Marcel Tudor With Andrei Cornea

This is Andrei Cornea, Paul Cornea's son, and this is my Marcel [the one in the middle], the dark-haired one. He was a very beautiful child. They were 5 years old in April 1957, because he was born in 1952. They're in the garden of the House of the University Staff, on Dionisie Lupu St., where a lady was walking them. [Andrei Cornea, born in 1952, is a jewish philologist, very well known teacher, essayist on political and cultural themes, son of Paul Cornea, born in 1924, literary theoretician and historian.]

We adopted a little boy, because I couldn't bear children. We had a nice marriage - we loved each other and we lived well - so we adopted this little boy from 'Sfanta Ecaterina' orphanage on Kiseleff Dr., near the Triumphal Arch [Ed. note: Bucharest's Triumphal Arch was initially made of wood in 1922. In 1935-1936 it was rebuilt from concrete and granite on the same spot. The 27-meter-high monument is dedicated to the victory of the Romanian armies in World War I.]. We picked a dark-haired boy, because Vasile was also dark-haired, and we wanted the boy to resemble us a little.

We raised him and gave him all our love, as you can imagine. But the child was an alcoholic's offspring. His mother had died in childbirth, and his father hadn't shown any interest in him. It was only much later that I found out his natural father was a drunkard. We were stupid communists: education is everything, heredity is crap. That's a communist theory! We raised him as well as we could, but he started drinking at 14. He was 9 when we got divorced. Vasile continued to care about the boy, then about the grandson, until he died. So, at about the age of 14, he went 'Mother, give me five lei to have a brandy.' He went to the Caragiale High School. 'We'll just have a brandy.' I thought that was odd, and I told my husband that Marcel had started to drink. 'Well, all the boys drink at his age.' So neither of us paid any attention to this. He died as an alcoholic with a lung disease, before he turned 51.