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THE PEDAGOGICAL AND SCHOLAR MURES PRESS IN THE XXTH CENTURY

Case study

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A rich professional tradition for the present teachers and students
Comparative analysis

JEL Classification

I20, A21

Abstract

The present study operates the first inventory and analysis of the pedagogical and scholar press appeared in the Mures County during the XXth century, aiming to identify its role in the general development of the local press and culture during this period. The study analyzes 70 pedagogical, scholar and students publications, representing 18% of the total number of newspapers and magazines (380), which represent the basic element of comparison.

The results reveal the profile of the pedagogical and scholar press during different periods and the roles it assumed to support the general development of the local press: a formative role during the inter-war period, a spiritual shelter during communism and a free space during the first decade of post communism. The study offers arguments for the present teachers and students in the Mures area to honour a rich tradition regarding the pedagogical and scholar press, underlining its involvement in the general evolution of the local culture.

The editorial profile of the pedagogical, scholar and students' press can be placed between the cultural press (by its content) and the specialized press (by its connection to the school environment and public). (Petcu, 2000: 39, 241) During the entire XXth century, this special category of the press proved to be an important resource for the general press in the Mure County, due to the formative function it assumed and to the national prestige it brought to the local culture.

In Târgu Mure – a town considered the capital of the Hungarian culture in Transylvania by the local Hungarian press at the beginning of the last century – the Romanian journalism appeared only after the creation of the Romanian modern state in 1918. And this late debut illustrated the institutional handicap that marked the evolution of the town as part of the new enlarged Romanian state. In this area, the development of the Romanian press was part of the complex process of creating the first Romanian schools of the town, as well as of the first Romanian administrative and cultural institutions.

In Mure county, the pedagogical, scholar and students' press of the XXth century totalizes 70 publications, representing 18% of the total 380 periodical publications appeared in Romanian or bilingual (Romanian-Hungarian) between 1920-2000 (Popt ma & Mózes, 2000: 41-242). After the appearance of the first Romanian local newspaper, *Ogorul (The land)* in 1920, the scholar and pedagogical press gained a growing importance in the general development of the local press, due to the role of an informative and cultural shelter it played during different periods.

Till 1918, Târgu Mure had only one primary Romanian school and no Romanian press. After this moment, finding a compensation for this fundamental deficiency became one of the primary goals aimed by the new Romanian administration. In this context were created

the future representative schools of the town („Alexandru Papiu Ilarian” High School in 1919, „Mihai Viteazul” Military High School in 1920, The School of Arts and Occupations in 1921, The Commercial School in 1922, The Teaching School in 1923) and through them, appeared the first Romanian periodical publications of the town.

Thus, the Romanian press in the Mure area appeared and developed on a scholar background, due to an entire generation of teachers (some of them with a solid journalistic experience) who came to Târgu Mure from other parts of the country to help at the creation of the local Romanian school system. In the young schools of the town, they set literary societies and scholar publications, creating a formative environment for the future journalists, a true cultural laboratory.

Because of its late journalistic debut, the Mure press of the inter-war period suffered from a complex of the latest arrived on the scene of the Romanian press in Transylvania, despite of the evident progress it reached in the 30s.

Between 1920-1940, in the Mure county appeared 87 Romanian and bilingual publications (most of them political, informative or specialized), among which 14 were pedagogical and scholar publications. The most relevant appearance of the period was the publication *Progres i cultur (Progress and culture, 1933-1938)*, edited by The Romanian Teachers Association in the Mure county. Although it was intended as a pedagogical publication, it gained a consistent cultural structure, becoming the most important cultural publication of the inter-war period, with a national reputation.

Furthermore, the most important journalistic figure of the time was the teacher Vasile Netea, with a fundamental contribution to the evolution of the Romanian local press from the beginning of the inter-war period till the end of the communist period. (Netea, 2010).

During communism, which brought along less but longer-lasting publications, as imposed by the centralized regime of the communist press, the pedagogical, scholar and students' press represented in Mure more than a half (52%) of the total appearances of the period (12 publications out of 23). Although, more or less, the communist ideology and its propaganda system transformed any publication of the time in a political one, the pedagogical, scholar and students' press played a major cultural role. Politically, it was forced to use the bilingualism as a political instrument, aiming the improvement of interethnic relationships.

After the fall of communism, the general effervescence of the Romanian new „free” press reflected with the similar intensity among pupils, students and their teachers. But the quantitative explosion of the cultural at the beginning of the 90s was quickly followed by the rapid capitulation under the turbulent political and economical „transition”. In this context, the pedagogical, scholar and students' press offered an important compensation. The 44 such publications issued between 1990-2000 (representing 17,5% of the total 252 of the period) contributed, by their complex editorial structure, to the development of a creative and critical spirit in schools, opposed to the general social and moral vulnerability of the society.

Considering this evolution during almost a century, the pedagogical, scholar and students' press in the Mure county reveals itself as a stream supporting the general development of the press in the area and assuming a statute according to the necessities of the different historical periods: at the beginning a formative role during the inter-war period, a spiritual shelter during communism and a space for free expression during the first post communist decade.

1. The inter-war period

The scholar and pedagogical press represented a constant source of oxygen for the Mure press during the entire inter-war period.

The 11 scholar publications of the time were the result of a passionate spirit developed after 1918: the publications of „Al. Papiu Ilarian” High School, *Scânteia* (*The Sparkle*, 1923) and *Îndemnul* (*The Impulse*, 1924-1927); the publications of the Military High School „Mihai Viteazu” in Târgu Mure , *oimii* (*The Hawks*, 1925-1929) and *tiin i progres* (*Science and Progress*, 1934-1945); the publication of the „Principele Nicolae” High School in Sighi oara, *Sf titorul Târnavelor* (*Târnavă Adviser*, 1926); the publication of the Girls' French Institute in Târgu Mure , *Chez nous* (1927); the publications of The Teaching High School in Târgu Mure , *Avântul* (*The Effusion*, 1928) and *Revista coalei Normale de învățatori din Târgu Mure* (*The Târgu Mure Teaching High School Magazine*, 1938-1940) (Figure 2); *Pov titorul col rimii* (*The Scholar Adviser*, 1937-1938); *Lumea noastră* (*Our World*, 1938-1940); *Scânteieri* (*Starkles*, 1938-1940).

Among these, *Îndemnul* and *oimii* earned a well deserved national reputation as models of their type. (Opri , 1977: 89) The main achievement of all these scholar publications was that they managed to overcome their statute as simple school publications, training the future journalists and to make up for the temporary absence of the informative press in certain years, by their complex format and high journalistic and scientific standards, including literature, folklore, math, news, chronics, translations, sports, entertaining.

The effort of the scholar publications were completed by the prestigious pedagogical publication *Via a colar* in Sighi oara (*The Scholar Life*, 1923-1924), *Graiul d sc lesc* (*The Teachers' Voice*, 1928-1931) and *Progres*

i cultur (*Progress and culture*, 1933-1938) in Târgu Mureș .

After almost one century, we find in the pages of these publications surprisingly modern theories and principles. For instance, in 1923, the publication *Via a colar* (*The Scholar Life*) analyzed the idea of knowledge applicability, recognized today as the principle of interactivity in education: "The school will be a primary preoccupation, and we shall defend and support its interests with all our power. We shall renounce to the old fashioned methods of memorization and to the hollow theory, we shall banish all stereotypes and excessive ways of teaching." (*Cuvântul liber*, 1991)

Revista coalei Normale de învățatori din Târgu-Mureș (*The Târgu Mureș Teaching High School Magazine*) also pleaded for the formation of the teacher in a spirit „that gives the child an education that take into consideration all of the science's and life's imperatives.” (*Revista coalei Normale de Învățatori*, 1938)

At its turn, *Graiul dascălească* (*The Teachers' Voice*) approached the actual problems of the Romanian school system of the time, such as the importance of learning religion for the conservation of nationality, school and politics, teachers and provinciality, the active school principles, which focused on respecting the child's individuality and applying the intuitive methods. The publication suggested six ways of action: analyzing the situations from a purely pedagogical perspective, sharing the experience, the correction of the errors detected in the educational planning and organization, supporting a good financial condition of the teachers, encouraging the literary creation in school and the promotion of an informative section of the publication dedicated to the latest regulations. (*Graiul dascălească*, 1928)

The issue of the Romanian school modernization was also followed by the informative and cultural publications,

which granted large spaces to the topic, as shown by the cultural publication *Clipa* (*The Instant*) in an article regarding the necessity to correlate the universe of the children's literature to the real universe of the children's every-day life: „We must mix the obligatory contents with *the pleasure contents*, so that the effort of the child to become an act made out of pleasure. And this will happen when the pieces of reading – from the manual or from the story books – will touch subjects from the children's daily activity, with their familiar vocabulary and facts.” (*Clipa*, 1936)

The most important achievement of the pedagogical press of the period was the publication *Progres i cultur* (*Progress and culture*) edited by the Romanian Teachers' Association in Mureș (Figure 1), initially structured as a pedagogical publication but transformed in the most important cultural publication of the area in the 30s, achieving the unique performance of gaining a national prestige.

2. The communist period

The period of the Hungarian occupation over the northern Transylvania (1940-1944) and the following years of the forced transition towards communism (1944-1947) determined the disappearance of the entire Romanian press in the Mureș County. This involution will prolong also during the next decade, after the instauration of the communist regime.

The revival of the scholar, pedagogical and students press happened on an ideological background at the end of the 60s, when numerous scholar publications, although politically contaminated, appeared and continued, in some cases, the old series from the inter-war.

Based on the manipulation practice of the communist period in its strategy regarding the early „education” of the young generations in the realist-socialist spirit, we observe the usage of bilingualism

in propagandistic purposes, including the scholar publications, issued in an impressive number compared to the general press of the period.

Twelve such scholar and student publications appeared in the Mures county between 1948-1989, representing 52% of the total number of publications in this period: *Generatii* (*Generations*, 1966-1972, the publication of "Al. Papiu Ilarian" High School Târgu Mure); *Acorduri noi* (*New Tones*, 1969-1971, the publication of the High School No. 5 Târgu Mure); *Ml dite* (*Sprigs*, 1969-1973, the publication of the "Unirea" High School Târgu Mure ; *Îndemnul* (*The Impulse*, 1967-1972, the publication of the High School No. 4 Târgu Mure ; *Zenit* (*Zenith*, 1968-1971, the publication of the Arts' High School Târgu-Mure); *Curierul Liceului Agricol* (*The Courier of Agricultural High School*, 1968-1972); *Cântecul vârstelor* (*The Song of Ages*, 1970, publication of the High School in Topli a); *Revista medical - Orvosi Szemle* (*The Medical Magazine*, 1955-1972) and *Aesculap* (1968-1972), publications of the Medical-Pharmaceutical Institute in Târgu Mure ; *Gânduri studen e ti* (*Students Thoughts*, 1974-1989, the publication of the Union of the Communist Students Association from the University Center of Târgu Mure); *Athenaeum* (1968-1972, the publication of the 3 years Pedagogical Institute in Târgu Mure); *Thalia* (1969-1972, the publication of the Theatre Institute Târgu Mure).

The pedagogical press of the communist period appeared under the political restrictions of the time, and also under the pressure to honour a valuable tradition built up during the inter-war period, as shown by the case of the publication *Generatii* (*Generations*) of "Al. Papiu Ilarian" High School in Târgu Mure), the follower of the first publication of the institution, *Îndemnul* (1924-1927).

The mentality of the regime regarding the ideological manipulation of the school system was illustrated since the

end of the 40s, by the learning system reform, done for the purpose of a controlled uniformity but also by the destruction of some valuable traditions: „For the methodological unification towards the need of educating the young according to our Republic's necessities, there was a need for the entire school system to become public. We could no longer permit the existence of a system based on commercial or religious ground, led from abroad, which gave the children a reactionary education. This system disseminated mysticism and obscurantism.” (*Ardealul nou / New Transylvania*, 1948)

At their turn, the students publications, bilingual (Romanian-Hungarian), were forced the goal of writing not about the student's life, but about the communist student's life – „the major hope of tomorrow in socialist Romania”. (*Gânduri studen e ti / Students' Thoughts*, 1979)

A representative students publication of the period was *Athenaeum* (1968-1972) (Figure 3) of the 3 years Pedagogic Institute created in Târgu Mure in 1960, to offer the future teachers, Romanian and Hungarian, „the opportunity to communicate their first achievements in the scientific research, but also their first literary creations, proving their commitment to beauty, truth, brotherhood between people of different nationalities but with their heart dedicated to common ideals of happiness.” (*Athenaeum*, 1968) The complex content of the publication during the first years included, besides the pages occupied by the party, articles about science, news, sports, interviews, entertainment and lots of literary pieces, illustrating the activity of the „Albatros” Literary Circle functioning in the Institute. After 1971, the content of the publication was more and more captured by politics, reflected in the numerous ideological quotations and “patriotic” poems. In was the form in which the publication ended its appearance, with an advice addressed to

the students: “As the preference for «mister» spread more and more, we can see it among our students as well. [...] Dear colleagues, we must prove that together with our teachers, we leave in a socialist society, embracing the same views and the same goal common to everyone – the construction of socialism – in which we are all comrades.” (*Athenaeum*, 1972)

Structured as true tribunes of indoctrination, the scholar, students and pedagogical publications of the communist period succeeded to surpass the ideological contamination and to give to their young readers a minimum spiritual shelter (especially by encouraging the literary creation) and to the teachers, the feeling of a minimum professional solidarity.

3. The first post communist decade

The press of the first years after the fall of communism combined in the Mures county, as in the entire Romania, the enthusiasm of a new beginning with the process of learning the new rules of appearing on a fluctuant market, influenced by profound political and social changes, in difficult economic conditions determined by the transition between the former centralized system and the new liberalized system.

The freedom of speech, the Romanian ideal of the last half of century, became real, but proved to be also a burden till the achievement of the preconditions indispensable for practicing it.

During this time, the Mures press managed to reach the performance of overcoming the marginal statute held during the inter-war period, and to be placed among the first eight most active counties of the country, journalistically speaking (after Cluj, Timiș, Bihor, Iași, Hunedoara, Constanța, Brașov). (Petcu, 2000: p. 164)

In the context of this general progress, the pedagogical, scholar and

students press totalized 44 publications, among which 35 were scholar, one was pedagogical (*Educație și cultură / Education and Culture*, 1995) and eight were students publications: *Generația 0 (Generation 0)*, Târgu Mureș, 1995; *Neb nuitele trepte (Unimagined steps)*, the publication of the Letters Faculty in the Ecological University „Dimitrie Cantemir”, Târgu Mureș, 1994; *ICS*, a publication edited by the Students’ Cultural Initiative Group (ICS) with the support of ProEuropa League, Târgu Mureș, 1995-1998; *VOXIS*, the publication of the Târgu-Mureș University, 1995; *Research Seminar Preprint*, edited by the Math Department of the „Petru Maior” University of Târgu Mureș, 1992-1998; *Pro Iure*, the publication of the Law Faculty the Ecological University „Dimitrie Cantemir”, Târgu Mureș, 1995; *Caietele Gheorghe I. Brătianu (The „Gheorghe I. Brătianu Notebooks)*, the publication edited by the „Gh. I Brătianu” Association of the history students in the „Petru Maior” University Târgu Mureș, 1998-2000; *Ideea (The Idea)*, another publications of the „Petru Maior” University Târgu Mureș, 2000.

1995 represented the peak of the period in the Mures press of the first post communist decade. In the first years of the period, the cultural press had a positive evolution, totalizing during these ten years almost the same number of publications as the informative press. In this context, the most important cultural publication of the area, even since the communist period, *Vatra (The Home)* played the role of a reference point for the development of the local press, as well as the role of a professional axis, due to its untouched credibility. Its editors managed to avoid the trap of an isolation in an ivory tower, actively involving in the evolution of the young press on the right professional standards. It also issued some children’s publications such as *Vatra copiilor (The Children’s Home)*, 1990) with its supplement *Disk-jockey* (1990), the

supplement *Clipa cea repede... (The fast second...)* edited by The Teaching High School „Mihai Eminescu” Târgu Mure (1994), the almanac *F gurel* (1995).

But after 1994, the courage of the cultural press diminished because of the difficult economical conditions. The necessary compensation came from the scholar press, which released 35 publications till 2000. Although many of them did not last, their relevance stays in their contribution to the development of an creative attitude and of a critical spirit in the Mures school.

Thus, in Târgu Mure appeared *Dialog în albastru* (Blue dialogue, 1992-1993); *Ml di e* (Burgeons) of the „Unirea” High School, 1993-1995; *Clipa cea repede... (The first second...)*, of the Teaching High School „Mihai Eminescu”, 1994; *Argument* of the local high schools, 1994-1995; *Adolescen a încotro? (Where to the adolescence?)* of the Chemistry High School, 1995; *School time* (1995); *Adolescen a (The adolescence)* of the „Bolyai Farkas” High School, 1995-1996; *Speran e (Hopes)* of the School No. 5, 1995; *Theb&G'S* of the School No. 3, 1995; *Pauza mare (The Big Brake)* of the Electromure High School, 1995; *D.C.I.O Reac ii (D.C.I.O Reactions)* of the „Al. Papiu Ilarian” High School, 1995; *Vocea Papiului (Papiu's Voice)*, 1996-1998; *OK!*, a publication „restricted to the adults”, 1997-1998); *ERGOCOMON* of the Constructions High School, 1997-1998; *Aripi pe valurile tinere ii (On the Youth Wings)*, a publications inter schools, 1997; *Punctul pe â* of the Economical High School, 1997; *Holidays* of the School No. 5, 1997; *Bob de rou (Dew Bean)* of the School No. 6, 1997-2000; *Suflet de papist (Papiu Soul)*, 1997-1998); *Interferen e* of the Arts High School, 1999; *VIP: Via a în Papiu (Life in Papiu)* 1999; *Labirint / Labirintus* of the „Traian Vuia” High School, 1999; *Revista 2000* of the „Avram Iancu” Industrial High School, 2000; *Accent* of „Unirea” High School; *Forest News* of the Silvan High School, *Atelier de*

cuvinte (Words Workhouse) of the „Bolyai Farkas” High School.

Less numerous, the scholar publications which appeared in Reghin maintained a close connection to the local informative press: *Oscar licean (High School Oscar)* of the Theoretic High School, 1995-1997; *Urme* (Traces) of the „Petru Maior” High School, 1996-1998; *Orizont* of the „Augustin Maior” Gymnasium. Other scholar publications were: *Maitreyi*, of the „Mircea Eliade” High School in Sighi oara, 1994; *Coloana*, of the „Constantin Brâncu i” Professional School in Târn veni, 2000; *No name*, of the Industrial High School in Ludu , 2000; *N sturel*, of the Iernut School, 1995-1996; *Vanet*, of the „Vasile Netea” High School in Deda, 1996-2000; *Cire arii 2000*, of the School in Criste ti, 2000.

Dialog în albastru (Blue Dialogue) was the first scholar publication of the period in the Mures area, uniting the efforts of several high schools in Târgu Mure , in a common attempt to answer the need for dialogue of the young readers, as an exercise of free speech. The first students publication, issued in 1990, was *Gânduri studen e ti (Students Thoughts)*, a social and cultural publication of the Students' League in Târgu-Mure , following the publication isseud under the same name during the communist period (1974-1989) by the Union of the Communist Students Association from the University Center of Târgu-Mure .

A representative students publications, especially due to the national echo it gained, was *ICS* (1994-1998), a cultural and social attitude periodical created in 1994 with the purpose of encouraging the students to act: „We, the students, we let ourselves assimilated by the present way of the Romanian society, abandoning any opposition. The Romanian students have never been more passive, more disoriented.” (*ICS*, 1995)

Among the pedagogical and cultural publications, *Educa ie i cultur (Education and culture, 1995)* (Figure 4)

was the modern version of the most important pedagogical and cultural publication of the inter-war period in the Mures county, *Progres și cultură*. On the basis of this tradition, the publication wanted to become a true „cathedral of professionalism” and of the creativity in the local kindergarten, schools and high schools, aiming to encourage the activity of the professional and scientific associations of the teachers.

The present study aimed to establish the profile of the pedagogical and scholar press during different periods and the roles it assumed to support the general development of the local press: a formative role during the inter-war period, a spiritual shelter during communism and a free space during the first decade of post communism. Besides this important contribution, the consistency of the pedagogical and scholar press during all these periods offers enough arguments for the present teachers and students in the Mures area to honor a rich tradition regarding the involvement of their predecessors in the general evolution of the local culture.

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Progres și Cultură

REVISTA PEDAGOGICĂ — SOCIALĂ — LITERARĂ

CUPRINSUL :

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Anul III. Nr. 4. Aprilie 1935.

Figure 1. Progres și cultură (Progress and Culture), 1933-1938, the most important pedagogical and cultural publication of the Mures county during the inter-war period.

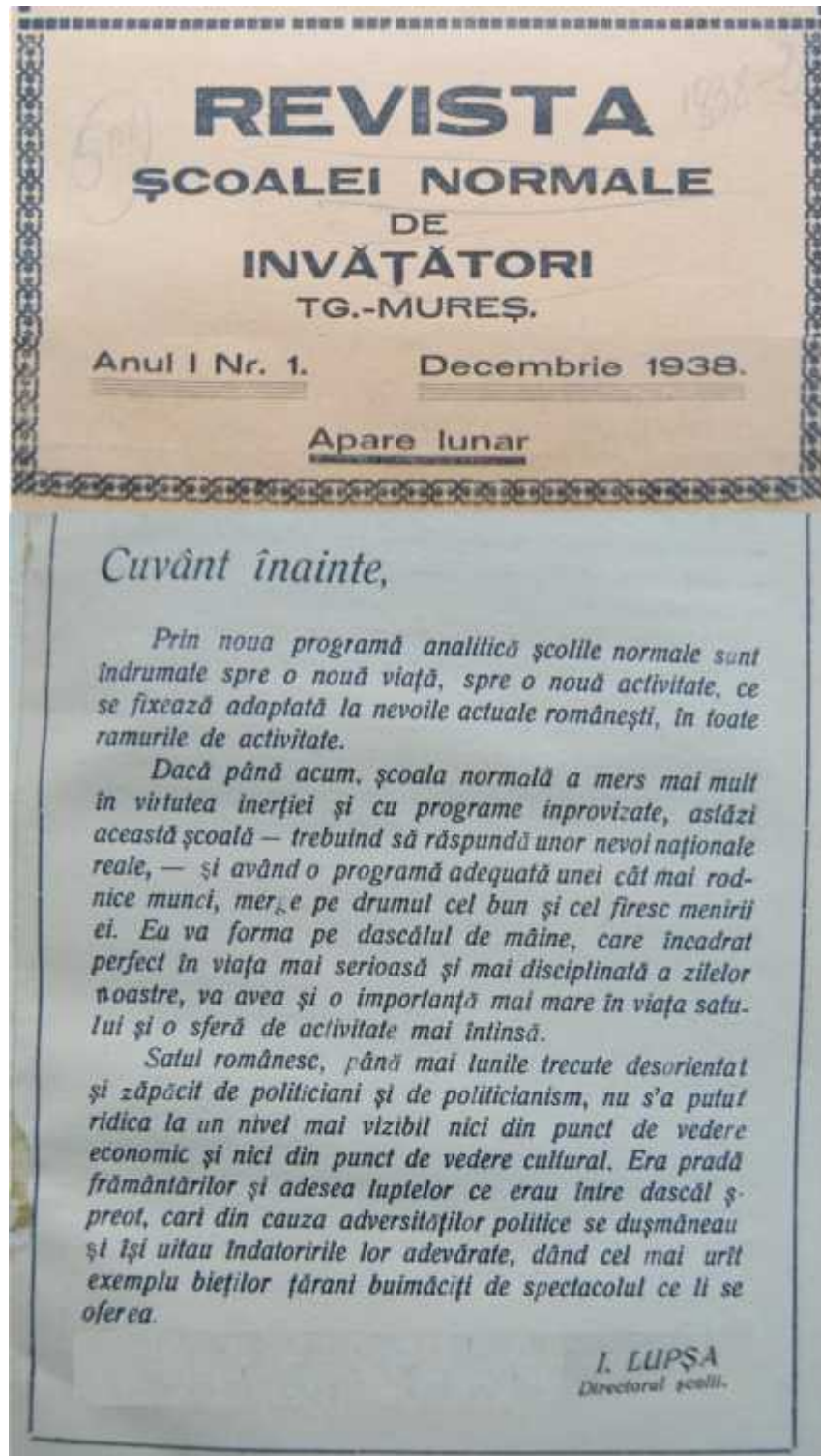


Figure 2. Revista școlii Normale de învățători din Târgu Mureș
(The Târgu Mureș Teaching High School Magazine, 1938-1940).



Figure 3. Athenaeum (1968-1972), the publication of the 3 years Pedagogical Institute in Târgu-Mure during the communist period.

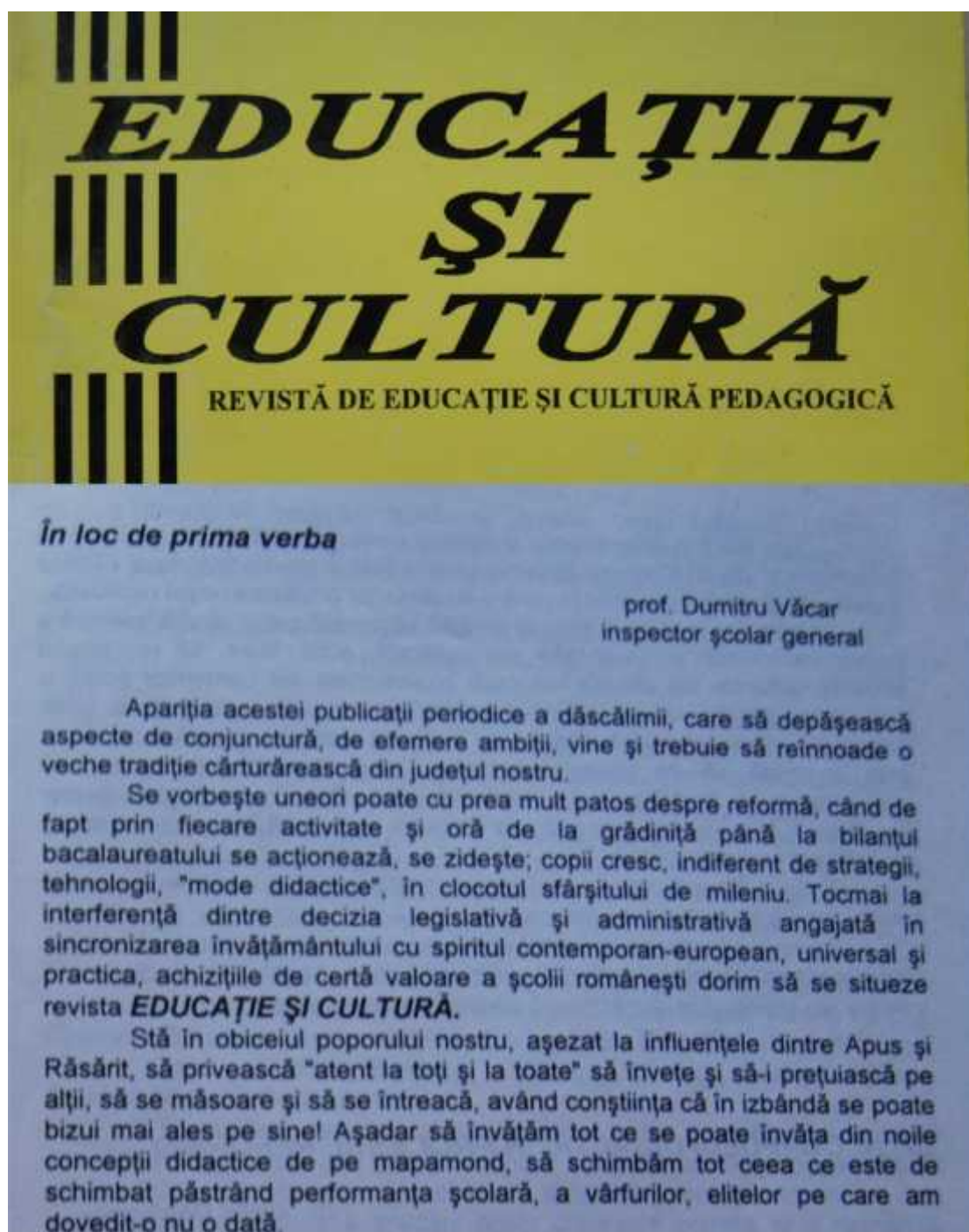


Figure 3. *Educație și cultură* (Education and Culture), 1995, the most relevant pedagogical publication of the first post communist decade in the Mures county.