

MASS MEDIA AND ETHNICAL IDENTITY

UNPUBLISHED PAGES IN THE HISTORY OF THE MINORITY PRESS (1940–1944)

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The directives addressed by General Ion Antonescu in February 1941 to the press, the broadcasting station and the telegraphic agency noted that, “In the authoritarian State of Romania, all the means to convey ideas and information are controlled and channeled.” Press control was not an innovation of the time. According to a specialist in the history of the press regime in the interwar, “the dominant feature of the press regime in 1919–1940 was the control exerted by the State.”¹ The lack of law of the press – the press functioned along the constitutional stipulations of 1923 – allowed the State, even during the constitutional monarchy, under siege, to exert pressure through censorship, by temporarily or permanently suppressing some journals and newspapers, to buy out the Rador news Agency, to subsidize governmental publications, etc. This became common practice in 1938–1940. On 13 April 1938, by a decree, the entire press became subordinated to the State². During the same year, the censorship was given clear indications. The presentation of any political activity except that of the Front of National Revival was banished, and so were the attacks against foreign state officials and the unfavorable comments on the foreign policy of Romania. On 3 October 1939 the Ministry of National Propaganda (MNP) was created, as the final result of the efforts of organization begun in 1927, with the setup of the General Direction of the Press and Propaganda, affiliated successively to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, or the Presidency of the Ministry Council³. With the instauration of the Antonescu Government, by the decree-law of 20 September 1940, the Ministry of National Propaganda was dissolved. However, its organization structures were preserved under the form of a Sub secretariat of press and propaganda, led until the Legionary Rebellion by Al. Constantin. It rebecame a Minister in January 1941, under the leadership of Nichifor Crainic and then, as an ad-interim minister, by the vice-president of the Ministry Council and Foreign Minister, Mihai Antonescu⁴.

The statute of the minority press in the interwar period is similar with that of the Romanian press. The State applied the same policy and, according to an archive source, “in no other field of public life did we, the minorities, make more progress

¹ Nicolae Dascălu, *Régime de la presse roumaine pendant la période de l'entre-deux-guerres*, in “Revue Roumaine d’Histoire” (“RRH”), XIX, 1980, 2-3, p. 399.

² *Ibidem*, p. 403.

³ Nicolae Dascălu, *Propaganda externă a României Mari (1981–1940)*, Bucharest, 1998, pp. 22-28.

⁴ *Enciclopedia de istorie a României*, Bucharest, 2003, pp. 142-143.

than in press”⁵. There are several statistic data in support of this. Reference shall be made here especially to journals and reviews in Magyar, German, to the Jewish ones (in Yiddish, Hebrew, Romanian, Magyar, and German), then Russian, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, Polish, Serb, Czech, Turkish, Albanese, and Armenian. Therefore, there were 90 periodical for the minorities in 1919, 456 in 1930, and 559 in 1934⁶. Since 1930 there had been a special department for minorities within the Direction of the Press. Trade unions for the journalists were created: the Trade Union of the Minority Journalists of Transylvania and the Banat, with its headquarters at Cluj; the Trade Union of the Minority Journalists of Romania⁷.

During the authoritarian monarchy, the number of the minority newspapers and journals decreased: 362 in 1938, and 344 in 1940⁸. The dissolution of all the political party and groups, the evolutions abroad, the aggressive attacks of the revisionist states marked the statute of the national minorities and, implicitly, their press. After the outbreak of World War II, the State kept the press under close surveillance. On 19 October 1939, the General Headquarters of the Army sent a letter to the Ministry of National Propaganda requesting “a list of the Magyar, German, Ukrainian, Bulgarian and Russian publishing houses, newspapers and journals.”⁹ The tables sent by the attorney offices of Arad¹⁰, Caraş¹¹, Severin¹², Caliacra¹³, Cernăuţi¹⁴, Timiş-Torontal¹⁵ included the following rubrics: name of the publication, type, periodicity, language, character, name and ethnic origin of the director, name and ethnic origin of the owner, place.

The tensioned relations between the authorities and the minority press are evident in the case of the Bulgarian publication “Dobrugeansco Eho” of Bazargic, which in November 1939 was on the verge of being suspended owing to an article *The Landowner’s Sons*, by which the Romanian public servants who persecuted the Bulgarian ethnics were covered with ridicule¹⁶.

As noted in a report on the minority press of 19 July 1940, “The governments of our Kingdom, in the 22 years’ time since the Union, avoided dealing with the issue of the minority press. The State had almost no involvement in the organization, development and orientation of this press and, as a

⁵ Idem, *La presse des minorités nationales dans la Roumanie d’entre les Deux Guerres (1919 – 1939)*, *Analyse statistique*, in “RRH”, XX, 1981, 1, p. 112.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 121.

⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 128-129.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 121.

⁹ The Direction of the Central Historical National Archives (DANIC), the Ministry of National Propaganda (MPN), internal press, file. 408, f. 12.

¹⁰ There were 17 minority publications in Arad: 10 Magyar, 2 German, 1 in Rumanian, Magyar and German, 1 in German and Magyar; *ibidem*, f. 21.

¹¹ In the district of Caraş, there were 2 German publications in Oraviţa and 2 German ones in Reşiţa; *ibidem*, f. 31.

¹² In the district of Severin, there were 3 Magyar publications in Lugoj, 2 German ones, and 1 in Romanian, German and French; *ibidem*, f. 36.

¹³ In the district of Caliacra, at Bazargic, there were 2 Bulgarian publications, 1 Turkish and 1 Romanian-Bulgarian; *ibidem*, f. 38.

¹⁴ In the district of Cernăuţi there were 2 German publications and 1 Ukrainian; *ibidem*, f. 45.

¹⁵ In Timişoara there were 27 minority publications: 10 Magyar, 12 German, 1 Serbian, 1 Bulgarian, 3 without the language being specifically mentioned; *ibidem*, f. 48.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, file 436, ff. 1-6.

consequence, no influence on the development of a minority public opinion. It merely exerted a conventional police control on it, without trying to influence it in a positive way, or place it in the service of Romanian interests, such as done in the other European states.”¹⁷ After a presentation in detail of the main publications, the author noted the lack of “psychological insight in the issue of the material published in the Romanian press and the material published in the minority press ... The Romanian editors, be they talented, well prepared and well experienced, cannot transpose themselves in the hypostasis of the minority reader.” The solutions included the processing of the material in such a form that it should “reach the souls of the minority readers”, and the correct translation of texts¹⁸.

The instauration of the Antonescu regime and the military involvement of Romania in the camp of the Axis, turned the press into a „daily collaborator of the government”. Could one speak of minority press in a regime in which the citizen rights and liberties had been suppressed, articles were written according to the daily advices of the Ministry of Propaganda, the censorship exerted a constant surveillance on the internal and external press, and, in general, on any text to be published, in which there were laws preventing the Jews, among others, from exercising a liberal profession? To this added the wounds of the summer of 1940, which deepened the susceptibility in relation to the Magyars, Bulgarians, Russians, and Ukrainians. Even if having survived legislation and censorship, the minority press was under rigorous control. Publications considered by the authorities to have an anti-Romanian character were dissolved, and other publications, in the service of the regime, were created. However, the documents preserved in the fund of the Ministry of National Propaganda speak of the existence of the minority press, undoubtedly precarious if compared to the previous years.

The government had a wavering attitude in relation to the Magyar press issued on the territory of the Romanian State. Undoubtedly, the injustice of the Diktat of Vienna, the persecution suffered by the Romanians in the ceded territories inflamed the spirit of the authorities in Bucharest. A diagram of 1940, entitled *Situația presei minoritare maghiare dinaintea de Arbitrajul de la Viena și după Arbitraj, precum și a presei românești din Ungaria actuală* (The Situation of the Magyar Minority Press Before the Arbitrage in Vienna, as Well as of the Romanian Press in Present Day Hungary) noted: before the Arbitrage, there were in Romania 1,350,000 Magyars who had approximately 300-350 publications in Magyar language. They had 30-50 dailies; 50-60 weekly journals; specialized publications, 50-80; of literature and critics, 70-82; of science and art, 15-20; humoristic, 8-10; sports, 5-9; other publications, 1-3. In Hungary, after the Arbitrage, 1,500,000 Romanians had only one newspaper. In Romania, after the Arbitrage, 350,000 Magyars had 59 publications: 11 dailies; weekly journals, 13; monthly journals, 30; bi-monthly journals, 11; quarterlies, 4; with no specific periodicity, 2-3¹⁹. A press article published in “Curentul” on 21 September 1940 and signed by Al. Vișinescu, showed that there were 38 Magyar periodicals in the Transylvanian towns belonging to Romania²⁰.

¹⁷ Ibidem, file 97, f. 2.

¹⁸ Ibidem, f. 14.

¹⁹ DANIC, the Presidency of the Ministry Council (PCM), file 128, ff. 50-51.

²⁰ DANIC, MPN, internal press, file 504, f. 13.

On October 1940, by the order of the government, all the Magyar publications in Romania, except the one published in Timișoara by Fránjo Zoltan, were suppressed²¹. The decision must have been got back on, since a report of 26 July 1941 noted that, “the minority press organs are very few in number and they reflect the state of mind of the respective populations, their ideological orientation and the activity of the leaders of the ethnic groups, and this first-hand information is beneficial to us.” Out of 21 minority periodicals – “which could be beneficial to us”, as mentioned by the author – 10 were Magyar, and were issued 3 in Alba-Iulia, 1 in Arad, 3 in Brașov, 2 in Timișoara, 1 in Severin²². A memoir of 1943 entitled *Minoritatea maghiară din România* (The Magyar Minority in Romania), listed 17 publications: 4 in Brașov; 2 in Timișoara; 4 in Aiud; 2 in Lugoj; and 1 in Bucharest, Arad, Turda, Petroșani, and Purcăreni²³.

There is considerable information on the Magyar publications in Timișoara. A document of 1941, entitled *Situația presei maghiare din România* (The Situation of the Magyar Press in Romania), noted that in October 1940 the only Magyar periodical left in Timișoara was “6 Orai Ujság” published by Fránjo Zoltan, “as it offers sufficient guarantees of loyalty in the propaganda for the Romanian cause.” The President of the Magyar community, Dr. Gyárfás Elemér, elected on 4 November 1940 in a general assembly at Aiud, tried to cultivate the irredentist spirit among his conationals. Assisted by the German Legation in Bucharest, he made approaches for the re-publication of “Déli Hirlap”, the official organ of the Magyar community, founded in 1924 at Timișoara. Soon an argument broke out between the two periodicals, and they were both suppressed. In early 1941, the publishing of the newspaper “Magyar Néplap” by Szász Istvan was authorized, “at the initiative of the official forums, the Presidency of the Minister Council, the Ministry of National Propaganda, and the Central Department of Censorship, so that a newspaper supporting the policy of the Romanian State should be published. However, no subsidies being granted, it was secretly convened that Szász Istvan would go in partnership with Fránjo Zoltan.” In a short while, owing to the approach of the Magyar Government supported by the German Legation in Bucharest, “Déli Hirlap” was also allowed to come out of press²⁴. Based on the above excerpts, one may draw several conclusions. The Romanian State tried to influence the policy of the minorities by supporting the obedient publications. However, its intentions were tempered by Germany and Hungary. Antonescu’s directives in relation to Budapest included the following: “We shall keep our reserves ... we shall correct calmly and in all objectivity the false assertions about us. The press campaigns in this issue are forbidden, even if they are prompted by rightful feelings.” Prudence appears more clearly on the occasion of the “armistice signed with the press”, which signed the Romanian-Magyar agreement made upon the signing of the tripartite pact²⁵. In a formal way, the Ministry of Propaganda assumed a neutral attitude in relation to the Magyar press. A Ministry resolution in

²¹ DANIC, MPN, internal press, file 892, ff. 27-30.

²² DANIC, the Presidency of the Minister Council, file 253, f. 2.

²³ DANIC, the Intelligence Service, file 920, f. 12.

²⁴ DANIC, MPN, internal press, file 892, ff. 27-30.

²⁵ Mihai E. Ionescu, *Puterea cuvântului*, Bucharest, 1984, p. 122.

answer to the report of 7 February 1942, signed by Ion Conciatu, director of the newspaper “Curierul Banatului”, in which the author showed his disappointment in the lenient attitude of the government which guaranteed the publishing of the two Magyar minority periodicals in Timișoara – “Magyar Néplap” și “Déli Hirlap” –, while in Cluj there was only “Tribuna Ardealului”, noted: “the minority press faces no competition from other periodicals in the same language. The newspapers printed in Budapest are not accepted in Romania, and the German ones mark a considerable delay ... The local Romanian press has to face up the competition of the press printed in the capital.” There were 4 Romanian dailies in Timișoara, at that date, namely “Dacia”, “Vestul”, “Curierul Banatului”, and “Biruința”, with a circulation of 20,000 daily copies, while the minority Magyar and German periodical had a circulation of 120,000 copies. Henceforth the discontent voiced by the Romanian journalist, who requested subsidies to be granted by the State to the Romanian publications²⁶.

The Romanian authorities exerted close surveillance on the minority Magyar press. The report sent on 9 February 1942 by the Police Department of the quaestorship of the town of Timișoara to the attorney office noted that the owner of “Déli Hirlap”, Dr. Andrei Vuchetich “lawyer and journalist” is a “dedicated Magyar chauvinist”, and the periodical “is the officious of the Magyar community in Romania, hosting a direct propaganda against the interests of our country”²⁷. Surveillance continued through 1943. In April, the Presidency of the Ministers Council notified the Ministry of National Propaganda about an article published in “Déli Hirlap”, which had a provocative attitude towards the Romanian State, and requested that measures should be taken in agreement “with the present circumstances of the regime of the Magyar press in Romania based on reciprocity with Hungary and in accordance with national dignity.”²⁸ During the following three months, Sebastian Bornemissa, the Minister’s representative, kept a close eye on the activity of the newspaper. In June he informed about the article *Ziua eroilor* (The Heroes’ Day), in which the sacrifice of the Romanian soldiers was not being mentioned²⁹, and in August, about “the solidarity that gather together into a strong community all the Hungarians in the Banat and the political leaders of this community, who act against the law.”³⁰ He concluded that, “we cannot trust the sincerity or the loyalty of this newspaper. It is in high demand, since there are no other similar newspapers.” He insisted that another Magyar newspaper should be founded in Brașov and “placed under the direct control and guidance of a delegate of the Direction of Propaganda.”³¹ One should note that the second newspaper in Timișoara, “Magyar Néplap”, had ceased to exist in May 1943, according to Bornemissa. What had happened?

At the end of 1941, several anonymous denunciations had been received by the Ministry of National Propaganda against Fránjo Zoltan. On the occasion, the journalist prepared a file in his defense, documenting all his activity. He had graduated from the

²⁶ DANIC, MPN, internal press, file 690, ff. 34-35.

²⁷ DANIC, MPN, internal press, file 580, f. 65.

²⁸ DANIC, MPN, internal press, file. 789, ff. 1-2.

²⁹ Ibidem, f. 10.

³⁰ Ibidem, f. 13.

³¹ Ibidem, f. 8.

military school of Budapest together with Liviu Rebreanu. During World War I, in 1915, he had been wounded on the Galician front, and taken to the military hospital of Vienna where he wrote the pacifist volume *Fratele dușman* (The Enemy Brother). He was appointed press attaché to Vienna by Foreign Minister Oskár Iászi. He met here Lucian Blaga, Nichifor Crainic, Busuioceanu, and Emil Riegler. In 1922–1923, the Academic Society “România Jună” proclaimed him an honorific member. He returned to the Banat in 1924, where he published the monthly journal “Genius”, and in 1926 he was a member on the Magyar delegation visiting Eminescu’s tomb. He led for some time the destinies of the Magyar theatre in Timișoara. He gained notoriety in the Romanian cultural world in 1932, when he published on his own expenses an anthology of the Romanian writers in German. The event was marked in the press of the time by Camil Petrescu, Eugen Jebeleanu. A writer, a translator – he also had knowledge of Oriental languages including Chinese, Arabic, and Persian – and an active presence in the cultural milieu, Fránjo Zoltan was perceived by the officials of the authoritarian monarchy and of the Antonescu regime as a loyal representative of Romanian interests³². As a result, in January 1941, with assistance from the Ministry of Propaganda, he seconded Istvan Szász in his project to found the newspaper “Magyar Néplap”. In January 1942, the censorship bureau of the attorney office of the district of Timiș Torontal noted that, “The Magyar newspaper “Maghiar Néplap” shows the greatest loyalty”³³. His attitude must have irritated some of the members of the Magyar community, who denounced him to the Antonescu authorities on account of his activities in his youth, when he used to show left-wing sympathies³⁴. The Magyar journalist denied all these accusations. Which is more, he would be a member of the German Ethnic Group, owing to his wife, born in Vienna. The fate of the journalist illustrates the troubled times he lived. Who was the real Fránjo Zoltan? The one considered in 1939 a distinguished scholar, an idealist working throughout his life for spiritual Romanian-Magyar collaboration, or the one who, as a member of the German Ethnic Group was accusing in 1942 his colleagues as “owners of the Jewish-Magyar press trusts”? The only information as hand as to his further evolution is his exclusion from the aforementioned organization.³⁵ Also, in 1944 he is listed among the minority journalists proposed for the College of the Journalists of Romania³⁶.

Having ranked second in the hierarchy of the minority press in the interwar period, the German press enjoyed a privileged regime in the time of the Antonescu Regime. Statistical sources are not relevant for the situation of the German press at national level. However, in 24 counties in 1940 there were 59 de periodicals³⁷; most of them, 12 in number, were concentrated in Timișoara³⁸. On 21 November 1940, the Romanian citizens of German origin were acknowledged the right to form, within the Romanian State, an organization invested with a legal status,

³² DANIC, MPN, internal press, file 580, ff. 38-59.

³³ Ibidem, f. 62.

³⁴ In May 1932, Frányo Zoltan published the manifesto of Romain Rolland for the calling up of an anti-militarist congress in Switzerland. On account of this article, the Magyar journalist was suspected of pro-Soviet sympathies; DANIC, external press, file 1482, ff. 1-2.

³⁵ DANIC, MPN, internal press, file 690, f. 16.

³⁶ DANIC, MPN, internal press, file 816, ff. 28-29.

³⁷ DANIC, MPN, internal press, file 590, ff. 40-49.

³⁸ Ibidem, file 408, f. 45.

called the German Ethnic Group of Romania, with its headquarters at Braşov, and led by Andreas Schmidt³⁹. The influence of the National-Socialist ideas on the German press in Romania had been noted by the authorities before this organization was set up. In 1939, the attorney office of the district of Caraş termed the two German periodicals of Reşiţa – “Reshitzer Zeitung” and “Reshitzer Wochenschau” – “newspapers with a Hitlerist character”⁴⁰. Gradually, Timişoara lost precedence to Sibiu and Braşov as to the publishing of German periodicals. According to a document of 26 July 1941, out of the 8 German periodical aforementioned, 4 were in Sibiu, 2 in Braşov, and 2 in the district of Timiş Torontal⁴¹. And on 13 October 1944 the attorney office of the district of Sibiu marked the existence of 11 periodicals, most of them founded in 1941-1943 under the influence of the German Ethnic Group⁴². Therefore, on 21 August 1941, the organization requested to the Ministry of Propaganda the permission to found a journal for the young people, which was to be edited by Willy Depner, with a circulation of 2,500 – 3,000 issues⁴³. Another request was made during the same year for the founding of a monthly journal, that was also supposed to publish information and provide guidance to the Economic Office of the Group. Its headquarters were in Braşov, and the circulation, 4,000 issues⁴⁴. A letter of the Group to the Ministry of National Propaganda, dated 18 November 1941, noted “our request is that only newspapers and journals whose owners, editors and journalists are of Romanian or German origin be allowed to issue such publications in German.”⁴⁵. The measure aimed to prevent the issuing of publications opposed to the policy of the organization, which could have confused the German readers. The control targeted both the newly founded periodicals, and those published founded in the interwar period. Two periodicals of Timişoara, “Banater Tagblatt” and “Rundschau”, were forced to close down, owing to pressure exerted by A. Schmidt’s organization⁴⁶. Quite notorious at the time was the case of the Catholic journal “St. Antoniusblatt” of Bucharest, initially published in Timişoara in 1929, with its edition of Timişoara “Sonntagsblatt”, which was suspended in April 1942 for “propaganda against National-Socialist Germany”⁴⁷.

An interesting episode of the minority press is recorded in relation with the Ukrainian publication “Jetia” of Buchareat. The editor and owner, Alexandru Turuşanko was suspected in the autumn of 1941 of irredentist propaganda, in view of establishing an independent Ukrainian state which would have been included Northern Bucovina and Bessarabia⁴⁸. Under the given circumstances, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the General Direction of the Police sent to the Ministry of

³⁹ Dumitru Şandru, *Divergenţe între Grupul Etnic German din România şi Bisericile evanghelică şi romano-catolică*, in “Arhivele totalitarismului”, VIII, 2000, 1-2, p. 44.

⁴⁰ DANIC, MPN, internal press, file 408, f. 31.

⁴¹ DANIC, MPN, internal press, file 253, f. 1.

⁴² Ibidem, file 934, f. 11.

⁴³ Ibidem, file 558, f. 3.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, file 581, f.4.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, f. 19.

⁴⁶ Ibidem, file 562, f. 7.

⁴⁷ DANIC, PCM, file 140, ff. 30-31.

⁴⁸ Dumitru Şandru, *Propaganda iredentei ucrainene în Basarabia şi nordul Bucovinei*, in *Mişcări de populaţie în România (1940–1948)*, Bucharest, 2003, pp. 39-53.

Propaganda on 18 October, the following note: “Turușanko Alexandru, of Ukrainian origin, a Romanian subject, born in 1912 at Cernăuți, engineer by profession, resides in Bucharest, at 20 Luterană Street.

The abovementioned lived in Cernăuți until the cession of Bucovina, while he edited the Ukrainian newspaper “Ceas”, the headquarters of which were moved to Bucharest.

The publishing of this newspaper in the capital was suspended by the order of the authorities, after the intervention of the leaders of the former Soviet legation in the capital, concerned about the anti-Soviet attitude of this newspaper ... Engineer Turușanko Alexandru follows the political orientation of the Petliurist Ukrainian emigration (democrat republic), planning to include in its future territorial claims the territory of Bucovina within its future independent Ukrainian State”⁴⁹.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs had reacted after the reception of a note from the gendarmerie Cernăuți, which kept under surveillance the activity of the Ukrainian irredentists and had exposed the links between Turușanko and a local leader, Meroniuc Vasile, living in the commune of Rarancea⁵⁰. To these links added the publishing in “Jetia” of a note by the Organization of the Ukrainian Nationalists calling upon all the Ukrainians “to return immediately to their country and their own land”. Antonescu reacted promptly. On 21 December 1941 the newspaper was banned, and it was decided that “those who dared to launch such an impulse, without being authorized to do so, should be sent to detention camp”⁵¹.

Information on the Jewish press is also scarce. The *List of Minority Newspapers* drawn up in early 1940 for 24 district includes 12 titles of Jewish publications: 3 in Cluj, in Magyar; 2 in Jassy, in Romanian and Yiddish; 1 in Prahova, in Romanian; 5 in Maramureș – one in Magyar and the remaining in German; 1 in Sălaj, in Magyar⁵². A report of July 1940 on the Jewish press in Magyar, published in Transylvania, included: 1 daily, 2 weekly journals, and a monthly journal, all with “a loyal attitude towards the State”⁵³. In 1940, there were 10 periodicals in Bucharest⁵⁴. The anti-Jewish legislation initiated by the government of the Carlist authoritarian regime and carried to extremes by the Antonescu Government led to the suppression of the independent Jewish press. On 6 September 1940, all publications in Hebrew and Yiddish were banished; on 5 October, the Jewish newspapers published in German in Timișoara were suppressed with the accord of the German Legation⁵⁵. The periodicals published in 1940–1944 were founded by and subservient to the government. New information on the weekly journal “Înfrățirea” has been recently identified. Founded in 1938, after the suppression of Jewish publications on 13 December 1940, the journal obtained the right of being published, and remained “beside “Sănătatea”, “Bursa” and “Palestina” the only Jewish publications”. The owner of the periodical was

⁴⁹ DANIC, MPN, internal press, file . 918, f. 2.

⁵⁰ Ibidem, f. 9.

⁵¹ Ibidem, f. 15-16.

⁵² Ibidem, file 510, ff. 40-49.

⁵³ Ibidem, Information, file 97, f. 14.

⁵⁴ Hary Kuller, *Presa evreiască din Bucharest*, Bucharest, 1997, pp. 145-154; see by the same author *Opt studii despre istoria evreilor din România*, Bucharest, 1997; *Jewish Press, Haskalah and Zionism*, in “Studia Judaica”, 1997, 6, pp. 177-184.

⁵⁵ Mihai E. Ionescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-139.

I.M. Schwartz, “also called Negrea, Romanian citizen, orphan of war, journalist since 1933, partisan of the current of assimilation. A note of the MNP of January 1941 showed that, owing to the promoted ideas, the propaganda for encouraging the Jews to stay in Romania, the making popular of Yiddish among the Jews, “so as to move them off from Hebrew”, under the circumstances in which “it is well known that in the Soviet Republic the Yiddish language and literature are intensely promoted, being protected by the State on the pretext that they are in concordance with the Soviet political regime, while the Hebrew and the Hebraic culture are considered determinant to the national awakening of the Jews,” the periodical had to be suppressed. The collaborators included lawyer Lascăr Șaraga, Professor Al. Graur, lawyer M. Davidovici, and journalists Emil Dorian and Ion Călugăru⁵⁶. The periodical was eventually suppressed, the owner sent to the detention camp of Tg-Jiu in August 1941. However, he was set free in the autumn of the same year⁵⁷.

From 18 February 1942 to 18 August 1944, “Gazeta evreiască” was published in Bucharest as an official periodical of the Jewish Central of Romania. Although obliged to publish the resolutions of the Romanian State without any comments, in the cultural section, prominent journalists kept alive the spirit of the Jewish people, such as the Barașeum Theater did in its shows⁵⁸. Personalities from world culture were featured in the column *Profiles: Baruch Spinoza*⁵⁹, Maimonides⁶⁰; articles devoted to composers Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy⁶¹, Gustav Mahler⁶² were also published, together with studies on the Jewish writers in the Romanian literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Other publications included “Curierul Israelit” – until the end of 1941; “Renașterea noastră” – 1943; “Anuarul liceului comercial Cultura”⁶³; and for a short while, at Cernăuți, “Buletinul evreesc”⁶⁴ in 1943.

A document of 26 July 1941, entitled *Publicații periodice minoritare, care ne-ar putea fi utile* (Minority Periodical That Could Be Useful to Us), mentioned “Temisvarski Vestnik” – the weekly journal of the Serb community, published since 1933; “Banatski Bălgarski Glasnik”, the monthly publication of the Bulgarian community – since 1935; the Slovak publication “Nase Snaty” of Arad⁶⁵. In 1942, the Slovak Lutheran Evangelic Church of Nădlac obtained the permission to publish “Evangeliarul slovac din România”. The request was supported by the Legation of the Slovak Republic in Bucharest, and the Ministry of National Propaganda authorized on 17 August the publishing of this periodical by the Evangelic Protopope of Nădlac, Ivan Bujna⁶⁶.

⁵⁶ DANIC, PCM, file 156, ff. 2-4.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, f. 25.

⁵⁸ Marius I. Mircu, *Povestea presei evreiești din România*, Bucharest, 2003, p. 400; see also Lya Beniamin, *Evreii din România Mare 1919–1944*, in *Contribuția evreilor din România la cultură și civilizație*, coord. Nicolae Cajal, Hary Culler, Bucharest, 1996.

⁵⁹ “Gazeta Evreiască”, 3 April 1942.

⁶⁰ Ibidem, 10 April 1942.

⁶¹ Ibidem, 18 September 1942.

⁶² Ibidem, 7 May 1943.

⁶³ Hary Kuller, *Presa evreiască din Bucharest*, pp. 145-154.

⁶⁴ Mihai Ionescu, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

⁶⁵ DANIC, PCM, file 253, f. 2.

⁶⁶ DANIC, MPN, internal press, file. 267, ff. 1-2.

In April 1941, Antonescu appointed a commission to elaborate a law of the press, and in 1942 the setting up of the College of Journalist was being considered. Both projects failed, but the related material and the lists of journalists proposed to become members of the new professional organization can give an insight into the attitude of the authorities in relation to the minority press.

Here are a few aspects included in the projects for a law of the press. The requirements for the position of journalist, as proposed by journalist Emil Hoffmann were “Romanian citizen, enjoying full civil rights; Arian, both the person in question and the spouse; the grandparents of both spouses should be Arians; minimum one year experience in an editorial office”. Octavian Metea of Timișoara suggested: “ethnic origin should be taken into consideration. At least 5 Romanian generations. The criterion of ethnic origin should be aimed at excluding not only the Jews, but all the foreigners: Gypsies, Greeks, Bulgarians, Poles, Russians, who under various names teach us Romanianism.” The sources also indicate the position held by the Association of Minority Journalists of Romania with headquarters at Timișoara, made exclusively of Magyar journalists, despite its name. The representatives of the association supported the right of the minority journalists to be represented in the professional organizations, a hierarchical system of the journalists according to skills, morality, seniority, as well as decent salaries, vacations, and pension schemes according to the standards of living⁶⁷.

The lists with the journalists proposed as founding members of the College of the Journalists of Romania also included minority journalists. Out of the 74 names, 39 were journalists belonging to the Union of the Journalists of the German Ethnic Group of Romania, 20 from the Association of the Minority Journalists, 8 from the Romanian-German Press Association of Transylvania and the Banat, 1 from the Association of the Romanian Periodical Press, and 6 were independents⁶⁸. In 1943 a list was drawn up with minority journalists “allowed to practice”: 15 were German, members or sympathizers of the German Ethnic Group, and 3 were Magyar⁶⁹.

In September 1940 – August 1944 the number of the minority publications recorded a dramatic fall. The government allowed a number of periodicals to be further published with the purpose to exert influence on the various minority groups living in Romania. The evolution of German periodicals under the authority of the German Ethnic Group took a different course. The organization influenced the decisions of the Ministry of Propaganda and obtained the suppression of German periodicals not sharing its political views.

Nonetheless, in an unnatural period, ravaged by war and the exacerbation of the nationalist and racist feelings, the minority press in Romania held on. According to Mihail Sebastian, survival was the most precious gift of those moments: “Today as yesterday, today more than yesterday, more than ever, I keep repeating to myself that the only thing that counts is to hold on, to resist, to wait. If you are alive, if you stay alive, everything else will pass.”⁷⁰

⁶⁷ DANIC, MPN, internal press, file 690, ff. 5-9.

⁶⁸ Ibidem, file 775, ff. 26-27.

⁶⁹ Ibidem, file 881, f. 16.

⁷⁰ Mihail Sebastian, *Jurnal 1935–1944*, Bucharest, 1996, p. 323.