

Censorship And The Interdiction Of Romanian Book Circulation In Transylvania Before 1918

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One of the most important elements of freedom in modern society is the absence of censorship. The right to uncensored print was gained by the majority of nations through a long ideological, political, and social dispute with the oligarchic forces on power. Important achievements in this direction were obtained under the "enlightened" regimes of emperors like Maria Theresa and Joseph II. Their regulations concerning that period have recently been analyzed by a remarkable French specialist, Jean Pierre Lavandier, who not long ago published two outstanding books on censorship in Austria, namely: *Le livre au temps de Marie-Thérèse. Codes des lois de censure du livre pour Les Pays Austro-Bohemiens (1740-1780) précédé d'un compendium sur l'histoire du concept de censure dans le temps*. Peter Lang, Bern-Vienne, 1993, and *Le livre au temps de Joseph II*, 1995. In both books the author surveys each law or imperial, chancery, or ecclesiastical rescript concerning the right of printing and circulation of books in the countries of the Empire, including Transylvania. For the Romanians in Transylvania these regulations were extremely important, since they facilitated the formation of a particular literature and culture of their own, and allowed them to enjoy the cultural achievements of their brethren over the mountains, which is of high importance in the building of a unitary culture and literature. There were however several hindrances against the building of a unitary national culture. It is well known that in Modernity, when some of the most important printing centers of Belgrade, Sibiu, or Orăștie had lost their importance, their place was superseded by other printing houses, not only by the one in Blaj (the printing press of the Greek Catholic Episcopal Court), but also by new printing houses in Brașov (Gött), Cluj (Barth, Petrus de Closius), Sibiu (Martin Hochmeister) and others, who printed Romanian books as well, previously approved by an appointed censor. The Viennese typographies of Ștefan Petrovici and Joseph Kurtzbök would do the same, just as later on the important Printing House of the University of Buda, which was to print censored Romanian books by V. Onișor, Samuil Micu, Gh. Șincai, Petru Maior,

Jacob Aaron and others. The free circulation of books on the two sides of the Carpathians was hindered though by several protectionist laws, by custom taxes, and restrictive regulations. Thus, even Saxon typographers suffered from restrictions to export Romanian books in the Romanian Principalities, as they did with other merchandise, and, mainly, weapons. Thus for instance, an article from 1841 in the newspaper *Der Siebenbürger Bote*¹ expressed hope for the modification of the measures that impeded books printed in Valachia to be brought into Austria. Thus, when the revolution of 1848 finally lifted the restrictions on the freedom of speech and print, the same newspaper published an enthusiastic article entitled *Censurfreiheit*² (Freedom of censure), which saluted the measure of the revolutionary government to suppress the legislation on censure from 14 March 1848. This happened on 14 April 1848, and on 26 July 1848 the editorial board came up again with an article, entitled *Pressachen*³ (Matters of the Press), which bluntly asked for the respect of the freedom of print in Transylvania, hoping that it would finally be applied. Bariț himself gladly welcomed the revolutionary measures about the freedom of print, as a *sine qua non* condition of social progress.⁴

Still, it did not happen, and those who hoped for greater liberties from the Austrian government were wrong. For Romanians, the end of the revolution brought some drastic changes, like preventing George Bariț from editing his *Journals* (Foaie pentru minte, inimă și literatură, Journal for the Mind, the Heart and Literature), and first of all the *Gazeta de Transilvania* (Transylvanian Gazette).⁵ This measure upset

¹ *Der Siebenbürger Bote*, LVI, 1841/ 9 (Febr. 2), p. 37. See also *Der Siebenbürger Bote*, LVI, 1841/48 (June 25), p. 212. It is also shown that after the breaking of the Turnu Roșu quarantine, the circulation of merchandise and people between Transylvania and Valachia intensified (*Siebenbürger Wochenblatt*, 1841/18, p. 192).

² *Censurfreiheit* (Freedom of censure), in *Der Siebenbürger Bote*, IX, 1848/25 (March 27), p. 97-100. The article is followed by poems on the freedom of the press.

³ *Pressachen* (Matters of the press), in *Der Siebenbürger Bote*, IX, 1848/61 (July 31), 241, and 62 (August 4), 246.

⁴ G. Bariț, *Unele idei practice despre libertatea tiparului* (Certain practical ideas about the freedom of print), in *Foaie pentru minte, inimă, și literatură* (Journal for the mind, the heart, and literature) XI, 1848/12, 93-95.

⁵ The ordinance of Governor Wohlgemuth for banning the *Gazeta de Transilvania* (Transylvanian Gazette) edited by G. Bariț because of criticizing the reorganization of Transylvania is published in the Saxon journals in Transylvania, like *Der Siebenbürger Bote*, LXV, 1850/41 (March 31), 191, and, II, 1850/22

Romanians, and one of them, Professor Atanasie Șandor from Arad, wrote to him in 1850, disappointed: “What damage your countrymen, the Saxons, are doing, and have been doing to us by stopping your renowned Gazette! Should God repay them accordingly!”¹ He would have been pleased however when the *Românul* (The Romanian) in Bucharest “gained license to freely enter through the royal Post in the Austrian states, and the honorable Chancery received subscriptions to this same journal.”² Voices against censorship and for the democratic application of freedom were heard also from the Saxons.³

The measures taken by the Austrian authorities to suspend George Bariț’s editing activities, and directed against the Romanian journals, which proved to be open to a critical attitude towards the status of the Romanians in Transylvania were followed by other dispositions restricting the press’ right to free expression. Being more and more afraid of the effects that a free press might have had over the people, the regulations about the press became more and more restrictive.⁴

In Valachia a withdrawal from the acquisitions of the revolution was also noticed. The Ottoman Porte addressed a telegram to the Caimacam of Moldavia by which it requires the abrogation of the freedom of the press and the re-introduction of censorship.⁵ As a consequence, a new law of the press was elaborated here as well, and the decree for its application was published in the *Buletinul oficial* (The Official Bulletin).⁶ In Transylvania the revolution’s acquisitions were also limited, and a return to state control of public opinion was attempted on all levels. Thus, on May 27, 1852 an *Imperial Patent* was issued, modified afterwards in 1867, 1871, and 1872, aiming at an increasing enthrallment of the press to the political power. This provided the deposition of a copy of any printed material to the Court of Law, the Supreme Court of Appeal, and the Ministry of Home Affairs, the deposition of a bail, and the strict observance of state order. Any critical manifestation about the regime could have been considered as an “undermining of state order” or as an

(March 18), 89.

¹ At. Șandor’s letter to G. Bariț on March 27/April 8 1850, in *George Bariț și contemporanii săi* (George Bariț and his contemporaries), vol. II., Bucharest: Minerva, 1975, 366.

² Letter on September 11, 1861. *ibid.*, 369.

³ *Kronstädter Zeitung*, I, 1849/1 (March 26), p.1. The article of Johann Gött.

⁴ *Der Siebenbürger Bote*, LXVI, 1851/116 (July 23), 551.

⁵ *Kronstädter Zeitung*, VIII, 1856/157 (Oct. 4), 710.

⁶ *Kronstädter Zeitung*, VIII, 1956/102 (June 28), 442.

“incitement to hatred against the nations” of the state, and thus the possibility that journalists be taken to Court became a daily practice. They were sued for the so-called “press-trials”, and for their judgment the so-called “Jury Courts” were instituted in Sibiu, Cluj, and Budapest, a fact which considerably increased the degree of state control over public opinion. At the same time the security measures at the frontiers were intensified, and draconic measures were taken against the import of Romanian books into Transylvania. This made George Bariț say in 1867: “Pity that Romanian gazettes are not free to enter our country”.¹

George Bariț also repeatedly complains about the way Romanian books and magazines arrive in Transylvania, and he is discontented with the too strict Austrian censorship, which hindered the better acquaintance with Romanian literature outside the Carpathians. This is what he wrote in 1853: “It is desirable that the literary commerce and references of the Principalities towards Austria should draw the attention of the said governments to set up a censor right in the capitals of the Principalities at the royal Agencies, and thus to facilitate the import of the censored books.”² In 1858 he returned to the question, writing again: “The products of Romanian literature that left the press in the last nine years, have remained completely unknown to the reading public. Thus, for example, nothing that was printed in Valachia or Moldavia is known in Transylvania, neither by name, nor from any catalogue of writers (except for the catalogue of Mr. Ioanid, which however contains less than half of the Romanian books published over a year), and whatever is printed in Transylvania or Hungary, is mostly ignored, and, what is more, widely despised in the Principalities. Therefore everybody can stay relaxed, since literary communication is non-existent. It is still nothing: Romanian language will not die out for this much, we know this for sure; its extinction may come from elsewhere.”³ The Theresian law that regulated book import in Transylvania seemed to him as outdated, thus he asked for its elimination as anachronic in 1862, when speaking about the

¹ G. Bariț, *Moldova și Țara Românească* (Moldavia and Valachia), in *Gazeta Transilvaniei* (Transylvanian Gazette), II, 1839/2, 67. See also the article *Necazul jurnalisticii* (The trouble with journalism), in *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, XXVII, 1864/51, 208.

² The same thing as in 1839. See the previous note.

³ G. Bariț, *Unele idei practice...*, p.93-95. See also *Revista română* (The Romanian journal), in *Foaie pentru minte...*, XXV, 1862/14, p. 106-108, and *Observații fugitive* (Fugitive observations), in *Foaie pentru minte...*, XXI, 1858/18, p. 95-96, and 19, p. 99-100.

hindrances that stopped the *Revista română* (Romanian Magazine) of George Sion to be diffused among the Romanians in Transylvania. Although, as editor Bariț says, “Mr. Sion took care to gain allowance from the Austrian government that his paper entered the Austrian provinces.” He is impeded nevertheless, thus his paper is practically unknown in Transylvania, so Bariț presents the previously published numbers to the readers, rhetorically asking in the end: “But how could it possibly arrive here, if the Theresian law that holds up everything printed in other countries in Romanian, Illyrian, and Jewish is still in power?”

The situation of the book was no better either. Șincai’s *Chronicle* was refused printing; several manuscripts sent for print to the Typography of the University of Buda remained in the state they had been sent.¹

In some cases, books were traced even after publication, and their authors were prosecuted and put through much harassment.

The best-known case is that of the *Fables* of D. Țichindeal², but in Modernity there are many such cases as well. Thus, for instance, the young student I.C. Drăgescu, author of the book *Noapțile carpatine sau Istoria martirilor libertății* (Nights in the Carpathians, or the History of the Martyrs of Freedom), eulogizing the deeds of Horia, Cloșca, and Crișan, and published in Pest in 1867, was forced to flee first to Graz, then to Turin, for fear of imminent imprisonment. From Italy, he wrote to Ioan Micu Moldovan in Blaj, asking for the text of his sentence, which was to be copied by Brother Alutan. He asked for “The verdict reached by the Court of Law on Horia”³ repeatedly, but in vain. The book

¹ The conclusion of the censoring committee, headed by the Roman-Catholic Bishop of Transylvania, Josif Mártonffy, ending the report about Șincai’s *Chronicle* remained proverbial: *Opus igne, auctor patibulo dignus*, that is, “the work is worthy of fire, and the author of the gallows”. Cf. Serafim Duicu, *Pe urmele lui Gheorghe Șincai* (On the footsteps of Gheorghe Șincai), Bucharest: Sport-Turism, 1983, 186.

² Nicolae Bocșan, *Confiscarea “Fabulelor” lui Țichindeal* (The confiscation of Țichindeal’s *Fables*), in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Cluj-Napoca* (The Annual of the History and Archeology Institute, Cluj-Napoca), XIX, 1976, 127-146.

³ State Archives, Cluj-Napoca Branch, *Ion Micu Moldovan* archival stock, doc. 10588 from July 17, 1867. See also Ioana Botezan, *Repertoriul corespondenței lui Ion Micu Moldovan* (The repertory of Ion Micu Moldovan’s correspondence), Cluj-Napoca: Academy Library, vol. IV, 2000, and Nicolae Coroiu, “*Noapțile Carpatine*” ale lui I.C. Drăgescu. *O mică amintire*. (I.C. Drăgescu’s “Nights in the Carpathians”. A small remembrance.) in *Cultura creștină* (Christian culture).

however was circulated with the help of his friends in Blaj, who distributed it together with schoolbooks. When writing a new book in Turin, *Amor și patrie* (Love and Motherland), he sent several copies of it to Blaj, using the pseudonym D. Neagoe.¹

Another case of censorship after publication was the book of Ioan Russu-Șirianu on serfdom; the case was halted in the end only due to the death of the author.² In these circumstances, when certain books and magazines were hunted down in Transylvania, false titles were printed on the book cover in order to beguile the authorities. Then, there was the secret book trade, passing books through the “cuckoo customs” (i.e., illegally), as Badea Cârțan had been doing for years. He got caught in the end, and in 1903 a “stock” of 4858 titles, in 76621 copies was confiscated from him.³ The Hungarian customs retained books regularly, and when the Romanian Consulate in Budapest asked for explanations, an eight-page bibliographic list of 217 entries and 230 titles was handed to them. The Romanian press in Transylvania commented on such cases of interdiction several times.

Censuring is strongly felt by all those who tried to publish newspapers in Romanian on their own account. Their requests were declined from the very beginning, or postponed for years on end. Such a request of Cipariu for instance, presented in 1839, was only answered in 1845; in other cases gazettes were suppressed after just a few numbers (the *Expatriatul* (*The Exiled*) of Cezar Bolliac).

Austrian censorship in Transylvania doubtlessly had an anti-national face, forbidding the people it had under control to freely express their thoughts and feelings. Many pages have been written about the arbitrariness and abuse of this regime of oppression, which easily condemned young Romanians for wearing tricolor cockades, or expelled from schools those who displayed the tricolor flag in visible places. The press could not criticize except in the limits well fixed by the law, and no

XVII, 1937/4-5, 307.

¹ State Archives, Cluj-Napoca Branch, *Ion Micu Moldovan* archival stock, doc. 6053: *Însemnări asupra difuzării romanului istoric “Noaptele carpatine” și a lucrării lui D. Neagoe “Amor și Patrie”* (26 exemplare) (Notes on the circulation of the historical novel “Nights in the Carpathians” and D. Neagoe’s work “Love and Motherland”). (26 copies).

² *Procesul lui Ion Russu-Șirianu* (Ion Russu-Șirianu’s trial), in the *Tribuna* (The tribune) of Arad.

³ Vasile Curticăreanu, *Mișcarea culturală românească pentru unirea din 1918* (The Romanian cultural movement for the Union in 1918), Bucharest: Științifică. 1968, 181.

Romanian editor could escape being summoned to Court for the crime of having spoken about the rights and liberties that the Romanian people should have acceded to. Between 1893 and 1903, Romanian journalists from Transylvania had to pay retribution of 40,000 crowns, and do 17 years of prison for imaginary press crimes¹; the great writers Slavici and Goga were imprisoned in Vác and Szeged, successively, for having spoken in favor of those troubled and vexed by shameful laws, since national suppression went hand in hand with a corrupt and anachronistic elective system, repeatedly unmasked in front of Europe by Scotus Viator, Roberto Fava, or Björnson, or other fiery defenders of the Romanian cause. Press crimes were considered even the most harmless expressions referring to the Latin origin of Romanians or to the fact that Romanians in Transylvania and over the mountains pertained to the same nation. The Austro-Hungarian dualist censorship after 1867 was careful that nothing should contribute to the formation of a strong national consciousness, so that children should be alienated from the common life of their nation, and should be implanted with ideas of obedience towards the state. Thus, for instance, Octavian Goga's play, *Domnul notar* (The notary), the staging of which at the National Theater in Bucharest was a true triumph, was prohibited to enter Transylvania, and all the copies found were confiscated.²

It was not for the first time that Austro-Hungarian authorities made use of such extreme means. Fearing the fact that such books directly contributed to raising the nation's national consciousness, the Ministry of Instruction and the Cults permanently observed that Romanian school children would not be infested with an adequate ideology. Thus, for instance, an 1877 issue of the magazine *Cărțile săteanului român* (The books of the Romanian peasant) edited in Gherla published a list of Romanian books the circulation of which was banned in Transylvania (among which also some magazines and newspapers). Here is the list published:

¹ *Manifestul presei românești din Ungaria către presa franceză* (The manifesto of the Romanian press in Hungary for the French press), in *Tribuna*, XIII, 1909/17' (August 11/24), p.1.

² *Confiscarea "Domnului notar" în Blaj* (The confiscation of "The notary" in Blaj), in *Foaia poporului* (The people's journal), XXII, 1914/15 (April 6/19), 18. The book was searched at the Seminary bookshop. *Dl. Notar confiscat* (The notary confiscated), *ibid.*, p. 4. The play was confiscated in Sibiu, at the *Foaia poporului* (The people's readings) bookshop.

1. *Lepturariu românesc* (A reader in Romanian literature) by Aron Pumnul, 2. *Atlante geografic* (A geographical atlas) by A.T. Laurian, 3. *Istoria românilor* (The history of Romanians) by A.T. Laurian, 4. *Elemente de geografie* (Elements of geography) by G. Vlădescu, 5. *Elemente de geografie fizică și politică* (Elements of physical and political geography) by M. Mihăescu, 6. *Misiunea Occidentului latin în Orientele Europei* (The mission of the Latin West in Eastern Europe), 7. the newspaper *Românul* (The Romanian), 8. *Charta Daciei* (The Charta of Dacia) by Zamfiropol, 9. *Abecedar pentru școalele române* (A primer for Romanian schools) by V. Petri, 10. *Manual de istoria patriei pentru școalele populare române din Ardeal* (Manual of history for Romanian popular schools in Transylvania), by I. M. Moldovan, 11. *Elemente de istoria Transilvaniei pentru învățători și școale populare române* (Elements of Transylvanian history for Romanian teachers and popular schools), by I.V. Russu, 12. *Istoria Ungariei în compendiu* (A compendium of Hungarian history) by Meletie Drăghici, 13. *Jidovul talmudist* (The talmudist Jew) by Grisip, 14. *Geografia țărilor de sub Coroana Ungariei* (The geography of the countries under the Hungarian Crown) by D. Varna, 15. *Carte de lectură pentru școalele românești* (A reader for Romanian schools) by Visarion Roman, 16. *Legendariu pentru clasa a 2-a a școlilor populare* (A reader for the second grade of popular schools), by Ștefan Pop, 17. *Istoria românilor* (Romanian history) by Ioan Tuducescu.¹ Other circulars sent directly to the bishoprics revealed that other manuals were also included into this category. The list sent by the Hungarian Ministry of the Cults to the Episcopal Vicar of Oradea, Heroteu Beleşiu, in 1881 also contained *Istoria universală* (World history) by dr. Georgiu Popa from Arad, *Geografia Ungariei* (The geography of Hungary) by N. Pop Brătianu, and *Introducere în geografie* (Introduction to geography) by Ioan Tuducescu. The decision coming from the top was communicated to the archdeaconry with the warning: “Whoever uses a book or means of education which are forbidden by the government, must be punished according to the circumstances with a fee of up to 300 florins and imprisonment for up to 2 months or even the loss of his office.”²

¹ *Mai multe cărți au fost osândite și oprite din școală* (More books were convicted and banned from schools), in *Cărțile săteanului român* (The books of the Romanian peasant), 1, 1877/9, p.1. The announcement was followed by the article *Libertatea de presă în Ungaria* (The freedom of the press in Hungary).

² State Archives, Oradea Branch. Oradea Orthodox Parish stock, folder 287/1882-83, p. 22.

From the same source we find that in 1889 more books are banned¹: 1. *Dorul românului* (The Romanian's longing), a collection of songs by N.D. Popescu, 2. *Arion*, a collection of songs compiled by Hanu Dariu (Braşov), 3. Minstrel show songs (Braşov), 4. *Amor și patrie* (Love and homeland) by Brutu Catone Horia [a pseudonym of I.C. Drăgescu – author's note], Turin, 1889.

It should be noticed that the government carefully observed not only schoolbooks, but also books containing all sorts of national poetry and folk songs, which could usually be found in the homes of Romanian peasants or artisans and clerks in the towns. Thus, they tried to “protect” the public from the wrong influence of songs with a high patriotic character. In addition, some religious books were also banned, such as the *Elemente de biblie și istorie bisericească pentru școlile populare* (Elements of the Bible and church history for popular schools) by Iosif Aron, approved by the Arad and Caransebeș consistories.² Although these manuals were previously approved by the consistory of a bishopric, which nevertheless had to take into account governmental recommendations, the government sometimes used its right to control, and interdicted their use in schools even after they were published.

Other schoolbooks follow in the line, and fall under the measure of restriction of the competent forums. Having had the possibility, in 2000, to work in the Viennese archives for a short time, I discovered reports on schoolbooks from the lowest to the highest grades, blamed for having contained dangerous formulations of which the authorities did not approve. Thus, for instance, there was a series of formulations denounced as inadequate in schoolbooks like: *Manual de istoria românilor pentru clasa a IV-a secundară* (Manual for the history of Romanians for the 4th grade) by Th. Aguletti, former school inspector, published in Bucharest at the Press of the National Bookstore Cooperative Society, 1906; *Carte de citire pentru clasa a III-a primară urbană* (Reading manual for the 3rd

¹ Viorel Faur, *Contribuții la istoricul bibliotecii române din Crișana, 1830-1940* (Contributions to the history of the Romanian library of Crișana, 1830-1940), Oradea, 1995. Another circular withdraws the second edition of I. Papiu's *Reader*.

² *O carte oprită de guvern* (A book banned by the Government), in *Tribuna*, XIV, 1910/130 (June 22/July 3), p. 7. Șt. O. Iosif's play, *Zorile* (The dawn) was another book that the Government forbade to enter Transylvania, by refusing it the right to be transported by postal service because it “might cause agitation against the Hungarian nation”. Cf. Ion Bozdog, *Statul polițist* (The police state) Braşov, 1944, 135.

grade urbane primary school), by G.I. Ionescu-Sion, V.Gr. Borgovan, Ch. Stoienescu, N. Costescu, and G.A. Dima, awarded by the Ministry of Public Instruction in 1903, published at the National Bookstore in 1908 (incriminated for the formulations on pages 63-98, regarding the “Romanian provinces”); *Românii din țările locuite de români. Manual de geografie pentru uzul clasei a IV-a* (Romanians in Romanian-inhabited countries. Manual of geography for the use of the 4th grade), written according to the analytical program of 1899 by G.M. Murgoci, I. Popa-Burca, a manual that had a statement about Hungary not approved by the authorities; *Pământul. Text-atlas pentru clasa a IV-a primară* (The Earth. Text-atlas for the 4th grade primary school), by S. Mehedinți, Alcalay, 1904, with the chapter called “Rumänische Länder” on page 39, not meeting the official Austro-Hungarian thinking; *Carte de cetire pentru clasa a IV-a primară urbană* (Reading manual for the 4th grade urbane primary school), by G.D. Scraba, St. Negulescu, and Gr. Teodosiu, 3rd edition; *Harta României și a țărilor vecine* (A map of Romania and the neighboring countries), by Gr. Bejan; *Patria mea. Geografie pentru clasa a III-a* (My Homeland. Geography for the 3rd grade), by Gr. Patriciu, Ion I. Onu, Ion I. Teodoru, published by the Steinberg bookstore in 1906; *Harta geografică a României cu țările învecinate* (A geographical map of Romania and the neighboring countries), by Vasile T. Niculescu, Ieremia Vlădescu, and Ioan C. Popescu; *Text Atlas România și țările locuite de români* (Text-atlas of Romania and the countries inhabited by Romanians), by S. Mehedinți, Alcalay, 1906; *Manual de istoria românilor* (Manual for the history of Romanians), by Gr. Tocilescu, Bucharest, 1900; *Geografia României și a țărilor locuite de români* (The geography of Romania and the countries inhabited by Romanians), by P. Dulfu, Dima Cristescu, and Fl. Cristescu, Bucharest, 1907.

All in all, the list contained 11 didactic manuals that were forbidden to enter Austro-Hungary for fear they should corrupt the minds of Romanian children in Transylvania, offering them a “false” image of their nation. The hunt for such “faults” intensified in Austro-Hungary especially following the adoption of Apponyi’s famous law from 1907 that caused so much agitation amongst Romanians, and launched a wave of protests; the law intended by every means the “forced magyarization” of all Romanians inside the Empire, by adopting Hungarian as the official language in any circumstances. This is the time when the student Octavian Goga is expelled from the Hungarian gymnasium in Sibiu, forced to transfer to the Romanian gymnasium in Brașov, and when a great number of youngsters of all kinds were expelled from the schools of

the Empire. There is another case in Blaj, in 1914, when three students from the upper course needed to cross the mountains into Romania, accused of nationalist propaganda. Otherwise, Austro-Hungarian authorities interdicted even a novel like *Sanin* by Artsybashev to enter the country, causing in fact exactly the opposite, as “the same Hungarian intellectual society asks for in whisper, and reads with greed the Russian novel” (in the newspaper *Tribuna*, 1909/52).

Special laws of censorship were established by the German occupation of the Romanian capital during the First World War. Several normative acts were set up for a real state of siege in the occupied Bucharest, and one of the first acts of the German governor of Bucharest was to elaborate an *Ordinance Relative to the Establishment of Censorship*. Folder no. 1043 (P.A. Liasse Krieg 59 b p. 64 bearing the specification *Verordnungsblatt der Militär Verwaltung*) of the Viennese Archives contains this parallel German-Romanian text, dated January 9, 1917/no. 766, which specifies:

- “1. All the products of the press, as well as all other reproductions of scripts and paintings produced to be diffused by means mechanical or chemical, including musical notes, are subject to the censure of the Military Administration of Romania. Censure will be executed at the Office of Censure of the Press Section serving the Military Administration of Romania.
2. Theatrical and canto representations, or any other kind of declamation, as well as cinematographic or cinematographic-like representations may be undertaken only once the Office of Censure approved them.
3. Whoever makes and distributes prints without permission will be condemned to prison up to two years and fined up to 3000 marks.”

New ones, regarding or bringing specifications from other domains of activity, completed these general dispositions in time. Thus, with no. 1124/January 16, 1917 an *Ordinance Relative to Meetings and Gatherings* was made public, which specifies in article 1: “Outdoor meetings are forbidden”, and in article 2, that “Public meetings are prohibited.” The military government conceived all kinds of “declarations of loyalty”, which had to be signed by every citizen (using formulas such as “I swear to obey” etc.), with special regulations regarding publications, cultivation of plough-lands (leaving them fallow was considered sabotage), etc. Thus German military censorship during the First World War meant a resounding example of control of the state over the population, by means of a well thought out system of decrees and ordinances, separately published under the very title of *Decrees and*

Ordinances. The collection of ordinances then published anticipated the measures taken by the Nazis later on. They were inaugurated by the *Publication*, on 22 December 1916, by the military governor of Bucharest, and were to constitute an example of what a military power of occupation could do. The measures were so severe and restrictive that they were meant to cut off any initiatives of an ordinary citizen, and reminded one just a little of the similar Austrian decrees, which kept the Romanians in Transylvania under continuous observation for several centuries. Any national movement was repressed in its very roots, and the Viennese archives are filled with folders of the type *Romanian Irredentist*, which recorded the reports of well-paid agents, regarding any movement or tentative of manifestation of a Romanian national character in Transylvania. All these events, facts, and actions are reported with an excessive scrupulosity to the superiors in the Ministry, some of them even contain the measures to take, and the solutions to prevent these. Only thus could the “police state”, as a Romanian journalist called it in a book, maintain itself for such an excessively long time, imposing its political power over countries and peoples of Central and Eastern Europe, who were naturally able to liberate themselves in 1918.