

Romanian Communist State Persecution on Neoprotestant Children, Youngsters and Teachers

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ABSTRACT: While Adventist pupils and students suffered because of the communist regime, particularly because of not attending classes on Saturday, other neoprotestant children and young people suffered because of their faith too. Although they had Sunday as a day of worship and did not skip classes, they, along with their parents and teachers belonging to these cults, had to endure furious repressive measures.

KEYWORDS: church, neoprotestant, students, youngsters, teachers, communism, persecutions

Introduction

This article represents a revised and added subchapter from the Graduate Thesis titled *The Religious Education of Neoprotestant Children and Youngsters in the Communist Period*, unpublished, presented in front of the Evaluation Committee at the University of Bucharest, Baptist Theology Faculty, in June 2007, in Bucharest.

This research is exclusively reserved for the presentation of concrete cases of neo-Protestant children and young people, parents and teachers who endured the persecution of the communist regime on account of their religious beliefs. The specificity and uniqueness of this study is given by the fact that the information provided comes, in particular, from the unpublished documents in the Archives of the State Secretariat for Cults (A.S.S.C.), as well as from the Archives of the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives (A.C.N.S.A.S.).

Persecutions against pupils and students

Offenses, insults and even harassment were just some of the measures that a neo-Protestant student had to endure as early as the primary school classes (Țon 2000, 130). There were real campaigns to identify "repented" in higher education institutions and high schools. The neo-Protestant students were often summoned by special commissions to sign statements that they would cease to attend churches, otherwise they would be expelled, and the high school students were threatened that, if they did not sign such a declaration in turn, their names would be sent to all higher education institutions so that they would be rejected at the admission exam (Țon 2000, 125). In addition, high school students were allowed access to higher education only based on the membership card from the Communist Youth Union (U.T.C.). When a young person, pupil, or student, wanted to be baptized or even got baptized, the cult inspectors, together with the territorial inspectors, were in contact with the schools or faculties they attended to penalize them. The inspector of cults Ioan Rusu requested to the Department of Cults to issue instructions to Dolj county local inspector in connection with the report No. 1.003, dated 1970, drawn up by the latter, to inform the leadership of the Faculty of Electronics in Craiova that among those who had been baptized on September 25th, 1970, is the Adventist student Anghel Valeriu (A.S.S.C., no. 21338/23 October 1970).

At the Civil Engineering High School in Oradea, after he presented the students with the criteria to access higher education, the director advised a young Baptist to give up his religion so that he would not compromise his future and even write a statement to that effect (Grosu

2006, 124). Connected to this, we must also mention that the daughter of Baptist pastor Mihai Chiu, vice president of the Baptist Church in Arad, was rejected at the "Gheorghe Dima" Conservatory in Cluj for the simple reason that her father was a Baptist pastor. According to the father's statements, his daughter was told that in the socialist state there was no room for the Baptist's children in state schools (A.S.S.C., no. 13/6/2/1976, vol. 2, 4). For the same "guilt", Teofil and Christian Ccean, students at the Faculty of Medicine in Timișoara, were not received in the student's hostel (Grosu 2006, 124). However, these measures did not frighten the faithful children and young people who wanted to be baptized. On August 8th, at the Pentecostal Church in Arad II, an event where 55 candidates were baptized took place, most of them students and workers. A number of 29 candidates were U.T.C. members (Communist Youth Union) and, although the cult inspector had previously been in contact with the U.T.C. Municipal Committee they still got baptized (A.S.S.C., no. 545/2 September 1971, 1). As our study shows, many such cases had been recorded. Of the 105 candidates coming from Baptist families who got baptized in the Baptist churches no.1, no. 2, and no. 3 in, 72 were members of the U.T.C, and four were party members (A.S.S.C., no. - /October 27, 1971). Also, on 23rd July 1973, at the Pentecostal Church in Bistrița, Bistrița-Năsăud county, the baptism of 19 young people, of whom 11 were U.T.C. members, took place. In Arad county, in 1973, 75 young people were baptized at the Pentecostal church no. 1, of whom 68 were U.T.C. members. On July 1, 1973, 24 young people were baptized at the Pentecostal Church no. 1 in Timișoara, of whom 16 were U.T.C. members (A.S.S.C., Lungeanu 1974, 66). At the same time, on June 23rd, 1977, nine 18-year-old girls and a 50-year-old woman were baptized at the Adventist Church in Focșani. Initially, the cult inspector had been given a table with the names of 12 girls (11 of whom were U.T.C. members) which were to be baptized. Because of the intervention of the U.T.C. County Committee, who discussed with each one of the 11 girls, three of them changed their minds (A.S.S.C., no. 705/July 13, 1978, 2).

In some schools, the maximum punishment imposed on students because of their religion was expulsion. In Deva, two Baptist students, named Pasăre Lidia, a student in the first year at the Pedagogical High School and Vereș Ana, a student in the third year at the Vocational School, were warned by the leadership of the schools they attended that they would be expelled in case they would not give up their faith (A.S.S.C., no. 15/611/1976, vol. 1, inv. 4, 1). In other situations, such as the one in Hunedoara, the students were expelled for the simple fact that they were Baptists and they continued to keep their faith. Thus, pupil Cosma Claudiu was expelled and the elder of the church in Hunedoara also expected for his daughter, Hațegan Maria, to be expelled for the same reason. The girl's father, Hațegan Ioan, accused the school leadership of dishonesty for the expulsion of student Cosma Claudiu. The trustee of the Department of Cults proposed that Hațegan Ioan be removed from the cult management (A.S.S.C., no. 109/1962, vol. 1, Inv. A, 35 – 36). Also, the students Lăcătuș Cornelia, Stanca Lucica, Ancatan Catița, Cântean Corina, and Mândru Mircea were expelled from the Pedagogical Highschool in Arad because they were Baptists. On the occasion of the expulsion, the manager said to them: "You cannot be considered Romanians, you are merely traitors, people because of which society cannot move forward!" (Grosu 2006, 124).

The students also suffered the same punishment. Sfatcu Genoveva from Iași, a Baptist student at the Faculty of Philology–English, was expelled for "various deviations". At the time the cult inspector drew up this document, she was employed part-time at the church in Iași, training the church choir and having frequent visits to other churches in the country (Brăila, Arad, Oradea, Bucharest), where she would support the idea that Iosif Țon was unjustly sanctioned (A.S.S.C., no. - /1978, 3). In addition, in a memorandum addressed to the Department of Cults at the end of December 1985 by the Baptist cult Union Committee, the case of two Baptist students, from the Mining Institute in Petroșani, who in 1984, had been expelled for missionary activity in the Institute and for the introduction and spreading of some religious materials among their co-workers (A.C.N.S.A.S., no. 154/1985, vol. 4).

In other schools, the management resorted to other methods to make children and young people stop attending the churches where their parents were members. In most cases, neo-Protestant children had been constantly offended by both teachers and colleagues (Grosu 2006, 100). Such was the case at the Arad General School, the neo-Protestant pupils had to endure great pressure from the teachers who forced them to stand-up, threatened with low grades for behavior, and if they continued to go to church, they would be called every Sunday, to school activities. And to emphasize even more the constraints to which these students were subject, we must add that on Easter Sunday in 1981, they were forced to go to school, where they were told about the evolution of life on earth (Grosu 2006, 100). In other schools, such as the General School of Agrij, Sălaj County, on April 15th, 1975, Baptist students endured the mockery words publicly expressed by their director. And as if that was not enough, the militiaman of the commune threatened that if he still attended church, he would have to send them to a correction house for minor delinquents (Grosu 2006, 124). The first-class student Blaj Daniel of the General School in Arad, Pârneava, was told to stand-up in front of the class and mocked because he came from a Baptist family (A.S.S.C., no. 13/6/2/1976, vol. 2, 3). The same happened in Sebis, Arad county, in 1977, where the students were forced to kneel on the school corridor to face all the bad jokes and offensive gross jokes of their colleagues. And at the General School in Gisești, Mehedinți county, things went even further as far as neo-Protestant students are concerned. After being threatened, they were even hit by the teacher because of their parents' faith (Grosu 2006, 124). For the Baptist students in Reșița, the classes were held under the accusation that they were "anti-communists", that they were "the worms that gnaw the root of nationalism" (A.S.S.C., no. 94/1954, vol. 14 – b, inv. 140, 6). For the simple reason that they were Baptists, they were beaten in schools, prevented from following full training, and others were expelled from high school on the grounds that they did not hold a 'certificate of baptism' indicating their status as members of the Orthodox cult (A.S.S.C., no. 94/1954, volume 14 – b, inv. 140).

Sergiu Grossu, in his book *The Calvary of Christian Romania*, reports a story from the American Mission Bulletin "Christian aid for Romania", about a ten-year-old student named Viorica. The author simply reports that she, together with four other colleagues, were the only Christian students in a renowned school in the country. On Sunday, as expected, they went with their parents to church, thus skipping the special activities organized in honor of the Communist Party. Learning from the instructor of the "Sunday school" that, the next Sunday, they were going to see at church slides from the life of Jesus, she also invited her colleagues who were extremely interested to see other images not only with soldiers and flags. On the following Sunday, 90 students were absent from the school choir rehearsal. On Monday morning, at school, all classes were gathered in the auditorium for a special conference. Asked by the school manager why they had been absent from the rehearsals the previous day, Viorica's colleagues confessed the "guilt". The five students were brutally beaten, with Viorica being dealt with by the manager himself, so that their punishment would be lesson for other students who would be inclined to do the same thing. Viorica was hit with fists and feet by the manager until she collapsed while the children were screaming. After completing his "lesson," the manager addressed the children with the following words: "I hope this will serve you as a lesson and you will not go to church again!" In vain did teachers try to reanimate Viorica, and she only recovered after a few weeks of deep coma (Grosu 2006, 174-175).

Because on the educational-instructive level on well trained students no measures could be taken, apart from insults and hitting, it was also imposed the measure to decrease the grade for behavior up to grade two, as it was known that grade five for behavior meant repetition of school year. The pupils Radu Liana, Noaș D., Oală Maria, Sertiș Ana and Tomas Maria, from the 9th and 10th grades from "Ioan Slavici" High School in Arad, for no reason, were graded with two and three for behavior. And at the Pedagogical Highschool in Arad, the students Mândruțau I., Stancu E, Steiner D., Cânteanu F., in the 10th grade, and students Roșu Cornelia

student in the first year, Otiș Cornelia and Lăcătuș Cornelia in the fourth year, had their grade for behavior lower than eight. It should be added that at the Pedagogical High school, the second stage could only be continued if one had the grade of minimum of eight for behavior (A.S.S.C., no. 13/6/2/1976, vol. 2, 3-4).

Persecution against parents

In a context where children and young people suffered in schools in different ways, it is interesting to note the attitude of parents, churches and even pastors. In Arad, 10 – 12 pupils of the Industrial High School no. 5 were excluded from the U.T.C. organization, the reason being their affiliation to the Baptist cult. This created unrest among Baptist believers, who considered themselves persecuted on the basis of their religious affiliation, considering it as "anti-democratic and anti-constitutional". Grecu Traian, President of the Baptist Church in Arad, mentioned that the Baptist students in secondary education were scared and their parents threatened to write various protests, considering that the exclusion from the U.T.C. of only Baptist children was a barrier in their way to follow the path of a higher education institution, thus preventing them from gaining access to culture (A.S.S.C., no. -/5 March 1977, 1).

In the commune of Băuțar, Caraș-Severin County, to show their discontent that the school frequently admonished their children because on Sunday they skipped school activities, a group of Baptist believers, together with their pastor Bosneac Simion, presented on January 27th, 1974 at the Inspectorate for the Pioneers (A.S.S.C., no. 3683/891/1974, 6). Similarly, in Holod village, Tulcea county, when his sons were forced to learn poems with political content, Dudaș Victor, the children's father, addressed the teacher with the following words: "If you still give my children to learn poems with political texts, I will withdraw them from school!" (A.S.S.C., no. 5127/14477/1973, 5). On the other hand, in churches where various members tried to urge parents to let their children attend school celebrations, they met with enough opposition from members. One eloquent case in this respect is the one found at the Pentecostal Church in Chendrea, Sălaj County, where Emil Damasa tried to break in the opposing block of parents who did not allow their children to participate in school celebrations. He received only serious scolding from the other members (A.S.S.C., no. -/1971, 5). There were also Baptist pastors who, under the threat of ruining their children's careers by not accepting them at higher education institutions, signed the collaboration with the Securitate (Țon 2000, 185).

Nevertheless, the Christian Evangelical Christians, and especially the Pentecostal ones, were often accused in the reports of the cult inspectors of cultural backwardness and lack of educational training. Half of the Pentecostal pastors were workers and craftsmen (locksmiths, welders, builders, painters, tailors, carpenters, joiners, watchmakers, drivers). Almost a third of the total number of pastors were peasants, most of whom worked in cooperatives. In addition, 99% of Pentecostals had only four to seven primary classes or less (A.S.S.C., no. -/12 April 1974, 41 – 42). In a documentary material concerning the activity of the sects it was specified that, in order to justify their cultural backwardness and lack of educational training, some Evangelical Christians claimed that "Christ, when choosing his disciples, did not choose highly educated men, but fishermen" (A.S.S.C., no. -/undated, 8).

The same were the reasons the Pentecostals invoked when they directed their children only to vocational schools, to various professions (electricians, drivers, tilers, carpenters, mechanics, plumbers) or when they were withdrawing them from schools (A.S.S.C., no. 61/3 March 1980, 2). There were not few cases when parents chose to withdraw their children from schools so it would not "get the communist doctrine into their head", because "too much learning is bad". Among those prevented from attending schools were the very children who were at the forefront of education. Other parents proved more obtuse towards their children, as it happened in the village of Cristești, the district of Beclean, where teachers found that

some pupils came to school after being beaten by their Pentecostal parents, because they refused to accompany them to church, preferring to go to school (Nicoară 1960, 42). In Uivar, Timișoara district, Petre Petre, the deacon of the Pentecostal church was accused by local authorities of being a bad example among the other believers because he did not allow his son to join the middle school. Affirming that his son had enough knowledge, from the four classes he had graduated, enough to read the Bible, and that if he had followed the gymnasium, he would have learned too much, and that would drive him away from God. The example of the deacon was closely followed by other believers, among whom we mention Chizec Gheorghe, a member of the same church. These deviations were also brought to the attention of the President of the Pentecostal cult, Bochianu, who was asked both to discharge from office the deacon and to clarify the other believers about the issue of educating their children (A.S.S.C., no. 109/1961, vol. 1, inv. 103, 39).

The case of the family Sandu Gheorghe and Maria, who were first accused of the manner they educated their three children and then of withdrawing two of them from school (twins Anton and Traian), should also be mentioned. The main reason invoked for the two children's withdrawal from school was not "because of our poor social situation, as a result of discrimination based on political criteria, but above all because they are indoctrinated at an age when they are not yet aware, preventing them from being aware, later, to understand true democracy". The measures applied to this family were as harsh as possible, namely the decaying of parents from parental rights, placing minors in protection institutions and forcing the two parents to pay a monthly amount for the maintenance of minors. Apart from this case, there were many other families who were deprived of their children because of such a "blatant" guilt in the eyes of their respective officials, namely, the religious education of minors ("The file of Romanian believers Gheorghe and Maria Sandu's case." Catacombes (1977). Grossu 2006, 109 – 113). In Vișeu, after withdrawing the right to raise their children to a seven-couple group, the court sentenced them to three years in prison. Simion Teodorovici, from Jelna, the village of Budacu de Jos, the Pentecostal father of 12 children, also withdrew seven of his school-age children from school. It was a sign that it was not about indifference or disregard, but more serious about ill will and stubbornness. Maria Mureșan, the manager of the school, said: "We did everything humanly possible. We talked to the parents, their children, but all our moves were in vain. But at a certain moment, it seems that Maria Teodorovici, the mother of the children, agreed to send them to school. She faced the ill will and stubbornness of the father who, for personal reasons, decided to keep his children at home this year because there is no point in sending them to school." For the eldest son, a student at the Electrotechnical High School in Bistrița county, he had to retroactively pay 13.000 lei for the two-year scholarship. Also, Georgeta Teodorovici also had the nostalgia of the school, she was among the first students at the admission contest for the mathematics-physics profile at the "Liviu Rebreanu" Highschool (Moise 1978).

Persecution against teachers

There were also cases when even teachers suffered because they were faithful and sometimes developed missionary activities among their fellow teachers or even among students. Jurjeu Gheorghe, a professor at the Special School for Blind people in Arad, was taken the teaching classes because he was a Baptist believer. Several teachers were also called to Arad Educational Inspectorate and forced to sign a questionnaire with insulting words about faith. Barbu Dorina, a graduate of the Pedagogical School in Deva, the preschool department, worked as an educator at Telinc for only a week, after which she was fired. Her sister, who was in the second year at the same school, was also expelled from school. Ilie Dănuț, a mathematics teacher at the Industrial Mining High School in Valea Jiului, a graduate of the University of Timișoara, promotion 1975, well appreciated for the competence with which he taught the subject, was even appointed head

teacher. He was given a studio flat and was considered as a hope of the teaching staff until it was found out that he was the son of Baptist Ilie Ionel in Bucium, Hunedoara county. As soon as he learned that he was a Baptist and that he came from such a family, the high school manager, Filip I., recommended him to find something else to do. Nemeş Alexandrina, a fourth-year student at the University of Timișoara, the Romanian language department, taught as a substitute teacher at the school in Fetești. She was under very careful surveillance in class, then called by the Inspectorate on Education and forced to give up faith. She was asked to declare, under signature, that she attended church out of coercion. Because she did not sign the declaration, she was released from office and stayed home until she finished her studies. Ghilea Lucia, a Romanian-language teacher, who was a holder at the Nălați preventorium, was warned that she would be fired if she was to attend church (A.S.S.C., no. 13/6/2/1976, vol. 2, 3-5). Mariana Basa, from Bucharest, was terminated her employment contract in accordance with the provision number 14, dated 11th January 1976, given by the Municipal School Inspectorate, because of her membership in the Pentecostal cult and the missionary activities carried out among the co-workers and students (Grosu 2006, 122).

Engineer Păulescu Terentie, professor of electronics at the Vocational School „Romanian Railways” from Arad until November 1976, was dismissed on the basis that he was a Baptist, although he was appreciated and even congratulated on the way he organized the school's physics lab. He presented a "memorandum" to Central Inspector Răducu Ion in December 1976 but received no response. As a result, the engineer intended to send a "memo" to the meeting of the representatives of the countries which adhered to the Helsinki “Final Act” in Belgrade, citing discrimination on grounds of religious belief (A.S.S.C., no. - /25 February 1977, 1; A.S.S.C., no. - /5 March 1977, 1). Also, Ilie Ion, a professor of physics at the school in Lapos, Prahova county, was also dismissed. And Professor Dobrescu, from Bucharest, was fired, as well as Almăsescu Cornel, a professor in Târgu Neamț, was dismissed. These and many other cases were collected and handed over by Silviu Cioată (Christian Evangelical Church) to Iosif Țon, who wrote a letter presented to Radio Liberty: "The situation of the neo-Protestant Cults in Romania and human rights", signed by Iosif Țon and Silviu Cioată. The paper was submitted to the Belgrade Conference and to the entitled authorities of Romania (A.C.N.S.A.S., no. 1087, vol. 2, 153).

Some teachers were dismissed because they were constantly in charge of the religious training of their children at church. A Christian Evangelical educator was fired because it was found that she oversaw the religious education of the children at church (A.S.S.C., no. 412/4 June 1973, 6). Because of their refusal to deliver materialistic-scientific education to pupils and their introduction of Baptist religious literature in school, the School Inspectorate of Arad county decided to terminate the employment contracts of the mathematics teacher Hedeșan Leontina, from the General School of Secusigiu, as well as to the English-Romanian language teacher Alboni Estera, from the same school. The two teachers were Baptists, members of the "Speranța" church in Arad.

We are going to report both the questionnaire drawn up by the school inspectorate and the statements made by the two teachers (A.S.S.C., no. 27/13 February 1987).

Questionnaire:

1. “Since when have you been working in Arad County? Under what circumstances did you receive your post at the Secusigiu General School?
2. What kind of additional student training activities, complementary to the educational-training process, did you carry out with the students?
3. If you participated in the 'friends of Scientific truth' circle program. Why? What themes did you debate?
4. How do you carry out the themes: The anachronistic character of religion, the creation of the world by God, about evil and hell, the religious morals, the morals of the degradation of human personality, etc.?

5. Is it correct and useful to encourage students to attend church? Why?
6. Is the status of teaching staff compatible with the attendance of church?
7. What do you think, the educational activities conducted with the pupils on Sunday, including the patriotic work, are useful for shaping their personality? Why?
8. Could the religious education of young people in our society make a positive contribution to the development of the personality of pupils?
9. Is it permitted to introduce and use religious books in school? Under what circumstances did you practice it? Where did you get prayer books?
10. What concerns do you have in your leisure time? What do you read? Are you participating in the cultural-sports activities children have on Sunday?
11. What are the people you have talked to on the train or at school about matters of faith in a supernatural force or others? Is such a practice welcome?"

Declaration by Leontina Hedeşan:

1. "As part of the additional activities with the students, we organized tuitions and consultations with the weaker students, and with the best, starting with this school year, I am preparing them for the Romanian language Olympics. As a matter of fact, I haven't been a head teacher for two years, as I am a substitute, which is why I haven't had any activities with the pioneers or the U.T.C. members. We have now worked together to prepare a literary montage, and in previous years I have been part of the vocal group of teachers and supported school lectures, preparing groups of students for lecturers, voice groups of foreign languages, plays.
2. I did not participate in the circle of the 'pioneers of the Scientific truth' because I was not asked.
3. Regarding my request to deliver subjects such as the 'anachronic character of religion', I would document closely and present the students with both the materiality of the world and its spirituality, so the world is made not only of things that are visible, palpable, but also of things which are not visible. I would not give them any further details, as it involves a debate that goes beyond my attributions in my work with students at school.
4. It is not useful to influence students to attend church, because going to church does not mean everything in their becoming. This is the responsibility of the family who has the right to direct their own children along the path they want.
5. Regarding the question whether the status of teaching staff is compatible with attending church, my answer is 'yes', since the church does not teach bad things, but inspires in one the fear and respect, the love and adoration of God, society and individual.
6. Yes, because they train for work, adding a more powerful fiber to their character.
7. In my opinion, Christian education has contributed to the fulfillment of my personality from a moral, social, spiritual, and patriotic point of view making me a worthy citizen, loving honesty, truth, justice, mercy, and having respect for the people and the land of the country in which I was born, I live and work.
8. Religious books are not allowed in school. I do not know how the brochure 'Alege viața' (Choose life) was sent from Alboni to colleague Miulescu, as this year I am to teach in three schools and only in certain days I am in Secusigiu.
9. I read the professional magazines 'Tribuna Școlii' (the School Tribune), 'Revista de pedagogie' (The Teaching Magazine), 'Limbile moderne în școală' (Modern Languages in School), pedagogical literature, party and state documents, scientific-educational books, magazines, newspapers such as 'Flacăra roșie' (The Red Flame), 'Scânteia' and 'the Bible'. On Sunday I rest, attend the Baptist Church 'Speranța', prepare my sketches for the next day, read, visit and go for walks.
10. Outside school and at school, I did not pursue proselytizing acts."

Declaration by Estera Alboni:

1. "I graduated from the Faculty of Natural Sciences, mathematics Section, in 1981.
2. I gave mathematics lessons to the students who were to take the step exam, training for the Physics Olympics, prepared 'Cel mai bun experimentator' (The Best Experimenter), held the 'Cercul de matematică' (Mathematics Circle), and trained and taught the weaker students.
3. I did not participate in this circle because I was not asked. I have little children and they have not asked me.

4. I cannot accomplish the themes of the anachronistic character of religion because I have a different opinion about these things. I can perhaps present them from the point of view of authors or scientists, without imposing my point of view, because I believe that God has created the world, that there is hell and heaven.
5. If the students attend church, I do not think this is something wrong, because they have nothing bad to learn from it. But it is not fair for us to stimulate students in this respect. They are free to decide what to do.
6. Yes. Because it has nothing to do with what I think or what I do at church with the way I teach my mathematics lesson.
7. They are useful because all activities organized by the school are useful for the development of pupils' personality, they have been designed and proposed for this purpose.
8. I do not know. It depends on what kind of religious education we are talking about. If they believe in God, they are accomplished.
9. I do not think it is allowed to introduce books with religious content in school. I had a book on me, though, in the autumn of this year, when I was in practice with the students. My colleague Miulesc Constantin said he did not believe in God, but that he wanted to educate his daughter about it. I would like to mention that he always provoked me in all sorts of discussions, but I did not want to talk to him. To convince me that he was well-intentioned, he also showed me a 'Bible' which he claimed his daughter was reading. The book I had, I borrowed it from a friend during my student years.
10. If there are organized working hours in school on Sunday, I do not participate. In my leisure time, I read specialty books and novels, but lately, less, because I have two little girls and I have no time. I also read the press or brochures and books necessary for preparing the classes of political information, or the head teaching classes. If it happens to find, I also read booklets on religious themes. I have commented on such subjects with my colleague Hedeşan Mariana."

A similar case is Loredana Vera Licu, Christian Evangelical Church member and teacher at School no. 1, with Classes 1 – 10, from Boldeşti–Scăieni. After working as a fourth-grade teacher, where she received, from the manager, at the end of the year the rating "very good", she went to the Extended schedule Kindergarten no. 5 in Boldeşti–Scăieni due to the staff restriction. And here she was noticed and received the same rating from the leadership at the end of the year. In 1981, she passed the test with the middle group and was even proposed for promotion by the method inspector. Despite these successes, at the end of the new year she received only the "good" rating from the new director Pantilimonescu Paul, who had previously asked her if she wanted to remain a teacher, then she would have to abandon her religious beliefs. She was subsequently called by the deputy director of the General School in Boldeşti–Scăieni to take up the position of schoolteacher. Thus, she became a teacher again, in a class that included nine Roma children, with little possibilities, one of whom repeated first class for the third time, three other children were schizophrenics who repeated first class for the third time, and two children came from divorced families. These aspects led to many tuitions, visits to the pupils' homes, the purchase of notebooks, pencils, drawing pens and brushes, for those who did not have money, for some she also made it possible to have their hair cut to ensure their presence in school. Following an inspection, she was reproached that her membership of the Christian Evangelical Church was incompatible with the tasks arising from her profession.

She was reproached that if she had loved her profession and her children, she would have chosen to give up her faith in order to remain a teacher. A few days after this incident, she was called by the mayor to be informed that if she did not give up her faith, her new job would be the local poultry slaughterhouse. Only three days after this incident, she was fired, even if "the teacher is, broadly, well trained". If her training was just "appropriate," it is very difficult to explain the "very good" ratings and the regrets and the revolt of the parents following her dismissal. Rodica Dragu mentioned in her referral, which practically concluded this case: "Since Thursday afternoon and Sunday morning she regularly attends the religious

gatherings, it is clear that school duties cannot be performed when scheduled on those days" (A.S.S.C., no. - /9 June 1983, 1-9).

Because of these measures against the neo-Protestant religious cults and, in particular, the presentation of the Baptist cult as a "sect", the Orthodox priests in Bușteni, Sebis and other localities began to carry out calumnious campaigns against the Baptists, claiming that after the "Education Congress", they were to be liquidated because they were not loyal to the state. Because of these things, the Baptist Churches lived in the fear that they should prepare for the beginning of persecution because of faith. In churches, groups of believers appeared praying for the power to resist possible interrogations. These groups, which had not previously existed, were mostly young believers (A.S.S.C., no. 13/6/2/1976, vol. 2, 4).

Against this background of instability, when it appeared that there was no future for the children and young neo-Protestant people, there were also voices that made the voice of children expelled or humiliated from schools heard, even abroad. Guided by the text from Proverbs 31, 8, which says, "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute", Iosif Țon, a pastor at that time in the Baptist Church no. 2 in Oradea, decided to write a work to defend the cause of the persecuted, being helped to collect materials by Aurel Popescu and Pavel Niculescu. The document was read on 3rd April 1977 after the newsletter at Radio Liberty. It is not hard to see what the communists' reactions were. Refusing to stop reading it live on the radio, those involved in drawing up the document were arrested the following morning and, for five weeks, were investigated and beaten at criminal investigation headquarters in Rahova Street. The immediate result of reading the document was the ending, at least for some time, of the persecution in schools (Țon 2000, 125-128).

Conclusions

Either because they were absent on Saturdays, as in the case of Adventist children and youngsters, or simply because they shared the faith of their parents, as was the case with other children and young neo-Protestants, they had to face in schools the hate promoted by the regime, both from school leaders, and from colleagues. Attempts were made to intimidate pupils and students by lowering the grade for behavior or expulsion, being left repeating the year, humiliated, and mocked. The parents of these young people were fined or even excluded from worship simply because they wanted to keep their children in the sphere of religion. Not even the neo-Protestant teachers escaped the communist repressive wave, many of them being fired for religious reasons. Although their path to education and culture was permanently hampered by the communist authorities, young people went to schools, becoming intellectuals who helped to strengthen the cults and spread spirituality both in the settings they had learned and in the environments where they went to work.

If Romania still offers the society people fearful of God, it is only the direct consequence of the fact that once some parents struggled to give to their children all their religious and moral legacy. On the other hand, if today we have a generation in whose hands we fear to leave the country, it is also because they are the unfaithful children of yesterday, in whose vision "God" is only the money, the job and the self-interest.

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