

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

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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

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remembrance of past events considered important by the community in its path to affirmation and fulfillment. The last category of events included mainly those of the political-military and cultural-religious sphere, more rarely of the economic, administrative or daily life of the ordinary people.

The 1918-1919 fulfillment of the Romanians' national desideratum – the creation of a unitary national state, followed by fast process of modernization and integration of the four major Romanian provinces into a unitary whole, based on the tradition of the place and the Western-European model, demanded special efforts, both physical and intellectual, from all social categories. In the process of stimulating the pace of the country's development, in overcoming the inherent difficulties in building the unitary state, including the global economical-political impediments felt also by our country (see the economic crisis in 1929-1933) – it was more than once that the press resorted to the remembrance of key moments in the modern history of our becoming. The human and material sacrifices for the process of national assertion had to animate and raise awareness in the new generations to overcome the hardships of the moment, requiring of them endeavours similar to their forerunners'. The references to recent history events could have a greater, immediate, impact especially since the living generations had either participated directly in them, or witnessed them, even at a young age.

Such an event, considered a catalyst for the interwar period, was represented by the Romanian Army's glorious facts in the summer of 1917 on the front in southern Moldova, which saved the Romanian modern state core, in a very complex international military context, unfavourable to our country. The Mărăști victory of the Romanian-Russian armies against the German and Austro-Hungarian troops, "the first victory of the Romanian Army in a modern war", according to General Averescu, as well as the resistance in Mărășești and Oituz, were viewed by the Romanians as the beginning of the triumphant march of 1918 which led to the creation of the Completed Romania.

It is interesting to see how the local press in the provinces of the country referred to the events of the Romanians' "recent" history (at that time), regardless of the great provinces in which they lived and acted politically and emotionally until 1918, subsumed under the great national effort ended happily in 1918-1919.

In 1918, Oradea and Bihor, with Maramureș, Sătmar, Arad and Timiș-Torontal were border areas of the Romanian nation towards the Hungarian, Slovak and Serbian ethnic-geographical space. They remained such even after 1920, until today. This "Romanian West" had a rather special demographic structure, similar to other counties of historical Transylvania until 1918. More precisely, while the rural area was massively and almost compactly inhabited by Romanians, the cities were mostly non-Romanian, inhabited by Germans, Magyarized Jews and Hungarians, albeit their hinterland was mainly Romanian. The explanation for this situation was lost in the Middle Ages, when the feudal

noble legislation did not allow Romanians to settle in the cities, i.e. in their fortified areas. Only the Enlightened legislation of the Habsburg Emperor Joseph II, who substantially changed the organization of the imperial treasury, allowing after 1781 the settlement of Romanians in the fortress-city¹. From that moment on, it was not the city-dweller's ethnicity that counted, but his economic power, his status of a good taxpayer to the State and the Emperor. However, the opposition of the "receptae nations and churches" manifested itself strongly until 1848-1849, growing gradually weaker by 1914. In this context, the number of Romanians increased in the cities in Transylvania, Banat, Crișana and Maramureș. The phenomenon continued even after 1918, at a faster pace, although the industry and the commerce continued to remain largely in the hands of the Jewish, Hungarian Jewish and German minorities².

Focusing on the demography of Oradea, we dwell on the data provided by the official censuses of 1910 (the last taken by the Austro-Hungarian authorities) and 1930 (the first and last one taken by the Romanian State according to the European requirements of the time). In 1910, of the 68960 inhabitants – 91,33 % declared themselves Hungarian (of which, in fact, 22,08% were Jews) and only 3779 Romanians (5,48%), although, actually, there were 8298 (4747 Orthodox and 3551 Greek-Catholics – so 12,3 % Romanians in total)³. In 1930, of a number of 88830 inhabitants, 47731 were Hungarians (53,73%), 23326 Romanians (26,26%) and 14816 Jews (16,68%)⁴.

Taking into account that the Jews in Oradea considered themselves of Hungarian culture and language, in the interwar period around 70% of the city's population frequently spoke and read in Hungarian; while only 30-35% of the locals used Romanian (including a certain percentage of the Jewish traders and industrialists who needed the language of the State to ensure a direct dialogue with local administrative authorities, as well as with those in Bucharest.

¹ Angelica Schaer, *Reformele iosefine în Transilvania și urmările lor în viața socială. Importanța Edictului de Concivilitate pentru orașul Sibiu*, Ed. Hora, Sibiu, 2000, pp. 66-77.

² See *Noua Gazetă de Vest* (Oradea), year II, July, 15, 1937, p. 2, the article "Românizarea orașelor ardelen. Cine stăpânesc casele și orașele din Ardeal" / "The Transylvanian Cities Turning Romanian. Who Owns the Houses and Cities in Transylvania?". It states that the minorities lived in the center of the cities, the Romanians lived at the peripheries, and 20 years later the commerce and industry are still in the hands of the minorities. As an objective for the Romanian State, it is stated that "after having been conquered politically, they must also be conquered economically by perseverance and good economic policy".

³ Mihai D. Drecin, "Considerații asupra evoluției demografice a orașului Oradea pe baza recensămintelor oficiale (1880-2011)", in vol. *Economie și Istorie. Dialog și interdisciplinaritate. In Honorem prof. univ. dr. Ioan Lumperdean la împlinirea vârstei de 60 de ani*, coordinators: Dana Bako, Iosif Marin Balog, Rudolf Graf, Răzvan V. Mustață, Ed. Academiei Române - Centrul de Studii Transilvane, Cluj-Napoca, 2015, p. 517.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 518. Also here see, according to demographic evaluations, 5734 Romanians in 1918, 8441 Romanians in 1920 (12,39%)

Furthermore, the links of the Hungarian-Jewish community of Oradea with Budapest were maintained after 1920. From 1930 on, the official Revisionist policy of Hungary was cultivated in Oradea and supported by substantial funds. This was reflected in the local press, especially the political and cultural-religious one.

Making an inventory of the Romanian and Hungarian press in Oradea and Bihor, insofar as it has been preserved in the collections of the cultural institutions of Oradea, many of them incomplete, unfortunately⁵, we reach several interesting conclusions. By grouping the press according to the dominant topic of the summary, we notice the existence of a political press (17 daily and weekly newspapers in Hungarian language, 7 in Romanian language), a cultural one (6 of Romanian language, 2 of Hungarian language, plus the Romanian-Hungarian bilingual magazine “Aurora”)⁶, a religious one (4 in Romanian language, 3 in Hungarian), an economic one (2 in Romanian, 1 in Hungarian), a satirical one (4 in Romanian), a sports press (2 in Hungarian, 1 in Romanian), and administrative one (Buletinul Județului Bihor/the Bihor County Bulletin, Monitorul Comunal: Primăria Municipiului Oradea/the Communal Monitor: Oradea City Hall – only in Romanian)⁷.

However, we allow ourselves a few brief general observations. The fact that the Hungarian political press overwhelmed the Romanian one, while the religious, and, partially, the Hungarian cultural and economic press equalled the Romanian one, would explain that the struggle for preserving the Hungarian supremacy in the area was fought by politicians belonging to the Hungarian parties established after 1920, by the Protestant and the Roman-Catholic churches, by the cultural institutions (school, foundations, professional, cultural and religious associations). They cultivated and maintained the nostalgia for the “Hungarian millennial State”, the “injustice of Trianon”, the hope of rebuilding Great Hungary – fundamental ideas of the anti-Romanian revisionist policy⁸.

⁵ “Gheorghe Șincai” County Library Oradea, The Library of the Orthodox Bishopric of Oradea, “Iosif Vulcan” Museum Library, Oradea, the Library of “Țării Crișurilor” Museum, Oradea, the National Archive – Bihor County Service, the University of Oradea Library.

⁶ *Aurora* (Oradea Mare), 24 December 1922 – 15 June 1923, director: G. Bacaloglu, editors: G. A. Petre, Keresztury Sandor, Salaman Laszlo. Cf. I. Hangiu, *Presa românească de la începuturi până în prezent. Dicționar cronologic 1790-2007*, Ed. Comunicare, București, 2008, vol. II, p. 237.

⁷ On another occasion we will detail their exact name, rhythmicity and appearance period, their editorial board (directors, editors, headquarters), political, religious and cultural orientation. For a detailed inventory of the subject, see I. Zainea, “Presa orădeană interbelică” / “Oradea Interwar Press”, in the vol. *Presa română interbelică între mitologizare și recuperare critică. Studii și cercetări de istorie a presei prezentate la cel de-al IV-lea Congres ARIP*, coordinator: Associate Professor PhD Aurelia Lăpușan, Constanța, 2011, pp. 36-42.

⁸ See Mihai Stratulat, *Revizionismul și neorevizionismul ungar*, Ed. Globus, București, 1994, pp. 177-208, 230-274.

The fulfillment of the national unity desideratum partially modified the Romanians' mentality. Getting rid of the foreign exploitation and the status of negligible power in Eastern Europe, ending by leading themselves by favourable legislation and administration, aware that they are among the first seven-eight powers of Europe – *Romanians understood it was also time for them to live their lives, to get rich through work and business. The recourse to the historical past and the forefathers' sacrifice as the foundation of the present was increasingly rare. There was a growing interest for the events of the moment, the struggle of the parties for local and national political and economic power, the condemnation of the intellectual sufficiency and imorality of the new generation of politicians from the top of the local administrative structures to the Parliament and Government, and the social life. However, the elite of the society formed in the late 19th century – early 20th century, from the "minor" rural one, to the "major" urban one, leading the fight for the Great Union, as well as the one established after the Great War through studies in the country and in Western Europe – would not forget the history of its nation, especially the events of the recent history. In this respect, the focus would be on the years between 1916-1922, an exceptional period of the Romanians' Union and the consolidation of the national state through major internal reforms and the international recognition.*

The above-mentioned state results precisely from the Romanian press of inter-war Oradea, insofar as it has been preserved in the local libraries⁹. *We emphasize from the beginning the prevalent evocation of local events and personalities from Oradea and Bihor who stood out in the fight for the Union of 1918, then its consolidation, compared to those of national range. Certainly, as always, exceptions prove the rule.*

If during the first ten years, besides the coronation of the royal family in Alba Iulia, recent history was neglected, it is only in the summer of 1927 that the press referred to the Great War as a moment marking, by its sacrifices, the beginning of the triumphant and political march of 1918-1920.

The anniversary of a decade since the heroic battles in the summer of 1917 in Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz had no special echo in the press of Oradea. The tense and serious events in domestic politics might explain the "amnesia". We are talking about the political struggle between the ruling People's Party, under the leadership of the Prime-Minister Gen. Alexandru Averescu, and the National Liberal Party. While King Ferdinand I's illness worsened, the Liberals forced the "populars" out of power. The tensions unfolded during the month of June 1927, the Liberals returning to power with the ephemeral government of Barbu Știrbei, then of Ion I.C. Brătianu. King Ferdinand I's death on July, 20, provided the

⁹ Unfortunately, the collection of Hungarian and Romanian newspapers and magazines was largely destroyed during its 2008-2009 storage in the basement of the current building, which was flooded following consolidation works on the building and untimely rain.

opportunity to recall his glorious reign, emphasizing his role, and that of his close associates, political and military people, in the dramatical events of WWI.

In this context, the pro-Averescu weekly newspaper "Tribuna" in Oradea emphasized General Alexandru Averescu's decisive role in the July-September 1917 fights in southern Moldova¹⁰. It also found regrettable the political act of PNL which cowardly and ungratefully had forced the hero of Mărăști out of power¹¹.

The "Romanian Law", a church and cultural journal of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of Oradea, published a special issue dedicated to King Ferdinand I's life and activity. Recounting the sovereign's place and role during WWI, it published in extenso the "Order of the Day" on the eve of the battle of Mărășești and the speech delivered the day after the victory. While the "Order of the Day" had been a short, dense and pathetic incentive to resistance, reminding the forefathers' sacrifices, ending with the urge "There is but one slogan: either victory or a hero's death", after the final victory the King announced the implementation of his promise to grant land ownership to the peasantry, the base of the Romanian army¹².

The year 1928 was marked by two events of national importance recalling glorious feats of arms and political acts in 1917-1918. In June, Mărășești saw the ceremony of church sanctification and placing of the foundation stone for the Mausoleum which was to rise to the memory of the heroes fallen in the battles of Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz. The weekly newspaper "Tribuna" detailed the unfolding of the celebrations, including the speech of General Averescu, the commander of the second army in the battle of Mărăști on July 22-27, 1917, where 35000 soldiers and officers had lost their lives.

The event was attended by leading political personalities of the moment: numerous senior officers, high-ranking clergymen, ministers, MPs. Among them were mentioned: H.M. the Queen Mother, H.R.H. Prince Nicolae – Regency member, General Alexandru Averescu, General Paul Angelescu – Minister of War, General Mărgineanu, former commander of the 3rd Division which had fought at Mărăști, H.H. Pimen Metropolitan of Moldova, bishop Lucian Triteanu, Deputy Gheorghe Tătărescu – State Subsecretary at the Ministry of Interior, etc. The beginning passage of General Averescu's speech has been full of lessons so far: "Time changes everything in this world", he said. "Our memories gradually fade, until they are gone forever. There are, however, memories one keeps to

¹⁰ *Tribuna* (Oradea), year VII, no. 26, 26 June, 26, 1927, p. 3, art. "Momente de astăzi", signed M.N.P.

¹¹ "In the country's Parliament a month ago, as president of the government, a great patriot and an accomplished statesman, sought by the applause of Parliament, after his remarkable speeches – he was sublime! Today... he is mocked." cf. *Ibidem*

¹² *Legea Românească* (Oradea), no. 15-16, August, 1-15, 1927, pp. 2-3.

death.”¹³ He was certainly speaking of the memory of those directly involved in the event. This, together with others of the same gravity and importance, must be perpetuated from generation to generation.

The “Romanian Law” magazine published a substantial article dedicated to a decade since December 1, 1918, when the political union of the nation was accomplished under the standard of the Royal House¹⁴. It also described the unfolding of the one-year requiem since King Ferdinand’s death, an event which took place on July, 21, in the Moon Church Cathedral, attended by local authorities and a large audience.¹⁵ “Vestitorul” – a bi-monthly cultural and religious magazine of the United Romanian Diocese of Oradea, published a special issue dedicated to December 1, 1918, emphasizing the unification of the efforts of all Romanians, regardless of their religion, in the preparation and accomplishment of the great political act.¹⁶

The death of General Traian Moşoiu, only 64 years old, on July, 20, 1932, in Bucharest, was a sad event with national and local echoes. One of the senior officers standing out during the battles in Oltenia, Muntenia and southern Moldova in 1916-1917, then in the liberation of Transylvania in 1918-1919, including that of Bihor and Oradea, the General, of Transylvanian origins, had close ties with Oradea and Bihor from 1919 to his untimely death. Commander of the Mountain Huntsmen Corps of Oradea, a Liberal Deputy of Bihor, a minister, he got involved in supporting the administration in the Romanian west, in asserting the Romanian element in the area, in establishing normal Romanian-Hungarian relations¹⁷. The periodical commemoration of his death in Oradea¹⁸, the unveiling of a bust of the General in August 1937¹⁹, are a testimony to the steady feelings of appreciation of the inhabitants of Oradea and Bihor to his involvement in the history of the area.

The visit to Oradea on August 13, 1937, of a group of 30 French intellectuals led by Father R.P. Dassonville, had a special significance. Formed by Catholic priests, teachers, lawyers, doctors, engineers and journalists, the group was hosted by the Greek-Catholic Episcopate. The delegation visited the city, the Greek-Catholic and Orthodox Dioceses, the Normal School of Primary Teachers, the City Hall, the Prefecture, the Court of Appeal, the Courthouse, the King Ferdinand I Barracks. The local and county administrative authorities got involved in the good unfolding of the visit. The traditional French-Romanian ties were emphasized in all the official circles where the group was received.

¹³ *Tribuna* (Oradea), year VIII, no. 25, June, 17, 1928, p. 5.

¹⁴ *Legea Românească* (Oradea), year VIII, no. 23, December, 1, 1928, pp. 1-16.

¹⁵ *Idem*, year VIII, no. 15, August, 1, 1928, pp. 4-5.

¹⁶ *Vestitorul* (Oradea), year IV, no. 23, December, 1, 1928, pp. 1-3.

¹⁷ *Gazeta de Vest* (Oradea), year IV, no. 821, July, 31, 1932, p. 1.

¹⁸ *Noua Gazetă de Vest* (Oradea), year II, July 23, 1937, p. 1.

¹⁹ *Idem*, August, 29, 1937, p. 1.

Furthermore, the Greek-Catholic canon I. Georgescu referred to the revisionist policy of neighbouring Hungary, stressing that “there could no longer be a question of Transylvania”²⁰. The visit of the French intellectuals delegation took place 20 years after the battles in southern Moldova, which received a special help from the French military Commission led by General Henri M. Berthelot.

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One notes that the Romanian press in Oradea paid special attention to the local events between 1918-1919 in Oradea and Bihor. However, they were not isolated from the national context. In fact, without the Romanian Kingdom’s involvement in the Great War and the Romanian Army’s sacrifice on the fronts in Smaller Romania, Bessarabia, Bucovina and Transylvania, the integration of Oradea and Bihor into the Romanian unitary state would not have been possible. At the same time, the local Romanian elite’s political actions and the local population’s sacrifices in the confrontation with the “white” and “red” administrations and army of Hungary added to the general-national sacrifices.

In the summer of 1927, “Vestitorul” published two special issues, substantial in documentation and page numbers, dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Greek-Catholic Episcopate of Oradea²¹. It rightly pointed out the cultural-national role played by the institution in increasing the number of literate persons among the Romanians in the area, in asserting a plethora of personalities cultivating the ideas of the late European Enlightenment in the early 19th century. The effects in time of this activity consisted in maintaining the Romanians’ nationality, participating in the nation’s political assertion, and the achievement of the national unity.

On the occasion of the anniversary of the first decade since the creation of Greater Romania (România întregită), the local Romanian press points out some of the “bricks” laid in time by Oradea and Bihor, including in the autumn of 1918, at the building of the national unity edifice. Details are given, first of all, on the celebration dedicated to the Centenary of the Romanian Highschool in Beiuș, founded and materially supported by the greek Catholic Episcopate of Oradea. Both “Tribuna” political newspaper and the cultural-religious magazine “Vestitorul” dedicated articles²², and even a special number²³, to the history of the centenary highschool in Beiuș.

Besides the presentation of the historical stages the institution had gone through, very dramatic stages more than once due to the persecutions of the

²⁰ *Vestitorul* (Oradea), year XIII, no. 15, August 1, 1937, p. 152.

²¹ *Idem*, no. 12, June, 15, 1927, 36 p.; no. 13 – 17, July, 1 – September 1, 1927.

²² *Tribuna* (Oradea), year VIII, no. 22, May 27, 1928, p. 1; no. 23, June, 3, 1928, pp. 1-2.

²³ *Vestitorul* (Oradea), year IV, no. 11-12, June 1-15, 1928, pp. 1-16.

administrative authorities in Budapest, the press kept emphasizing its role in schooling whole generations of pupils of Bihor and surrounding counties, even Bucovina, mostly Romanians, but also Jewish. These young people would consolidate the Romanian nation's minor and major elite.

The prologue of the struggle for the union of Transylvania with the Kingdom of Romania, the drawing of the "Declaration of Independence" of the Transylvanian Romanians under Hungarian rule on October 12, 1918, in the house of the lawyer of Oradea, Dr. Aurel Lazăr, received a moving anniversary "on-site", Dr. Aurel Lazăr's house, in his presence and that of his family. The "Romanian Law" magazine detailed the entire festivity.

A delegation of devout fathers belonging to the leadership of Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of Oradea held a series of speeches on behalf of the Bishop Roman Ciorogariu²⁴, gone to Sibiu to the meeting of the Metropolitan Council. The Episcopal advisor Father Z. Moga presented the context of the meeting in Oradea of the Executive Committee of the Romanian National Party (P.N.R.), speaking of Dr. Aurel Lazăr's courage to host the meeting "when from Marghita and Vașcău, from Beliu and Aleșd came terrible news of persecutions and awful killings of Romanians" by the Hungarian army and policemen. It was also reminded that Vicar Roman Ciorogariu determined Dr. Aurel Lazăr to insist with the PNR leadership to accept the meeting in Oradea.

Teodor Neș, the principal of "Emanuil Gojdu" Highschool, spoke on behalf of the lay intellectuals. Dr. Nerva Iercan, the Director of the Orthodox Episcopate of Oradea, laid a silver commemorative stone on the "historic table", where the "Declaration of Independence" had been drawn, with the following inscription: "It is on this table that, on October 1918, in Oradea, in Dr. Aurel Lazăr's house, the Romanian National Committee has drawn the Proclamation of Independence of the Romanian Nation in Ardeal, Crișana and Banat, read by the Deputy Alexandru Vaida Voevod in the Hungarian Parliament in Budapest, during the session of October, 18, 1918*. Laid on October 2, 1928²⁵, at the anniversary of the great event.

Finally, Dr. Aurel Lazăr "excitedly responds... by a spontaneous and fast paced speech"²⁶. At the end of the article, the editorial staff of the magazine

²⁴ The involvement of the Orthodox Episcopate of Oradea in organizing the festivity was also due to the exceptional role played by Roman Ciorogariu, at the time the Orthodox Vicar of Oradea and Bihor, in the dramatic events of autumn 1918 – spring 1919. He was the most prominent intellectual personality of the place, with a solid national activity, who kept up the awareness of the need for the Romanians' struggle for the Union. Of the rich historical literature on the subject in recent years, see: Elisaveta Roșu, *Roman R. Ciorogariu (1852-1936) – Repere istorice*, Ed. Arca, Oradea, 2007.

* The magazine article wrongly places it on October, 12, 1918.

²⁵ New calendar style.

²⁶ The magazine regretfully mentioned that it had failed to get both Dr. Aurel Lazăr's speech, and Teodor Neș's, "even in summary".

specifies that the manifestation presented to the readers “was meant for no cult of personality, but for the cult of our union with the Motherland, whose beginning was made by decreeing the independence of the Romanian nation beyond the Carpathians. This is the day of glory for Biharia, with which it enters the book of the Nation.”²⁷

The 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Superior School of Commerce in Oradea is a sample of the pragmatic and balanced nationalism of the Romanian media, in the midst of homage ceremonies for 1918. Founded in 1888 in the context of the city’s development as a commercial and industrial center, with Hungarian as the teaching language, the school continued its activity even after 1919. The Hungarian teaching line continued until 1922, after which the state school switches to teaching in Romanian, according to the new school legislation.

Significant for the Romanian state’s tolerance, the former Hungarian and Jewish teachers of before 1918/19 continued to teach during the “Romanian era” as well. We are talking about those who had taken an oath of loyalty for the Romanian state and made efforts to learn Romanian, albeit approximatively. In June 1928, the newspaper “Tribuna” (“The Tribune”) recalled that while celebrating the school, its principal, Adolf Schustek celebrated his twenty-five years of “directorship”. In other words, he continued to run the school even after 1919, the Romanian state appreciating his professional qualities in the subjects he taught, as a good organizer and a leader of the institution²⁸.

The terror the Romanian population had been submitted to by the Hungarian administration and army ever since October 1918, especially in December 1918 – April 1919, ending in real atrocities against intellectuals and peasants, was periodically brought back to the consciousness of the population in 1928, 1929, 1932, 1937, as the Hungarian irredentist movement proliferated in Hungary and in our country. It was the democratic retaliation of the Romanian national body trying to defend itself against the shadows of the past. “Vestitorul” (“The Herald”) magazine recollected the “difficult days” of November 1918 – April 1919, the assassinations of Romanians²⁹. On the other hand, “Gazeta de Vest” (“The Western Gazette”) launched subscriptions for the “Monument of the Martyrs of Bihor in 1919”, publicly announced the decoration ceremony of the former Transylvanian volunteers from the area of Beiuș – Vașcău – Ceica, participants in the 1919 battles in the Romanian Armed Forces. The decoration by the leadership of Bihor Council County took place in Beiuș.³⁰

²⁷ *Legea Românească* (Oradea), year VIII, no. 21, November 1, 1928, p. 6, Article “12 octombrie 1928”.

²⁸ *Tribuna* (Oradea), year VIII, no. 25, June 17, 1928, p. 2.

²⁹ *Vestitorul* (Oradea), year IV, no. 23, December 1, 1928, pp. 17-18, Gheorghe Maior’s article; year V, no. 9-10, May, 1-15, 1929, 16 p., Petru Tămăian Greek Catholic canon’s article.

³⁰ *Gazeta de Vest* (Oradea), year IV, no. 821, July, 31, 1932, p. 3; no. 822, August, 7, 1932, p. 1.

“The Heroes’ Day”, celebrated annually after its establishment by law on a national level, was another occasion to remember the events of the heroic years of 1916-1920. In 1937, for example, Nicolae Popoviciu – the Orthodox Bishop of Oradea and Bihor, after the memorial service held in the city cemetery for the heroes of the nation, in front of the tombs of the Romanian soldiers deceased in the spring of 1919 during the fights for the liberation of Bihor and of those fallen in the Tisa battles against the Hungarian Bolshevik Army, reminded of over one million dead people, the contribution of the national resistance between 1916-1919.

On this occasion, the Rt. Revd. Paid tribute to them because “they died for us... for us to build a happy country over their times. And now their afflicted souls are wandering over their troubled condition and ask themselves whether this is why they had died for”. The high prelate naturally expresses thus his disagreement with the realities of his time, the “worm of corruption” which led the country to wither, to the exhaustion of powers, to internal dissensions. Nevertheless, he expresses his confidence that the heroes’ graves provide the energy that may balance the country’s situation, making it overcome the hardships and dangers of the moment.³¹

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The national and local events and the personalities involved between 1917-1919 in the complex process of creating the Completed Romania were quite often remembered in the Romanian press in Oradea. The articles were permeated by truth and patriotism expressed in dignified and civilized terms, of an European type, without offending the majority of non-Romanians in Oradea at that time. This way, in addition to conferences and performances with national touches, it tried to maintain an optimistic energy for the future of Romanians, in a Europe in which the intensity of the irredentism and revisionism was growing. The neighbouring Hungary stood out by such a policy, whose echoes became visible even in the Hungarian and Hungarian culture Jewish communities in Oradea and Transylvania.³²

³¹ *Legea Românească/The Romanian Law* (Oradea), no. 12-13, June 15 - July 1, 1937, pp. 127-128.

³² Communication presented at the Autumn Scientific Session of the AOSR, Timișoara, October, 12-14, 2017, History Section.