

THE ROMANIAN PRESS IN INTERWAR ORADEA ON THE 1917-1919 EVENTS AS FOUNDATION FOR THE CREATION OF GREAT ROMANIA

Mihai D. DRECIN*

Abstract. Although during the interwar period (1919-1940) the city of Oradea had a Hungarian and Jewish demographic majority, Romanians constantly grew in number. The phenomenon is explained by the majority Romanian ethnic reservoir in Bihor County and the hinterland of the city. The economic and administrative development demanded skilled manpower, constantly growing, knowledgeable in Romanian language, which the city could no longer provide. The neatly superior biological force of Romanians in Bihor, compared to that of the ethnic minorities in the area, facilitated their migration from the village to the city and the gradual preponderance of the Romanians in Oradea and other urban centers in the county.

It is against this backdrop that the Romanian press in Oradea, especially the political, religious, cultural one, went through a quantitative and qualitative increase, on demand by the city population.

Its pages would periodically host articles on the commemoration of events and personalities in the 1917-1919s, seen as foundations for the creation of Great Romania. These are moments of both general, national importance (the battles of Mărăști, Mărășești, Oituz; December 1, 1918; King Ferdinand; Generals Alexandru Averescu, Traian Moșoiu, Henri M. Berthelot, Prime Minister Ion I. C. Brătianu) and local one, considered true bricks laid at the foundation of the preparation and realization of the Great Romania: 150 years since the establishment of the Greek Catholic Episcopacy of Oradea (1777), 100 years since the founding of the Romanian High School in Beiuș (1828), 10 years since the Declaration of Self-Determination of the Romanian People of Oradea (1918), the commemoration of the atrocities committed against Romanians by the Hungarian army in 1918-1919 (1928, 1929, 1932, 1937).

The reference to this “recent history” of the Romanians was meant to spiritually strengthen the nation in its efforts to overcome the social-economical difficulties the country was going through, including the irredentism and revisionism of Hungary and the Hungarian parties in Romania that targeted the country’s union.

Keywords: Oradea, 1919-1940, the Romanian press, commemoration of events and personalities in 1917-1919, strengthening of the national feeling.

Since its inception, the press has been a tool for informing readers about the realities of the moment in various areas of daily life, as well as for the

* Professor, History Department, University of Oradea, Corresponding Member of the Academy of Romanian Scientists, e-mail: drecin_mihai@yahoo.com