

LEGISLATION AND MORALS IN INTER-WAR REȘIȚA*

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Prostitution was taken for a social aspect at the unsubstantial limit between morals and physiologic needs; for issuing a delicate controversy, it was debated through themes concerning some socio-religious principles, blamed for shattering the heterosexual family. They said that it was generated by some pecuniary needs or, simply, as an effect of a behavioral deviation.

Having been identified yet in the early history and well-known as the oldest profession in the world, prostitution degenerated step by step from the concept of a sacral action in the religious sphere of pre-Christian rituals, to a stigmatizing and blamed habit; it was even interdicted up to the life together criteria in the modern civilization, but incognito tolerated by those who tacitly benefited of it.

The largest part of the antique peoples conjured up that tumultuous history of trading concupiscence dregs through celebrating religious ceremonies on belief that the young girls' virginity must offered to deities belonging to Cupid's sphere.¹

The Babylonians for instance thought that the women were obliged to offer their body to a foreigner for some money once in life, inside Venus' temple.² Macabre were the meanings of sexual depravity in Ancient Egypt where they interdicted even the young girls' corpses embalming for the priests satisfied their carnal desires with the warm yet corpses. Herodotus describes a moment in Pharaoh Ramses' life, after the royal thesaurus dilapidation, when the

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¹ Dominic Stanca, Aurel Voina, "Istoria prostituției și bolile venerice," in Adrian Majuru, ed., *Prostituția. Între cuceritori și plătitori* (Pitești: Paralela 45, 2007), 64.

² Ibid.

pharaoh decides to let his daughter prostitute so the secret of the infraction was disclosed inside the intimacy of her alcove. Pharaoh Cheops also used his own daughter in the same circumstances and so he obtained the money he needed to finalize one of his pyramids.³

If wander away within the old civilizations history, we may discover a tendency of using the female services at the Hellenic people also for spiritual satisfactions; so the auletrides and hetairai, equivalent of the demimondaine of today, were performing activities similar to those of the instrumentalist ladies and escorts.⁴ In the Roman ancient civilization, there were distinct treasures referring to prostitution. The Roman prostitutes known as *lupae* (female wolfs) for their brutishness were oriented to carnal desires in the detriment of the spiritual ones; in such circumstances, their classification depends on the time they performed the sexual favors and not on their life style or cultural standards. So, *meretrici* serving Venus were performing only by night; *prostibulae* were working both by day and by night, *bustuariae*, only by day in graveyards between funeral gigs, and the lowest category called *diobolares* were accessible even to the slaves.⁵

The new neo-Christian concepts spread all over the territory of the Roman Empire, antithetically interfered with the former practices of sexual depravity. Through promoting abstinence and sexual chastity, the life model proposed by Christianity, based on mysticism and subjective imagination, set in an aggressive contradiction with the degenerate customs of an antique depraved society.⁶

As the official religion in the Roman Empire, Christianity led to the family morality strengthening, progressively diminishing popularity of prostitution. Going on with this chronological foray under such circumstances, prostitution is no more an enraptured manifestation in the social life to the Middle Ages. However, there were certain leaders during the medieval period, as Charlemagne or Louis IX who issued severe orders to discourage such a scourge.⁷ Or, in England, the first regulations concerning prostitution was promulgated in 1161; later, given the papal State in the center of Rome, the prostitutes there were relocated in the purlieu of the town of the seven hills.⁸

By the end of feudalism, Maria Theresa, the sovereign of the Habsburg Empire, decreed in 1751 concentration of the prostitutes around Timișoara, for peopling the Banat. To minimize the risk of venereal diseases they elaborated

³ Ibid., 65.

⁴ Ibid., 64.

⁵ Ibid., 69.

⁶ Ibid., 71.

⁷ Ibid., 72.

⁸ Ibid., 74.

the first rules on hygienic-sanitary situation of those women and periodic medical controls and medical attendance if needed were imposed.⁹ Rules on controlling the sexually transmitted diseases were issued also in Belgium, in 1825, the Belgian Society of Natural and Medical Sciences proposing those rules be extended all over Europe. 42-years later that idea was put into practice: the International Congress in Paris accepted the importance of venereal diseases suppressing through compulsory periodical medical controls imposed to the prostitutes.¹⁰

The modern human civilization enters the narrative of prostitution as being on afflicted by some of such diseases: gonorrhoea and syphilis especially. Medical research confirmed the gravity of these diseases as they found up that 40% of children with birth defects had parents with venereal diseases.¹¹ The acute lack of sexual education objectively directed to the youth was also a decisive element in suppressing or preventing these maladies.¹² So, authorities decided to take the helm in hygienic measures focused on the ones who practiced that old profession.

Setting of the “International Union for Combating Venereal Diseases” in 1923, joining 30 countries from different continents, is the direct result of the actions in anti-venereal diseases.¹³ Officially closing down of the brothels in 1925, in Anvers, a Belgian town, led to clandestine prostitution extending.¹⁴ Even if some of the Western countries imposed registration and cataloguing of the prostitutes, professor Bayert (University of Brussels) found out that no more than 300 prostitutes were registered from the 10–15,000 in the capital of Belgium; so, even granted by law, legalization of prostitution wasn’t the true solution against the problems it used to generate.¹⁵

Apart from the medical question, slavery of juvenile females was the derived problem which was taken for a threatening phenomenon against mankind. The fight against sex trafficking began in London, where the first International Congress against traffic in girls was organized in 1889. A new congress is organized in 1902, in Paris where Feuilleley, the representative of France unleashes

⁹ Ibid., 74.

¹⁰ Ibid., 75.

¹¹ “Combaterea sifilisului,” in *Clujul* II, 5 (Cluj, February 3, 1924): 3.

¹² S. Manuilă, “Educația sexuală,” in *Societatea de Mâine* I, 6 (Cluj, May 18, 1924): 136–137; “Tuberculoza și sifilisul în Banat,” in *Românul* XIII, 1 (Oravița, August 10, 1939): 3.

¹³ Aurel Voina, “Lupta antiveneriană la noi și în străinătate,” in *Societatea de Mâine* II, 28 and 29 (Cluj, July 12 and 19, 1925): 481.

¹⁴ Aurel Voina, “Problema prostituției,” in *Societatea de Mâine* II, 44 (Cluj, November 1, 1925): 778.

¹⁵ Aurel Vlasiu, “Prostituția legală și prostituția clandestină,” in *Chemarea Tinerimei Române* IV, 19 (Cluj, May 10, 1931): 2.

the international campaign against human trafficking and traffickers of girls. The next year, authorities in Berlin set a central police organization that had to connect with similar organizations in other countries to combat the effects of prostitution. In 1909 an inquest showed that the price for a minor prostitute went from 200 to 2,000 dollars in the United States of America. Such elements led to a global effort concerning trafficking in women, so that the League of Nations organized the first international meeting (Geneva, 1921) and adopted important measures to protect young women.¹⁶

The inter-war Berlin was another hotbed liable to mercantile elements in sexual depraved practices. *Strassenfrauen*, namely the streetwalkers in Berlin were four times a week brought to medical control as the main of them were suspected of being infected with syphilis or gonorrhoea. A particular aspect concerning the reason the women aimed to such practices refers especially to their financial needs. The female workers were infinitesimally payed, from 50 to 80 marks/month. They also found then the nature of organized crime of the phenomenon, as many persons, male in general, used to collect part of the prostitutes' money for the so-called protection.¹⁷

If restraining the spatial-chronological analysis to modern Romania, we might speak about Order No. 248/1919 to set the Out-Patients Clinics under the guidance of the Board of Social Care Department, to prevent, cure and combat the venereal diseases and set up social hygiene.¹⁸

Concepts of the two totally opposite currents on prostitution profitably blended in the activity of those institutions: regulation defined by the obligatory character of medical control, and abolition, defined by a subjective tolerance, militating against authorities' restrictions in the case of trading sexual desires.¹⁹ Those approaches led to a social positive result: population became ever aware of necessity to report sick yet in the early moments of venereal disease hunting out.²⁰ An increasing trend was registered in inter-war Cluj Clinic, with 82 registered prostitutes in 1920, and 300 working prostitutes in 1930.²¹

Pro-active approaches in fighting venereal diseases increased due to hunting

¹⁶ Manuela Georges, *Prostituția de-a lungul timpului* (Cluj: Seso Hipparion, 1999), 239–240.

¹⁷ Dr. Kernbarch, "Prostituția în Berlin," in *Societatea de Mâine* III 6 (Cluj, February 7, 1926): 101.

¹⁸ Dominic Stanca, "Campania pentru combaterea sifilisului în județele ardelene," in *Societatea de Mâine* II, 30 and 31 (Cluj, July 26 and August 2, 1925): 508.

¹⁹ Dominic Stanca, "Lupta contra prostituției," in *Societatea de Mâine* II, 32 and 33 (Cluj, August 9 and 16, 1925): 571.

²⁰ Aurel Voina, "Campania antisifilitică," in *Societatea de Mâine* III, 35 and 36 (Cluj, August 29 and September 5, 1926): 530.

²¹ Dominic Stanca, "Reglementarea prostituției," in *Societatea de Mâine* X, 12 (Cluj, December 1933): 246.

out of a strong epidemic in Transylvania, with the mine locality of Zlagna as its epicenter, spreading over other area too, including the mountainous Banat.²²

The inter-war time essentially changed the historic trend of prostitution. The unsettled and frequently unwholesome way of life during World War I and after, as well as distrust of medical staff, especially in the case of rural people, caused expanding of infectious venereal diseases that could have increased the mortality curve. Legally restricting prostitution becomes henceforth the way to eradicate the harmful effects of that practice.²³ So, prostitution is legally performed with a preliminary notification of the local authorities, attentively supervised by security bodies, and only with a medical grant on the basis of a detailed control.²⁴

It was the same the scenario in the Banat in the years 20s–30s: a period of clandestine prostitution proliferation in spite of the prospects, on the foot of the acute crisis and the rules for, as well as of those referring to carnal desires.²⁵ To identify the causes and the medical impact on the inter-war society in Reșița, I have thought that an objective approach on this taboo would be useful on the basis of primary sources, the main of them coming from Caraș-Severin County Office of the National Archives. It is about annual reports of Caraș County Sanitary Office to the Ministry of Work, Health and Social Care, reports, notifications and mail of Police Station of Reșița to and with auxiliary institutions as Timișoara Regional Sanitary Inspectorate, Police Station of Oravița, the Mobile Legion of Gendarmerie No 1, and Police Station of Caransebeș.

The prostitutes in the inter-war Romania were women of a low cultural level in the main, trivially or rather grotesque speaking, being of 20–30-year old, and coming from regions far from their job area²⁶; they represented a sensible, disputed subject frequently taken for being harmful in a society based on moral principles. On account of this, certain rules of controlling them became necessary, and the fact is proved by the decisions some of town councils emitted then. The town council of Arad for instance elaborated in 1925 a local disposal

²² Stanca, Voina, “Istoria prostituției,” 73.

²³ Matei Cozma, “Sporirea boalelor sociale și cauzele lor,” in *Societatea de Mâine* III, 21 and 22 (Cluj, May 23 and 30, 1926): 400.

²⁴ Ioan Scurtu, *Viața cotidiană a românilor în perioada interbelică* (București: Rao, 2001), 256; Ioan Scurtu, Gheorghe Buzatu, *Istoria Românilor în secolul XX* (București: Paideia, 1999), 85.

²⁵ Lucian Popescu, *Timișoara interbelică și universul social din România* (București: Cartea Universitară, 2004), 118.

²⁶ Scurtu, *Viața cotidiană a românilor*, 256; Scurtu, Buzatu, *Istoria Românilor*, 85; Aurel Voinea, *Prostituția și bolile venerice din România* (București: 1930), 64–65.

containing restrictions on prostitution practice, referring to the prostitutes' behavior in community.²⁷

Legislatively, prostitution was a field of rules and restrictions, constrained through medical control as one of the main results of such a practice was the venereal diseases propagation; on the basis of Order 646/1919, the question directly entered the medical area of competence.²⁸ Once the law of direct contributions came into effect in 1921, the prostitutes had to contribute to the budget with 10% from their income, according to letter E., art. 33 and 35 of the named law.²⁹ Economically, such a stipulation was profitable as long as a "luxury" prostitute had a revenue of 20,000 lei a month, while the working girls, 5,000–6,000 lei/ month.³⁰

An ante-project of a law concerning the reformation of prostitution and venereal diseases controlling was set in 1922 by the Ministry of Health Care, to reduce the cases of patients with diseases generated by sexual contacts.³¹ Some aspects were taken into account in that project: equality of earnings of males and females; protection of pregnant woman at her job; seducers had to ask the women who had fallen into the family way in marriage; they also had to own the new born and to raise him/her; virgins' violation and venereal diseases transmitting were taken for offences; the sexually diseases transmitters were punished no matter their sex; selling of young girls in pubs, confectionery stores, taverns or plants and factories was interdicted too.³²

The National Council of Romanian Women sent memorials to authorities in charge referring to social hygiene: the healthy certificate issuing, obligatory character of declaring venereal diseases when marrying, including patients and doctors sanctioning, eliminating of brothels, care of minors, and endorsement of the anti-drinking law.³³ Prostitution was interdicted in brothels in 1925–1927 and so, the ones who wanted to practice on such a profession were exposed both to risk of offence and to that of becoming contaminated with venereal diseases.

Sanitary Law that came into force in 1930 forbade brothels and other establishments where they practiced activities connected to carnal desires, but

²⁷ Scurtu, *Viața cotidiană a românilor*, 257; Scurtu, Buzatu, *Istoria Românilor*, 85.

²⁸ Stanca, "Lupta contra prostituției," 572.

²⁹ El. Manicativ-Venert, El. Nanu-Pășcan, "Studiu de igienă socială. Moravuri. Educație. Legi," in Adrian Majuru ed., *Prostituția. Între cuceritori și plățitori* (Pitești: Paralela 45, 2007), 167.

³⁰ Scurtu, *Viața cotidiană a românilor*, 256; Scurtu, Buzatu, *Istoria Românilor*, 85.

³¹ Stanca, "Lupta contra prostituției," 572.

³² *Ibid.*, 572–573.

³³ Aurel Voina, "Femeile în viața socială," în *Societatea de Mâine* III, 8 (Cluj, February 21, 1926): 143.

allowed women prostituting on condition that they had a medical personal record emitted by the sanitary authorities.³⁴ The young girls up to 16-years were totally interdicted too to send their body for financial advantages.³⁵ The recorded prostitutes were referring to in another stipulation. They were registered as public prostitutes who had only prostitution for source of revenue, and free prostitutes who practice prostitution as an adjacent profession.³⁶ The two categories were also financially delimited unfortunately for the public ones as they had to pay increased taxes for offering carnal desires.³⁷ For the location of such jobs, renting of dwellings was allowed but at a distance of 150m from schools, churches or other cultural institutions; people between 2 and 18-year old were forbidden to live together in those dwellings.³⁸ Following the Sanitary Law they elaborated certain measures to strongly combat the venereal epidemics, among which we find granting of free consultations. In the case of Caraș County for instance, people infected with syphilis benefited of 337 free consultations in 1931.³⁹ Of course, one of the safest prophylactic methods to provide protection against sexually transmitted diseases, indicated even in modern times, was the use of a condom during sexual intercourse. One of the notable ranges was *OLLA*, often found in Reșița newspaper commercials.⁴⁰

The situation got out of control due to a precarious managing and so the clandestine prostitution proliferated and led to a virulent extension of venereal embryos that mainly touched the male population.⁴¹ In the Banat a significant increasing of infected persons is registered especially in 1931, with 36% comparatively with 1930.

The most affected category was that one of 15–30-years old, almost half of the infected persons in the case of syphilis.

In the case of the inter-war Banat, the analysis of the three counties was required to set the real and efficient evaluation of that disease spreading in the local communities.

³⁴ Scurtu, *Viața cotidiană a românilor*, 257; Scurtu, Buzatu, *Istoria Românilor*, 85.

³⁵ Popescu, *Timișoara interbelică*, 118.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 119.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

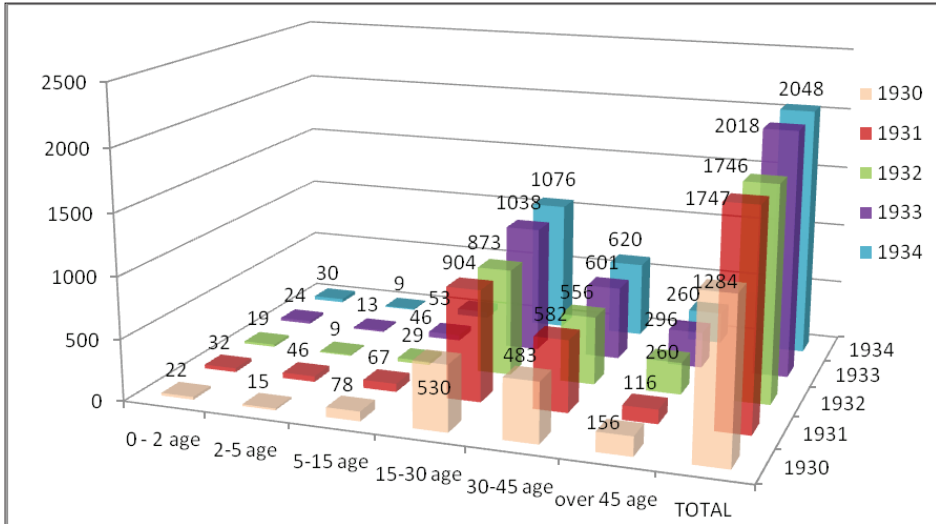
³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Serviciul Județean al Arhivelor Naționale Caraș-Severin (SJANCS), *Serviciul Sanitar al Județului Caraș, Raport anual asupra stărei de sănătate și de igienă a Jud. Caraș pe anul 1931*, Invent No. 1466, File No. 1/1931–1932, f. 8.

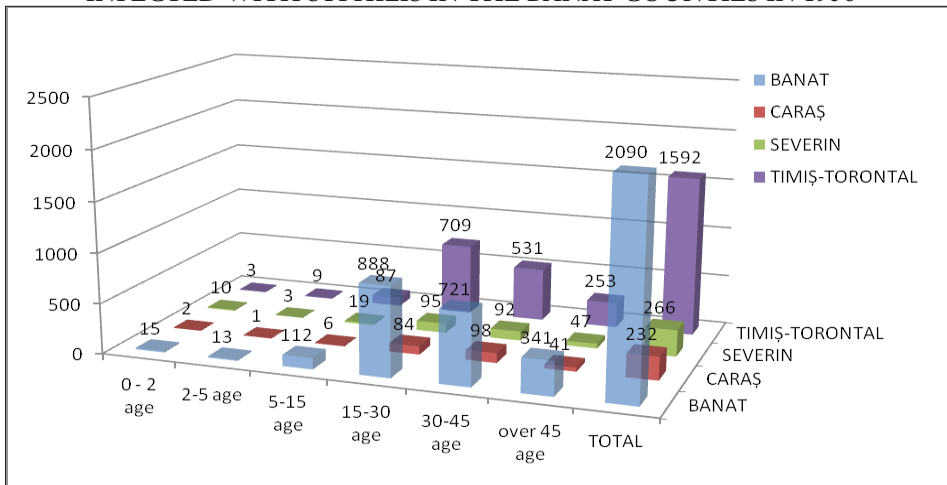
⁴⁰ The ad is in the newspaper *Glasul Muncitorului Român* II, 12 (Reșița, 30 september 1934): 4; 17 (14 november 1934): 4; 18 (11 november 1934): 4.

⁴¹ Scurtu, *Viața cotidiană a românilor*, 257; Scurtu, Buzatu, *Istoria Românilor*, 85.

SYPHILIS IN THE BANAT 1930-1941⁴²



INFECTED WITH SYPHILIS IN THE BANAT COUNTIES IN 1936⁴³



Counties: Caraș, Severin, and Timiș-Torontal

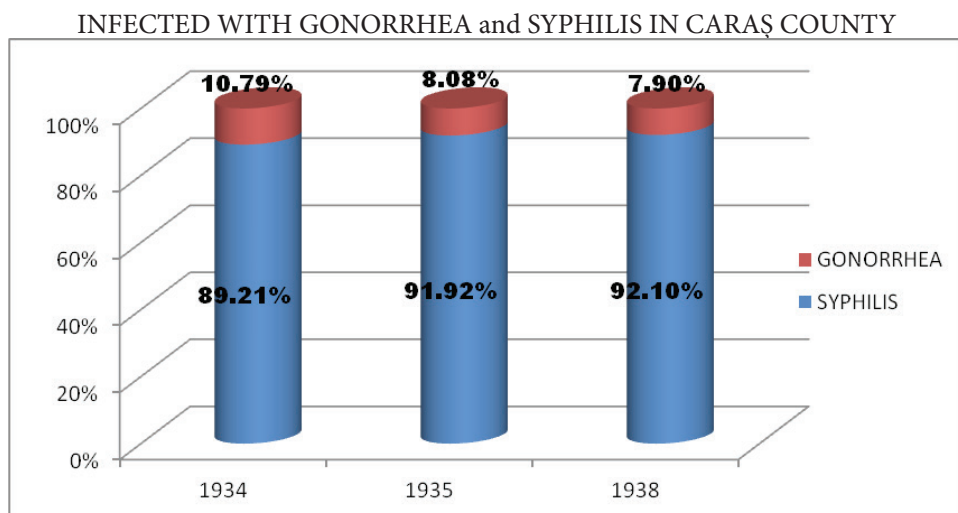
So, the county of Timiș-Torontal was the most afflicted, with three fourth about infections. Counties of Severin and Caraș had the same number of cases approximately, eight times smaller than the county of Timiș-Torontal.

According to data in the annual reports on health and hygiene in Caraș

⁴² *Anuarul statistic al României 1934* (București: Tipografia Curții Regale, 1935), 440.

⁴³ *Anuarul statistic al României 1937 and 1938* (București: Tipografia Curții Regale, 1939), 137.

County sent to the Ministry of Health and Social Care, chapter *Social Diseases*, infections with sexually transmitted diseases was of 58.68% in the case of the male population; in 1931, for instance, statistic reports show 363 men and 269 women for the previous year plus 144 men and 88 women for the current year, with 138 recovered male cases, and 65 female. Deceased: only 3 persons: 1 man and 2 women.⁴⁴



In 1934, statistical data were as following: a total of 1057 cases of venereal diseases, with 114 cases of gonorrhoea and 943 of syphilis, and supplementary information: 78 recovered persons, and 12 deceased.⁴⁵ 351 new cases with syphilis infections and 96 with gonorrhoea were identified the next year.⁴⁶ In spite of the cases increasing, the medical reports show a latent, non-aggressive trend of those diseases, a curable one with the medical treatment of the time.⁴⁷ By the end of the inter-war period, the effects of the Sanitary Law were as following: in 1938, besides the existent 881 cases of syphilis, other 332 were registered, with 178 recovered persons and 23 deceased.⁴⁸ For gonorrhoea, there were 104 cases, with 90 successfully recovered, and no deceased person.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ SJANCS, *Serviciul Sanitar al Județului Caraș, Raport anual asupra stărei de sănătate și de igienă a Jud. Caraș pe anul 1931*, Invent. No. 1466, File No. 1/1931–1932, f. 8.

⁴⁵ Ibid, *Raport anual 1934*, Invent. No. 1466, File No. 2/1934–1939, f. 16.

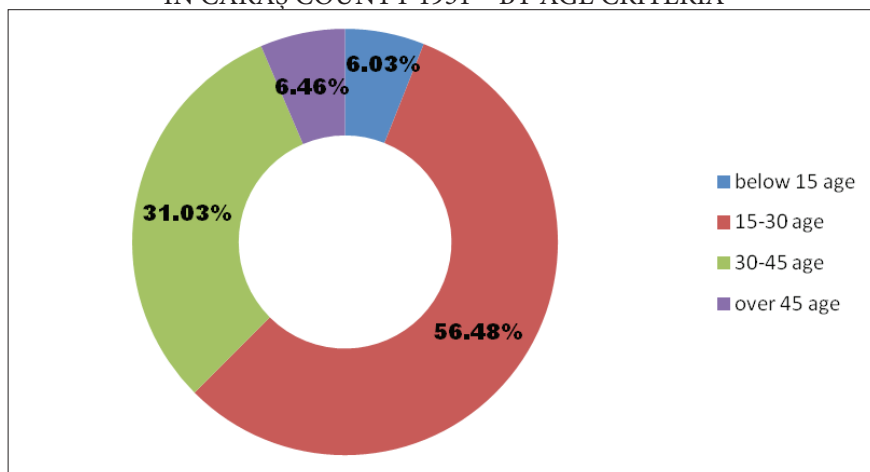
⁴⁶ Ibid, *Raport anual 1934*, Invent. No. 1466, File No. 2/1934–1939, f. 16.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid, *Raport anual 1939*, Invent. No. 1466, File No. 2/1934–1939, f. 47.

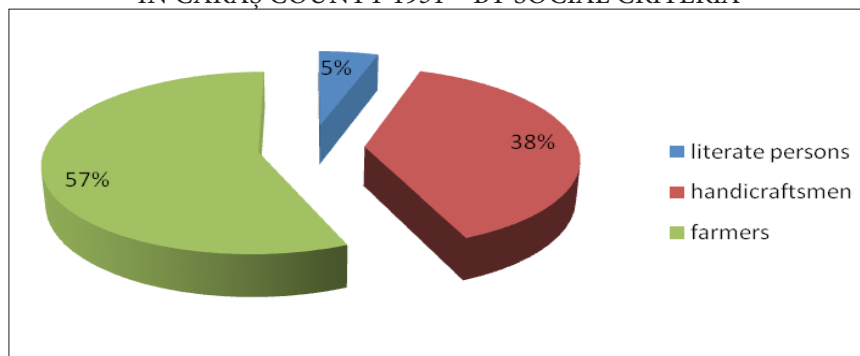
⁴⁹ Ibid, f. 49.

INFESTED WITH SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES
IN CARAȘ COUNTY 1931 – BY AGE CRITERIA



So, there were 6.03% below 15-year old, 56.48% between 15 and 30 years old, 31.03% between 30 and 45 years old, and the ones over 45 counted for 6.46%.⁵⁰

INFESTED WITH SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES
IN CARAȘ COUNTY 1931 – BY SOCIAL CRITERIA



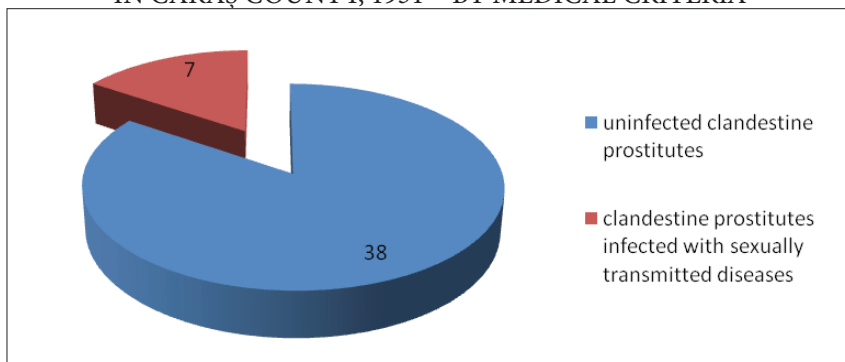
As for professional criteria, the farmers were the main infected persons (57%), followed by handicraftsmen (38%), and literate persons (5%)⁵¹; lack of knowledge on sexual education and the sexual relations between minors (13–15 years-old) might have been ones of the vectors in becoming infected.⁵²

⁵⁰ Ibid., *Raport anual asupra stărei de sănătate și de igienă a Jud. Caraș pe anul 1931*, Invent. No. 1466, File No. 1/1931–1932, f. 8.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., *Raport anual 1934*, Invent. No. 1466, File No. 2/1934–1939, f. 12.

COMPARATIVE DATA ON CLANDESTINE PROSTITUTES
IN CARAȘ COUNTY, 1931 – BY MEDICAL CRITERIA



45 clandestine prostitutes were identified in 1931, with 7 cases of infections with syphilis and gonorrhea⁵³, but it is not a true scanning of reality as many of the infected persons possibly avoided the medical control locations and so they weren't registered.

As for Reșița, a locality firstly registered in 1673 in an Ottoman taxes book⁵⁴, it is well known for a town of iron working, taken for one of the most important industrial centers in the Hapsburg Empire, since 1771. That locality was officially named Recița in June 1919 and became a town (urban administrative range) on the basis of the Royal Decree No. 3840 (December 21, 1925), under the name of Reșița.⁵⁵

In 1920, on the former structure of StEG (Staats Eisenbahn Gesellschaft), the Iron Works and Estates Reșița (UDR), a joint-stock company came into being for playing an essential role in the industrial economy of Romania, including the arming process during World War II. Consequently, the palette of social categories expanded there, following the industrial needs; The wage-earners, apprentices and probationers counted for the larger mass in Reșița, according to 1930 census, namely three quarters from the total active population.⁵⁶ The middle class was insufficiently paid, a worker earning 1,000–1,500 lei monthly and rents were of 500 to 700 lei/a month.⁵⁷

⁵³ Ibid., *Raport anual asupra stărei de sănătate și de igienă a Jud. Caraș pe anul 1931*, Incent. No. 1466, File no. 1/1931–1932, f. 8 v.

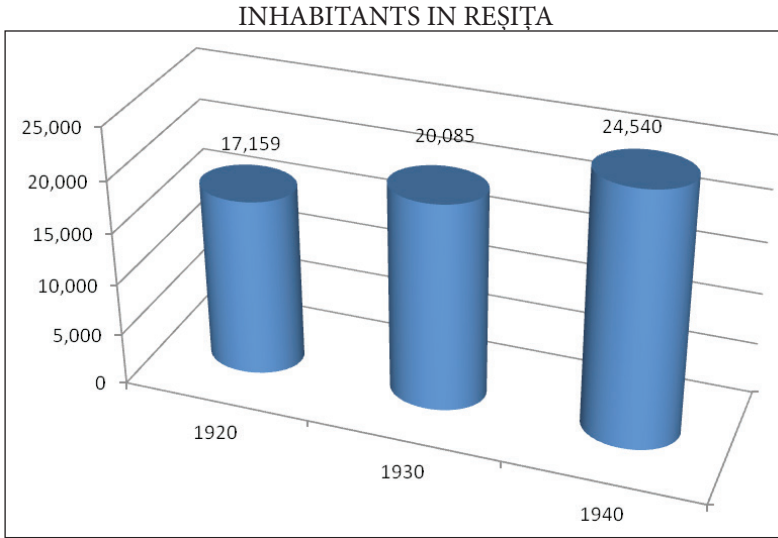
⁵⁴ Nicolae Magiar, Eduard Magiar, *Monografia Municipiului Reșița* (Cluj Napoca: Napoca Star, 2016), 16.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 76, 147.

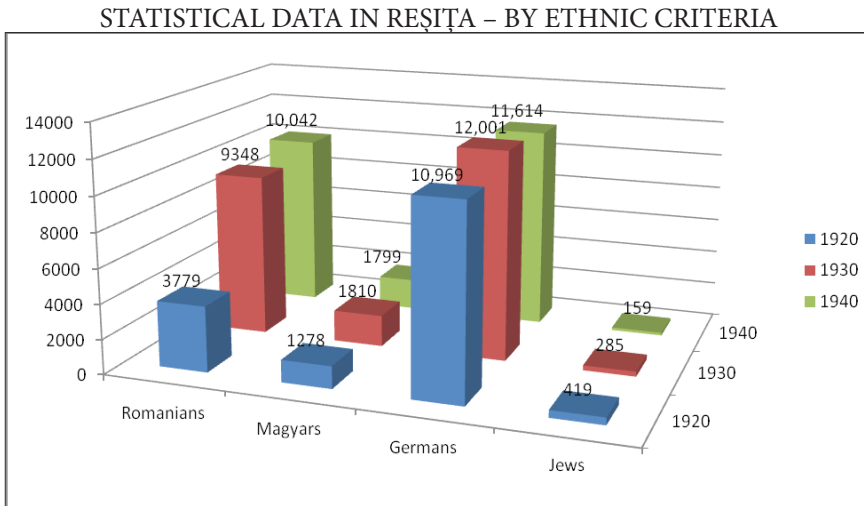
⁵⁶ Ibid., 96; *Reșița istorie și contemporaneitate*, I. Zahiu, D. Mareș, T. Cocîrlă, eds. (Reșița: 1971), 24.

⁵⁷ Ecaterina Cimponeriu, *Reșița Luptătoare: din istoria mișcării muncitorești reșițene în*

The immense absorption of human capital resulted from the strong economic development and led to substantial changing in the demographical colors in Reșița.



Statistical data show so an ascendant trend in Reșița, from 17, 159 inhabitants in 1920, to 24,540 in 1940.⁵⁸



perioada dintre cele două războaie mondiale (București: Editura Științifică, 1965), 187.

⁵⁸ N. Magiar, E. Magiar, *Monografia Municipiului Reșița*, 76.

Increasing of the Romanian population is to be noted, comparatively with the other ethnic communities, after studying the censuses taken every decade in Reșița. For instance, in 1940, the Romanians cover 42% approximately, an almost equal percent to the Germans' one (47%).⁵⁹

If analyzing the confessional vectors in the census of 1930, we might note the two main confessions: Romano-Catholic (with 62.1% of population) and Orthodox (with 27.3%).⁶⁰

The time papers were presented the most vehement notifications on the harmful clandestine prostitution. They gave away the areas of different actions the prostitutes developed, in order to take the local authorities' guard. Besides the way those women jeopardized the public health, they were also accused of robberies, their victims being frequently left penniless. The pubs were the prostitutes' preferred locations where they worked in the guise of waitresses or housekeepers and spread the venereal diseases especially among the males belonging to Reșița working class.⁶¹

Both from the medical and spiritual point of view, location of such hotbed was identified nearby some spiritual and also educational units. The brothels placed across "General Dragalina" Primary School and the Orthodox Church in Reșița Română were reported as the most eloquent cases in the matter. The pupils had to look perplexed at the frequent divergences between prostitutes and their clients, which degenerated into high violent conflicts even in the midday.⁶²

Three were the locations where prostitution was frequently practiced, as the reports of Reșița Police Station let us know.

Family of Francisc and Roza Crăciun held a hotel on Aureliu Popovici Street (Emperor Traian before) No. 10, for 120 lei/a day (accommodation and meal).⁶³ The same family owned in 1929 *Astra* Cinema and also had rented *Oltenia* Cinema for 12,000 lei monthly.⁶⁴ Iuliu Bocor was at the same time the owner of a brothel on Octavian Goga Street, No. 3, with 152 lei/a day (accommodation and meal).⁶⁵ Acting on own initiative, the Police Station of Oravița, capital of

⁵⁹ Ibid., 57.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 95; Joseph Erwin Țigla, *Biserici Romano-Catolice din arhidiaconatul Montan* (Reșița: ColorPrint, 2004), 110.

⁶¹ "Iarăși prostituția deghizată," in *Națiunea* II, 7 (Reșița, February 16, 1935): 2.

⁶² Articol signed by Rică, "Prostituția din Recița," in *Glasul Muncitorului Român* III, 32 (Reșița, August 11, 1935): 3

⁶³ SJANCS, *Comisariatul de Poliție Reșița 1928–1948*, Invent. No. 103, File No. 124/1940, f. 51.

⁶⁴ SJANCS, *Prefectura Județului Caraș 1926–1949*, Invent. No. 115, File No. 108/1926–1930, f. 82.

⁶⁵ SJANCS, *Comisariatul de Poliție Reșița 1928–1948*, Invent. No. 103, File no. 124/1940, f. 50.

Caraș County, emitted address No. 7565 in May 12, 1940 and demanded Reșița Police Station to profoundly verify the eventual illegal sex trafficking they were supposed to be practiced in the above named locations, and to extend such controls to other ones where, women practiced activities taken for promiscuous, in the guise of waitresses, housekeepers or maid servants.⁶⁶ The establishment owned by Perianu, Libertății Street No. 22 was another location where prostitution was practiced.⁶⁷

In May 20, 1940, Reșița Police Station answered the Police of the county's address and specified that in 1938, in order to combat the infantile prostitution, the ones who had been identified to prostitute for money in the guise of maids or waitresses had been expelled from Reșița. Some of those persons came back in the town, rented dwellings and went on with clandestine prostituting.⁶⁸ Exponential spreading of venereal diseases and impossibility to keep their record and control, made the sanitary authorities to tolerate activities connected to carnal desires for money in two locations in Reșița, as addresses 455/1938 and 78/1938 emitted by Reșița Police Station show.⁶⁹ Once the licenses of drinks selling had been repealed, the women working in the guise of waitresses lost their fictive jobs and so a new moment of expelling them took place. The situation recurred and those persons came once again back and went on with clandestine prostitution without any medical control and so the peril of spreading sexually transmitted diseases increased. In such a situation Reșița Police Station and Doctors Dimitrie Hohoiu and Iulia Ignea decided to be accepted 10 at a time prostitutes in the hotels of Bocor Iuliu and Crăciun Rozalia; those prostitutes were interdicted to resort to the town center and were obliged to medical controls every week.⁷⁰ It was a temporary solution to prevent infections with syphilis and gonorrhea, especially in the cases of the alone males who came from villages to earn their living in Reșița industrial units.⁷¹

The local authorities of public order concerning regulation of prostitution in Reșița gained finally an answer. Analyzing the report of Timișoara General Inspectorate of Sanitary care, No. 8367/September 25, 1940, the Ministry of Work, Health and Social Care emitted on order under No. 85165/October 30, 1940 with medical directions to be *ad litteram* used in the case of the waitresses in the hotels of Bocor Iuliu and Crăciun Roza(lia).⁷² Confronting that Order

⁶⁶ Ibid., f. 29.

⁶⁷ Ibid., dosar nr.60/1936, f. 75.

⁶⁸ Ibid., f. 30.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

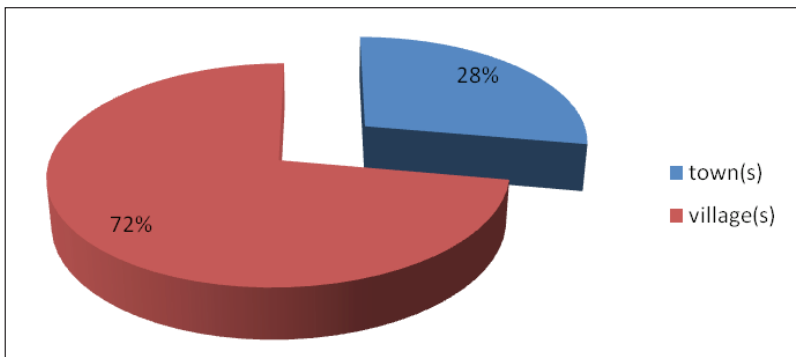
⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., f. 94.

with the Rules concerning prostitution in Reșița (Art. 10), the local Police Station found a non-conform situation, as the local Rules interdicted the prostitutes to live near churches or schools, and allowed them to live only on some streets: Vasile Alecsandri, Tudor Vladimirescu, Aurel Vlaicu, Petru Bandu, and Călărășilor.⁷³ The establishments of Bocor Iuliu and Crăciun Roza were closed by Reșița Sanitary Office at the request of Reșița Police Station, following Art. 297 in the Sanitary Law (Monitorul Oficial nr. 140, June 22, 1935) and Art. 30 in the Law on Public Establishments Control⁷⁴; the prostitutes were relocated down in the purlieu of the town. Hygienic poor conditions, accommodation levels surpassing and their location nearby spiritual-cultural units are some of the elements that led to above two establishments closing.⁷⁵

Analyzing the prostitutes registered in Reșița Police reports, I have identified 59 women of all ages, from teen-agers (15 years old) to experienced ones (48 years old).⁷⁶



STATISTICAL DATA BY THE PROSTITUTES' SOCIAL ORIGIN IN REȘIȚA

Analyzing the declarations the females in front of authorities of public order, I have found out that they practiced such services no matter their civil status: Nusbacher Lia, 19 years old, an unmarried and domestic women declared a revenue of 500 lei/month for practicing prostitution⁷⁷; Laiu Maria, 27 years old, married, maid servant had an average monthly earning of 800 lei⁷⁸, and Ana Iovanovici, 25 years old, unmarried had an average monthly earning of 1,000 lei.⁷⁹

⁷³ Ibid., f. 92, 95.

⁷⁴ Ibid., f. 91.

⁷⁵ Ibid., f. 91.

⁷⁶ Ibid., f. 3–12, 15–16, 19, 21–24, 34–36, 38–40, 42–45, 52–65, 69–74, 76, 78, 80–88.

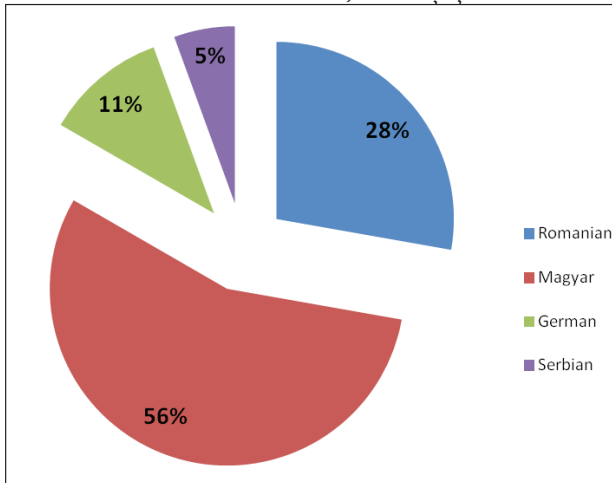
⁷⁷ Ibid., f. 44.

⁷⁸ Ibid., f. 22.

⁷⁹ Ibid., f. 45.

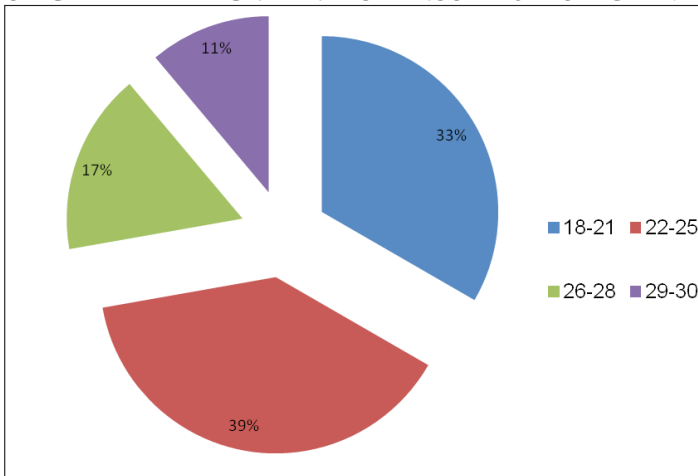
For the declarations in the file of the two brothels owned by Bocor Iuliu and Crăciun Roza, I might show that 18 women set there, 72% of them originated in villages.⁸⁰

STATISTICAL DATA BY CRITERIA OF PROSTITUTES' ETHNIC ORIGIN, IN REȘIȚA



So, the largest part of prostitutes in Reșița were of Magyar origin (56%) followed by those of Romanian origin (28%).⁸¹

STATISTICAL DATA BY CRITERIA OF PROSTITUTES' AGE IN REȘIȚA



⁸⁰ Ibid., f. 3–12, 15–16, 19, 21–24, 34–36, 38–40, 42–45, 52–65, 69–74, 76, 78, 80–88.

⁸¹ Ibid.

By age criteria, 39% of prostitutes were 22–25 years old, and only 11% were 29–30 years old.⁸²

The strong urbanizing process and industrialization led to a convergence of certain social strata to exploit the primary instincts of the working class and pecuniary benefiting. Prostitution or promiscuous activities interfered with important such strata: the medical or economic sphere and last but not least, the spiritual one; a conflictual impact was so generated especially within the frame of actions of the authorities called to resolve such situations.

Daily starvation and sustenance during World War I were malign traces that contributed to inter-war social morals shattering and facilitated so the venereal diseases coming out.

To stop prostitution extension, the authorities elaborated programs and legal norms to enforce the qualified institutions. The whole sphere of low morals was kept under observation by the local decisions of restriction and rules concerning the females who offered their bodies for money.

For prostitution in inter-war Reșița we might conclude that the largest part of such women came from out of town; they were young and unmarried, and so they found themselves a way to earn their living.

The social-moral status of woman and her part in society after World War I, together with the high rate of male mortality led to woman involving in activities that had belonged to males before, according to customs. Once becoming involuntary the main source of family income, the women concentrated their attention on pecuniary facile and even immoral opportunities.

Those practices generated by the living standards falling were certainly in contradiction with the moral-religious rules. Prostitution practicing in sanitary unsuitable environments led implicitly to progressive spreading of venereal diseases. Approaching this disputed subject, for long debated therefore, poses prostitution both as an antithetic element to social, medical and even religious parts of a society, and a result of a mixture of factors coming from the primary survival instinct.

LEGIslaȚIE ȘI MORAVURI ÎN REȘIȚA INTERBELICĂ

Rezumat

Prostituția era considerată un aspect social localizat la limita firavă dintre moravuri și necesități fiziologice, ce emana o delicată controversă, dezbătută prin tematici care atingeau anumite principii socio-religioase, fiind considerată vinovată de zdruncinarea mitului

⁸² Ibid.

familiei heterosexuale, apărută fie din necesitatea satisfacerii unor nevoi pecuniare, ori pur și simplu dintr-o deviație comportamentală.

Modul de viață dezorganizat, insalubru în cele mai dese cazuri, din timpul și după Primul Război Mondial, manifestat în special de populația rurală, au fost cauzele ce au pricinuit răspândirea unor maladii contagioase de tip veneric, ce puteau afecta iminent curba mortalității spre un trend ascendent.

Coroborat cu absorbția imensă de capital uman, urmare a unei puternice dezvoltări economice, fapt ce a generat modificări substanțiale în configurația demografică din arealul reșițean, urbanizarea și industrializarea masivă din mediile metalurgice au condus implicit spre o convergență a unor facțiuni sociale menite să exploateze instinctele primare ale clasei muncitoare, în beneficiul obținerii de foloase materiale.

Statisticile interbelice cărășene relevă existența a doi deținători de proprietăți imobiliare în Reșița, unde era recunoscută practicarea frecventă a actelor de moravuri ușoare. Familia Francisc și Roza Crăciun precum și Iuliu Bocor dețineau locații în a căror proximitate se vehicula ipoteza desfășurării activităților de prostituție infantilă și a traficului de carne vie. Foamea și subzistența impregnate în cotidianul primului război mondial constituie urmările conflictelor armate, ce au contribuit la zdruncinarea moralității în societatea interbelică, pricinuind astfel și facilitarea apariției bolilor venerice.

În virtutea menținerii prostituției într-un mediu restrictiv, care să nu permită perpetuări maligne, susținute și de un cadru legal bine articulat, autoritățile locale au întreprins acțiuni ce vizau activitatea curentă desfășurată în Reșița interbelică, cu scopul de a eradica orice tentativă de răspândire a consecințelor nefaste derivate din sfera plăcerilor carnale, oferite în scopuri mercantile.

În consecință, abordarea acestei controversate și îndelung dezbătute teme aduce în discuție prostituția odată ca element antitetice în raport cu componentele sociale, medicale și chiar religioase ale societății, iar pe de altă parte ca o rezultantă a unui conglomerat de factori izvorâți din instinctul primar al supraviețuirii.