

**Uses and Abuses of Professional Deontology  
A Case History of the Bucharest Journalists' Trade Union - the 'first instance  
court' for Romanian journalists**

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**Abstract:** The documents presented in this article have not been previously published and present the journalists' self-regulation means – the honorary jury. The affiliation to a professional association gives one the right to hold accountable the person/persons guilty of disciplinary offences in violation of the association's statute and of the profession's norms. All documents make reference to the activity of the honorary jury of the Bucharest Journalists' Trade Union and are part of a private collection – the Eugen Filotti Fund.

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**Explanatory note**

*There* were numerous types of associations of Romanian journalists, but only a few of them promoted regulations concerning access to the profession, rules of conduct, professional values, etc. The first association was the Society of the Press (Bucharest, 1889), which also included in its structure the Press Trade Union. The General Association of the Press (Bucharest, 1913), the Union of Professional Journalists (1919) were only a few of the most representative ones. But the Bucharest Journalists' Trade Union, an organization with European prestige, which – as the documents presented below show – included prestigious journalists but also persons with uncertain professional status remained the most exclusive.

**A few petitions without resolutions**

The series of documents starts with petitions that have no resolutions or other accompanying documents – they were either lost, or never existed. It is possible that some of the facts reported were not considered so serious by BJTU<sup>1</sup> as to justify a recording, hearings with witnesses, etc. For instance, on August 12, 1914, Zamfir C. Arbure<sup>2</sup> addresses “The Chairman of the Press Trade Union” concerning the existence of an honorary jury that would analyze the complaint of Russian

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<sup>1</sup> Abbreviations used throughout the text: BJTU – Bucharest Journalists' Trade Union; GAP – General Association of the Press; UPJ – Union of Professional Journalists; GARP – The General Association of the Romanian Press

<sup>2</sup> Zamfir Arbore (1848-1933), Romanian journalist and writer.

journalist Wictoroff Toporkoff, a political correspondent of the *Riecci* newspaper in Petersburg. He had been expelled from Romania on July 29, on which occasion he was insulted by newspaper *Universul* (no. 209) with the epithet “Bulgarian spy”. Arbure presented all the documents necessary to prove “my client’s honour”.<sup>1</sup>

In the next case, the Committee discusses in the sessions on May 22 and May 29, 1920, George Caliga’s complaint, without making a decision, as the Trade Union’s Secretary C. Demetrescu’s notes reveal: “After the reception of some anonymous letters addressed to the management of the newspapers *Minerva* and *Seara* – with which I collaborated – supported by a calumnious statement of an alleged journalist, Mr. G. Filip, the acting administrator of these newspapers, laid me off, without conducting any other investigations. As Mr. G. Cantacuzino, the owner of these papers did not want to listen to my explanations either, and consequently confirmed this calumny through his approval of the dismissal, I kindly ask you [...] to immediately convene the extraordinary general assembly to judge the incident and give due justice to whom deserves it.”<sup>2</sup>

Here is another unsolved petition. Matei Georghiu, editor of *Adevărul* complains to the BJTU Chairman on November 30, 1923 that he went to the editorial office of newspaper *Argus* “to settle some telegram accounts, but the then editorial secretary of this newspaper refused to acknowledge the payments made. Outraged by such an attitude” he told the secretary (Kogler) that he was finished talking to him. The host asked the guest to leave. Moreover, “discontent with the bare use of these words, he flies at me and taking me by my arm he throws me out. I forced him back and after the newspaper’s administrator, Mr. Valentin, and others interfered, I waited for the Director, Mr. Pauker to come as he promised he would interfere and solve the secretary’s impertinence [...] something that has not happened until this very day, although I showed much, too much patience. So as not to be forced to take the matter in my own hands, I kindly ask you to call for an investigation of the case, following the appropriate procedures.”<sup>3</sup> The document was discussed in the Committee’s December 4, 1923 session, but the case file does not include details.

“I am starving!” warned Constantin I. Apostolescu (who resided in Bucharest, at 15 Puțu cu apă rece St.) in his complaint addressed to the BJTU Chairman on November 5, 1923. In June 1922 he obtained a hiring promise from Sever Bocu, the director of the new daily *România*. For this purpose he had been recommended by Mih. Popovici. He was to be hired as of September 15 the latest; he had no doubt about this, given that both Bocu and Popovici were serious members of Parliament. As the employment process was not being finalized, on November 2, he discussed with Sever Bocu, but Bocu told him that he could not employ him. “As a result – writes the petitioner – I am today as I was yesterday, as I have for the past year – unemployed [...] I find myself threatened by starvation and indigence together with my family whose sole support I am... I am starving because as everything has a limit, the last refuge, the help is closed for me [...] The

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<sup>1</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 188.

<sup>2</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 189.

<sup>3</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 158.

Trade Union – through the committee and through the support of the members who know that I am not reluctant to work, on the contrary – most kindly granted me due help, and the people who also helped me meet my needs would of course be inclined now to doubt the peculiar result caused by the inhumane violation of a commitment that I strove to fulfil [...] The Trade Union's role is not limited to providing financial aid, but it consists first and foremost in safeguarding its members' rights and making those prevail, in defending their dignity and life [...] I request either that the commitment made on the date included in this account be kept or that I be offered the severance pay usually granted to employees who are not given formal notice of discharge – although the financial loss caused to me greatly exceeds compulsory compensation.”<sup>1</sup> There is no resolution included in the document, but only highlights of the excerpt in which the petitioner says he received due help from the Trade Union.<sup>2</sup>

### **The dispute between C. C. Bacalbaşa and Anton Camburopol**

On April 11, 1922, the honorary jury meets, with Ion Minulescu as an alternate member instead of C. Bacalbaşa, who filled a complaint against Camburopol. Hearings take place, followed by a break during which the accused presents a written statement showing that he did not question his colleague's honourableness, which he regretted. In fact, Bacalbaşa was a member of the commission drafting the somewhat questionable rent law. The jury decided to punish the perpetrator by admonition (seven votes for) while two votes supported his suspension from the position of BJTU member (S. Pauker and C. Demetrescu sign).<sup>3</sup>

### **Bartolomeu Cecropide versus *Dacia***

Lieutenant colonel St. Zăvoianu, the director of newspaper *Dacia* addresses the BJTU board on May 21, 1922, in a four-page memorandum which we summarize. In 1921, at the Trade Union's proposal, Zăvoianu organized arbitration for the solution of a dispute between B. Cecropide – who had been recently laid off – and newspaper *Dacia* (where the officer was acting administrator). But *Dacia*'s managing board did not agree with the arbitration and chose to go to trial. However, the appointed arbiters decided to try the case and sentenced newspaper *Dacia* to pay Cecropide his three months salary. Moreover, the General Association of the Press that had also been notified, asked Zăvoianu to compensate Cecropide from his very salary. Moreover, GAP expels the colonel without a hearing for not having carried out the compensation decision (GAP assumed the decision of the BJTU arbitration). Or, so that the situation be made right, Zăvoianu calls for the appointment of an honorary jury made up “from a delegate of the BJTU, a newspaper director I appoint and a member of the Court of Appeals or Cassation, to investigate my role in the entire matter and especially if by not paying the amount requested by the

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<sup>1</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 157.

<sup>2</sup> C.I. Apostolescu had worked as editorial secretary of Cluj newspaper *Înfrăţirea* (1921) then of *Universul*, and was hoping to work for *România*.

<sup>3</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 173.

arbitration decision from my own salary instead of newspaper *Dacia* – whose trustee I was – I became guilty of breaking a contract, and therefore a promise.”<sup>1</sup> We found eight documents in the case file.

1. A “mandate for the arbiters of the dispute with Mr. Cecropide” which shows that “in the judgment of the dispute the standard commitment contract between directors and journalists is not considered valid, in abeyance (? n.n.) from the start due to its (violation) observation by the journalists themselves and to the disappearance of the Union of Professional Journalists”.<sup>2</sup> Although he personally agreed to pay three salaries as severance pay to the laid off journalist, his superiors did not agree, Zăvoianu states.
2. An official letter signed by C. Demetrescu on behalf of BJTU, through which Zăvoianu was informed that the arbiters held the contract between *Dacia* and Cecropide (signed in September 1920) to be valid and that the newspaper’s administration had accepted the agreement with UPJ concerning the notice time limit. Consequently, the contract gave him the right to receive a salary for three months, during which time he would work – he would be at *Dacia*’s management’s command.<sup>3</sup>
3. A written record by GARP which shows that three journalists from *Dacia* were heard. They confirmed that Cecropide was hired on September 17, 1920; consequently he had a right to notice.
4. The official letter signed by C. Costaforu, the GARP Chairman (on November 14, 1920) informing Zăvoianu that the members of the Committee were not willing to resume the investigation of the conflict and suggesting that the matter be taken to court.
5. An official letter by BJTU (from April 9, 1921) reminding Zăvoianu as director and acting administrator of *Dacia* that he was due to pay 9.000 lei to B. Cecropide.
6. An official letter by GARP from June 13, 1921, inviting Zăvoianu to come before the GARP Committee to explain why he did not carry out the decision of the arbitration commission.
7. An official letter by GARP, from July 8, 1921, summoning again the colonel to enforce the arbitration decision.
8. The letter sent by GARP to Zăvoianu, informing him about the decision of the Committee from September 23, 1921, stating that he had violated Article 8 of the Statutes, for which reason his GARP membership was terminated, and about his right to appeal the decision at the general meeting.

Unfortunately, there are no available details concerning the solution of this case.

### **Pamfil Șeicaru versus *Viitorul***

On December 22, 1922, Pamfil Șeicaru filed a complaint with BJTU requesting the adjudication of the fact that newspaper *Viitorul* (in the same day edition) accused

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<sup>1</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 163.

<sup>2</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 164.

<sup>3</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 165.

him – through innuendo – “that I tried to blackmail Mr. C. Banu, the Minister of Arts”. Since the jury could not meet, on February 23, 1923 he supplements his request and proposes that the reparation be made after the annual general meeting. As a result, on March 7, 1923, the jury adjudicated “the dispute and determined that the accusation was groundless, having resulted from misinformation”.<sup>1</sup>

### **Virgiliu St. Iosif versus newspaper *Carpații***

On March 8, 1924, the BJTU Chairman is asked to convene the honorary jury by a colleague – Virgiliu St. Iosif, the director of the newspaper *Gazeta Transilvaniei*. Moreover, he requests that Al. Tisescu, the director of the newspaper *Carpații* (Brașov) and N. Karnabat, the editor of the same newspaper, both members of the BJTU be called before the jury.<sup>2</sup>

What had happened? The newspaper *Carpații* (in issue 221, March 1924) had published the article “The attitude of the blackmailers from *Gazeta Transilvaniei*,” considered by the petitioner a “defamatory text, affecting my prestige, honesty and honour”.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, in the newspaper charged<sup>4</sup>, *Gazeta Transilvaniei*’s editorial office is accused of having started a campaign against the cinema theatre functioning in the building of the National Theatre in the locality, for the reason that an obscene film was screened. An investigation was started, proving that such a film had been shown at the restaurant “La Cerbu”, whose owners were sanctioned. Although they know the truth, the journalists from *Gazeta*... “are making pressures on the administration of the cinema theatre from the National Theatre, they are urging the public to boycott this cinema theatre. Given that the administration of the cinema theatre [...] did not react to these manipulations, the blackmailers moved from pressures to making this cinema theatre’s administration responsible for a deed committed by someone else, in another premises”.

Here is what was printed in *Gazeta Transilvaniei*<sup>5</sup>: “The pornographic film from Brașov. The press charlatans. The so called liberal – or whatever it is called – newspaper defends its owner, the tenant of the National Theatre. It is its right, for it receives from him a 10.000 lei monthly subsidy. But the fallacies it publishes believing that it can mislead the public opinion, fallacies verge on roguery and blackmail. We will not lower ourselves to having a discussion with this filthy lampoon [...] showing that the film was shown at the theatre and subsequently at the above mentioned place.”

The scandal escalates. The newspaper *Viitorul* publishes the article “From the file of Ardeal nationalists”<sup>6</sup> according to which “a recent issue of *Gazeta Transilvaniei* included an article about ‘the Saxon events’ in which the author asks the Saxons’ support against Romanian nationalist policy. We are asking if the

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<sup>1</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 155.

<sup>2</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 126.

<sup>3</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 126.

<sup>4</sup> *Carpații*, Year IV, no. 221, Brașov, Friday, March 7, 1924, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, Year LXXXVII, no. 25, Brașov, Friday, March 7, 1924, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> *Viitorul*, Year 17, no. 4,829, Saturday, April 12, 1924, p. 3.

initials ‘v.b.’ – with which this sinister article is signed – hide Mr. Victor Braniște. In this case it would be good to also be informed about certain receipts, found in the Budapest archives, indicative of the past activity of the today nationalist, receipts signed in full name.”

This case file included various documents. Among them, a certified copy of a receipt through which Valeriu Braniște receives on behalf of the *Gazeta Transilvaniei*’s administration 3,000 lei (three thousand lei) from Mișu Fotino, the director of the city theatre (funded by Club Înfrățirea), amount representing “the tax for advertisements published between December 20, 1920 and January 20, 1921.”<sup>1</sup>

The meeting of the honorary jury takes place on April 19 and is attended by the two persons involved. But there is no quorum of the jury, so a new meeting will be necessary. However, Al. Tisescu assumes full responsibility for the article in question, Karnabat being innocent. Hearings are organized, but a new date is set for the delivery of a decision.<sup>2</sup>

On April 25, 1924, Virgiliu St. Iosif sends a new memorandum to the BJTU Chairman, showing that Al. Tisescu launched the accusation of blackmail that *Gazeta Transilvaniei* had presumably used against Club Înfrățirea from Brașov, but brings evidence that the Club received money from the named publication as payment for advertising.

The case file is filled with memoranda, notes, and explanations.

In the end, the jury decides “to enforce in Mr. Al. Tisescu’s case the first degree of punishment stipulated by Article – of the Statutes, i.e. an admonition.”<sup>3</sup>

### **The case Dașcovici versus *Universul***

N. Dașcovici<sup>4</sup> will also address the BJTU Chairman, on June 5, 1925, after returning from a trip to Czechoslovakia, that several journalists had made.

He complains that in an article published in *Universul* he was described as “a publicist with paid opinions who would compromise the Romanian press in Prague.” Since a week after, the administration of newspaper *Universul* had not yet published a text “to restore the truth,” based on Article 32 in the Statute, Dașcovici asks that the honorary jury be convened and Stelian Popescu, the newspaper’s director be summoned “to prove his statement in the mentioned article and the calumnious conclusion resulting from it for my entire career as a publicist.”<sup>5</sup> For this reason, the honorary jury is convened on June 8, at 9:00 pm.

What had happened? On May 27, 1925, an unsigned article was published on the first page of newspaper *Universul*, with the headline “More modesty would not hurt,” and the subheading “Respect for the restoration of historical truth” indicating that Dașcovici received 10.000 lei from the mayor of Constanța to write favourable articles (more concretely, articles supporting the idea that Constanța

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<sup>1</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 131.

<sup>2</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 148.

<sup>3</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 151.

<sup>4</sup> Nicolae Dașcovici (1888-1969, Bucharest), was a jurist, historian and publicist, a member of the Romanian Academy

<sup>5</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 96.

should not become a port). According to the cited journalist – Th. Andreescu-Rigo – the paid articles were printed in newspaper *Dacia* (issues no. 171, 183, 200) and in *Argus* (issue no. 179). “The same Mr. Daşcovici is representing today the Romanian press in Prague!” the *Universul* editors marvelled.

On June 6, 1925, Stelian Popescu answers the BJTU Chairman asking him to postpone the judgment because he had to go to Ploieşti to a public meeting. On June 9, the honorary jury made up of C. Demetrescu, chairman, I. Nădejde, M. Mora, R. Anastasiu, R. Seişeanu, Barbu Voinescu, N. Georgescu, Eugen Filotti and Em. Ciuceanu convenes where to interrogate the two – Daşcovici and Popescu. The director of *Universul* proves that the incriminated article reproduced information from a leaflet published by Andreescu-Rigo, says that he agreed to the publication of the text, that he knows the author but that he will only reveal the name in court. Why has Daşcovici not exculpated himself yet? Popescu asks. Daşcovici says that “he cannot accept the publication of attacks against a fellow member of the Trade Union without accepting at the same time to support the same accusations and to answer for them before the jury. As to the leaflet, he says that he neither has it nor does he believe that it deserves an answer. Other reasons follow – Popescu “challenges the jury’s and any person’s right to pass an opinion, because that would equate to the jury censoring the newspapers [...] as a newspaper director, he does not accept to be judged by the jury and he does not assume responsibility for the article.” He does not say the name of the author; he only says that the author is not a BJTU member. The jury decides the removal of the director of *Universul* from the case “while Mr. N. Daşcovici can seek satisfaction as he sees fit”.<sup>1</sup> It is important to remember that at the time, N. Daşcovici was a professor and BJTU Vice President.

### **The Corneliu Moldovanu – Pamfil Şeicaru case**

On October 24, 1925, Corneliu Moldovanu, a BJTU member, General Director of theatres and director of the National Theatre in Bucharest addressed C. Demetrescu, the Trade Union’s Chairman, asking him to convene the Honorary Council “to give me due satisfaction against Mr. Pamfil Şeicaru who is accusing me of dishonesty in newspaper *Cuvântul* (issues no. 286, 289 and 290 here enclosed).” And he enclosed copies of three newspapers.<sup>2</sup>

The October 18, 1925 issue of *Cuvântul* had carried on page 2 a lengthy article signed by Pamfil Şeicaru – “The shamelessness from the National Theatre – Master Manole by V. Eftimiu” in which he stated that “Master Manole” ballad “was waiting for a great poet, capable of detaching the metaphysical meaning of symbols from the primitive creation [...] instead of the great poet, a shameless Balkan tramp came to replace mystical ideas with pickpocket tricks, poetry with monotonous tittle-tattle; Victor Eftimiu spit on ‘Master Manole’s legend’ with the bovine support of the ‘National Theatre’ administration. Obviously, the support did not stop at providing an asylum for a masquerade, but offered a 2,000,000 lei contribution (you are reading this right: two million lei) in order to facilitate a desecration. A surrogate of theatre understanding – the performance – has finally

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<sup>1</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 113.

<sup>2</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 113.

started to catch ground in Corneliu Moldovanu's nut." What follows – a lampoon-style explanation concerning the failure of the staging and a verdict – "Victor Eftimiu is moving between pinch and shamelessness".<sup>1</sup>

Pamfil Șeicaru had published in the October 22 issue of the newspaper, on page two, under the column "Bloc-notes" a lengthy article under the headline "The metics' reign"<sup>2</sup> in which Corneliu Moldovanu "if from a literary point of view was a nullity" had proved to be a good administrator of the theatre until one day when "he abandoned the principles of honest saving and placed the bag of the National Theatre at the disposal of the Balkan tramp named Victor Eftimiu. No norm, no measure, no decency; the bills of the suppliers were swelling like doughnuts in a hot oil cauldron (the 20% commission had to be easy to cash), the merchandises were multiplying in a scandalous wastage, and the kind steward named Corneliu Moldovanu had lost his mind." Șeicaru was furious not only because of the funding wastage, but rather because Eftimiu, "a former shop boy at the grocery store"<sup>3</sup> had ended up staging plays at the national theatre, while other valuable directors have been ignored.

Three texts are included in the October 23, 1925 issue, on page two, in the "Bloc-notes" column. 1. "Moron Cornel", in which Șeicaru accuses the director of the theatres of theft, using the terms: "... here is an acceptable reaction. The man with a rotten nut-like head went to court. For me, this is an irrefutable success, for he will have to present the bills for the merchandises [...] Corneliu, Iacobescu is right, you are unbelievably stupid." 2. "Seeking: Seeking toothpaste able to reduce bad breath and willing to pay any price. The offers will be sent to Mr. CORNELIU MOLDOVANU, the Director of..." 3. "Lost: lost old, beaten ram. Mr. Corneliu Moldovanu was seen tied to the column of the National Theatre, with a handful of half chewed straws in his mouth. The fortune teller receives a free volume of the poems of the above mentioned patient."<sup>4</sup>

The honorary jury is convened on October 27, at 9 pm, and Șeicaru is also officially invited at the same time.<sup>5</sup> At the set date, Pamfil Șeicaru makes a statement before the members of the jury, saying that the appeal to this professional institution is illegitimate – "it would be right to appeal to the honorary jury if a matter of professional honour was at stake, an unjust judgment of his journalistic activity; however, this was not a matter related to the probity of journalist Corneliu Moldovanu, who, as a matter of fact has not been working for the press for three years, but rather one concerning the public money waste. Therefore, this is an evaluation of a public servant, since for any human mind a director of the National Theatre is a public servant and not a journalist. If the title and the capacity of journalist did not part with Mr. Corneliu Moldovanu's person the day he stopped working for a newspaper, they undoubtedly parted with him the moment the decree

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<sup>1</sup> *Cuvântul*, Year II, no. 286, Sunday, October 18, 1925, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Metic – name given in Athens to strangers coming living in the city (the explanation of the article's author)

<sup>3</sup> *Cuvântul*, Year II, no. 289, Thursday, October 22, 1925, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Cuvântul*, Year II, no. 290, Friday, October 23, 1925, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 117.



appointing him Director of the National Theatre was signed. I am surprised that [...] he was not able to make this otherwise very simple distinction. Since this concerns the activity of a public servant, how could the BJTU's jury analyze the real documents, not only a few receipts or a few papers perhaps prepared for this very purpose? What are BJTU's jurisdiction and means of investigation? [...] So, we suggest Mr. Corneliu Moldovanu the most appropriate path for his public servant capacity – an investigation, obviously conducted by the Ministry [...] Considering that the circumvention of the court – the only one that has investigative powers – and the appeal to a solely professional honorary jury are sufficient proof of the lack of seriousness of Mr. Corneliu Moldovan's complaint, I ask the jury to decline its jurisdiction. P. Șeicaru".<sup>1</sup>

During the hearings, Moldovanu says he has no personal grudge against Șeicaru – "I have to take care of my own name, which I have kept as unstained as possible" and that he does not understand why Șeicaru published the following passage "how many extra crayons for Mr. Corneliu from the two millions of lei?" In his turn, Șeicaru stated that although he did not have evidence, it was known that "taking a percentage from the money is common practice" (a commission for the chairman of an institution – n.n.)

The written record of the meeting indicates that Șeicaru stated "no, I definitely did not question Mr. Corneliu Moldovanu's respectability", which determined BJTU's Chairman to conclude that "we are in favour of a conciliatory solution" and given that Șeicaru claims that through no article did he intend to affect Moldovanu's personal honour, the jury "unanimously considers the incident closed" and the members' signatures follow.<sup>2</sup>

### **Pamfil Șeicaru versus Octavian Goga**

On March 24, 1926, Pamfil Șeicaru registers a complaint with BJTU, under registration number 125. As a member of the Trade Union's committee, he was authorized by the BJTU Chairman (Barbu Voinescu) "to represent you at the banquet organized by SRW<sup>3</sup> in honour of Mr. Lapedatu, the Minister of Arts, and to thank him on behalf of the committee for the financial aid given to the Trade Union. I carried out my duty, emphasizing in my remarks the situation of the press that, through its very destiny, it does not fall within the preoccupations of the Ministry of Arts. Being a permanent control, an active criticism force, the press cannot have any direct connection of interests with the Ministry. At the same time I painted an accurate image of the situation of the Romanian press in the new lands, citing the following statistics: in Ardeal, there are 2 Romanian dailies (*Patria* in Cluj and *Tribuna Nouă* in Arad) and 26 dailies of minorities; 33 Romanian weeklies and 42 weeklies of the minorities (;) 3 Romanian biweeklies and 8 of the minorities; 2 Romanian newspapers published three times a week and 2 of the minorities; no Romanian newspaper published four times a week and 2 of the minorities. In Bucovina, there is one Romanian daily (*Glasul Bucovinei*) and 5 of the minorities;

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<sup>1</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 122.

<sup>2</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 123.

<sup>3</sup> The Society of Romanian Writers

no Romanian weekly and 5 of the minorities; also, there is one newspaper of the minorities published three times a week. And in Bessarabia, there is no Romanian daily, but there are 7 dailies of the minorities. I concluded my compulsory remarks with the words you asked me to say (despite my objections) – ‘I subject to your Romanian attention this discouraging situation, summarized in the discouraging accuracy of the figures presented.’ I indignantly read in the magazine *Țara noastră* (Year VII, No. 12) whose Director is Mr. Octavian Goga – a member of the journalists’ Trade Union – a note in which the mission you entrusted me with, that of representing the committee is presented as blandishments, saying that in order to get rid of the barking of the ‘dogs’, Mr. Al Lapedatu shut their mouths with a small bone. The controversialists from *Cuvântul* ‘obtained the subsidy they were hunting’. The blackmail accusation is clear, for which reason, Mr. President, I ask you to convene the Trade Union’s honorary jury, summon Mr. Octavian Goga, the Director of the magazine *Țara Noastră* and a Trade Union member, and call Mr. Al. Lapedatu and all those who attended the SRW’s dinner as witnesses. Given that the prestige of a Trade Union member is questioned, I request that the honorary jury be immediately convened. I enclose the calumnious issue of *Țara Noastră*. ...” Signed P. Șeicaru.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, an unsigned article is published on pages 390–391 of issue no. 12, from March 12, 1926 of *Țara noastră* under the headline “Curses and incense”, from which we cite: “A few months, almost a year ago, the killing lampoon-writers paid by newspaper *Cuvântul* had started an aggressive campaign – for all the campaigns carried by *Cuvântul* are aggressive – against Mr. Al. Lapedatu, the current – soon to be the former – Minister of Religious Affairs and Arts. [...] No phrase seemed too harsh to these fearsome censors of our public life in stigmatizing Mr. Lapedatu’s ‘disastrous activity’ for culture and Church. In particular Mr. Pamfil Popescu (Șeicaru) foamed at the mouth everytime he mentioned “the ash man”, “the no good man at the Ministry of Religious Affairs”, “the narrow-minded and intolerant head” of the mentioned minister [...] Slowly, *Cuvântul*’s attacks attenuated. They became rarer. Mr. Popescu Șeicaru (Pamfil)’s pugnacity had obviously regrettably abated... That is until the past days, when a group of writers and artists thought about offering Mr. Al. Lapedatu [...] a sort of goodbye banquet. Well, who do you believe was the first to eulogize – this time verbally – “the beneficent activity” of the “superior insight”, “of the cultural policy” of the same minister, whom the phalanx of literati from *Cuvântul* had so furiously attacked? Who else but Mr. Pamfil Șeicaru (Popescu), the author of the past swearings? We admit, the case is not very interesting. It is not the first time when the delicate word masters come to heartily lick where they disdainfully spit. We tried this experience on our own skin. After being servilely flattered, one day, we suddenly found ourselves aggressively insulted. So a generous man, made wealthy by the war, who had unjustly been involved in military policy, who could afford the luxury of paying well for these insults had appeared. It seems that Mr. Al. Lapedatu acted this way. In order to get rid of the barking of the ‘dogs’, he shut their mouths with a little bone. The controversialists from *Cuvântul* obtained the subsidy they were

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<sup>1</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, pages 79–81.

hunting... This is a practical procedure, which we understand. However, we will not adopt it. We do not give anything, Mr. Pamfil Popescu Șeicaru! Nothing, you undersrand me, nothing...”

Șeicaru’s complaint includes the following resolution: “Mr. Șeicaru’s complaint will be presented to Mr. Octavian Goga and the honorary jury will be convened”<sup>1</sup> (illegible signature), but without including the date the jury would be convened. There are no details available about the developments in this case.

### **A journalist was hustled...**

G.A. Mitache, another journalist who had previously had problems sent a complaint to the BJTU Chairman on October 5, 1926. While doing research for an article at the Ministry of Education (on Saturday, October 2), he was accosted by Ilie Purcaru, the Director General of the Directorate for Vocational Education with the phrase “you who write slanderous statements about the officials of this ministry, get out immediately!” The petitioner replied to him that he did not have the authority to take him out of the ministry’s building, but the quarrelsome director asked the guard and the two doormen to throw him out. And this happened involving a certain degree of brutality. “If following this incident no intervention is made with Mr. Purcaru’s superiours, this might create an unfortunate precedent for the journalists’ professional category [...]”<sup>2</sup> stated Mitache and called for the intervention of the Trade Union.

Well, the journalists’ leaders brought the two face to face, explanations were given and regrets were presented, all ending with a simple announcement published in the press announcing that the incident “was settled”.

### **The B. Cecropide – Ion Popescu quarrel**

B. Cecropide informs Pamfil Șeicaru, the BJTU Chairman, through letter no. 91 from February 22, 1927 that “Mr. Ion Popescu, a member of the Journalists’ Trade Union threatened me through various colleagues that he would slap me” and asks the Chairman to evaluate “if Popescu should be sent before the honorary jury”. Moreover, Cecropide says, “the threatening phrasing used by Mr. Ion Popescu is directed against me in my capacity of member of the Trade Union. And consequently, to a certain degree, it is directed against the entire Committee.”<sup>3</sup>

The honorary jury convened on February 24, 1927, in the Union’s Palace building and I. Popescu was summoned. The surprise – on judgment day, Ion Popescu filled a petition showing that he did not make any threats, that “my facts, or rather, my words, were wrongfully and erroneously reported to Mr. Cecropide. I deeply regret that he could believe I am capable of such actions, although in my 18 years of journalistic activity I did not have such incidents with anyone.” Șeicaru can only draft the resolution – “we consider the incident inexistent and the committee moves to the agenda...”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 79.

<sup>2</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 82.

<sup>3</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 55.

<sup>4</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 56.

**A missing letter...**

On June 29, 1927, Remus C. Dragomirescu, the Trade Union's treasurer writes to the BJTU Chairman "Tuesday, June 28, this year, after I parted with you, I went to the headquarters of the Trade Union where I found accountant N. Popovici and according to your order, I called for the committee to be convened on Friday, July 1 at 7:30 pm, and according to your personal indications, I included the Matei Gheorghiu case on the agenda."

Afterwards, the petitioner went home, where, at 8:30 pm came Matei Gheorghiu "who on an unusual tone requested that I accompany him to the headquarters of the Trade Union to give him the notifications received by the Trade Union which would be discussed by the committee on July 1. I answered [...] that the documents were to be examined by the committee [...] As a result of this answer, Matei Gheorghiu thought it necessary to be aggressive and insulting. Faced with this attitude I told him that in my own home I was a simple individual and I invited him to leave my domicile. My answer was PROMPT. He cursed my mother and he vulgarly cursed me in front of my wife, child and a seamstress that was working with my wife in the courtyard. Mr. President, I ask you to immediately convene the committee and also the honorary jury [...] and you must know that I cannot stand such an insult which is also directed against you and the entire committee. I also enclose [...] an original insulting letter by Matei Gheorghiu in which he threatens to sue old Moșescu, our clerk. I request that this be handled immediately as any delay would damage the prestige of the Trade Union which, liberating itself from debts and other bad habits, has a beautiful role to play in ousting so many profiteers and daring so called journalists from the press. The Trade Union's treasurer"<sup>1</sup> (signature).

Indeed, on June 24, Gheorghiu had sent Moșescu a note (enclosed to the complaint) including the text "I am holding you responsible for the envelope that was sent to me and which you did not give me. If by tomorrow, Saturday, you do not give it to me, I will sue you" (signature).

Faced with this evidence, Șeicaru "immediately" convenes both the committee and the honorary jury on Friday evening, at 9 pm, inviting Mr. Gheorghiu to the meeting.

On July 6, 1927, Gheorghiu, the very "aggressor" requests that the case be analyzed. Of course, the versions of the participants in the incident were different. In petition no. 187 from July 6, Gheorghiu states that Dragomirescu refused (the episode in the courtyard) to give him the envelope because he is an "apaș"<sup>2</sup> (a blackmailer), moreover, "in a beastly manner he put his hands on my chest; he grabbed me by the lapels, which snapped, and he pushed me towards the gate. Of course, I opposed this unprecedented infamy between the members of our profession with all my strength; however, with all my irritation – natural for a person who sees itself thus mistreated – I note that I did not kick him with the cane I had in my hand, but I rather left the aggressor to take it from me, limiting myself

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<sup>1</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 58.

<sup>2</sup> "Apaș" – a pejorative name for journalists that blackmailed, defrauded various persons, used in the interwar period.

to addressing him a few appropriate epithets: idiot Bulgarian, butcher, beast. Mr. President, please be so kind as to call Mr. Remus Dragomirescu, to account for the abuse of office he committed holding a letter of mine for 16 days and for the serious insult he addressed me, or to prove his statement that...”<sup>1</sup>

Apparently this time no decisions were made – the document does not include a resolution and the eight copies of certificates, petitions, etc. were retained in the case file (usually they were removed by the members of the jury); among the documents there is also the (empty) envelope sent by the Minister of Agriculture to Gheorghiu at the headquarters of the BJTU (however, other documents indicate that a session had been organized on October 15).

On February 22, 1928, Matei Gheorghiu's request is registered with the BJTU, under registration number 83. In it, the editor of *Aurora* states: “Mr. President, I notified you in due time about the shocking behaviour of Mr. Remus Dragomirescu, the Trade Union's treasurer who, in June 1927, after abusively holding back an envelope with some official letters that belonged to me, and sent to the Trade Union's headquarters on my name, insulted me when I went to his home to ask for them after being promised to have them handed for an entire month. Last year on October 15, you convened the honorary jury. As the reunion did not take place, you apparently abandoned my complaint. Since a man's honour is at stake, please be so kind as to convene it again to analyze the incident, for I see no reason for it to be buried, especially after the inciter – unaware of the seriousness of his action – convened the committee himself to judge ‘the Matei Gheorghiu case’. I believe you will not fail to consider my complaint to such an extent that you force me to demand the satisfaction I was reluctant to demand initially. Very respectfully...” The document includes three resolutions: one asking the committee to notify the honorary jury (February 23, 1928); a second one “March 6, 1928. The jury is to convene on Thursday, March 15, 1928, at 7 pm. The parties will be summoned”; and finally “the March 15 meeting – As the parties provided explanations, the case was closed. In the case file.”<sup>2</sup> The first and third resolutions are signed by Pamfil Șeicaru in his capacity of Chairman.

Gheorghiu attached to his petition a copy of the request registered under number 32812 on March 1927, addressed to the Ministry of Properties, in which he announced that he wanted a monthly magazine – Fish breeding – for which reason he requested “a list of the addresses of all hunters, fish scaling workers, wholesale fishmongers and retailers and of fishermen cooperatives.”<sup>3</sup>

### **The Hârsu case – *Cronica politică***

The *Parlamentul* magazine's director, G. Hârsu is brought to the attention of BJTU, being registered under no. 133, on March 20, 1929. Hârsu indicates that a text printed in the *Cronica politică și parlamentară*, Year 1, issue no. 2, causes him moral damages – “it affects my honour, please kindly subject this issue to the BJTU honorary jury for analysis and issue of sanctions. I propose that I, Mr. Ion Totu and

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<sup>1</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 59.

<sup>2</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 51.

<sup>3</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 33, page 52.

V. Bârcă be heard, the editors of the mentioned magazine, both members of the Trade Union, and Mr. V. Ionescu-Vion, a member of the Trade Union and the President of ‘The Union of Professional Journalists’, who can attest that I indeed had a debt to the Trade Union resulted from a business but which I fully paid before the deadline established by the Trade Union’s committee...” Upon request, I enclosed two excerpts from the newspapers – a text through which the *Parlamentul* (Year III, issue no. 7) journalists elegantly praise the appearance of *Cronica politică și parlamentară* magazine (although *Cronica* approached a list of topics that they also covered), and an article from *Cronica*...: “misfortune is a poor counsellor, the weapon of the week. The Director of magazine *Parlamentul* turned out to be bothered by the appearance of our magazine. We do not know the reasons, but we suspect which they are. Consequently, he insisted on acting in a perfidious manner, announcing that two of our magazine’s editors are also editors of *Viitorul*, which means that our magazine is Liberal. If it were, we would say this loud and clear, for we find nothing dishonourable in this – in being a Liberal magazine – on the contrary. But *Cronica* does not support any political party and the readers could see this clearly in this magazine’s last issue; the current issue gives the very same impression we believe. However, we thought that something else might constitute a moral impediment for the editors of a magazine or of a newspaper. This being the case, we would have expected the director of magazine *Parlamentul* to find stains in the discussion of our professional honesty, or conflicts with the press associations due to money-related issues. Such a situation would have been truly embarrassing.”

On G. Hârsu’s complaint there is a resolution with an indecipherable signature dating from March 19, 1929: “following the account provided by I. Totu that he did not intend to question my honour, I accepted the Trade Union’s advice not to bring the matter in the attention of the jury’s plenum.” The signatory’s identity is easy to guess – G. Hârsu. Thus ended the conflict between the two publications.

### **Mihai Burillianu versus Pamfil Șeicaru**

Enclosed in the BJTU case file, at page 50, there is a copy of newspaper *Ordinea*, Year II, issue no. 148, from Tuesday June 11, 1929. On page 4, we find “An application to the Bucharest Journalists’ Trade Union” signed by Mihail Burilianu, Director of newspaper *Ordinea*. The text is a notification addressed to Al. Mavrodi, the BJTU Chairman, concerning Popescu Pamfil, called Șeicaru, who has presumably infiltrated the BJTU and who “is dishonouring with his articles and habits [...]”. The text’s author denounces Pamfil Șeicaru who had contracted a loan from banker Bercovici “with the intention of never giving the money back”. The case was tried and the prosecutor “forever sealed this individual who does not deserve to be a member of the Journalists’ Trade Union, as long as our association retains its statute unchanged...” The text’s author asks the BJTU Chairman to have the Șeicaru case analyzed by the honorary jury. There are no documents available concerning the development of the case.

### **The Vlădoianu-Karnabatt conflict**

The request signed by D.(imitrie) Karnabatt, a BJTU member, registered under number 131, on April 14, 1930 indicates that “in a magazine called *Fla-Fla*, Mr. N. Vlădoianu, recently accepted as a member of the Journalists’ Trade Union takes the freedom to insult and infamously slander my wife, Mrs. Lucreția Karnabatt, a writer and journalist, citing her name and including her among a series of prostitutes in Bucharest. As, beyond offending me, this device affects the prestige of our professional group and its members, Mr. Chairman, I kindly ask you to bring this case in the attention of the BJTU honorary jury, and to establish the trial date as soon as possible. Very respectfully, D. Karnabatt,<sup>1</sup> BJTU member, Bucharest, April 5, 1930.”

The following resolution is hand written on the cited document: “Being informed that the incident was solved by common agreement, the Committee’s members believe it is no longer necessary to follow through on the request” illegible signature and no date.

### **The Nicolae Grecu (*Universul*) versus *Calendarul* case**

On February 9, 1932, BJTU receives *Universul* editor Nicolae Grecu’s request asking that the honorary jury convene “to judge the conflict between me and the administration of newspaper *Calendarul*, in whose columns I was insulted and slandered in issue no. 12 from February 5.” The petitioner believes that “it is not nice at all for journalists to scoff at each other for trifles, and especially to turn the institutions they lead into trumpets of insult, calumny and lie” and attaches a newspaper page with the incriminated text. The page includes a group of articles printed under the headline “The coalition of banking newspapers against *Calendarul*” starting with the following excerpt: “banking newspapers *Universul*, *Curentul*, *Dimineața*, accomplices with the trusts and cartels that keep living costs excessively high, continue to boycott *Calendarul*, because they do not accept our small prices of 2 lei per copy and 500 lei for an annual subscription. We too will relentlessly continue to present this banditry, unprecedented in the history of Romanian press to the public opinion.” The group of articles includes letters from some readers denouncing the pressures made by various individuals on newspaper vendors for the latter not to distribute *Calendarul*. The subtitle “How former Justice Minister Stelian Popescu’s men operate” precedes the letter of a certain “G.”: “Distinguished Mr. Crainic, yesterday morning a certain Mr. Nicolae Grecu from *Universul* came to Pitești. Seeing him and knowing from *Calendarul* about *Universul* & company’s horrendous campaign, I suspected the purpose of his arrival in Pitești. The facts fully confirmed my suspicions. Accompanied by another individual, this Mr. Grecu\_whose intellectual capacity deserves no attention, but whose record cowardice should be known\_ (the petitioner’s underlining – n.n.) went from kiosk to kiosk forbidding the sale of *Calendarul* by all sort of threats [...] We

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<sup>1</sup> Dimitrie Karnabatt, a journalist and publicist born in Giurgiu, on October 29, 1877 frequented the “Literatorul” literary circle, led by Al. Macedonski. He published numerous articles signed D. Karr (pen names: Diodor, Censor, Pierrot). He was a follower of Symbolism. Karnabatt died in Bucharest, in April 1949.

ask the Journalists' Trade Union which is impassibly watching this banditry go on – is this, Mr. N. Grecu, whom it received among its members, a journalist or just an individual who terrorizes the vendors?" A benevolent man from Tulcea, Anton Petrov (vendor) complained about the poor distribution of the newspaper, Artur Grovei from Fălticeni congratulated the *Calendarul* editorial office, Emil Isac from Cluj expressed his enthusiasm over *Calendarul*'s appearance, etc.

The BJTU chairman includes three resolutions in the petitioner's request: on February 10 he asks N. Grecu to include in writing the names of those whom he wishes to bring an action against; on March 7, he includes the note: "We asked Mr. Nicolae Grecu for explanations through notification no. 12 from March 7, 1932"; and last, "Pr. V. Șed. on February 1932."

In the case file there is no document attesting to the sentencing/exclusion from BJTU of some member, and less so of newspaper editor N. Grecu. Of course, even if he wanted to, Grecu could not prohibit the distribution of a publication...

### **The case of Nicolae Iorga, Prime Minister and journalist...**

On May 20, 1932, a letter by Nicolae Iorga arrived at BJTU in an envelope with the letterhead "The Chairman of the Council of Ministers". We include here the full text of the letter (registered under no. 216, on May 20, 1932) for its documentary value.

"Mr. Chairman, Many years have passed since I was elected honorary member of the Journalists' Trade Union, as you remember I believe. On the other hand, more than once, the press threatened by savage laws passed by the former governments appealed to me to defend its rights. Thirdly, when the Liberal government was discussing the introduction of firm measures against the press, I defended its freedom. I accepted that honour and I brought these services convinced that the number of honest journalists exceed the number of those who, slandering daily, dishonour this noble profession and that, in the absence of a law ensuring honour, someone can appeal to the former category, represented by the Trade Union you are a member of. Circumstances made me a member of this country's leadership, although I did not ask for it. Starting that moment, a part of the press had been leading – especially after the end of the Parliament's session, when I cannot use its rostrum to defend my honour – an infamous campaign challenging my professional honesty. I was accused of creating parasitical situations for the members of my family, of building a fortune through illicit means, of taking advantage of my current situation to gain money. I took the matter to court, but unfortunately I cannot receive immediate satisfaction. As a man, I am entitled to it; as a head of the Government, I owe it the public opinion to expose the slanderers. The need to be granted immediate satisfaction is stringent in one recent case. In the Bessarabia issue, through Mr. Boldur's book and in many other issues, 'Gamber' Bookshop from Paris, led by a Romanian from Banat who sacrifices money in order to defend Romania's interests, would like to recover its independent direction that could place it in the service of the country, by the dissolution of an association which, of course, could not pursue this goal. Upon seeing this national interest



document, while I was still in the opposition, under the Government of the National Peasants' Party an arrangement was negotiated, with the Romanian state taking over a number of shares, in order to print books – almost inexistent today and which are indispensable – necessary for history seminars. The Government sent me to Mr. Tetianu who asked for the amount of 3,000,000 lei to be discharged through a simple issue of the gazette of the Council of Ministers. As the government changed, I agreed with my colleagues, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Undersecretary for Press to use an amount of only 800,000 lei for this purpose. The amount was discharged as early as a few months ago, when salaries were paid periodically – and of course, the teachers' salaries would not have been paid by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or by the Press office, so this did not incur any losses for him – to Romania's Legation in Paris, who received instructions to give the money to Mr. Gamber upon the transfer of shares to be used immediately for book printing. With honesty that does him honour, Minister Cezianu, whom I asked to strictly carry out the legal warranty procedures, called for the use of all possible measures to make sure that the Romanian state goes unprejudiced. Sharing his views, I paid 20,000 lei to the head of the Legal Department of the Ministry of Education to make the legal documents, then adding the head of the accounting office, paid with an equal amount for organizing the accounting of the Romanian school in France, a task which, of course, cannot be carried out from Bucharest. Two newspapers, first *Dreptatea* and then *Universul* used this administrative document and me, depicting me as a defrauder who, wasting public money made an agreement with Mr. Gamber – a perfectly honest man – so that he can sell my history books which he edited and which according to *Universul* are worthless. (I take the liberty to note that I am an associate member of the Writing Academy in Paris). I was imperatively asked to name the books I recommended. I counter these calumnies with the statement that: there was no discussion that Mr. Gamber bought a sole book of mine; that those books written by me and edited by him – 'Sinteza' and a few other brochures – were sold well enough so as not to cause him losses, and I received royalties; that most of the books cited by *Universul* were in fact printed by me, Mr. Gamber's name being placed on the cover only for distribution purposes and the book on Armenia was printed by the Armenians, who even awarded me a prize for it. Notified with respect to this, as a French citizen, Mr. Gamber will address the French Government, to prove that he is not an accomplice in a fraud, and I offer you all the information means necessary to answer in three days time from the reception of this letter if I am or not as people have known me for 40 years – an honest man who is a victim of gross slanderers who dishonour the press. At the same time, you will be so kind as to investigate if the 100,000 lei I received in November for my visit to Paris in order to hold my annual course – an amount which scandalizes newspaper *Dreptatea* – is or is not, my annual pay included in the budget for this purpose. Anyone is free to assess my actions and policy, but in the case of any attempt to my honour, instead of having a law against the press voted – which I could do – I prefer to appeal to your professional and human consciousness so that together with the BJTU Board of Directors make the decision I am waiting for, because the very BJTU is interested that its sole honorary member not be presented to the public opinion as newspapers *Dreptatea* and *Universul*

would want. In any similar cases, I will be forced to also address you for the defence of my rights, for I want the system of unsanctioned insults leading us to anarchy to stop. Mr Chairman, please let me assure you that you enjoy my highest consideration. N. Iorga, May 20, 1931.”

The document includes the following resolutions: “With the Committee, Secretary Emil Ciuceanu, May 20, 1932” and “The May 23, 1932 Committee decision no. /1932”. The signature is illegible. In fact, the available documents do not tell us how this incident was solved.

### **The Mircea Damian Case**

A spectacular mobilization of journalists took place in 1937... on October 4, 1937, 50 journalists signed a petition addressed to Al. Săndulescu, the BJTU Chairman, in which they requested ‘the exclusion of Constantin Mătuşa, called Mircea Damian from our organization because he was found guilty of defamatory acts, for which he was sent to correctional prison as the final rulings in the criminal cases no. 473 (delivered by the War Council of the Army Corps 6, on April 3, 1927) and no. 389 from June 29, 1930 (delivered by the Court of Appeals, Section 2, Bucharest). Our petition is based on the provisions of Article 4, paragraph 4, of the Journalists’ Union’s Statutes that specifies one’s ‘perfect and irreproachable moral reputation’ among the indispensable conditions that one has to fulfil in order to become a member of the Trade Union. We enclose the certified copies of the sentences mentioned above.”(signatures follow).

In this document from October 4, 1937, that carries no. 340, the BJTU Chairman notes (on the same day): “the Committee is convened today at 8 o’clock and the decision of whether the case will be solved by the committee or by the honorary jury will be taken through appeal. Al. Săndulescu” The request was accompanied by documents of the Ilfov Court in which following the interrogatory from November 19, 1929, senior prosecutor Al. Râşcanu noted that Mătuşa Constantin did not deny having committed a criminal act – the forgery of some public documents (January, 1923), for which he was judged and sentenced to one month in the military prison of Cluj Army Corps 6. Mătuşa acknowledges that he is indebted to a tailor from Năsăud, that he was denounced for calumny while being editor-in-chief of *Someşul* gazette (Dej, 1926), that in June 1927 he crossed the border illegally to Yugoslavia (he intended to go to France). In Yugoslavia he claimed to be a political refugee but he was repatriated, judged by the War Council, Army Corps 6 and acquitted. According to Mătuşa’s testimony, the series of criminal acts continued with the publication of some open letters addressed to Prince Nicolae, for which he received very large sums of money from the director of *Vitrina literară* magazine (he accused the prince of running over a baker). Other court decisions also supported Mircea Damian’s guilt. The case file does not include documents related to the honorary jury’s decision, but the evidence is so numerous and indubitable that the decision can be easily inferred.

### **The Ioan Vinea - C. Ap. Orăşianu incident**

On May 8, 1942, the BJTU Chairman was asked by C. Ap. Orăşianu to convene the honorary jury and Ioan Vinea, for the latter to give information about the

inappropriate attitude towards the petitioner. Pamfil Șeicaru had asked Lorin Popescu (Secretary General) to hire Orășianu at *Curentul* because they had two vacant seats. But two days later, Vinea opposed the hiring – “in reality they are open only to the Tax authority”. In conclusion he was not hired. Orășianu was all the more upset given that Vinea was the Chairman of the Union of Professional Journalists – “he was obligated to assist me all the more given that my labour and honesty record is irreproachable. Not a long time ago, Mr. Vinea presented himself to the State Leader as a defender of professional journalists that are in difficult situations, on behalf of whom he asked for financial aid. Given such a role, he wasn’t allowed to have a different attitude towards me.”<sup>1</sup> The jury was convened on May 14, 1942, at 8 p.m, all those involved being summoned.

Well, on May 13, the Trade Union receives a letter signed by Vinea, in which it is shown that Orășianu is not telling the truth when stating that “I opposed his hiring at *Evenimentul*, where I’m a Director. Even if this was so, this does not concern the Trade Union’s honorary jury, whose judgement I regretfully contest. As director of *Evenimentul* I have the jurisdiction and the right to choose the editorial staff and the collaborators that I want, in conformity with the laws of this country and with the norms of our profession.” He also denies the fact that he asked the Leader for something, regretting the ease with which Orășianu makes such statements.<sup>2</sup>

There are no other notes concerning the pursuit of the proceedings.

### **Vasile Damaschin versus Ladislau Dudaș**

On May 1, 1942 the BJTU Chairman receives a letter signed by Cassian Mihăilescu, senior editor at *Seara* newspaper, requesting that editor Vasile Damaschin be brought before the honorary jury, for he “slandered many fellows that were not members of the Trade Union in writing and verbally and also tried to have *Seara* and *Capitala* closed down. I submit a photocopy of the written record of Mr. Vasile Damaschin’s elimination, signed by all the editors of *Seara* and *Capitala*.” The attached copy shows that on April 28, 1942, in the editorial room, in 3 Oteteleșteanu Street, the editors “decided to eliminate Vasile Damaschin from the editorial office, and informed the appropriate authorities and the professional organizations”. 14 signatures follow (11 legible, 3 undecipherable).

Here is Vasile Damaschin’s complaint, addressed to the BJTU Chairman on May 5, 1942 – “Mr. Chairman, on May 1, 1942 there was a piece of information in *Seara* and *Capitala* newspapers, according to which I was fired through a written report signed by the editorial staff because I ‘tried to cause serious harm to my colleagues and to the institution’, ‘in writing and verbally’. As this slanderous information doesn’t include any details, but it just suggests serious accusations against me, we clarify things:

*Seara* and *Capitala* newspapers, where I have been working for five years and where I signed for a very long time the editorial were two Romanian daily newspapers that succeeded to feed 20-30 professional writers, but their owner lost

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<sup>1</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 68, page 133.

<sup>2</sup> The Eugen Filotti Fund, Case file no. 68, page 133.

his interest in them and let them in the hands of the editorial group of professional journalists, whose only target was securing national and technical status.

A year and a half ago, when owner Eugen Titeanu was in Văcărești (in prison, n.n.) he sent us a spiritual and administrative leader, a man named Ladislau Dudaș, of Hungarian origin [...] an illiterate man without any connection to journalism, but with strange political connections. All-powerful, he started to induce a certain attitude to the newspapers, one contrary to those we support, what led to warnings from The Direction of Press and Censorship [...] Because laws forbade him to fire us, he resorted to not paying salaries or other trickeries, even trying to close down the newspapers...”. Within this context, the editors drafted a memorandum addressed to the Direction of Press and Censorship, asking for the “purification of our newspapers of foreign elements and the protection of our professional rights”. The memorandum was signed by Mihail Gheorghiu, Vasile Damaschin, Gh. Teodorescu, C. Nani, Mihai Atanasiu and Al. Raicu. Vindictive as he is, Dudaș fired Gh. Teodorescu and V. Damaschin, without notice, Al. Raicu and Ovid Ioanid quit because of the tensed atmosphere from the editorial offices. That is why Damaschin asks the BJTU to inform the Ministry of Propaganda and the Presidency of the Council of Ministers about this. The BJTU Chairman convenes the honorary jury on May, 8, at 6.30 pm, summoning all the persons involved.<sup>1</sup> The BJTU leadership finds itself forced to collect evidence about what happened and requests a statement from Jana Titeanu, Eugen Titeanu’s wife. The owner’s wife states that Dudaș was recommended by M. Gheorghiu and G. Vulpescu and that V. Damaschin was present; this happened when the institution was in a difficult situation – “newspaper *Capitala* was discontinued, the editors’ salaries were not paid and debts were owed to the Tax Revenue and to the Social Insurance authorities. All three of them agreed that Mr. L. Dudaș was the only one that could rescue the institution. Mr. Vasile Damaschin was very happy with this choice. As to the request to close down the newspapers, it was my husband’s wish, for he thought that this way he would be released from prison, thinking that the newspapers were turning into a weapon used against him. This idea had been abandoned long before Mr. Damaschin started the actions against the interests of the institution. All the actions taken by Mr. V. Damaschin were decided without his employer’s consent, from whom he has been eating his bread for five years and due to whom he is now a press counsellor at the Press Directorate...”<sup>2</sup>

On May 8 and 16, 1942, the honorary jury convenes “to investigate and reach a decision – as a disciplinary authority – on senior editor Cassian Mihăilescu’s complaint [...] and on Mr. Vasile Damaschin’s complaint against Mr. Cassian Mihăilescu. 16 witnesses – editors at the named newspapers – and a woman lawyer are heard together with the two. After the debates, Chairman Al. Săndulescu summarizes the points of view of those present and addresses three questions to the jury. Then he “sanctions Mr. Cassian Mihăilescu with an admonition and Mr.

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<sup>1</sup> Case file no. 68, page 130.

<sup>2</sup> Handwritten letter, unnumbered page, unregistered, Case file no. 68.

Damian Vasile with a three-month suspension as of May 12, 1942 until June 21, 1942.” (Signatures follow)<sup>1</sup>

**Petre Mihail Mihăilescu versus Vasile Dova**

On May 16, 1942, BJTU registered under name 139, Petre Mihail’s Mihăilescu. After having been employed at the beginning of March to edit newspaper *Viața*’s legal column, he was not paid for two months. He requested manager Vasile Dova his due payment on several occasions until the day when “he believed he will make me insist no longer by swearing at me and addressing me numerous other serious insults.”<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, “I left the editorial room [...] and I sent Mr. Liviu Rebreanu who presumably is this newspaper’s Director a notification that I enclose. As expected, I received no answer...”

This is the reason behind the arduous request addressed to the BJTU Chairman to “be so kind as to make the necessary efforts to obtain for me not moral reparation which I do not need, but the due salary rights which I estimate to be of 12,000 lei.” The document also includes threats to denounce the issue to the Marechal, to other state authorities should the amount not be recovered.

The prejudiced lawyer and publicist sent to Liviu Rebreanu – who indeed was the Director of the aforementioned newspaper but did not get involved into its activity because of numerous other obligations – a long text titled “Notification” but which yielded no results. The BJTU leadership decides to convene the honorary jury, because both Nova and Mihăilescu were members, but the consulted documents do not mention any results of this initiative.

The above documents are very indicative of the mores of the times, of the means of manifestation of professional solidarity, of relationship with the owners of the publications, and so on. The use of the archives of other press organizations would offer us the opportunity to reconstruct the interwar professional climate, to prove its difference as compared to the euphoric-imaginative representations of the period, and to identify (recover) models of conduct which many believe to be recent developments.

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<sup>1</sup> Case file no. 68, unnumbered page.

<sup>2</sup> Case file no. 68, page 139.