

**NOTES ON THE ROMANIAN CIVIL SERVANTS
FROM BESZTERCE-NASZÓD/BISTRIȚA-NĂȘĂUD COUNTY
DURING WORLD WAR I
AND ITS AFTERMATH (1914-1921)***

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Abstract: *The paper is focused on the situation of the Romanian civil servants from Beszterce-Naszód/Bistrița-Năsăud County during World War I and its aftermath, with emphasis on their integration into the Romanian society of the time, the part played during the revolutionary events of late 1918 and their place in the new administration of the Romanian Kingdom. Romanian historical writing experienced a tendency of shadowing those political representatives and civil servants perceived before 1918 as collaborators of the Hungarian state, to the point in which they were presented as somehow estranged from their co-nationals, but following their links with the Romanian financial institutions, cultural associations and charity activities seems to highlight the contrary, at least for the county and period under research. In Beszterce-Naszód/Bistrița-Năsăud they formed a small but active group, well integrated into the Romanian society, and they managed to preserve their status in troubled times, shifting the source of their authority from the Hungarian to the Romanian Kingdom. However, this did not save some of them from the virulent press attacks and allegations of the radical nationalists, which sometimes ended in criminal investigations, especially for those holding the highest county offices.*

Keywords: civil servants, World War I, Romanians, Transylvania, Beszterce-Naszód/Bistrița-Năsăud County

On 22 March 1919, the official publication of the Romanian National Party, ‘Patria’ (‘Motherland’), published, under the signature of Al. Ciura, an editorial entitled ‘The Outcasts’ (‘Renegații’), in which the author approached the situation of the Romanians who had held offices in the administration of the Hungarian Kingdom. The text of the article actually emphasises the purely theoretical and demagoguery filled, radical expectations of the wing led by Octavian Goga (at that time in charge of the propaganda office and, implicitly, in charge of the party official publication): the complete elimination from the new administration of those Romanian civil servants that had held leadership positions during the old regime, as

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well as the selective inclusion of those who only held lower offices.¹ Following a letter of protest from a high positioned civil servant (who remained anonymous), the author slowed down the tone of the attack, defining as ‘outcasts’ only those who had directly collaborated with the Hungarian authorities, against their co-nationals, and who, after the war, held the same or even higher positions.²

This particular exchange of opinions contextualized a type of discourse whose origins can be identified in the Romanian Transylvanian press at the beginning of the 1860s, once with the growth in numbers of Romanians holding public offices. The incompatibility between serving the state and serving the nation was perpetuated by the Romanian newspapers throughout the entire Dualist period,³ and soon Romanian politicians within Hungarian parties were alongside the civil servants under the same title of ‘outcasts’. The political-national ambiguous position of both these categories and the involvement of some civil servants (especially constables – *szolgabíró*, and district-level – *járás* office holders) in electoral campaigns against the candidates of the Romanian National Party seems to have decisively contributed to this association. However, at the same period of time another type of discourse developed, which showed compassion towards the ingrate position of the Romanian civil servants, presented as continuously being pressured by authorities to deny their ethnical origin.⁴

The Romanian historiography regarding civil servants and the administration during the Dualist period is not very rich. The few texts dedicated to this theme either completely ignore the situation of the Romanian civil servants, or perpetuate clichés from the press of that time, in an ultra-synthesized version, promoting the image of a body of Romanian civil servants which appears not only very small in number, but also somewhat estranged from the rest of the Romanian society, as result of the pressure of the Hungarian authorities.⁵ K. Hitchins nuances their situation, underlining that they were regarded with mistrust by the leaders of the Romanian National Party, but does not extend the analysis, probably due to the lack of scientific literature on the subject. It is also the American historian who associates the Romanian civil servants in the Dualist period mainly with lower and local offices (especially commune notaries).⁶

¹ „Patria”, I, 1919, no. 5, 7/20 February, p. 1.

² Idem, no. 31, 22 March, p. 1.

³ The issue had deeper roots. For an in-depth analysis of the relation between Romanian office holders and Romanian intelligentsia in earlier 19th century see Sorin Mitu, *National Identity and Social Status at the Romanians in Transylvania*, in vol. *Entangled Identities. Regionalism, Society, Ethnicity, Confession and Gender in Transylvania (18th-19th century)*, Cluj-Napoca – Gatineau, Argonaut – Symphologic Publishing, 2014, p. 73-88.

⁴ „Luminatoriulu”, II, 1881, no. 21, 14/26 March, p. 4.

⁵ E.g.: *Istoria României. Transilvania*. Vol. II, Cluj-Napoca, Editura George Barițiu, 1997, p. 130-131.

⁶ Keith Hitchins, *A Nation Affirmed: The Romanian National Movement in Transylvania 1860-1914*, Bucharest, The Encyclopaedic Publishing House, 1999, p. 108.

I have chosen to shortly revisit the issue of integrating the Romanian civil servants into the Romanian society of that time by approaching the particular case of the Romanian civil servants of the central administration of the Besterce-Naszód/Bistrița-Năsăud County in the period of time between 1914–1921, following:

- their involvement in the Romanian economic and cultural institutions before 1918, as well as charity acts;
- their involvement in the events of November–December 1918;
- professional and social standing after 1919.

a. ‘Outcasts’ and Romanian society during the war

Beszterce-Naszód/Bistrița-Năsăud County was formed in 1876, through the union of the Năsăud District (the territory of the former 2nd Romanian Border Regiment) and Bistritz (Saxon District), together with other few territories from neighbouring counties.⁷ From a geographical point of view, it was situated at the border with the Kingdom of Romania, but also with the Austrian province of Bukovina. At the 1910 census, the structure of its population by declared mother tongue was: 68.5% Romanian, 20% German (German and Jewish), 8.4% Hungarian (Hungarian and Jewish), 3.1% other languages.⁸ An unofficial assessment of the population, conducted at the end of 1918 by the Romanian, Hungarian and German local National Councils showed relatively similar figures.⁹

Between 1914 and 1918, a number of six Romanian civil servants were active in the central administration of the county, representing about 20-25% of the total of employees (except for the auxiliary unqualified workforce): Dr. Leo Scridon (high notary – *főjegző*), Dr. George Linul (high county attorney – *tiszti főügyész*), Ioan Corbul (notary at the orphanage see – *árvaszéki jegyző*), Procopie Cuteanu, Ioan Șerban (assessors at the orphanage see – *árvaszéki ülnökök*), Ioan Popovici (clerk – *irodatiszt*).¹⁰ The first five in office ranking were locals born on the territory of the former border regiment, of agriculture workers descent, and at least three of them benefitted from the border guard study scholarships system.¹¹ A fourth one, who held the highest office (Dr. L. Scridon), was descendant of a family of wealthy

⁷ Anton Dörner, *Administrația Transilvaniei în perioada anilor 1867-1876*, „Anuarul Institutului de Istorie “George Barițiu” din Cluj-Napoca”, XL, 2001, p. 117.

⁸ Kepecs József (szk.), *Erdély településeinek nemzetiségi (anyanyelvi) adatai százalékos megoszlásban (1850-1941)*, Budapest, Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 1996, p. 14.

⁹ Andreea Salvan, *Pavel Tofan Memorii din 1918*, in vol. *Bistrița – 90 de ani de la Marea Unire*, Bistrița, Barna’s, 2008, p. 81.

¹⁰ „Magyarország tiszti czim- és névtára”, XXXIV, 1915, p. 104; Idem, XXXV, 1916, p. 116; Idem, XXXVI, 1917, p. 128; Idem, XXXVII, 1918, p. 71.

¹¹ Cornel Sigmirean, *Formarea intelectualității românești din Transilvania și Banat în epoca modernă*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2000, p. 450, 451, 446, 455.

peasants, with a tradition in village administration.¹² The majority of them had studied at the Romanian Gymnasium in Năsăud and all of them had Law studies (mandatory requirement for a position in civil service), most of them at the University in Kolozsvár/Cluj.

An important landmark in establishing their interaction with the Romanian society of the time is represented by their presence at the leadership of local financial-banking and economic institutions. This implies not only the recognition of their social status by their co-nationals and the interactions with other members of the Romanian elite (including supporters of the Romanian National Party), but also the direct involvement, with power of decision, in the credit system that fuelled the economic welfare of Romanian communities.

As can be seen in Table 1 below, four out of six Romanians holding offices at county level can be found among the leadership of several Romanian financial-banking and commercial institutions. Apart from these, there were also other district-level civil servants who held leadership positions at other institutions in the field. In total, Romanian civil servants at county and district level held board offices in eight out of ten Romanian financial-banking and commercial institutions with a social capital of over 100.000 Crowns in the county.¹³

Table 1. The involvement of Romanian county civil servants in the leadership of financial-banking and commercial institutions.

Firstname, Lastname	Position in administration	Economic institution	Position in economic institution
Ioan Corbul	Orphanage see notary	Banca Poporală	Member of Directors' board
Ioan Corbul	Orphanage see notary	Societatea acționară de cărămidărie	Member in the Overseeing Committee
Procopie Cutean	Orphanage see Assessor	Bistrițiana, institut de credit și economii	Member in the Overseeing Committee
George Linul	High county attorney	Bistrițiana, institut de credit și economii	Member of Directors' board
Leo Scridon	County pronotary	Bistrițiana, institut de credit și economii	Vice-President of Directors' board
Leo Scridon	County pronotary	Aurora, societate de împrumut și păstrare	Member of Directors' board
Leo Scridon	County pronotary	Hebe, societate acționară	Member of Directors' board

¹² Iosif Uilăcan, *Leon Scridon*, in Adrian Onofreiu, Dan Lucian Vaida (ed.), *Convergențe etnoculturale. In Honorem Mircea Prahase*, Cluj-Napoca, Mega, 2012, p. 292-293.

¹³ Estimated from: „Anuarul Băncilor Române”, XV, 1914; Idem, XVI, 1915; Idem, XVII, 1916.

Another indicator of the level of integration of Romanian civil servants in the Romanian society of that time is their presence among the members of the cultural society ASTRA. Analysing its membership for 1917 (thus, in full war and full cultural offensive of the Hungarian authorities in the border regions near Romania) it can be seen that out of the county civil servants, the following were ASTRA members: Dr. L. Scridon, I. Corbu and P. Cuteanu, together with other few district physicians (Dr. Alexandru German, Dr. Teofil Tanco and Dr. Aurel Monda).¹⁴ The results are almost identical to those in the Sibiu County:¹⁵ in both counties, the highest ranked Romanian civil servants were ASTRA members, and lower ranking civil servants mostly were not, which raises questions regarding the true reason behind their non-involvement. Most probably, the choice of becoming an ASTRA member pertained less to the image one had in the eyes of the authorities, but rather to the personal interest in the cultural act, which, at its turn, could have probably been tied to the level of education and salary. A good example in this case is that of I. Corbu, whose status as ASTRA member appears natural given his literary-scientific preoccupations: before 1918, he had literary contributions to ‘Revista Bistriței’ (‘The Bistrița Magazine’), and in the period between the World Wars, he developed an intense editorial activity in the field of popular sciences.¹⁶ Moreover, even in the troubled days of November 1918, I. Corbu let his artistic side reveal itself in the newsheet ‘Glasul Vremei’ (‘The Voice of Our Times’), which appeared at the beginning of November in Bistrița, issued by the Romanian National Council, where he signs several literary-mobilizing pieces.¹⁷

The acts of charity for national causes are another form of social involvement where the presence of civil servants can be easily identified. They represented a constant even before 1914, but our examples will focus only on the period during the war, when substantial donations for the orphanage in Blaj stand out, made either in their own name, or through the financial-banking institutions they held leadership positions in (for example, the ‘Bistrițiana’ bank). Out of the individual donors, worth mentioning is I. Corbu, who donates bee hives worth of 1000 Crowns, for ‘our bees of tomorrow.’ Other donors were Dr. G. Linul and his wife Camila (100 Crowns each), as well as Dr. L. Scridon and his wife Iarda (100 Crowns each).¹⁸

Also during the war, in the social representation registry, it is worth underlining that the ecclesiastic press does not omit mentioning Dr. L. Scridon and

¹⁴ „Transilvania”, XLVIII, 1917, no. 7-12, p. 145, 156.

¹⁵ Vlad Popovici, *Considerații privind funcționarii publici români din Transilvania. Studiu de caz: comitatul Sibiu și scaunele săsești care l-au format (1861-1918)*, „Anuarul Institutului de Istorie ‘George Barițiu’ din Cluj-Napoca”, LV, 2016, p. 159-178.

¹⁶ Al. Matei, *Documente despre Marea Unire: „Glasul Vremei”*, „Arhiva Someșană”, II, 1974, p. 97.

¹⁷ Idem, p. 97, 101-103.

¹⁸ „Unirea”, XXVI, 1916, no. 32, 28 March, p. 2-3; Idem, no. 57, 6 June, p. 4.

Dr. G Linul as representatives of the Bestercze-Naszód/Bistrița-Năsăud County at the funeral of the Romanian Greek-Catholic bishop Vasile Hossu from Gherla.¹⁹

Last but not least, it should be noted, but only as a rumour, that in 1917, when the Hungarian government asked the Romanian personalities to sign a declaration of loyalty, Dr. L. Scridon, although county high notary, asked his co-nationals not to sign.²⁰

Taking into account the data above, one can draw the conclusion that the integration of the Romanian civil servants in the Romanian society of that time is truly difficult to call into question: this socio-professional category included some of the most important and respected members of their communities. In cases where the political context could generate labels as 'outcast', the social context inevitably led to the dilution, up to the disappearance of such labels. As we are about to see, even when, in 1919, the radical wing of the Romanian National Party tried to reiterate this cliché with the purpose of eliminating these 'outcast' civil servants from their offices, retaliation came shortly after, as they took a stand both at journalistic level, and through the voice of civil society.

b. Autumn 1918

The events that came with the disintegration of the Double Monarchy left the Romanian civil servants in a duality situation: on the one hand, they were rightful members of an administration whose control gears were rapidly fading, and on the other hand, they were recruited in all the newly created self-administration organisms at local level (the so called National Councils). This situation was not specific to Romanian civil servants only, but to all who held decision-factor positions. For example, vice-Lieutenant (*alispán*) Dr. Hunyadi Imre was member of the Hungarian National Council, and high notary Dr. L. Scridon, member of the Romanian National Council. Even though within the county administrative organisms their relationship was one of hierarchical subordination, as members of the National Councils (which *de facto* held the power), the relationship became one of equality within the negotiations pertaining to different aspects of civic interest.²¹

When the Romanian National Council was formed in the city of Bistrița on 29 October 1918, three out of the six county civil servants took part in the proceedings: Dr. L. Scridon, Dr. G. Linul and I. Corbu, together with other district civil servants and others from different administrative services. Although I. Corbu was asked to hold the opening speech for this occasion, he declined the honour.²² Within the Romanian National Senate from Bistrița-Năsăud County were chosen Dr. L. Scridon

¹⁹ Idem, no. 6, 22 January, p. 2.

²⁰ I. Uilăcan, *Leon Scridon*, p. 302.

²¹ A. Salvan, *Pavel Tofan Memorii din 1918*, p. 81.

²² Idem, *Ibidem*, p. 76.

(one of the six presidents) and I. Corbu (cashier).²³ Also, four administrative civil servants from the period between 1914 and 1918 were chosen for the ad-hoc commission that undertook the administration of the goods belonging to the wealth of the border guard funds: Dr. L. Scridon, former high notary and future vice prefect (=vice-Lieutenant), together with Dr. George Linul (high county attorney) Procopiu Cutean and Ioan Corbul (assessors at the orphanage see).²⁴ It was also Dr. L. Scridon who took part in the commission that negotiated, together with the Hungarian and German representatives, the proportional and ethnic structure based distribution of the goods stored in the warehouses and barracks of the former imperial and royal army.²⁵

Evidently, the Romanian civil servants in the Hungarian administration had played in Beszterce-Naszód/Bistrița-Năsăud, as everywhere else in Transylvania, important roles in translating the power towards the Romanian National Councils. Despite their activity on behalf of the national cause, their status of ‘outcasts’ wasn’t overlooked this time either. Violence against representatives of the former administration took place especially at local level, the main targeted category being the commune notaries and mayors – meaning those civil servants who had ensured the direct contact with the mass of the population and in whose case the resentment had taken a personal note.²⁶ Occasionally, however, important figures within the administration and justice were the object of such threats. Their involvement in the new organizational structures was not always welcomed and any discontent had the potential of turning into violence.

For example, royal judge Alexa David, the only Romanian civil servant present at the founding of the Romanian National Council in the borough of Naszód/Năsăud, was soon accused of abuse of power while distributing alcohol towards the National Guard in the city. His actions seem to have bothered the members of a group of 25 veterans from Rebrîșoara and Năsăud, who returned from the Italian front. In a threatening letter sent to Major Iuliu Marțian, the commander of the Guard, they mention how they would murder both him (the commander), and A. David, together with another comrade (Ion Zagreanu), should the latter two not be eliminated from the National Guard for conduit reasons: ‘That bitch David who sold his body and soul to the Hungarians and Jews, [you] made him distribute brandy, so that he could take more for himself, and to us who were in the fire, not give us anything? Why?’ (‘Pe curva de David care-i vândut cu trup și suflet la unguri și jâdovi să-l pui pe el

²³ Al. Matei, *Documente despre Marea Unire: „Glasul Vremei”*, p. 89.

²⁴ Adrian Onofreiu, *1918 – o lume în schimbare*, „Revista Bistriței”, XXII, 2008, p. 354-355.

²⁵ A. Salvan, *Pavel Toțan Memorii din 1918*, p. 81.

²⁶ *Idem*, *Ibidem*, p. 83-98.

să împărtășcă vinars să-și iee el mai mult să-și ducă acasă și nouă cari am fost în bătaie să nu ne dați? Pentru ce?’).²⁷

But the peasants were not the only ones to share such views. Neither the commanders of the Romanian army which had recently entered Transylvania, nor the Transylvanians in the Romanian Volunteers Corps showed great trust in the former civil servants. In a report of the Volunteer Corps Central Service from the beginning of December 1918, which comprised a list of the trusted personalities (Romanians in Transylvania) who could be asked for advice and support during the advance of the Romanian army, it was mentioned that ‘all Romanian lawyers, as well as priests, teachers and bank clerks are trustworthy people.’²⁸ As we can see, civil servants were not included within this group, which led to situations such as the one in Bistrița-Năsăud, in which L. Scridon Jr. (Law student) was nominated as trusted person, whilst the father, important office holder, was wilfully omitted.

c. Former civil servants in the new administration (1919-1920)

The attempts of the Ruling Council to organize the new Romanian administration were influenced, in Bistrița-Năsăud as well as in all of Transylvania, by several aspects:

- the relative state of confusion regarding authority (the Hungarian state vs. the Romanian state), which ruled between November 1918 and February 1919;
- the refusal of a high number of Hungarian civil servants to swear allegiance to the Romanian Kingdom (January – March 1919);
- the lack of Romanian qualified staff to fill in the positions vacated through the refusal of swearing allegiance (January – June 1919).

In this context, Romanian civil servants from before 1919 represented a key group in assuring the control over the administration, either through their promotion within leadership positions, or through their expertise from former offices. In Bistrița-Năsăud, all former Romanian civil servants (as well as most of the Hungarian and German civil servants from the central county administration) had sworn allegiance to the Romanian state. Some were promoted, either within the central county administration, or in external positions such as high-constables (*prim-pretor, főszolgabíró*), constables (*pretor, szolgabíró*), or district secretaries (*secretar de plasă, járási titkár*). It is worth mentioning that, even though a high number of Romanians were employed within the new administration, especially at district level, the promotions of former civil servants also included Hungarians and Germans, not

²⁷ Alexandru Porțeanu, *Documente privind lupta revoluționară a maselor populare din județul Bistrița-Năsăud pentru unirea Transilvaniei cu România (din Arhivele Consiliului Național Român, 1918)*, „Arhiva Someșană”, II, 1974, p. 128.

²⁸ Cornel Grad, *Contribuția armatei române la preluarea puterii politico-administrative în Transilvania. Primele măsuri (noiembrie 1918-aprilie 1919)*, „Revista de Administrație Publică și Politici Sociale”, II, 2010, nr. 4 (5), p. 55-56.

only Romanians. This was partly an expression of the necessity at that time, in which expertise mattered more than ethnicity, but it also definitely reflects a consensus state at local level. Practically, out of the former county civil servants in Bistrița-Năsăud, only the vice-Lieutenant and the 1st vice-Notary (*I. fűjegző*), both Hungarian, together with a hussar and a servant, were the ones who were no longer on the payment slips after February 1919.²⁹ The constable of the Viișoara district also asked to be relieved of his allegiance, motivating with the fact that he desired to take up technical studies and he would only be able to do that in Hungary, since he did not master the Romanian language well enough.³⁰ Generally, however, the composition of the central county administration between 1919 and 1921 does not fundamentally differ from that of the period before.

One of the negative effects of this situation of relative continuity was represented by the delations and allegations against the former civil servants still on duty. Concerning the Hungarian civil servants, they were generally accused of lack of loyalty towards the Romanian state, and facilitating the access to subordinate positions for their co-nationals. The Romanian civil servants were mostly accused of corruption and embezzlement.

In the context of the war and the poverty period of 1919–1920, corruption acts themselves did not represent anything out of the ordinary. In some cases, however, it appears obvious they were orchestrated in order to disgrace important people, among which one also finds former civil servants now in power positions. Sometimes it can be noticed the favouring of the new civil servants (recruited from within the followers of the Romanian National Party from before 1918), in detriment of the former ones.

An edifying case in this sense was that of Dr. L. Scridon, former high notary, named vice prefect.³¹ His position within the former administration had most definitely brought him resentment, and his advancement in office since January 1919 only added to that. His popularity was also influenced by his decision to ban the opening of bars and the selling of alcoholic beverages in villages on Sundays and religious holidays.³² Around the middle of 1919, the first rumours started to make their way in the newspapers, later sustained by the announcement of his arrest, being accused of having favoured a blackmailing officer and illegally issuing export

²⁹ Serviciul Județean Bistrița-Năsăud al Arhivelor Naționale (Bistrița-Năsăud County Archive), Fond Prefectura Județului Bistrița-Năsăud (Bistrița-Năsăud County – Prefect's office fund), File 182/1919, p. 1-52.

³⁰ A. Onofreiu, *Mărturii documentare referitoare la relațiile minoritate/majoritate la Bistrița în primii ani după Unirea din 1918*, „Revista Bistriței”, XXIV, 2010, p. 435.

³¹ Gheorghe Iancu, *Contribuția Consiliului Dirigent la consolidarea statului național unitar român (1918-1920)*, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia, 1985, p. 132.

³² A. Onofreiu, *1918 – o lume în schimbare*, p. 358.

permits to some Jewish merchants³³ – many corruption cases made public by ‘Patria’ were related in a way or another to Jews, although quite often no Jewish persons were nominated, which calls into question the true character and purposes of such press reports.

Reading the news 100 years later and setting it in the larger context of the typology of the ‘Patria’ newspaper, some question marks arise:

– first of all, as we mentioned at the beginning, the official publication of RNP was at that time under the rule of the radical wing of the party, and its attitude towards the former civil servants was explicitly showcased in the already mentioned editorial;

– secondly, associating Jews to the acts of corruption of Romanian civil servants was a common ground in the journalistic discourse of said publication. In this context, the arrest and the alleged corruption acts of Dr. L. Scridon were just some other pieces of news from that time, belonging to the series of those in which Jewish business people corrupted Romanian civil servants.

– thirdly, the news, however sensational in essence, was not continued by means of other stories. A partial explanation is given by one of Scridon’s biographers, who mentions that the county prefect, Dr. G. Tripon (important member of RNP), was also investigated regarding this business. However, given the fact that he had been recently named judge, the investigation was stopped by the immunity granted by his new position. If that truly was the development of the issue, the image of a prefect, former ‘Memorandum’ activist and important member of the RNP accused of corruption would have represented a major stain on the party’s image, therefore the silence of the press on this matter.

Finally, after six months of investigation and after a large number of local Romanian intellectuals took a public stance in his favour, the charges could not be proved and the vice prefect was reinstated.³⁴ However, several months later, the same Dr. L. Scridon was involved in a new major scandal: on the background of the tensions accumulated during the preparations for the Agricultural Reform, a mob of several hundred peasants took him out of his office on 23 May 1920. Since 28 of them were arrested, the following day over 2000 peasants gathered in the streets, in front of the Prefecture building.³⁵

Putting the two events together, leaving aside the innocence or the degree of corruption of the vice prefect, one can see the more exposed position held by Dr. L. Scridon, as former civil servant before 1919, now in a power position. In both scandals, it was not the prefects (former local leaders within RNP) who were the object of investigations and revolts, but the vice prefect (former civil servant before

³³ „Patria”, I, 1919, no. 94, 13 June, p. 1.

³⁴ I. Uilăcan, *Leon Scridon*, p. 296, 303.

³⁵ Vasile Iovan, *Aspecte ale mișcării revoluționare și democratice în județul Bistrița-Năsăud*, „File de Istorie”, II, 1972, p. 173-174.

1919, promoted within the new administration). However, as in any other bureaucratic system, the career of Dr. L. Scridon did not suffer from such charges, since, shortly after, he became prefect of Ciuc County.³⁶

Conclusions

Even though they were marginalized in historiography, the Romanian civil servants before 1918, at least those belonging to the central county administrative bodies, seem to have played an important role in the Romanian society of that time. A mere surface analysis, such as the one presented here, identifies them as intercessors between the Romanian institutions and the Hungarian state, but also as members, organizers and financial contributors to different types of societies, associations and national initiatives. It is worth mentioning that, even though this research only represents a surface case study on a given territorial-administrative level, similar results were also revealed in the research of another county: Sibiu (in southern Transylvania), which advises towards the extension of the research to the entire province.

The events at the end of 1918 brought the Romanian civil servants within the new power structures (National Councils) and, at least in Beszterce-Naszód/Bistrița-Năsăud, they were present in all important activities of ‘taking over the imperium’ (‘preluarea imperiului’), even though, due to their former offices, they did not always benefit from their co-nationals’ full trust.

Their evolution in the administration after 1919 seems to have been generally an ascendant one, most of them ending up in higher positions than before, some even county prefects. From this point of view, however, the present case study is not particularly relevant, since, in Bistrița-Năsăud, as stated earlier, most of the members of the central administration, no matter the nationality, kept their positions even after 1919. One of their biggest problems was represented by the attitude of a radical part of their co-nationals, who were openly critique due to their former positions in the Hungarian administration. Even though it is difficult to identify and impossible to quantify the limit between discourse and practice, this attitude existed and persisted even after 1919, and it was later taken over and perpetuated throughout historiography.

In the end, there are three main observations to be made, based on the current case study. First, there is no reason for the historiographic cast out and Romanian civil servants before 1918 should be regarded and researched as just another professional layer of the Romanian society in Hungary. Second, involvement in the Romanian cultural and economic national movement seems to have been influenced not by the field of work (as the writings on the subject tend to consider) but by social position, education and income. Off course, when it came to politics, things changed

³⁶ I. Uilăcan, *Leon Scridon*, p. 302.

radically, no Romanian civil servant being involved in radical national politics before 1919. Finally, after 1918 the level of professional expertise and social status seem to have been valued higher by the new Romanian authorities than any former political associations and negative labels.