

RACISM IN INTERWAR ROMANIAN PRESS. DISSEMINATORS AND INFLUENCES IN SOCIETATEA DE MÂINE: A CASE STUDY

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RASISMUL ÎN PRESA ROMÂNEASCĂ INTERBELICĂ. PROPAGATORI ȘI INFLUENȚE ÎN SOCIETATEA DE MÂINE: STUDIU DE CAZ

ABSTRACT: *This study analyses the particularities of the racist discourse from an interwar Cluj press magazine, in order to identify the manner and the openness with which the modern notion of race was taken over in the Romanian public discourse. To this end, a quantitative, qualitative and discursive analysis was conducted on the Romanian periodical Societatea de mâine. First of all, the study measures the amount of racist articles and the frequency with which they were published. Secondly, it makes collective and individual portraits of the authors of racist articles and interprets their discourse and the level of “radicality” of the messages conveyed by those articles. From a theoretical point of view, the study tries to frame the production and dissemination of racist ideas in the interwar Transylvanian press in the context of Transylvania’s peripheral position in relation to the Western world. The peripheral position referred to in this article is not just a geographical one, but rather one of ideas and currents of thought. The results of this study show that, in the periodical analysed, racist articles were published with an average frequency of two articles in each issue of the magazine in the first half of the 1920s, then decreasing to about one article per issue in the second half of the decade. Most of the time, the racialising discourse had three main topics. First of all, the affiliation of the Romanian ethnic group to the western, modern culture, and the denial of the Balkan heritage of the Romanian people. Secondly, the Romanian ethnic superiority over the Roma population, considered subhuman, and, thirdly, the racial struggle against the Jewish population, seen as a dangerous invasion for the supremacy of the Romanian element, dominant in the new state of Greater Romania.*

REZUMAT: *Studiul analizează particularitățile discursului rasist dintr-o revistă de presă clujeană interbelică, pentru a identifica modul și deschiderea cu care a fost preluată noțiunea modernă de rasă în discursul public românesc. În acest scop, am realizat o analiză cantitativă, calitativă și discursivă asupra publicației periodice Societatea de mâine. În primul rând, studiul măsoară cantitatea articolelor rasiste și frecvența cu care au fost publicate. În al doilea rând, realizează portrete colective și individuale a autorilor de articole rasiste și interpretează discursul acestora și nivelul de „radicalitate” al mesajelor transmise prin articolele respective. Din punct de vedere teoretic, studiul încearcă să încadreze producția și diseminarea de idei rasiste din presa transilvăneană interbelică în contextul poziției de periferie a Transilvaniei în raport cu lumea occidentală. Poziția periferică la care facem referire nu este doar una geografică, ci mai degrabă una a ideilor și curenților de gândire. Rezultatele studiului arată că, în cadrul periodicului analizat, articolele rasiste erau publicate cu o frecvență medie de două articole în fiecare număr al revistei, în prima jumătate a anilor ‘20, scăzând apoi la aproximativ un articol per număr, în a doua jumătate a deceniului. De cele mai multe ori, discursul rasializant avea ca subiect trei teme principale. În primul rând, apartenența grupului etnic românesc la cultura occidentală, modernă, și renegarea moștenirii balcanice a poporului român. În al doilea rând, superioritatea etnică românească față de populația romă, considerată subumană, și, în al treilea rând, lupta de rasă dusă împotriva populației evreiești, văzută ca o invazie periculoasă pentru supremația elementului românesc, dominant în noul stat al României Mari.*

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CUVINTE-CHEIE: *rasism, eugenism, superioritate etnică, modernitate, presă*

INTRODUCTION

The topic of Romanian racism started to receive attention in Romanian historiography only in the post-communist period. Maria Bucur¹ described the formation environment of the Cluj eugenic community, as the most important group of its kind in the country, and raised the issue of scientific racialisation within the interwar Romanian eugenics movements, without however deepening the issue of race in public discourse. Marius Turda² published an article dedicated to the relationship between the fear of “racial degeneration” of Romanians and anti-Semitism, a problem first raised in Romania in the second half of the 19th century by the Romanian medical community and introduced in other scientific fields in the interwar period. In a larger work, which tries to synthesise the phenomenon of Romanian interwar racism, Lucian Butaru³ wrote about Romanian anti-Semitism, analysing it from political, legal and scientific perspectives, by trying to identify if its dominant component was a racial one, from the point of view of biological determinism, or just a cultural one. In conclusion, Butaru argues, on the one hand, that the impact or weight of Romanian racism for the history of interwar Romania is more or less insignificant. However, the sources he uses to argue this conclusion are limited to the public discourse of the people he considers to be the main actors of Romanian racism. Although he claims that scientific or biological racism has found fertile ground in Cluj, among the eugenics community led by Iuliu Moldovan, Butaru omits from his study the possible means of popularisation of these ideas in Cluj. While historians have managed to draw particularities of the concept of race in the Romanian scientific environment, an attempt to measure the penetration of these ideas into the Romanian collective imagination was not identified so far.

Consequently, in order to answer the question, “Was there racism in interwar Romania or not and what impact did it have on the Romanian collective memory,” one must investigate those sources that allow us to approximate the level of protrusion of racism in press, literature or other fields to which especially the large, non-elite population had access. One also needs to look at the types of racism that have spread in these information media and the evolution thereof. Therefore, this paper carries out a case study that contains a quantitative, qualitative and discursive analysis of the Cluj interwar press. First, the study measures the amount of racist articles and the frequency with which these were published. At the same time, it interprets the discourse of racist authors and the level of “radicality” of the messages transmitted through racist articles. Discourse analysis consists in interpreting texts that make racist references, trying to identify a common topic or message. The research for the present study was focussed on the interwar magazine *Societatea de mâine* (*The Society of Tomorrow*), published in Cluj between 1924–1934 and managed by Ion Clopoșel⁴, due to its so-called independent political character, but with strong peasant and liberal inclinations, and to the alleged tolerant discourse towards minorities.

The choice of a press publication from Cluj is due to the fact that the city was an important centre of the eugenics movement, among which an important form of Romanian scientific racism developed, and due to the fact that some of the most prominent leaders of the movement published the works and carried out their scientific activity here. In order to understand the way in which racist ideas overcame the intellectual circles in which they were formulated and the way in which they were spread among the large Romanian population, one considers that it is necessary to understand who were the actors

¹ Bucur 2002.

² Turda 2003.

³ Butaru 2010.

⁴ Clopoșel 1924, p. 5–6.

involved in this popularisation process. Consequently, this study is an attempt to depict both a collective portrait of the authors involved in the dissemination of racism in the press and their individual portraits. Increased attention has been paid to articles that make direct racist references to Jews and Roma, but those articles that make general remarks on the concept of race have also been considered. However, future research is needed in order to identify and modulate the relational matrices between the press authors and the leaders or members of the racist group from Cluj, most of the times eugenic.

From a theoretical point of view, the present study tries to frame the production and dissemination of racist ideas from the interwar Transylvanian press in the context of Transylvania's peripheral position in relation to the Western world. The peripheral position referred to in this article is not just a geographical one, but rather one of the ideas and currents of thought and of the trajectory of these ideas. The theoretical model used in this paper operates in the paradigm of the centre and the periphery as a ratio of economic, intellectual, social and political powers, based on the theory of global systems developed by Immanuel Wallerstein⁵. The studies conducted by Manuela Boatcă and Anca Pârvulescu⁶ on racism in Transylvania and Eastern Europe in relation to the status of periphery of Europe bring new and original contributions on the social issues in the Romanian territories, derived from the complex economic and political relations of the 19th century, which are relevant to this paper. Therefore, the analysis in our study considers the state of coloniality of Transylvania, according to the theory applied by Manuela Boatcă to the whole of Eastern Europe in relation to the colonial centres of power⁷, with three types of Europe defined by the centre, namely a so-called heroic one in the West, a decadent one in the South and a poorly developed Europe in the East⁸. The modernity towards which the countries of Eastern Europe tended in order to get as close as possible to the European economic and political model – or to the “civilised” Western centre – also meant accepting the categories of social classification of racial, ethnic or national superiority and inferiority⁹. Thus, this article looks at the Romanian racism in Transylvania, developed at the beginning of the 20th century, as to an epistemological import from the West, as part of the region's efforts to try to place itself as close as possible to the centre from a scientific and intellectual point of view.

RACIAL DEGENERATION, BASES OF RACISM IN ROMANIA, AND TERMINOLOGY

The Romanian medical community has been marked by an import of ideas, models and principles from the centres of power, since the origins of the modern Romanian health system. According to a study conducted by Călin Cotoi¹⁰, multiple scientific loans were carried out by Romanian doctors, taken from the Russian Empire, the Austrian Empire and France in the 19th century, both in order to modernise the Romanian health system and to create new health institutions and laws, adapted to local needs¹¹. The process of sanitary modernisation in Romania was initiated, on the one hand, by the Russian Empire and, on the other hand, by the central European powers¹². Therefore, the foundations of the institutionalised Romanian medical system were laid in response to the cholera epidemic of the 19th century, which affected most of Europe. But the inability of the new Romanian medical system to manage the social, demographic and health crises caused by the cholera epidemic, as well as the eco-

⁵ Wallerstein 2013.

⁶ Boatcă 2019; Boatcă, Pârvulescu 2020.

⁷ Boatcă 2019.

⁸ Boatcă 2020, p. 14.

⁹ Boatcă 2019, p. 19–20.

¹⁰ Cotoi 2016.

¹¹ Cotoi 2016, p. 162.

¹² Cotoi 2016, p. 162.

conomic issues arising because of the quarantine of the Romanian Principalities, located at the intersection of the Russian, Ottoman and Habsburg empires, had led to the development of certain nationalist concepts within the medical community. Among them, one mentions the concept of *racial degeneration*, an issue first raised for the Romanian public by the Romanian doctor and chemist Constantin I. Istrati (1850–1919), considered to be caused by the Jewish population, based on erroneous and anti-Semitic arguments¹³. Another important concept is the *Romanian element*, firstly outlined during the cholera epidemic, when the disease had become the only common denominator between Romanians from urban and rural localities¹⁴.

However, the concept of race degeneration was not produced in Romanian medical circles, but was borrowed from France at the end of the 19th century¹⁵. Most Romanian intellectuals from the middle of the 19th century studied in France, and, after 1870, in Germany as well. Therefore, the idea of racial degeneration was taken from the French medical schools, where a demographic problem similar to that of Romania marked by cholera epidemics was debated, namely depopulation¹⁶. Romanian doctors viewed the issue of the degeneration of the Romanian race as a competition between the excessive mortality of the predominantly rural Romanian population and the increased birth rate of the urban Jewish population, with better access to public hygiene services¹⁷. Therefore, the medical community was the first to warn against the danger of racial degeneration, since the second half of the 19th century, in a context marked by epidemics, by waves of immigration of the Jewish population to Romanian territories¹⁸ and by the development of racist thinking, facilitated by nineteenth-century nationalism¹⁹. Later, in the first half of the 20th century, eugenics gave racism an alleged scientific dimension, following the development of the idea of biopolitics, by which a conceptual biologisation of the nation was achieved, as formulated by Iuliu Moldovan, prominent leader of the eugenic community in Cluj²⁰.

To eliminate the risk of being accused of presentism²¹ or anachronism in terms of how this article refers to interwar concepts of race, ethnicity, or racial degeneration, it will review various meanings of the terms, as they appear in the dictionaries of the times. From a lexical point of view, in the Romanian dictionaries from the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century²², one notices the presence mainly of the word *rassă*, taken from the Germanic *rasse*. After an interweaving of this form with the form adapted to the Romanian spelling, *rasă*, the Romanian form gets to be used almost exclusively at the beginning of the 30s. In a Romanian dictionary of neologisms, published in 1929, the word “race” is defined as “lineage, kin, kind”²³. One can deduce, on the one hand, that this is the period in which, in parallel with the popularisation of racist eugenics and racial anthropology²⁴, the concept of race had settled in the collective consciousness. On the other hand, the synonyms used in the 1929 dictionaries to describe the concept of race suggest that the Romanian race was seen as an extended family, or as a nation with a common origin, united by language, history, religion and common suffering.

However, the explanatory dictionaries of the late 1930s offer a much more accurate definition of race, as “kin, family” or a “constant variety that is preserved from generation to generation: the *human*

¹³ Cotoi 2016, p. 172.

¹⁴ Cotoi 2016, p. 184.

¹⁵ Bărbulescu 2015, p. 272.

¹⁶ Bărbulescu 2015, p. 273.

¹⁷ Bărbulescu 2015, p. 274; Cotoi 2016, p. 172.

¹⁸ Bărbulescu 2015, p. 222–226.

¹⁹ Turda 2003.

²⁰ Turda 2015, p. 296–299.

²¹ Back, Solomos 2000, p. 30.

²² Pop 1909, p. 178.

²³ Hodoş 1929, p. 172.

²⁴ Turda 2008.

*races*²⁵. The family, in turn, at a more restricted level was defined as “kin, race, all persons of the same blood, as children, siblings, grandchildren [...]” and at a broader level the family represented “race, group of nations or languages of the same origin: *the Indo-European family*”²⁶. This definition confirms the biologisation of the nation and the resemblance of the nation to a homogeneous living organism, also found in *Societatea de mâine*, which, in the end, has led to a well-defined separation of the Romanian nation from everything that was not Romanian. The peculiarity of the Romanian race is given by the example: “Romanians are of Latin race”²⁷. As for racial degeneration, in 1939 it was considered to refer to the “degeneration by bad mixing,” which results in a “bastard race”²⁸. In the same year, the term “ethnic” was defined as “referring to race, national”²⁹, which indicates that racial differentiation was both considered an ethnic differentiation and a national differentiation. Therefore, one can see that the idea of race was closely linked to common family, ancestral, and linguistic origins, and that the inappropriate or “bad” racial mixing was seen as a degenerative act.

THE POPULARISATION OF RACIAL THINKING IN SOCIETATEA DE MÂINE

Very important for the discourse analysis within this study is that, conceptually, though not entirely, the term race largely overlaps with ethnicity, nation, or nationality. For this reason, this analysis includes the topics of eugenics, especially the negative one, and biopolitics because the articles written on these topics have contributed to the phenomenon of biologisation of the nation and strengthened the idea that ethnicity or nation is a living, unitary organism. Therefore, it is considered that the two concepts supported and were part of the public discourse that wanted to racialise the Romanian nation as opposed to other external nations or internal ethnic groups. Consequently, for this study were selected for analysis only those articles that contain the terms: “race,” “eugenics,” “biopolitics,” “Jews,” “Gypsies,” “ethnicity”. The purpose of the selected texts was also taken into account, by correlating the title of the articles with the importance given by the authors to each of the key terms, thus grouping the texts into articles dedicated to key topics and articles that only include key topics.

Racist ideas were not limited to the medical community. Although it was the eugenicist community that initiated the popularisation of scientific racism, many articles written by intellectuals outside the relatively small eugenicist circle propagated racist ideas. In fact, in *Societatea de mâine*, the authors who developed and popularised the concept of race more than eugenics scholars or researchers in medicine were historians, philologists, and philosophers. Surprisingly, before the members of the eugenic community published articles related to race in the main body for the popularisation of the Romanian eugenics, *Buletin eugenic și biopolitic*, published in Cluj between 1927–1947, the periodical was already active in publishing articles on racial issues. Of the total articles written on the topics covered by this study, about 40% refer either in a dedicated or tangential manner to the concept of race, followed, in descending numerical order, by articles on the concepts of biopolitics, eugenics, Jews, ethnicity and gypsies, all being interconnected with the topic of race.

RACE AND ETHNIC SUPERIORITY

The definitions of race that one can extract from *Societatea de mâine* are vague and use ambiguous language. Race represents a biological category, but at the same time a spiritual one. They referred to race

²⁵ Scriban 1939, p. 491.

²⁶ Scriban 1939, p. 491.

²⁷ Scriban 1939, p. 1089.

²⁸ Scriban 1939, p. 153.

²⁹ Scriban 1939, p. 477.

as part of human, personal consciousness, with causal effects on individual and collective behaviour³⁰. Among the general qualities of the Romanian race the intellectual spontaneity, the democratic feeling and the longing for freedom were listed³¹. In another instance, the race was defined as “an aggregate of common traits and feelings, which are increasingly strengthened by heredity”³². As for the Romanians, the articles of the periodical suggest that they were in a reasonable position in the racial hierarchy, since the inferiority of the race is irremediable if it exists in a people³³. In a chapter in *Evoluția umanității* (*The Evolution of Humanity*), by Eugene Pittard, dedicated to Romanians, translated and published in *Societatea de mâine*, the origin of the supposed Romanian race was identified in the Neolithic. The Romanian race or population was described as solid, hardworking and prolific, made up mostly of peasants³⁴. In fact, the Romanian peasant was seen as the depository of the highest qualities of the Romanian race³⁵. In a comparative article between Romanians and Serbs, Romanians were considered morally and ethnically superior, being described as patient, calm, peaceful, and gentle, while Serbs were categorised as savage, hateful, and violent³⁶.

Sometimes, the race was mistaken for the ethnic nation, by the use of expressions such as “persons of Romanian race”³⁷, and other times it was delimited from it, the racial mixture within a people being highlighted³⁸. Although there were theories that tried to dismantle the idea of racial purity, they were invalidated by the will to attain Romanian ethnic supremacy in all areas of the new Romanian state. The formation of Greater Romania and the takeover of the governing of the Romanian territories by the Romanians were seen as evidence of racial health³⁹. It was considered that the Romanian people had a great purpose, which was predestined by “their racial qualities”⁴⁰. In a 1926 article, it was suggested that the Romanian people, who cared about the purity of their race, should adopt restrictive immigration measures, following the model of the United States of America, in order to “increase the strength of the population and protect it from harmful influences”⁴¹. According to the US model, people with disabilities were prohibited from entering the country and only the immigration of people of European descent was preferable.

In many of the articles addressing the issue of race or ethnic superiority of Romanians, attempts were made to place Romania, from a racial point of view, in the Western world and to delimit it from the Slavic, Eastern world, seen as in direct opposition to the “Latins” in the West⁴². It was considered that the Romanian people, of Latin race, were surrounded, on the one hand, by Slavic peoples and, on the other hand, by the Hungarian, Turanian people. In other words, they were surrounded by different races, whom the Romanians – Latins – were opposed to⁴³. Thus, Romania could be seen as an oasis of European civilisation in the midst of “poorly developed” peoples with extra-European origins. Regarding the relations between races, it was considered that there were mental incompatibilities between different types of races, caused by cultural differences, by differences of language, faith, customs, etc. and that, within

³⁰ Preda 1925, p. 355–356.

³¹ Clopoșel 1930, p. 128–129.

³² Brăileanu 1926, p. 331–335.

³³ Bucur 1924, p. 355.

³⁴ Trandafir 1924, p. 634–635.

³⁵ Ghiulea 1926, p. 485–486.

³⁶ Mehedinți 1924, p. 191–192.

³⁷ Dașcovici 1925, p. 1924.

³⁸ Popoviciu 1924, p. 48.

³⁹ Agârbiceanu 1924, p. 65.

⁴⁰ Manuilă 1925b, p. 680–681.

⁴¹ Voinea 1926c, p. 540.

⁴² Ghibu 1924d, p. 495–496.

⁴³ Boitoș 1927a, p. 34–37.

the same race, communication could be made easier than between different races⁴⁴. It was believed that by the migration and mixing of races, the “magical power of preserving the type,” that is, the essence of the race was lost⁴⁵. The Romanians were therefore tasked with the ancestral responsibility to carry forward the blood of the Latins who once ruled the world, avoiding the “undesirable mixture of races”⁴⁶.

EUGENICS AND BIOPOLITICS

Societatea de mâine had a column dedicated to biopolitics and eugenics, since the first issue of the periodical⁴⁷. Eugenics was defined as the “science which deals with the factors that can change for better or worse the racial qualities – mental or physical – of future generations. The purpose of eugenics is the qualitative improvement of the race”⁴⁸ and it was seen as a saving mission for the Romanian people⁴⁹ and as an element of consolidation of the Romanian nation⁵⁰. Biopolitics was described as the “politics of life”⁵¹ and was theorised by Prof. Iuliu Moldovan (1882–1966), a famous hygienist and leader of the eugenic community in Cluj⁵². According to his biopolitical programme, all ministries had to be subordinated to the Ministry of Health, because, first of all, each initiative had to take into account the well-being and health of human capital. They also wanted to set up a ministry for national vigour, which would be concerned with the quality and quantity of the population. Among the duties of the proposed ministry, one shall mention:

- (1) monitoring the quantitative and qualitative evolution of human capital, (2) guiding the biological energies of the nation where needed, (3) guiding and protecting hereditary defective individuals, with the supervision of the matrimonial act, (4) protecting superior families with numerous children, (5) controlling the rational distribution of food in the interest of human capital, (6) national-biological education with the awakening of racial consciousness, (7) organising the physical education, (8) regulating the immigration of foreign elements, emigration, (9) the fight against subversive actions meant to harm the nation from a biological point of view, etc.⁵³.

In *Societatea de mâine*, the most active author on biopolitical and eugenic issues was I. Moldovan’s collaborator, Aurel Voina (1896–1967)⁵⁴. One of the main eugenic and biopolitical concerns manifested by A. Voina and other doctors and hygienists in *Societatea de mâine* was the defence of the national biological capital against increased mortality⁵⁵, on the one hand, and against the effects of alcoholism, on the other⁵⁶. But the biopolitical theory from *Societatea de mâine* also contained negative aspects, such as the idea that the individual’s right to participate in democracy and public life should be limited by individual biological abilities, taking into account so-called biological inequalities between individuals⁵⁷. Also, the periodical included articles that promoted negative eugenics, supporting the idea of sterilising “individuals with intellectual and moral defects”⁵⁸.

⁴⁴ Preda 1924, p. 20–21.

⁴⁵ Borza 1926, p. 416–418.

⁴⁶ Popoviciu 1928, p. 443.

⁴⁷ Preda 1924, p. 20–21.

⁴⁸ Moldovan 1927, p. 3–4.

⁴⁹ Stanca 1924a, p. 641–644.

⁵⁰ Stanca 1924b, p. 660–663.

⁵¹ Voina 1926a, p. 225.

⁵² For details regarding the life and activity of I. Moldovan, see Turda 2015.

⁵³ Voina 1926b, p. 361.

⁵⁴ Turda 2015, p. 275.

⁵⁵ Iacobovici 1924, p. 305–306.

⁵⁶ Vlădescu-Răcoasa 1924, p. 137–138.

⁵⁷ Voina 1926b, p. 361.

⁵⁸ Manuilă 1924, p. 484.

JEWS AND ROMA

In *Societatea de mâine*, the Semitic race was described as easily adaptable and assimilable⁵⁹, and the Jew illustrated with fleshy lips, “drowned in moustache and beard,” “dirty, ill-dressed, and with a rough face of filth”⁶⁰. Among the topics most often encountered in the articles of the periodical is the so-called invasion of the Jewish population, who was accused of “invading” Hungary as “a second Canaan”⁶¹. In another instance, the presence of the “wandering element of the Jews expelled from Galicia to Maramureş”⁶², or the immigration of Jews from Russia to Bessarabia, illustrated as an invasion⁶³, was lamented. Sometimes, in the periodical, pejorative terms such as “jidani” or “jidovi” were used to refer to the Jewish population⁶⁴. As part of the so-called racial struggle or for ethnic supremacy, many of the periodical articles emphasise the numerical overrepresentation of urban Jews⁶⁵ and the need for Romanian colonisation of cities⁶⁶, for the consolidation of the new Romanian leadership in the territories annexed through the Great Union⁶⁷. On the other hand, the presence of Jews in Romanian universities and in certain liberal professions in Romanian cities were considered to be a threat to Romanianism⁶⁸. In the rural area, the Romanian peasant was considered a victim of Jewish innkeepers, their over-representation in the alcohol-producing industry being emphasised⁶⁹. However, the articles in the periodical denied that anti-Semitism was a “racial struggle” carried out by the Romanians against the Jews, but an act of nationalism⁷⁰. In Transylvania, the association of Hungarianised Jews with Hungarian culture was a problem for Romanian intellectuals. In the articles of *Societatea de mâine*, Jews were accused of deeds of corruption committed in collaboration with members of the Hungarian population⁷¹.

The Roma were called almost exclusively as “Gypsies”. The word “Gypsy” was used as a synonym for “dirty man”⁷², and they were considered to be of poor quality, stultified⁷³. In a 1924 article, gypsies were used as a metaphor to illustrate a fungus in symbiosis with certain trees, described as the strongest social class of forests, contaminated by the fungus called “forest Gypsies,” ruled by rotten morals⁷⁴. The Gypsies, through their “Gypsiness,” were used as an antithetical element in relation to the institution of the army. They were described as lowly and inferior, while the army was noble and made up of elites⁷⁵. Due to an alleged innate biological incapacity, gypsies were seen as unable to pay attention, learn and wash⁷⁶. Another alleged innate feature of Gypsies was criminality, with the authors of *Societatea de mâine* advocating for forced labour projects for the Gypsies in order to stabilise the so-called useless elements of the state⁷⁷. The gypsy was also portrayed as a “parasite that sucks the blood of villages and spreads diseases”⁷⁸.

⁵⁹ Suciu 1924, p. 471–475.

⁶⁰ Cehan-Racoviță 1926, p. 802–806.

⁶¹ Suciu 1924a, p. 471–475.

⁶² Pușcariu 1925, p. 737–738.

⁶³ Giurgea 1924a, p. 240.

⁶⁴ Lupaș 1924, p. 387–389.

⁶⁵ Mureșanu 1924, p. 199.

⁶⁶ Bogdan-Duică 1924b, p. 88.

⁶⁷ Gherasim 1924, p. 324–325.

⁶⁸ Suciu 1924b, p. 512–517; Giurgea 1924b, p. 536.

⁶⁹ Manuilă 1925a, p. 112.

⁷⁰ Ghiulea 1928, p. 132–133.

⁷¹ Ghiulea 1925, p. 342.

⁷² Pușcariu 1924, p. 89.

⁷³ Boitoș, Breazu 1926a, p. 163.

⁷⁴ Borza 1924, p. 328.

⁷⁵ Redacția 1925, p. 359.

⁷⁶ Redacția 1927a, p. 243.

⁷⁷ Redacția 1927b, p. 402.

⁷⁸ Dumitreanu 1929, p. 203–206.

In a 1930 article, an analysis of the ethnic and national character of the Roma was made. These were put in antithesis with the Romanians, just as the Jews were put in antithesis with the Aryans: “all the forms of physical and spiritual life so characteristic of the Gypsies are profoundly different from those of the Romanians”⁷⁹. At the same time, the Roma were likened to the Jews by their “fate” of being tireless travellers and having the same Asian origin. They were described as primitives and the opposite of social progress, people promoting the false idea that Gypsies were cannibals. Also, Roma individuals were described as incapable of making their own decisions, hence their alleged talent or alleged natural inclination towards slavery. They were also considered incapable of understanding concepts such as homeland or religion⁸⁰.

The Gypsy race was described by traits such as lying, stealing, begging, stealing children, counterfeiting money, drunkenness, smoking, etc.⁸¹. In a 1933 article on woodworker Gypsies, the author portrayed them as a kind of wild animal that lived in the forest. The author considered that, following the mixing with the Romanians and the fact that they did not use the Romani language, the woodworkers were not part of the “Gypsy race,” but had become Romanians⁸². They were described as being of medium stature, “mostly brunettes, with a platyrrhine nose and a deeply sunken root, a sign of their racial primitivism”⁸³. The diligence, calm temperament and honour of the woodworkers were considered to be traits taken over from the mixing with the Romanian race.

COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL PORTRAITS OF RACIST AUTHORS OF SOCIETATEA DE MÂINE

For *Societatea de mâine*, 1924–1925 seem to be the most prolific years in terms of the weight of racist articles. In order to determine the frequency of the articles covered by this study, a sample of 10 volumes of *Societatea de mâine* was chosen, respectively from 1924 to 1933, representing the period of publication of the periodical in Cluj, before the moving of the editorial office to Bucharest. By analysing the topics, it was found that in 1924 and 1925, 100% of the issues of the periodical directly or indirectly addressed the topics of race, eugenics, biopolitics, Jews, Roma and ethnicity or ethnic superiority, with an average frequency of 2 articles per issue. In the following years, however, between 1926–1933, the average frequency decreased to about 1 article per issue. The decrease in frequency could be due, on the one hand, to the gradual reduction in the number of issues of the periodical per year, from over 33 in 1924 to below 10 in 1933. On the other hand, it could be a result of the reduced activity of some of the most fervent authors on racial issues among the periodicals’ contributors. Despite the decrease in frequency, in the 30s, the racial concept seems to have been already well known, well disseminated and well established in the mentality of the Romanian urban society. By defining, clarifying and establishing a biological meaning of the term “race” in the 1930s, as it is employed in the press, one can get a clearer picture of how the idea of Romanian race developed in the collective imagination. The same can be observed in relation to the concepts of biopolitics or eugenics. For example, in a 1931 article written by Ion Clopoșel in *Societatea de mâine*⁸⁴, the author only mentions the eugenic rules, but does not go on to list them, which suggests that he was addressing an audience already familiar with the concept of eugenics.

The authors of the articles collected from *Societatea de mâine* for this study amount to 54. Of these, only 33% worked in the medical field, while the remaining 67% worked in various fields, such

⁷⁹ Pașca 1930, 445–446.

⁸⁰ Pașca 1930, 445–446.

⁸¹ Pașca 1930, 445–446.

⁸² Chelcea 1931, p. 311–313.

⁸³ Chelcea 1931, p. 312.

⁸⁴ Clopoșel 1931, 336–338.

as humanities, social, artistic, military, sports field and others⁸⁵. From the point of view of academic training, the authors included in this analysis attended Western foreign universities in a proportion of almost 70%, while the remaining 30% studied in Romanian universities, in Cluj or Bucharest, but not exclusively. Although they completed their undergraduate studies in the country, most of them obtained their doctorate in universities abroad.

Among the authors who wrote the largest number of articles on the subject of the race one shall mention, in alphabetical order, Ion Agârbiceanu, Odiseu Apostol, Ion Băilă, Valeriu Barbu, Olimpiu Boitoș, Alexandru Borza, Traian Brăileanu, Gheorghe Brânduș, Vasile Bucur, Nicolae Buta, Petre Drăghici, Ion Chelcea, Ion Clopoșel, Radu Drajnea, Gheorghe Bogdan-Duică, Onisifor Ghibu, Nicolae Ghiulea, Ștefan Pașca, Gheorghe Popoviciu, Gheorghe Preda, Petru Suciu, Aurel Voina and Emil Zinveliu. Taking into account the small size of this study, in order to make the individual portraits of the mentioned authors, four authors were selected, namely, Olimpiu Boitoș, Traian Brăileanu, Gheorghe Bogdan-Duică and Onisifor Ghibu. Their selection was made taking into account both the large number of articles published by them and the quality of the articles, as they were among the authors who most clearly outlined their views on the concept of race in the periodical.

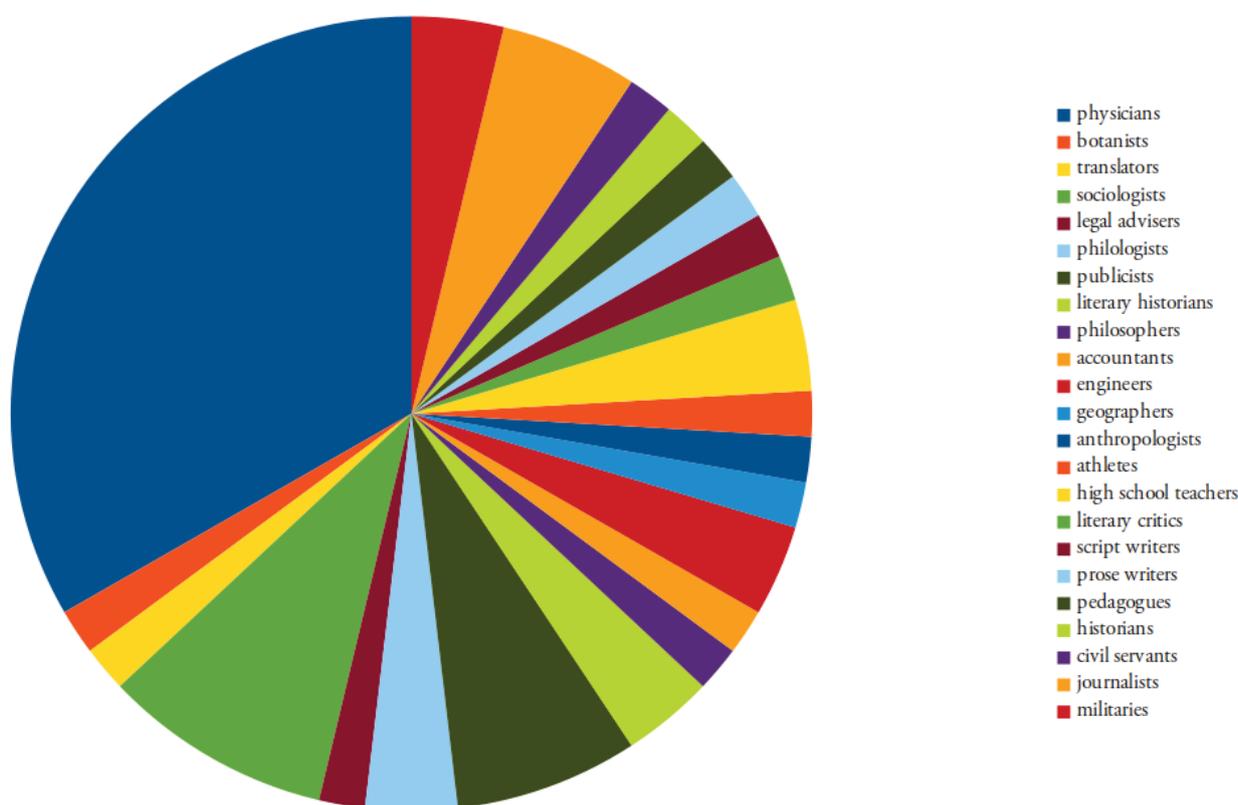


Fig. 1: The professions of authors from the periodical "Societatea de mâine," who wrote articles on the topics covered by this study.

GHEORGHE BOGDAN-DUICĂ

Gh. Bogdan-Duică was born in 1865 in Brașov, in a family of civil servants and merchants, and died in 1934, in the same locality. He attended high school in his hometown, and his university studies in history and philology in Budapest, Jena, Vienna and Bucharest, where he graduated in 1897⁸⁶. From a professional point of view, in 1919 he became a member of the Romanian Academy and the first dean of

⁸⁵ See Fig. 1.

⁸⁶ Sasu 2006, p. 180.

the Faculty of Letters, within the University of Cluj⁸⁷. Regarding his political presence, he was a member of the National-Liberal Party, led by Ion C. Brătianu⁸⁸. He had collaborated with several magazines and newspapers, including *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, *Tribuna*, *Convorbiri literare*, *Societatea de mâine*, *Românismul* and others. In *Societatea de mâine*, in 1924 and 1925, he wrote over twenty articles that are either dedicated to the concept of race or refer to this concept in the sections devoted to social issues and literary discussions. As a founding member of the League of Cultural Unity of All Romanians⁸⁹, an instrument created for disseminating the idea of Romanianism as a racial feature⁹⁰, Gh. Bogdan-Duică was one of the most active authors on the topic of race in the editorial staff of *Societatea de mâine*.

The topics approached by Gh. Bogdan-Duică in his press articles were mainly related to the ethnic supremacy of the Romanians, especially of the Transylvanian Motzen (moți), who, according to him, had to be supported by the state⁹¹. He encouraged the Romanianisation of Transylvanian cities through the colonisation from rural to urban areas and supported the adoption of ethnic policies at the national level. Like O. Ghibu, he believed that the Jewish population was the greatest threat to the urban environment.

It's about the Transylvanian cities. We have long complained about the fact that these cities are foreign; that Romanians represent a small percentage of the population within them; and that this must change. [...] And what is serious is that in some parts the conditions continue to change to our detriment; sometimes to the detriment of the main population, for example the Saxons in Bistrița, where the Jewish element is greatly advancing, much to the chagrin of the Saxons. [...] Colonisation would flourish richly if a *collective* power said to itself: "This city can be conquered". [...] Another form of colonisation would be that of the state. It will happen someday!⁹²

For Gh. Bogdan-Duică, the concept of race seems to be the main paradigm which he used in order to express his ideas. He almost always used the German spelling of the term race (*rassă*), which suggests the epistemic influence on the author coming from the German rather than from the Romanian area. Although, in many cases, he used the term race in a neutral way, namely without making discriminatory statements regarding other racial groups, by the frequency of using this term, Bogdan-Duică managed to populate with the concept of race a relatively large number of issues of the periodical in the years 1924–1925. On the other hand, according to Bogdan-Duică, each nation was considered to have racial qualities and defects⁹³. Using expressions such as "race instincts," "race health," "race emancipation," "race characteristics," "delayed races," he promoted the existence of racial differences specific to each people. In a review of the book *Democrații moderne (Modern Democracies)* written by the liberal James Bryce (1838–1922), describing the racial character of the French, Bogdan-Duică stated that: "the French unity of soul strongly supports itself, thanks to its *origin, race and love of country*"⁹⁴.

From a racial point of view, in a 1924 article entitled *Politică și rassă (Politics and Race)*⁹⁵, in which he promoted a pan-European alliance against Russia, Gh. Bogdan-Duică positioned Romania on the side of the Western world as its defender: "Wouldn't it be better to have the appearance of a people aware of its place as neighbour of Russia and border guard of Europe?"⁹⁶. Being among the greatest supporters of

⁸⁷ Sasu 2006, p. 180.

⁸⁸ Mateiu 1934, p. 2–3.

⁸⁹ Pârâianu 2007, p. 355.

⁹⁰ Pârâianu 2007, p. 366.

⁹¹ Bogdan-Duică 1924a, p. 59–60.

⁹² Bogdan-Duică 1924b, p. 87–88.

⁹³ Bogdan-Duică 1925b, p. 599.

⁹⁴ Bogdan-Duică 1925a, p. 18.

⁹⁵ Bogdan-Duică 1924c, p. 129–130.

⁹⁶ Bogdan-Duică 1924c, p. 130.

the European character of the Romanians, this time, Bogdan-Duică minimised the importance of racial distinctions in the discussion on European integrity, in order to support his point of view according to which Russia or the East was the greatest danger to Europe and, implicitly, to a European Romania.

ONISIFOR GHIBU

O. Ghibu was born in 1883 in the commune of Săliște in Sibiu County, in a family of peasant furriers, and died in 1972 in Sibiu. He completed his secondary education at the Hungarian state high school in Sibiu, at the Romanian high school in Braşov and at the Theological Institute in Sibiu⁹⁷. He attended higher education at the University of Bucharest, at the University of Strasbourg and at the University of Jena, obtaining a doctorate in philosophy, philology and history in 1909. Throughout his academic career as a pedagogue and memorialist, he taught at the Theological Institute in Sibiu and, from 1919, at the University of Cluj, where he became dean of the Faculty of Letters, between 1928–1929⁹⁸. Within Astra (The Transylvanian Association for Romanian Literature and the Culture of the Romanian People), he was president of the School Department⁹⁹. He was a corresponding member of the Romanian Academy and published articles in periodicals, such as *Luceafărul*, *Tribuna*, *Transilvania*, *Ardealul*, and others. In *Societatea de mâine*, where he was a member of the steering committee, he published articles related to racism, anti-Semitism, or Romanian ethnic supremacy in various columns, such as *Actualităţi* (*News*), *Unitate naţională* (*National Unity*), *invăţământ şi educaţie* (*School and Education*), and *Problema culturii* (*The Problem of Culture*).

Having a nationalist orientation, O. Ghibu's racist concerns were closely related to the numerical overrepresentation of Jews in universities and in the economic field, promoting the idea of the struggle for cultural and numerical supremacy between Romanians and Jews¹⁰⁰. The tendency observed in the case of Ghibu, as in the case of other authors, was to hold the Jewish population responsible for the poor governance of the state. Combined with demographic and social imbalances, following the unification of Romanian territories in 1918, and the implementation of modern work organisation, based on the Western model, in the context of a predominantly peasant Romania, the impression of the need for a racial and cultural struggle generated in the media, but not only, a hate speech against the Jewish population. In the Romanian urban environment after the Union, in the principalities annexed to the Old Kingdom, the desire for the "Romanian element" to obtain numerical superiority in cultural and educational institutions, but also in other fields of liberal professions, generated an ethnic or racial struggle carried out, in particular, by intellectuals and opinion formers.

In the case of Transylvania, according to Ghibu, the new rights of the majority population had to limit the rights of minorities, caught between the inferiority complexes of Transylvanian Romanians in relation to Hungarians and the Romanian state's efforts to "Romanianise" the urban environment¹⁰¹. In Transylvania, the Hungarianised Jews from the former Austro-Hungarian province, with a higher affinity for Hungarian culture than for the Romanian culture, were also considered an obstacle to Romanianisation¹⁰². Against the background of Jewish immigrations from Russian areas to Bessarabia, the "Jewish problem" generated difficulties not only for the process of Romanianisation of the cities in Transylvania, but also in Bessarabia¹⁰³. According to a Bessarabian professor quoted by Ghibu in a 1924 article, he confessed that:

⁹⁷ Sasu 2006, p. 651.

⁹⁸ Sasu 2006, p. 651.

⁹⁹ Sasu 2006, p. 651.

¹⁰⁰ Ghibu 1924a, p. 71; Ghibu 1924b, p. 151–154; Ghibu 1924c, p. 235–236.

¹⁰¹ Ghibu 1924b, p. 151–154.

¹⁰² Livezeanu 1998, p. 165.

¹⁰³ For more on the particularities of Bessarabian nationalism and the province's relationship with the Jewish population,

we work chaotically. We have in Chişinău an opera and operetta troupe subsidised with I don't know how many millions by the Ministry of Arts, on account of the Jews, and for the soul of the poor Moldovan they don't give a single penny. Not only that nothing is added to what we have left Romanian, after the Russian oppression, but even that is weakened¹⁰⁴.

In a 1925 article, in which he ethnically and numerically analysed the situation of university students, O. Ghibu lamented the large number of Jewish students in Romanian educational institutions, although in Cluj the “Jewish danger” was not as great as in Iaşi or as in Chernivtsi because, in Cluj, after the “anti-Semitic perturbations,” the number of Jewish students fell by almost half¹⁰⁵. However, the anti-Semitic perturbations from the early 1920s, to which Ghibu attributed the positive result of the decline in the number of Jewish students at the University of Cluj, were violent attacks, especially physical ones, against the local Jewish population¹⁰⁶. By using this rhetoric, Ghibu thus went from the hate speech to supporting violence against Jews.

Regarding the concept of race, O. Ghibu overlapped it with religion. In a 1924 article on a potential union of Eastern and Western churches, he stated:

The Greeks will outrightly oppose any tendency of the reunification of the Church. And probably the Slavic Orthodox peoples will do the same, because they never wanted to get close to the “Latins” of the West¹⁰⁷.

Ghibu also included Romanians in the category of the Western Latin race and proposed a religious “modernisation” by detaching Romania from the East and by its annexation to the West. The only barrier left in the way of the westernisation or complete modernisation of Romania was the Orthodox religion:

in matters of such decisive importance to our whole future, should we link our fate only to these peoples with whom we have nothing in common but a long-buried past, from which almost no spark of life springs forth? Isn't this the time to emancipate ourselves on the religious grounds from prejudices that have kept us in place for so long?¹⁰⁸

For Ghibu, the malleability and ambiguity of the concept of race in the 20s meant that it could be used as a category that could bring the Romanian nation closer to the Western world even biologically, not only politically, institutionally and economically. Race thus became a means by which the origins of the Romanian nation could be traced in the West, but was forcibly captured in Eastern Europe.

Our people, who, by religion are connected with the Eastern peoples, and by race and cultural and political tendencies are connected with the Western peoples, are predestined by Providence to form the bridge between the two sides that stood and still stand today face to face as enemies, and to gather them together¹⁰⁹.

see the chapter „Basarabia: naţionalism într-o provincie arhaică” (Bessarabia: Nationalism in an Archaic Province) in Livezeanu 1998, p. 111–156.

¹⁰⁴ Ghibu 1924a, p. 71.

¹⁰⁵ Ghibu 1925, p. 863–864.

¹⁰⁶ For more about the student anti-Semitic attacks in Cluj, from 1922–1927, see the subchapter „Studentii” (The Students) in Gidó 2014, p. 138–148.

¹⁰⁷ Ghibu 1924d, p. 495–496.

¹⁰⁸ Ghibu 1924d, p. 496.

¹⁰⁹ Ghibu 1924e, p. 580.

TRAIAN BRĂILEANU

Traian Brăileanu was born in 1882 in the commune of Bilca from Suceava County, in a family of Romanian teachers, and died in 1947, in the Aiud penitentiary. He completed his middle school at the German high school in Rădăuți, and his higher education studies in philosophy at the University of Chernivtsi where, in 1909, he obtained a doctorate in philosophy¹¹⁰. He lived for ten years in Vienna, where he developed professionally and attended courses at the Faculty of Law within the University of Vienna. After the First World War he returned to Chernivtsi, where he became a university professor. Politically, he was a member of the People's Party, led by Alexandru Averescu, in whose government he served as secretary general of education in Bukovina¹¹¹. In the first half of the 1920s, he joined the Nationalist Party, led by Nicolae Iorga, after which he resigned and, in 1927, he joined the legionary fascist movement, the Legion of Archangel Michael¹¹², being the friend or "old companion" of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu¹¹³. During 1931–1933, while he was dean of the Faculty of Sociology in Chernivtsi, T. Brăileanu retrained in sociology, becoming famous both nationally and internationally¹¹⁴.

T. Brăileanu has led many Chernivtsi magazines, such as *Cugetări*, *Poporul* and *Gazeta Poporului*. In *Societatea de mâine* he contributed with articles in the column dedicated to social issues, promoting his nationalist and racist views, writing on topics related to race, biopolitics, Jews and corruption. Convinced of the racial superiority of Romanians over national minorities, in his articles, T. Brăileanu urged the Romanian population to fight for economic, social or cultural supremacy¹¹⁵. Philosophically, Brăileanu was influenced, among others, by the social hierarchy of Kant and Aristotle¹¹⁶, by the positivism of Auguste Comte¹¹⁷, and by the social Darwinism of Herbert Spencer¹¹⁸. In a synthesis on crowd psychology drawn up by Gustave Le Bon, published in *Societatea de mâine*, Brăileanu defined race as "an aggregate with common traits and feelings, which are increasingly strengthened by heredity"¹¹⁹. In fact, in his career as a sociologist, T. Brăileanu developed his own theoretical model, according to which society was considered a living organism, and social problems had to be treated as such¹²⁰.

In his public discourse, as it appears in *Societatea de mâine*, Brăileanu was convinced of the cultural superiority of the Romanians in Bukovina, as compared to the Germans and Jews in the region, whom he considered clearly inferior to the Romanian intellectuals¹²¹. In a 1924 article, Brăileanu presented the Jews as the main culprits for the precarious situation of Romanians in Bukovina, especially from an economic point of view, but also intellectually, considering that there was a Jewish numerical overrepresentation in education, in the media and in the Bukovina bourgeoisie, in general, to the detriment of the Romanian element. For T. Brăileanu, Romanian anti-Semitism was a natural reaction to the "tricks" committed by Jewish bankers, who supposedly lived off the Romanians through methods such as fraud¹²². The use of medical terms for corruption, such as "social pathology," and the blaming of Jews as an ethnic group¹²³ suggests that his anti-Semitism had a component of internal racism, that is,

¹¹⁰ Schifirneț 2009, p. 51–52.

¹¹¹ Schifirneț 2009, p. 55.

¹¹² Schifirneț 2009, p. 55.

¹¹³ Schmitt 2017, p. 11.

¹¹⁴ Schifirneț 2009, p. 53.

¹¹⁵ Brăileanu 1924b, p. 478–481.

¹¹⁶ Schifirneț 2009, p. 58.

¹¹⁷ Brăileanu 1924b, p. 478.

¹¹⁸ Brăileanu 1925b, p. 654.

¹¹⁹ Brăileanu 1926, p. 331–335.

¹²⁰ Schifirneț 2003, p. 20.

¹²¹ Brăileanu 1924a, p. 455–457.

¹²² Brăileanu 1924b, p. 478–481.

¹²³ Brăileanu 1925a, p. 594–595.

in relation to a minority within state borders¹²⁴. At the same time, Brăileanu accused the entire Jewish ethnic group of racism, due to the promotion by some Jewish intellectuals of the concept of *Klassenvolk*, through which “Jews [...] would represent an ethnic unit and at the same time a class unit, the bourgeois class of our cities”¹²⁵. For Brăileanu, this meant an incompatibility between the two groups, Jewish and Romanian, which would inevitably lead to a conflict between Jews and the Romanian nation, as in the case of any other majority nation in a state where Jewish citizens live as well¹²⁶.

In Brăileanu’s articles one can observe a gradual radicalisation of his discriminatory messages. Thus, in an article from 1927, Brăileanu came to promote the exclusion of minorities from the political and social life of the state. Implicitly, the political rights of state minorities had to be limited in order to maintain the unity and authority of the state over other states. By opposing the pacifist and humanist ideas circulated in his time, Brăileanu believed that:

As long as differences of race, religion, language persist and manifest themselves in the state, the political obligations can only be fulfilled by the dominant nation, so the political rights belong to it too. [...] Religion? Ask the Turks why they do not admit Christians into the army. Race? Ask the English and French how many black or yellow officers they have in their armies and how many ministers? Let the British try to make free elections and entrust the helm of the State to a government coming out of that parliament! It would be an interesting experience for pacifist and humanitarian sociologists¹²⁷.

OLIMPIU BOIȚOȘ

Olimpiu Boițoș was born in 1903, in the commune of Blăjel in Sibiu County, in a family of Romanian peasants, and died in 1954 in Cluj, where he spent most of his life. He completed his secondary education in Blaj and Sibiu and graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in 1925 and a doctorate in 1931 at the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy of the University of Cluj. In the 1930s, during his career as literary historian, after making his debut in the magazine *Dacia Traiană* in 1921, O. Boițoș was editorial secretary at the *Gând Românesc* publication and contributed to magazines such as *Luceafărul*, *Cosânzeana*, *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, and others. He was part of organisations and institutes of the Romanian Academy, such as the Institute of National History in Cluj and the Linguistic Institute of the Academy, Cluj branch¹²⁸. Internationally, he was in close contact with French literary organisations, being a member of the Romanian School in France, a member of Société d’Histoire Littéraire de la France, and contributed to studies on Romanian-French relations¹²⁹. Within Astra, he was secretary of the Literary and Scientific Department¹³⁰. Since 1924, in the periodical *Societatea de mâine*, he published articles on racial and ethnic issues, both individually and together with Ion Breazu, under the B&B signature¹³¹.

From a racial point of view, quoting a fragment from a work written by sociologist Mihail Șerban¹³², O. Boițoș considered the peasant as “the most Romanian part” of the Romanian ethnic body¹³³. Ever since his Bachelor’s degree studies, he had expressed his nationalist ideals, arguing that the Romanian people must be the only national leading people. His statements on ethnicity were part of a kind of ethnic struggle against “greedy foreigners,” which allegedly represented a threat to the ethnic and economic

¹²⁴ Balibar, Wallerstein 1991, p. 38–39.

¹²⁵ Brăileanu 1924b, p. 479.

¹²⁶ Brăileanu 1924b, p. 478–481.

¹²⁷ Brăileanu 1927, p. 303.

¹²⁸ Sasu 2006, p. 184.

¹²⁹ Sasu 2006, p. 184–185.

¹³⁰ Sasu 2006, p. 184.

¹³¹ Sasu 2006, p. 185.

¹³² Șerban 1925.

¹³³ Boițoș, Breazu 1926c, p. 666.

existence of the Romanian people¹³⁴. In addition to ethno-nationalist beliefs, among the objects of his publicist fascination there was the concept of race, sometimes expressing concerns about the degeneration of race, influenced by French Gobinism racism¹³⁵. The ideas of Arthur de Gobineau (1816–1882), who promoted the idea of the Aryan race and who was one of the founders of an early scientific racism, had a great impact on European racist thinking and, implicitly, on Romanian racism¹³⁶.

Another French personality who had an influence on Boitoș's articles was the positivist Auguste Comte, the founder of modern sociology¹³⁷. Citing his contemporary, the philosopher and psychologist Constantin Rădulescu-Motru (1868–1957), in reference to the need to introduce a science such as sociology among the interests of the state, Boitoș urged the adoption of a scientific nationalism in exchange for the romantic one, because he considered the nation to be a social and biological organism that had to be treated as such¹³⁸. Like other thinkers who were contemporary with him, Boitoș supported a government based primarily on science, not so much on politics, because science was supposed to be infallible¹³⁹. In the scientific nationalism promoted by C. Rădulescu-Motru, however, race (*rassa*) had an essential role:

The material influences of the cosmic environment and of the race are engraved on the primitive homogeneity of the soul; then the spiritual differentiations follow, which remain, because they are the most enduring. The last word in the leadership of the nationalist movement will therefore belong, not to the well-intentioned, but to the well-skilled in terms of the truth¹⁴⁰.

However, this kind of racial differentiation had the potential to divide *nations* or peoples into “good-origin” or “bad-origin” races. On the one hand, when referring to the Roma, he called them, paraphrasing, “stultified shoddy Gypsies”¹⁴¹. On the other hand, in a praise brought to some portraits of Motzen persons, made by the Szekler painter Nagy Istvan, Boitoș talks about the “strong race characters” imprinted on the face of the Romanian peasants, which he sees as “illuminated by an inner spirit”¹⁴². The topic of the good-bad dichotomy in relation to the Romanian peasant with a noble soul and the “dirty Gypsy” was not new in the Romanian public discourse. But the importance of highlighting this differentiation in the present study is that, in the interwar period, the peasant-Roma opposition was given a new, scientific dimension.

The biopolitical theory formulated by I. Moldovan was another influence on articles signed by O. Boitoș. The impact of Moldovan's biopolitics on Boitoș can especially be seen in his articles that talk about the biological stratification of the society. Boitoș therefore supported Moldovan's theory, which, although denying the existence of races in the modern European sense, promoted the idea of biological social stratification, hereditarily inherited. According to this theory, the social status was considered to be closely linked to the biology of the individual, which, in turn, had an influence on the nation from an economic point of view. Thus, social differences were perceived as biological differentiators, and the transition from a lower to a higher social status could only be achieved if the individual was able to overcome his biological condition or the hereditary destiny in which he was born¹⁴³.

¹³⁴ Boitoș 1924, p. 697.

¹³⁵ Boitoș 1925, p. 902.

¹³⁶ Turda 2003, p. 339.

¹³⁷ Boitoș 1926, p. 54–55.

¹³⁸ Boitoș 1926, p. 54–55.

¹³⁹ Boitoș 1926, p. 54–55.

¹⁴⁰ Rădulescu-Motru 1925, p. 94.

¹⁴¹ Boitoș, Breazu 1926a, p. 163.

¹⁴² Boitoș, Breazu 1926b, p. 363.

¹⁴³ Boitoș 1927b, p. 224.

Using terms of similar ambiguity, due to the conflict in Romanian scientific communities between the adoption of modernity and the preservation of traditionalism, as well as to the need to set the Romanian nation on a favourable position in relation to other European races, O. Boitoş recommended a racial classification system that took into account the “elements of the soul”¹⁴⁴. Summarising the content of a conference in Cluj on biological and racial topics, held by biology and hygiene professor Mihai Botez¹⁴⁵, in which they discussed about the theory of racial degradation based on Gobinism of the so-called superior races, namely dolichocephalic or Germanic, as opposed to the inferior brachycephalic ones, Boitoş refused the Western proposal of a strictly biological improvement of the race¹⁴⁶. He condemned the adoption of a pure biological racism and called for a form of racism that would take into account the multilateralism of the human issue, namely both the biological elements and the human elements of the soul¹⁴⁷. In another article, referring to the political ideas of Ioan Slavici, O. Boitoş stated that the spiritual aspect was integral to the idea of race:

As opposed to the Hungarian people, the Romanian people are better endowed with cultural skills. Aware of his spiritual superiority, the Romanian looks with contempt on the peoples around him. Lacking a political conscience, he has a living national conscience [...]¹⁴⁸.

CONCLUSIONS

The racism analysed in this study was one that originated in nationalism. The relationship of dependence between nationalism and racist thinking is an inevitable phenomenon in the history of modern nation-states, as Etienne Balibar remarks with regard to modern mechanisms for the formation of racism. According to Balibar, racism is constantly derived from nationalism, as a component part thereof, not only in relation to external groups, but also to ethnic elements or internal groups¹⁴⁹. According to Balibar, the nationalisms of Third World countries resulted as a reaction to colonial racism¹⁵⁰. If one were to extrapolate his theory to the case of Greater Romania, one could say that Romanian nationalism was born as a result of multiple external factors that gave the Romanian principalities a status of colonialities. First of all, one of the causes for the development of the Romanian nationalism-racism pair would be, on the one hand, Romania’s exit from the Ottoman and then Russian imaginary space and, on the other hand, the entry into the European imaginary space. In accordance with this theory, one notices that, even in *Societatea de mâine*, the racialising discourse came mainly from actors who promoted the Westernisation of Romania and the detachment from the Eastern, Slavic or Balkan cultural heritage. Romania’s entry into the European world, even if never complete, created a need for an identity which would position the Romanian people in a positive light in relation to other European “civilisations”. On the one hand, Romanian racism can be interpreted as a reaction to the superiority of Northern European racism over everything that was not Northern, namely, implicitly, to the nations detached from the former Ottoman Empire and which became peripheries of Europe or, in the case of Romania, “agrarian province of Western Europe”¹⁵¹. On the other hand, it can be seen as a reaction to Hungarian racism, manifested through a discourse of ethnic superiority over Transylvanian Romanians, which generated among Romanian intellectuals their own racial theory destined to combat Hungarian

¹⁴⁴ Boitoş, Breazu 1926d, p. 784.

¹⁴⁵ Turda 2008, p. 38.

¹⁴⁶ Boitoş, Breazu 1926d, p. 784.

¹⁴⁷ Boitoş, Breazu 1926d, p. 784.

¹⁴⁸ Boitoş 1927a, p. 34–37.

¹⁴⁹ Balibar, Wallerstein 1991, p. 53.

¹⁵⁰ Balibar, Wallerstein 1991, p. 53.

¹⁵¹ Boatcă 2019, p. 19.

superiority. Developed since the end of the 19th century, it served then as basis for the Romanian racial thinking of the 20th century¹⁵².

Secondly, along with the formation of European nationalisms in the 19th century and the creation of an international European Christian category which, at least theoretically, included Romania, an otherness came to being, as object of European international racism, namely that of the uprooted Jewish person¹⁵³, which was inevitably adopted by Romanian nationalism. In the case of Romanian racism, the hatred towards the uprooted Jewish was accompanied by the contempt towards the nomadic Gypsy. Although anti-Semitism and anti-Gypsism existed in the Romanian territories even before the unification of the principalities, Romania's entry into the modern, Western, civilised world also presupposed the adoption, among others, of the racialising discourse in relation to non-Romanian groups. Jewish people were seen as Romania's greatest enemy because they were considered a threat to the integrity of the state, both because of the Jewish immigration from Russian areas and their presence in cities, in Romanian universities and in certain liberal professions. In addition to these reasons, the Jewish people from Transylvania represented a presumed double danger for the Romanianisation of the territories annexed to the Old Kingdom, due to their affinity to the Hungarian culture which, for Transylvanian Romanians, generated an inferiority complex. The Roma, freed from slavery after about half a millennium, were now seen as dispensable, subhuman, and with no economic, biological or intellectual value for the modern Romanian state.

One can consider the articles analysed in this paper as an integral part of the studies essential for a more complete understanding of interwar public discourse. The frequency of about 2 articles on racist topics in each issue of the periodical indicates that racial ideas have had a significant impact on readers. Also, the gradual decrease in the 1920s of the explanations for the racial, eugenic, and biopolitical terms suggests that the public had already become familiar with the theories behind them. On the one hand, one considers that the biologisation of the individual and of the nation in eugenic and biopolitical discourses, by resembling the nation to a living organism and the society to a cellular organism, had an influence on the way in which the individual related to human existence. As programmes created only for the welfare of the Romanian population, without taking into account the multiethnic character of the Romanian state, eugenics and biopolitics had the potential to encourage the emergence of racialised thinking. On the other hand, the direct use of racial terms in the eugenic and biopolitical discourse, the discouragement of racial mixing, and the popularisation of theories on racial characteristics, the differences between human races, and racial hierarchies have had negative consequences. These have generated discriminatory discourses against other ethnic groups, discourses of segregation and debates on the inability of minority groups to assimilate to the majority group in such a way as to result in a homogeneous Romanianised population. As Ion Clopoșel, the editor-in-chief of *Societatea de mâine*, remarked in a 1932 article that the eugenicist leader I. Moldovan "enchanted the society with his formulas of *biopolitics* and *biological capital*"¹⁵⁴. All these conclusions force us to re-evaluate the role, importance, and impact of the concepts of race, eugenics and biopolitics on the interwar Romanian imaginary and collective identity, both in the process of Romanian cultural identity formation and in relation to the minorities from Romania.

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¹⁵² Turda 2016, p. 149–156.

¹⁵³ Balibar, Wallerstein 1991, p. 63.

¹⁵⁴ Clopoșel 1932, p. 163.

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