; he was not made responsible for the large number of positions that he held, the reason behind this so called monopoly being the scarce number of party members in the University¹⁸.

Returning to the informative note, even more interesting were the observations regarding Roșca's book, *Tehnica psihologiei experimentale și practice*, published in 1947, as a manual for both professors and students. The harsh criticism was caused by the denunciator's opinion that the book was "in the service of the United States propaganda and its reactionary ideology", especially since at that time it was still on sale. He continued by highlighting the racial aspects of the paper, blaming Roșca for not using any of the soviet literature, citing only the works of the Western scientific community.

Regardless of the immediate professional rewards that the anonymous author might have pursued, the denunciation shows that Roșca seemed to have failed to grasp the true nature of the political changes that Romania was undergoing¹⁹. Even though it is difficult to form a definitive opinion based exclusively on this archive document, that clearly reflected the reaction of an envious colleague, it is possible that Roșca might have been under the impression that these

¹⁶ Țărău, 2006, 311-314.

¹⁷ Țărău, 2006, p. 315.

¹⁸ A.N.I.C., Fond CC al PCR Secția Cadre, dosar R/56, f. 37.

¹⁹ Deletant, 2006, 45-76.

fundamental changes would be limited exclusively to the spheres of power; he might have hoped that the country's political reorientation would not interfere with research, science and humanities being kept outside these transformations.

The study *Tehnica psihologiei experimentale și practice* was published following the Western methodology and its specific view on the subject, the result of the many years of training during which Roșca had familiarized himself with the most important research trends. Up until that moment, his most significant contributions to psychology and his entire career were due to the permanent contact with the Western academic approaches and the subsequent effort to adapt them to the Romanian social realities. All of a sudden, what had previously been the established way in which research was being conducted, had turned into a serious fault, the author being accused of not following the ideological directives of the Soviet leaders and the research trends approved in USSR. Even though, since 1948, Roșca had begun to distance himself from the old research methods, through conferences and public positions in *Revista de Psihologie* that were highly critical of his previous papers and main works, it seems to not have been enough.

The eventual exclusion from the party proved to be a tough lesson for the psychologist, who learnt from this episode, becoming a close collaborator of the regime, in order to continue his career and to perform his professorial and research activities.

The denunciation also included details regarding the situation of the members of the Institute of Psychology that had become undesirable for the new regime, and even about the former leader, Ștefănescu Goangă, Roșca being accused of trying to protect them; among these were mentioned Liviu Rusu and Mihai Peteanu²⁰, prominent researchers part of the team Goangă²¹ had assembled soon after the First World War. These charges show Roșca's attachment to his colleagues and especially to his master, to whom he owed his training as a psychologist, and prove that he has tried to help them, preventing them from being unemployed after their purge from the research field. This attachment was proved once again when, after the tumultuous first decade of the communist regime, the situation has

²⁰ He was head of the Institute of Psychotechnique (Institutul de Psihotehnică). *Decret-lege pentru fixarea normelor de numire și salarizare a personalului institutelor psihotehnice și al oficiilor de orientare profesională* Publicat în Monitorul oficial nr. 272 din 24 decembrie 1937, partea I, București, Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, Imprimeria Centrală, 1938, pp. 3-5. This type of laboratories and institutes had previously been created, being under the authority of the Ministry of Labour.

²¹ A.N.I.C., Fond CC al PCR, Secția Cadre, dosar R/56, ff. 38-40.

allowed a recovery of the interwar personalities, in this context, Roșca dedicating numerous pages to the memory of his mentor, in which he praised his professional contributions²². We believe therefore that the allegations made by his colleague, Nicolae Mărgineanu, in whose conviction Roșca seems to have been involved²³, that he was sympathizing and has even joined the Legion, during the period when Ștefănescu Goangă was the victim of an assassination attempt on its part²⁴, are not supported by archive sources.

Nevertheless, according to a document that was part of the file created by the communist authorities in 1951 to investigate Roșca's situation, it seems that he was given the task to monitor Ștefănescu Goangă and Liviu Rusu and counterbalance their influence in the University, as they were seen as supporters of Iuliu Maniu. However, the same document concludes that Roșca did not comply with the request until 1948, when he has contributed to the removal of the two from the education system²⁵. Despite these accusations, the fact that his inaction regarding these two became a major fault in his evaluation in 1951 shows that he has tried to protect them for as long as it was possible.

Consequently, the same year Roșca was dismissed from the party, but kept his functions at the University, even though his tasks were reduced; he continued to be the Director of Studies, Dean of the Faculty of Psychology and president of the Institute for Romanian-Soviet Studies²⁶.

The period between 1951 till 1956 when Roșca has rejoined the Romanian Workers Party was one of a professional adjustment and alignment to the Soviet scientific demands. If the Institute of Psychology in Cluj had successfully adopted and applied the Western experimental methods and also the use on a large scale of psychological tests throughout the research projects during the interwar period, with spectacular results, the regime change has dictated the abandonment of this

²² Roșca, Bejat, 1976, 80-87. See also Roșca; Chircev, Radu, 1986.

²³ Anisescu ed., 2006, 39-40, 118-120. According to the archive documents that the author has studied, Alexandru Roșca, Salvador Cupcea, Constantin Daicoviciu and even Florian Ștefănescu Goangă have been plotting and addressed several memoirs to the leaders of the Communist Party and the Security Services to remove Mărgineanu from his position in the Psychology Institute and from the University in Cluj.

²⁴ Mărgineanu, 2002, 190-191. Mărgineanu is the only source that claims Roșca had joined the Legion, which makes his allegations difficult to believe, especially since Roșca's left-wing sympathies are well documented by the written statements of his colleagues; see A.N.I.C., Fond CC al PCR, Secția cadre, dosar R/56, f. 108.

²⁵ A.N.I.C., Fond CC al PCR, Secția Cadre, dosar R/56, f. 37.

²⁶ A.N.I.C., Fond CC al PCR, Secția Cadre, dosar R/56, f. 35.

scientific paradigm. This shift was more than a simple academic reorientation, and Roșca's professional trajectory is symptomatic of the path that Romania was following at that time. The traditional modernization project that had been imported from the Western part of Europe was being replaced by the Soviet political and social development pattern. Furthermore, in order for the professionals of the previous research school to be promoted by the new regime they had to undergo a complete transformation process which meant to criticize and discard the old academic methodologies and analysis perspectives, and adopt the Soviet ones.

This was exactly what Alexandru Roșca has done; the fact that he was dismissed from the Communist Party must have been a clear sign that if he wanted to continue his professional ascent he should compromise and accept the new terms in which research was to be conducted in the field of psychology. Even though that meant not only abandoning the old study methods but also condemning them, and even denying the value of his previous works. Therefore, in his numerous autobiographies he has expressed his conviction that the methodological approaches that he had been applying in his studies were "false and wrong"²⁷ acknowledging the fact that from that moment on the only authority that was entitled to draw the directions in the research field was the Soviet academic world. It is true however, that there can be noticed different degrees to this process of self-incrimination, Roșca's nihilistic attitudes displayed in the auto biographies in 1951 being more moderate five years later. One can assume that this was the result of his rehabilitation, since the same year he would be received into the party.

But Roșca has done more than a professional repositioning. His file shows that during the years of absence from the party he has made periodical statements of loyalty²⁸, which indicate his desire to regain his place after he has fallen from grace. This attitude proves that he has acquired the principles of the Soviet science and had acknowledged and accepted the privileged relationship between the political power and the field of psychology.

Maintaining a permanent contact with the representatives of the party led the way to his rehabilitation, in 1956 Roșca being received into the Romanian Worker's Party. Also, prior to his admission he has been appointed pro-rector of the University, a token of the party's appreciation and trust²⁹. From that moment on, Roșca's career has followed a steady upward path. Throughout the 60s and 70s, Alexandru Roșca has coordinated the great syntheses of psychology; in 1963, it was

²⁷ A.N.I.C., Fond CC al PCR Secția Cadre, dosar R/56, f. 18.

²⁸ A.N.I.C., Fond CC al PCR Secția Cadre, dosar R/56, f. 19.

²⁹ A.N.I.C., Fond CC al PCR Secția Cadre, dosar R/56, f. 20.

published the *Treaty of Experimental Psychology*, under Roșca's direction, who collaborated with other important researchers such as Anatolie Chircev, Valer Mare, Paul Popescu-Neveanu, Gheorghe Zapan³⁰ and Benjamin Zörgö. Interestingly, experimental psychology and the use of psychological tests were reconsidered from the Soviet perspective, whose methods were adopted and explained³¹.

1970 was the year that the Academy of Political and Social Sciences was established, an institution that was directly subordinated to the political command in order to control humanities research in socialist Romania. Naturally, Alexandru Roșca was the perfect choice to lead the department of Psychology and Pedagogy³² as he was at that time a well reputed psychologist³³, with more than 40 years of professional experience and contributions to the development of this research field. The fact that the party has appointed him to coordinate the implementation of the new directions in Psychology was a public recognition of Roșca's merits and also a token of appreciation, as he remains to this day a professor and researcher that former colleagues and students praise and admire³⁴. The political regime found a way to collaborate with the most prestigious personalities in humanities, this strategy being meant to confer credibility and legitimacy to an institution which had a clear political agenda. On the other hand, the position that Roșca held allowed him and the team he coordinated to draw the main directions in Psychology and Pedagogy research, leading the modernization of these social sciences. Therefore, it becomes clear that Alexandru Roșca has played an important part in the modernization process, being a key personality in the effort made by the Romanian scientific environment to synchronize itself with the Western trends, and afterwards with the Soviet methods.

³⁰ Gheorghe Zapan (1897-1976) was a professor at the Psychology Department of the University in Bucharest, teaching Experimental Psychology. His professional trajectory has important similarities with Roșca's, since he too was trained in German universities. His former student, Aurora Liiceanu, remembered him fondly, as one of the leading researchers in Romania. Also, she mentions the fact that after the war, with the change of the political regime, the equipment in the Experimental Psychology Laboratory were set one fire, being associated with the legacy of the bourgeoisie. Liiceanu, 2009, 110-119.

³¹ Roșca et alii., 1963, 17-19.

³² Popa, 2015, 63, 77.

³³ A.N.I.C., Fond Academia de Științe Sociale și Politice, Secția Psihologie și Pedagogie, dosar 2/ 1970, ff. 1-16.

³⁴ Berar, 2006, 165-166.

In 1975, another treaty, *General Psychology*, was re-edited and supplemented to include new information and the conceptual accumulations occurred since its first publication in 1966. This massive work was aimed at students, teachers and also researchers. Among those who contributed to the volume were Anatolie Chircev, Roșca's wife, also a psychologist, Mariana Roșca, Valer Mare, I. Radu and B. Zörgö³⁵. Analysing the references used by the authors, including Roșca's own footnotes, it is obvious that the most frequent ones referred to papers of the "founding fathers", Marx, Engels and Lenin, of the Soviet researchers, such as Pavlov, and occasionally to the Western literature, as it was the case with the works of the notorious Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget³⁶. The opening chapter of the volume was signed by Roșca himself, since it had the purpose of setting the tone for the rest of the contributors. It is extremely interesting the way terms such as progress and determinism³⁷, usually used by the regime's public discourse and propaganda were being transferred and applied to the field of psychology. Comparing these treaties with the studies published under the guidance of Ștefănescu-Goangă, during the interwar period, it is obvious not only the abandonment of the previous methodological approaches, but also the fact that those researches were conducted to analyse a precise social phenomenon, whilst these treaties represented an effort to synthesize and to impose a theoretical framework. Therefore, their constraining nature is beyond any doubt.

In 1976, Alexandru Roșca and Marian Bejat have written and published the volume *Psychology*³⁸, part of a larger project coordinated by the Romanian Academy and dedicated to the history of science in Romania³⁹. By that time, the Communist regime had recovered the national identity component and integrated it into the political speech and propaganda⁴⁰. Therefore, this shift in the regimes perspective brought a massive capitalization of the national values; in this context, Roșca and his partner were able to acknowledge the importance of Florian

³⁵ Roșca et alii., 1975.

³⁶ Roșca et alii., 21-22.

³⁷ Roșca et alii., 13-15.

³⁸ Roșca, Bejat, 1976.

³⁹ A.N.I.C., Fond Mihai Beniuc, dosar 81/1941-1984, ff. 75-76. In November 1969, Mihai Beniuc, who at that time was a Professor of the Faculty of Philosophy in Bucharest, at the Psychology Department, was appointed member of the committee of the PhD evaluation for Marian Bejat's thesis, *Preliminariile constituirii psihologiei ca știință experimentală în România*, that might have been the basis of the book published seven years later in collaboration with Alexandru Roșca.

⁴⁰ Cioroianu, 2007, 403.

Ștefănescu Goangă and Contantin Rădulescu Motru to the creation of the Romanian Psychology School, two names that could not be mentioned during the 50s.

Regardless of these changes of the political regime, analysing the content of the chapters that Roșca himself has written, it is obvious that there was a clear continuity with the research path initiated by the Institute of Psychology in Cluj during the 30s, especially regarding children and teenagers with behavioural disorders and young people career guidance.

The fact that Alexandru Roșca has remained professionally active throughout the entire decades that followed the coup of 23rd of August 1944 has enabled him to specialize in the therapeutic approaches to defective children⁴¹ and become one of the leading researchers in the country, as his career did not experience any disruptions. On the contrary, his privileged relationship with the communist regime has allowed him to attend international conferences and to establish contacts with psychologists and researchers from the Western and Soviet space⁴². These arrangements were mutually beneficial, since the party was confident that his representatives would conduct themselves according to its instructions, and the researchers had the opportunity to get in contact with the latest trends and methodologies in psychology. Also, this process makes visible the mechanism by which the elites of the interwar regime have been integrated by the communist one, these intellectuals contributing to the implementation of a new modernizing speech which according to the historic moment, was imported from the Western Europe or from the Eastern part of the continent.

In 1977 however, social sciences, such as psychology, pedagogy and sociology were perceived as undesirable by the political regime and eventually suppressed. Also the "transcendental meditation affair" which took place at the Institute of Research in Pedagogy and Psychology in Bucharest, made these specializations untrustworthy in the eyes of the regime⁴³. Perhaps that is the reason why the previous year, in 1976, Roșca had retired at his own will from the positions held at the University and at the Institute of Experimental, Compared and Applied

⁴¹ This explains why to this day, many centres for minors with behavioural problems are named after him; <http://www.csei-alrosca.ro/>; <http://www.cjtimis.ro/judetul-timis/transport/institutii-de-invataman-special/centrul-scolar-pentru-educatie.html>, accessed on 4th of November 2016.

⁴² Berar, 2010, 141-230.

⁴³ <http://jurnalul.ro/special-jurnalul/revolutia-culturala-afacerea-meditatia-transcendental-38976.html>, accessed on 5th of November 2016.

Psychology in Cluj⁴⁴. By the 80s, his relationship with the regime had severely deteriorated, being monitored by the Security Services which managed to create a web of informers. The fact that Roșca was president of the Soviet-Romanian Friendship Association (ARLUS) seemed suspicious to the party⁴⁵, given that fact that Ceaușescu's regime was experiencing a clear detachment from Moscow.

Mihai Beniuc: A Psychologist and a Poet in the Service of the Communist Party

Mihai Beniuc's professional evolution presents striking similarities with that of Alexandru Roșca, his former colleague at the Institute of Psychology in Cluj. Born on the 20th of November 1907 in the village Sebeș, Arad County he attended the Faculty of Philosophy in Cluj and later became part of the team coordinated by Ștefănescu Goangă, having specialized in animal psychology. As a young scholar, from 1932 to 1933, he was sent to Germany, at Hamburg, for a training stage. The contact with the Western scientific environment allowed Beniuc to familiarize himself with the latest trends in psychology, his area of expertise proving that he benefited greatly from it. Even though every specialization in the field of psychology represented a pioneering work since this modern social science was underdeveloped in Romania prior to the First World War, Beniuc's contribution, animal psychology, was truly a cutting edge discipline⁴⁶. Therefore it is obvious that his professional option was the result of the process of alignment to the Western scientific trends indicating that he played a major part in the modernization of this field⁴⁷.

Once returned home, he worked as an assistant at the Institute of Psychology in Cluj, later being appointed assistant at the University of Sibiu, after the North-West part of Transilvania, including the city of Cluj, had been ceded to Hungary. As Roșca, he too showed obvious left-wing sympathies, being the Secretary of the USSR Friends (Amicii URSS) in Cluj.

During the last years of the interwar period, from 1936 to 1940, he maintained regular contacts with members of the Communist Party of Cluj

⁴⁴ Berar, 2010, 15.

⁴⁵ A.C.N.S.A.S., dosar FCX 000774, ff. 2-20.

⁴⁶ Beniuc, 1970.

⁴⁷ He defended his doctoral thesis, *Învățare și inteligență la animale. Formarea drumului indirect la peștele combatant in 1934*, becoming the first Romanian psychologist specialized in animal psychology.

University. Following its orders in 1938, Beniuc started collaborating with the National Peasant Party, between 1938 and 1940 working as the editorial secretary of its journal, *Țara Nouă*, being considered at that time a talented poet. His volumes of poetry in the late 30s and especially those during the war, such as *Cântece de pierzanie* (1938), *Cântece noi* (1940) and *Orașul pierdut* (1943) are considered by Ion Cristoiu to be strongly influenced by nationalism. He has righteously pointed out the important similarities of these poems to those of the circles of Legionaries poets and those around Octavian Goga⁴⁸. His opinion is consistent with that of the Security Services, as in a report in 1943 it was mentioned that Beniuc had sympathized with the Legionary movement during its short reign⁴⁹; however, one must cautiously analyse these files, as they prove to be full of inaccurate information⁵⁰. Despite these, even the Communist Party activists have noticed the powerful national component of his poetry, but have attributed it to the specific situation in Transylvania, a region with a historical background of national tensions. After the coup of 23rd of August 1944, Beniuc himself tried to present these poems as announcing the change of the regime and the party accepted his perspective because they both benefited from the arrangement.

Regarding his allegedly Legionary past, in his memoirs he mentioned a moment in 1940, during the Antonescu-Sima reign, when one of his colleagues in the University, a close friend, has asked him whether he would accept to enlist in the Legion, if it were to be asked. His response was negative, whilst his friend expressed his belief that it was better to accept than to decline such an invitation⁵¹. Unfortunately, Beniuc on purposely did not mention his name, but we can assume that he was in fact talking about Salvador Cupcea, since Nicolae Mărgineanu also mentioned him as having joined the Legionary Movement.

In July 1941, after Romania joined the Axis forces in the war against the USSR, Beniuc came to Bucharest, being located at the 93 Infantry Regiment with the rank of Corporal, and due to the fact that he spoke several foreign languages was assigned to the Second Bureau of Information and Counterintelligence, Service of the General Staff as translator, in the Censorship Bureau, at the North Station. As Beniuc claims in his autobiographies, the Party knew his situation⁵² and

⁴⁸ Beniuc, 1999, 11.

⁴⁹ A.N.I.C., Fond 95, rola 682, Beniuc, ff. 388-390.

⁵⁰ A.N.I.C., Fond 95, rola 682, Beniuc, f. 384. According to some documents, Mihai Beniuc was suspected to be an Ukrainian communist from Bucovina.

⁵¹ Beniuc, 1999, 63-64.

⁵² A.N.I.C., Fond CC al PCR, Secția Cadre, dosar B 116, vol. I, ff. 5-6.

recommended him to maintain his position and to provide him with documents related to the spirits of the soldiers on the front. In his memories, Beniuc admits that during this period he has extracted some of the letters of the German soldiers fighting on the Russian front⁵³, which proves that he was indeed actively working for the then illegal communist movement, if discovered exposing himself to serious penalties. He has remained stationed there until 23rd of August 1944.

As well as Roșca, he too was arrested in November 1943 for communist activity, and brought before the War Council in Sibiu, being released eventually, after an intervention of his direct superior in the Bureau of Information and Counterintelligence. Despite his contribution to the cause of the Communist Party and despite being recognized as a member since 1945, because of the period in which he worked as a translator at the Office of Censorship, in 1951 he was expelled from the party⁵⁴. Five years later however, his name was cleared and he was re-admitted to the party, an important factor in the decision making process being the ongoing collaboration and his obedience to its main directions.

Between 1946 and 1948 Mihai Beniuc was sent to Moscow as an advisor, the ambassador being Iorgu Iordan. According to his memoirs, the time spent there allowed him to get acquainted with the Russian institutions and the way they were organized; he learnt the language, became friends with the soviet writer Ilya Ehrenburg, but most importantly he obtained the statutes of the Union of the Soviet Writers. This period has served as a turning point in his career, as he has experienced a professional reorientation; even though he claimed that when he has returned from Moscow he wanted to continue his teaching career at the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Philosophy, where with the help of Mihai Ralea he was appointed professor at the Comparative Psychology course⁵⁵. But things took a different turn, as Beniuc was chosen to reorganize the newly founded Writers Union in Romania; he became the "transmission belt"⁵⁶ of the Propaganda Department, having a major contribution in the implementation of the socialist realism in the Romanian literature. Between March 1949 and 1962, Beniuc was appointed secretary and first secretary, in 1962 becoming president; even though he

⁵³ Beniuc, 1999, 125.

⁵⁴ A.N.I.C., Fond CC al PCR, Secția Cadre, dosar B 116, vol. I, ff. 16-19.

⁵⁵ Beniuc, 1999, 129.

⁵⁶ Tismăneanu, Vasile, 2008, 94-95. The expression belongs to Cristian Vasile who used it to define the relationship that existed between Mihai Beniuc and Leonte Răutu, the undisputed pontif of the Romanian culture, whom the later used to control and reshape the Writers Union in Romania according to the one in the USSR.

pretended that he considered himself a mere manager of the institution⁵⁷, having the task of purging the so called fascist writers, in fact he was one of the instruments that the communist regime has used in order to remove the unwanted personalities that were seen as major inconveniences to the new directions introduced in the Romanian culture⁵⁸.

During the 1956 Hungarian revolution, Beniuc was instructed to go to Budapest and keep the Bucharest regime up to date with the political and military evolutions. In fear of the revolution, the communist leaders used him as he knew the language and afterwards he was sent to Cluj as a spokesperson, to instruct the teaching staff on this issue⁵⁹.

His loyalty to the party remains beyond any doubt as it can clearly be seen in his poetry volumes and other literary productions⁶⁰. This type of political commitment was in fact mutually beneficial for both of the parties; the consistent financial component is obvious since in 1959, Beniuc was awarded the prize Steaua Republicii Populare Române, second class⁶¹; also, the previous year Mihai Beniuc had been elected member of the Romanian Academy. Therefore, the fact that only six years later Leonte Răutu sacrificed him as the scape goat for the regime's excesses at the Writers Union in Romania must have been a bitter experience.

After leaving the Writers Union, in 1965, he returned to the Faculty of Philosophy, as a professor at the Psychology Department, in 1968 the Ministry of Education appointing him head of this department⁶². He was also a PhD supervisor at the same faculty, in 1970 asking the permission of the Ministry to coordinate doctoral thesis for biology students, as he also thought a course regarding the study of behaviour evolution.

In 1973 when he retired, in a farewell note, his colleagues who considered themselves as his "disciples" called him "a hero of the social and cultural revolution" in the country; among them there were Dorin Damaschin, Paul Popescu Neveanu,

⁵⁷ Beniuc, 1999, 87-88.

⁵⁸ Vasile, 2011, 168.

⁵⁹ Lungu; Retegan, 1996, 370-374.

⁶⁰ Bănulescu, Purcaru, 1964, 168-171. In his interview, Beniuc was praising the importance of the politically engaged poetry. In 1959, his novel *Pe muche de cuțit* included a clear attack on Bлага which only increased his bad reputation. Macrea-Toma, 2006, 220.

⁶¹ Cristian Vasile, 2011, 114-115.

⁶² A.N.I.C., Fond Mihai Beniuc, dosar 81/1941-1984, f. 59.

M. Zlate and P. Constantinescu⁶³. Their appreciative attitude shows that Mihai Beniuc had remained an important personality in psychology, even though he was no longer part of a research team. On the other hand it proves that his political background was important in defining his professional status. Despite his dramatic removal from the Writers Union, it is obvious that even though he was no longer a first class political figure, for almost a decade, Beniuc's university career followed an ascending path. In 1975, he was even elected member of the Great National Assembly.

Conclusions

The modernization process that the Romanian society has undergone starting with the 19th century represented the elite's effort to import and adapt a development pattern that would connect this space with the Western evolutions. The political regimes that have succeeded until the Second World War have encouraged the synchronization with the Western trends, this pattern being noticeable at the political, institutional, social and cultural level, but also in the scientific and academic world. However, after 1945 the new political regime has imposed a new direction, along with the entry in the sphere of influence of USSR, Romania experiencing a shift in the modernization pattern. This process could not have been possible without the human resources that each political regime heavily relies on to implement its vision and governing project.

The professional trajectories of Alexandru Roșca and Mihai Beniuc, two important representatives of the psychology school in Cluj, reflect exactly this process and the close collaboration between the political power and the elite from different fields of research. Their documented sympathy and consequent adhesion to the left-wing movement during the interwar period and especially throughout the years of the Second World War recommended them as trustworthy professionals that the regime used as pillars of the new modernization project. Mainly in the case of Alexandru Roșca, one can notice the two stages in his career that are consistent with the development paths that the country has been following. As a result, both Roșca and Beniuc have strongly contributed to the definition and implementation of the two distinct directions, being increasingly more involved in the second one, as they had reached their professional maturity and have gained

⁶³ A.N.I.C., Fond Beniuc, dosar 81/1941-1984, f. 92; "We are extremely fond of you and we tend to identify ourselves with the role model that you have been in accordance with the communist principles, with the academic elevation, wisdom and human qualities".

access to decision making positions inside the communist establishment. As Sheila Fitzpatrick has proven, this oscillation between West and East is a common phenomenon for Central and Eastern European countries, and during the 19th and 20th century Romania was no exception.

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