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HOW DID THE SPANISH INFLUENZA IMPACT THE 1918 UNION OF TRANSYLVANIA WITH ROMANIA?

Abstract. *The National Assembly, scheduled for Alba Iulia on December 1, 1918, was meant to proclaim the Union of Transylvania, Banat, and Partium (parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1918, but with a Romanian ethnic majority) with the Kingdom of Romania. Among the worst enemies for the organization of this Assembly was the Spanish Influenza.*

Towards the end of 1918, explanations about this pandemic were partly modern. Transylvanian newspapers made some efforts to depict the Spanish flu, emphasizing a scientific dimension, occasionally giving space for the medical discussions, although theories without scientific support were present as well. In some countries around the world, modern procedures were taken against the spread of the flu, such as wearing a mask or the interdiction to organize events with numerous participants, but in Transylvania, at the end of the war, it appeared that very few cared for real measures regarding the pandemic. The major imperatives of the period were hundred per cent towards the national emancipation. There was also a vacuum of authority which needed to be filled.

The deputies for the National Assembly were elected 4 – 7 days prior the event established to take place in Alba Iulia. A significant number of them got sick in this period, becoming unable to make the trip to Alba Iulia. Most of them sent telegrams to the Assembly organizers, specifying that they were victims of the Spanish flu and that they were forced to stay in bed. Some of those afflicted were replaced by substitutes already elected. Nevertheless, other Romanian leaders, although being very ill, made a considerable effort and managed to be present at the event. Carrying the flu germs (knowledge about viruses was extremely limited) and putting others in danger was not seen as a major problem.

Key words: *pandemic, flu, World War I, post-war, Transylvania, unification, National Assembly.*

ЯК ІСПАНСКИЙ ГРИП ВПЛИНУВ НА СОЮЗ ТРАНСИЛЬВАНІЇ І РУМУНІЇ 1918 РОКУ?

Анотація. *Національні збори, заплановані в Альба-Юлії на 1 грудня 1918 р., мали проголосити союз Трансильванії, Банату та Партіуму (частини Австро-Угорської імперії до 1918 р., але з румунською етнічною більшістю) з Королівством Румунія. Одним із найлютіших ворогів організації цієї Асамблеї був іспанський грип.*

Ближче до кінця 1918 р. пояснення цієї пандемії стали частково сучасними. Трансильванські газети докладали певних зусиль, щоб змалювати іспанський грип, підкреслюючи науковий вимір.

час від часу надаючи простір для медичних дискусій, хоча також були присутні теорії без наукових пояснень. У деяких країнах світу застосовувалися сучасні заходи проти поширення грипу, наприклад, носіння маски і заборона організовувати заходи з численними учасниками, але в Трансильванії наприкінці війни виявилось, що мало хто піклується про реальні кроки проти пандемії. Головні імперативи того періоду стовідсотково були спрямовані на національну емансипацію. Сформувався й вакуум влади, який потрібно було заповнити.

Депутатів Національних зборів обирали за 4–7 днів до заходу, призначеного для проведення в Альба-Юлії. Значна частина з них у цей період захворіли, не будучи в змозі поїхати до Альба-Юлії. Більшість надсилали телеграми організаторам Асамблеї, уточнюючи, що вони постраждали від іспанського грипу і змушені залишатися вдома. Деякі з цих депутатів були замінені вже обраними заступниками. Проте інші румунські лідери, хоча й були дуже хворі, доклали значних зусиль і змогли бути присутніми на заході. Перенесення мікробів грипу (знання про віруси були вкрай обмежені) і зараження на небезпеку інших не вважалися великими проблемами.

Ключові слова: пандемія, грип, Перша світова війна, повоєнна, Трансильванія, об'єднання, Національні збори.

The Problem Statement. The Union of Transylvania with Romania from December 1, 1918, a decision taken in Alba Iulia, a small town in the centre of Transylvania, is considered the most important event from the history of the Romanians. At the time, the National Assembly of Romanians from Transylvania, Banat and the Hungarian Parties (north-western territories of present-day Romania), as a constituent forum, voted for the unconditional union with the Kingdom of Romania.

This historical process is one of the most analysed in the Romanian historiography, through all its dimensions, but until a recent stage, the matter of Spanish Influenza – in progress in that period – and how this influenced the political course and the associated events, was never very focused or it was considered a minor issue for the structure of a much greater historical phenomenon. But, as always, the present defines the way we see the past: the present COVID-19 pandemic automatically determines a different positioning of any historian in relation with such issue, and reconsidering its importance becomes mandatory.

The Analyses of Sources and Recent Researches. Throughout decades there have been numerous studies dedicated to 1st of December 1918 act of Union and the process that conjugates this event. Yet none of them are really worth noting regarding how the Spanish Influenza evolved in Transylvania by the end of 1918, and, more important, if and how this pandemic influenced the course of events. However, there are studies about this pandemic on a larger scale, regarding its spread and evolution in Europe, or the world, and most of the time from a perspective – let's say – of the history of medicine (e.g.: Patterson 1986, Valleron *et alii* 2010, Humphries 2013, Spinney 2020). Transylvania and the Romanian territory in general are not covered. Most of the historical productions barely mentioned this issue, which was seen as an exotic fact, but worthy only for *en passant* references. Nonetheless this manner was determined by an apparent lack of sources. Probably due to the imperatives of 1918 with its significant political transformations, there was no coherent attention distributed towards the pandemic, which determined less information, media-productions, literature, or scientifically approaches as it should have been in normal conditions.

However, there are sources that can be analysed regarding the matter in question, even though not so many as one would expect; consequently, the present study tries to go back to primary sources and to retrieve and exploit this kind of information. Most of these sources are not very known for the Romanian historical research: several press articles from the end of 1918 that pay significant attention to the evolution of the pandemic mostly in Transylvania,

some specific or even peculiar situations related also by the newspapers, fragments from private diaries, and a set of documents (letters, telegrams) issued around the event of 1 December 1918 and in relation with it.

The only historical studies regarding exactly the same matter were published in a recent period by the same author of the present article (Roșu, 2020a, pp. 71–75; Roșu, 2020b, pp. 135–144).

The Purpose of the publication. This article focuses on the impact of the Spanish Influenza for the course of events of 1918 in Transylvania, a subject which was treated as a minor one in the Romanian historiography, but which seems to be very fresh and of great interest lately, due to the nowadays pandemic realities.

The Main Material Statement. Organizing the National Assembly in Alba Iulia was, however, not a simple feat, and the event had its own enemies: the mostly unconcealed opposition of the Hungarians, occasionally “spiced” with bullets, the intimidation coming from the German troops transiting the Transylvanian territory (during their retreat from Romania to Germany), or the pressure put by the Serbian forces on the Banat participants. But the fiercest enemy was the “Spaniard” one. The pandemic that was increasing every day towards the end of 1918 confined to their beds many of the Romanians who wanted to reach Alba Iulia (Roșu, 2020a, pp. 71–75).

The election or appointment of deputies for the National Assembly, which was to be the supreme forum of the Romanian nation in Transylvania on December 1, 1918, took place throughout the province, only a few days prior the event. In fact, scheduling the Assembly on December 1 was only decided on November 20. Unmistakeably, the members must have been elected from among those who wanted and were able to travel. However, 4 – 5 days following the election, some of these delegates were no longer in their full physical strength. Most of those absent from the December 1 Assembly blamed the terrible pandemic.

The “Spanish influenza” is believed to have caused between 40 and 100 million deaths during 1918 – 1919, at least double the total number of casualties caused by World War I, with the military and civilians combined. The figures circulated at the beginning of the 1920s reported around 20 million deaths, but revising the calculations in the following decades always increased the estimated values, reaching up to 100 million deaths. A sociologist and philosopher Max Weber, a painter Gustav Klimt, writer Guillaume Apollinaire, Prince Eric of Denmark, as well as Romanian Army General Eremia Grigorescu were among the famous personalities who succumbed to the Spanish flu. According to specialists, the pandemic was caused by a H1N1 virus, more dangerous, but not fundamentally different from viruses in its category. However, the war and post-war conditions aggravated its manifestation. The unusual feature of the Spanish flu was that it produced a higher mortality among young adults (age 20–40, with a higher incidence in men) than any other flu.

There had been two major influenza pandemics in the previous century: one between 1830 – 1831, which, despite causing very severe forms of the disease, was not as widespread as the subsequent influenza pandemics (Patterson 1986, pp. 32–36); respectively, a second one in 1889, the so-called “Russian” flu, the last great pandemic of the nineteenth century – spread throughout the planet in only four months and having had recurrences until 1895; produced about half a billion diseases and one million deaths (Valleron et al. 2010, pp. 8778–8781). One of the explanations for the increased mortality of the 1918 Spanish flu among young people around the age of 28 was that their generation did not experience the so-called “herd immunization” with the 1889 flu (having been born after).

It is estimated that at least 10% of those who fell ill in the 1918 – 1919 pandemic died. Despite being named “the Spanish flu”, the epidemic is unlikely to have started in Spain. It

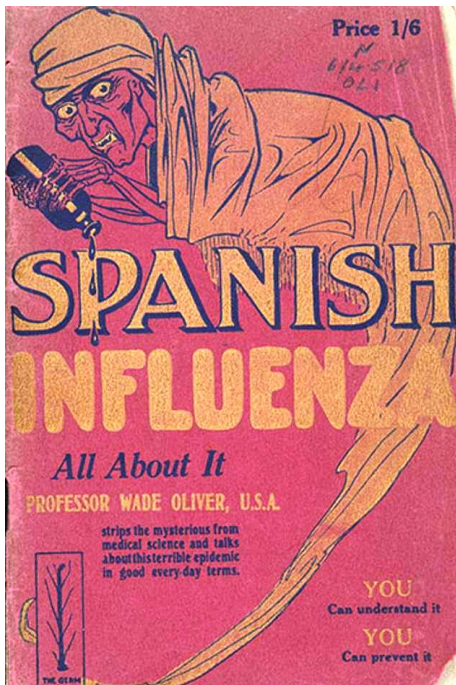
is well known that Spain, a neutral country in World War I, was the only one that actually paid attention to the flu in its first phase. Information circulated that King Alfonso XIII and members of the government had fallen ill. The other countries involved in the war initially blocked the information related to the appearance and spread of the plague to prevent the demoralization of the troops. Therefore, the “blame” fell on the Spaniards.

However, more recent research places “patient zero” in China (Humphries, 2013, pp. 71–72), while others place him in France or the United States (Spinney, 2020, pp. 55–56, 185–199). In this last variant, the first case would have appeared in Kansas in March of 1918, and by May of 1918, the first wave of the pandemic had manifested itself. Incomparably stronger, however, was the second wave, which began in August, covering all of Europe until the end of September and affecting the population severely between October and December (Spinney, 2020, pp. 58–61).

The few explanations that circulated in Transylvania regarding the origin of the pandemic were in line with the level of medical knowledge of the time and the horrors of the war, which were related to the cause of the disease. Some analyses on the subject are purely bewildering to the eyes of modern readers, others, on the contrary, seem realistic and in accordance with the rules of contemporary medicine. It should be noted, however, that little was known about viruses in 1918; no tests existed, and antibiotics had yet to be invented. Physician training was not standardized. In 1917, the United States introduced for the first time worldwide the medical examination of soldiers to be sent to the front and hundreds of thousands of men deemed unfit for war were sent home, which was a total novelty. Although mankind had skyscrapers,

telephones, automobiles, and believed in the quantum theory, it was also a society that still believed strongly in witchcraft, and where owning a bathtub was a prerogative of the wealthy (Spinney, 2020, pp. 50–52).

As for the Transylvanian and the Banatian spaces, newspaper *Românul*, the journal of the Central Romanian National Council in Transylvania, offered an epic hypothesis: “*The Spanish pandemic – in the opinion of a German physiologist, is not caused by bacilli, but by toxic gases used on the war fields for years and years as means of combat, which furthermore expanded and saturated to some extent the entire layer of air that envelops the earth globe. Cases of the Spanish disease indeed look like mass poisonings. As daring and adventurous as the physiologist’s theory may seem, it cannot be called absurd, if we consider how many millions of m3 of rarefied gases, all slightly heavier than air, have been spread by winds throughout the atmosphere. Thus, it is likely that even in their very poor condition today they are poisonous. [...] The gas theory, if it proves to be true, will shed new light on the barbarities associated with the war*” (*Epidemia*, 1918, p. 4).



**Book cover of the 1919 volume
by U.S. professor Wade Oliver.
Printed in Melbourne**

Newspaper *Libertatea* reported in a similar register: “According to some German scholars, the Spanish disease is caused by the poisoning of the air, by gas bombs that exploded during the war” (*Libertatea*, 1918, no. 5, p. 4).

In November of 1918, Newspaper *Glasul Ardealului* also blamed the disease on the effects of the war, but in a much more scientific way, appealing to the words of doctor Mircea Mocanu [medical staff of the Military Command from Braşov]: “*The Spanish influenza came like a sudden thunder bolt [...] – it spread like a flood over the entire Europe and made as many victims as all the infectious diseases together: abdominal and exanthematous typhus, smallpox (chicken pox) and cholera, dysentery and malaria, scarlet fever and measles throughout the whole war did not cost so many victims. The influenza began her European tour in the spring of 1918, and visited not only the capitals but also the provincial towns and villages, and attracted about 30% of the population to her gloomy performances – which in many cases were real family and social tragedies.*” Regarding the etiology of the disease, the Braşov newspaper found antecedents in the epidemics of 1837 (actually, 1830) and 1889 – 1890, and the spreading of the disease was considered to have started from around Moscow-St. Petersburg; the disease was attributed to “Pfeiffer’s¹ coco-bacillus”, transmitted “*only by contact or through objects.*” The rapid spread was rightly attributed to the modern means of transportation: “*it widens as fast as trains run. The claim that the flu would spread through the air at a distance did not come true and in general this type of infection belongs only to the history of medicine.*” Closer to the explanations currently accepted by medicine, Dr. Mircea Mocanu showed that “the bacilli that reach the nose or mouth through the infected hand - stay here longer – multiply and soon enter the deeper airways, trachea, bronchi, lungs. From here, the most effective means of defence against the influenza is already required, namely the frequent washing of the hands, nose and mouth”; The doctor also talks about rinsing one’s mouth with “warm water in hypermangan red”, the need to isolate the infected, the risk of recurrence of the disease; he insists on prophylactic measures, and emphasizes that smoking and alcohol do not stop the disease, as many believe. Symptomatology, diagnosis and therapy are considered specialized issues, less relevant to the general public, and Mocanu reminds only a few details, for example that if the temperature does not drop after 5 days, there are certainly pulmonary complications and one must call a doctor (Mocanu, 1918, pp. 2–3).

Other articles, including reports from newspaper *Glasul Ardealului*, mixed information that is still scientifically supported today with elements rejected by modern medicine: for example, there was talk of isolating the patient, distancing crowds, avoiding kissing objects, etc., but it was considered good for the patient to drink hot wine, at least in the first phase of the disease’s evolution (Sbarcea, 1918, p. 3). It should be noted that the notion of isolation also existed in Transylvania, but no one seemed to believe that it could really be put into practice: “[...] *we could escape more easily if people knew what isolation meant (to separate the ill from the healthy ones) and if they adhered closely to the requirements of isolation. The good proof of isolation is that during the plague or cholera, lonely and secluded monasteries remained untouched*” (*Libertatea*, 1918, no. 6, p. 3).

October of 1918, known as the “month of horror” (Pop 1978, p. 30), represented the climax of the pandemic worldwide. In Budapest, who back then was capital of Transylvania, a third of the population had fallen ill, and 50–100 people died every day. But the months

¹ Named, in fact, Richard Pfeiffer, he was a student of physician and bacteriologist Robert Koch. In 1892, Pfeiffer identified the flu bacteria. In 1918, however, the issue for doctors was that Pfeiffer's bacillus, despite being commonly found in a person's throat, does not always cause the flu. The virus that causes the disease is 20 times smaller than a bacterium, too small to be seen under an optical microscope (Spinney, 2020, pp. 86–87).

of November – December of 1918 and the first months of 1919 also produced disastrous numbers. The newspaper *Alba Iulia* noted, on Christmas Eve of 1918: “The Spanish disease continues to haunt villages and towns. In Pest, in one day, 413 became ill and 54 died” (*Alba Iulia* 1918, p. 4).

The disease also manifested itself strongly in the Romanian area. Despite not having satisfactory statistics, there are numerous case reports, especially among those who passed away from the disease. For example, in Prejmer, near Brașov, in one day (November 9/22), three sisters died, leaving 14 children orphaned (*Jertfele*, 1918, p. 4). A lawyer Emil Dan, a legal adviser at Banca Albina in Brașov, aged 42, also died of the Spanish flu (*Revista economic*, 1918, p. 446). Likewise, the priest from Sacoșul Unguresc [near Caransebeș] (*Church and School*, 1918, p. 4). A medical student Victor Lupu Hossu, aged 29, became a “sacrifice of the disease” (1918, no. 13, p. 4). Other situations of death seemed somewhat paradoxical in the eyes of the 1918 public opinion: a second lieutenant named Traian Gliga, after four years of war in which he had always been in the fire of battle, decorated several times, present on the fronts in Galicia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bukovyna, Bessarabia, Italy, and France, was killed by the Spanish disease on October 12/25, in the final days of the war (*Glasul Ardealului*, 1918, p. 4).

However, the general idea, around December 1, was that “*the Spanish disease is haunting the entire country, reaping people more atrociously than did the battle [war] reap. Fathers, mothers and children are dying in many places. Entire families are dying out*” (*Libertatea*, 1918, no. 6, p. 3).

Faced with the Spanish flu, Romanian doctors were “lacking in experience, prophylaxis and medicines”, noted Transylvanian politician and medical doctor, Alexandru Vaida Voevod (Vaida Voevod, 1994, p. 226). “*The symptoms were not always the same. But it was a disaster. A safe man today, was a dead man tomorrow or the day after. Fever was the more common symptom. Young, pregnant women fell – almost without exception – sacrificed to the disease. [...] In our villages, on the same day, there were several funerals. [...] The only medicine I had was aspirin. Certain pains decreased, but I could not find power to heal*”, added Vaida, the one who escaped untouched by the flu, despite having contact with many patients (Vaida Voevod, 1994, p. 226).

Beyond the mountains, Queen Maria of Romania did not have the same fortune on her side; hers was perhaps the most famous case of the Spanish flu in Romania. The queen was severely affected by the disease, reaching climax a week after December 1. Queen Maria left in her diary an eloquent description of how the disease manifested: “*I was ill, very ill, struck by surprise and unexpectedly, backhandedly, as one would say, and I was confined to bed – precisely when the world desired to rejoice alongside me. The disease knocked me by Saturday: I woke up with a heavy and painful head, I could hardly endure a few audiences and I even took an automobile to the palace [...] But I felt exhausted [...] Yet, I was sick – a horrible, painful illness I had never had in my life. For days and days, a tormenting fever and nausea, weakness, severe hallucinations and uninterrupted insomnia, until I thought I was going crazy. So, this is the famous Spanish flu – well, now I know it is not to be trifled. And, alas, my poor head, how much it suffered and what a terrible torment all was, every sound, every smell, every taste, every colour, even the shape and name of things made me nauseous and horrified. I was a changed, miserable, weak being and brought to the brink of despair by so much headache and the terrible estate of illness that left me weak*” (Maria, 2015, pp. 435–436).



**Commercial in newspaper Libertatea, around November/December 1918 –
“The Anti-Spanish dust disinfects, therefore it is the best shield against the Spanish
disease. Let each man be provided with this dust. Price 4 crowns”**

Therefore, “with the Spanish disease everywhere” (*Libertatea*, 1918, no. 4, p. 1), the organization of the National Assembly suffered as well. Soldiers from the National Guards, who had undertaken the security of the area, also suffered from the flu, especially since they were often insufficiently equipped for the cold weather and had to patrol permanently in the localities and outside them. However, the encouraging voice of the commanders had strong effects, and the thought that those days were decisive for the fate of the nation made them move on (Hulea, 1978, p. 448). As already mentioned, several delegates were absent from Alba Iulia, most likely falling ill in the time lapse since their nomination as representatives of the Romanian nation [most elections were held on November 25–27] and the scheduled date for the trip to Alba Iulia [mostly, on November 29–30].

Prophylactic measures must be contextualized, of course, within the mentality of the time, in accordance to the imperatives of those last days of November of 1918. Compared to the western countries, where modern methods of prophylaxis were tried, from protective masks to the isolation of those affected, the gap is visible. In Transylvania, according to some testimonies of the December 1 event, people wore garlic beads around their necks, hoping to prevent the flu. The idea of isolation, of not traveling while being sick, did not exist. The example of the octogenarian Gheorghe Pop de Băsești, who travelled to Alba Iulia in an advanced state of the disease, was perceived as proof of heroism. He arrived in the city of the Union on November 30, “but the fatigue of the road knocked him to bed. Despite all the fever that laboured him, he got up, came to preside over the National Assembly and to bless its happy purpose” (Dragomir, 1984, p. 278). Ștefan Cicio Pop, the leader of the Romanian National Council, was also far from the fullness of his physical strength, because the doctors had forbidden him to leave the bed and considered him seriously ill, but, he remembered proudly, “the disease could not stop me” (Cicio Pop, 1984, p. 557). Ștefan Cicio Pop had been ill since early November, bringing the flu from Budapest (Cicio Pop Birtolon, 1978, pp. 237–238).

Naturally, nowadays such examples would be deemed negative due to their facilitating of the spread of influenza, but in 1918 the paradigm was completely different. Alba Iulia’s voice was louder. Therefore, absents were those so ill that could not even travel physically. In many cases, the desire to take part in the National Assembly lost to the physical disability caused by the disease. “The Spanish flu, which only six weeks ago took my wife, also took over me,

knocking me to bed. Fever-stricken for the last four days, I search in vain for the cure that would set me up, so that I too can go to Alba Iulia to pay for my duty as an honest Romanian and as a delegate of my national church” (*Documentele Unirii*, IV, p. 11 – Letter of Archpriest Adrian Deșeanul), confessed a delegate, while looking for resources to be able to travel.

It is very possible that a certain segment of deputies was absent from Alba Iulia without notifying the organizing committee by telegram, and it is also possible that certain telegrams or other documents announcing the absence of some deputies, to be lost. Also, some of those who announced their absence did not even appear in the credentials, a sign that they were replaced in the meantime, either by alternates or by other people, and, consequently, the credentials changed.

However, it is impossible to establish the number of those absent due to illness only based on the existing documents. The documents that have been preserved, quite many, in fact, usually contain the following information: they announce the regret of not being able to participate; motivate absence through the effects of the disease, often mention that it is due to the flu; emphasize, in almost every case, that they agree with the decisions to be taken, or, explicitly, speak about the union with Romania, breaking apart from the Hungarians, etc.

We furthermore quote from these documents:

– “for sanitary reasons I cannot participate physically in the most brilliant historical act of the Romanian people”, it was shown in the letter of the archpriest Ioachim Muntean from Agnita (*Documentele Unirii*, VI, p. 114);

– Archpriest Iovian Andreiu from Gârbou (Sălaj): “I regret that due to illness I cannot participate in the great celebration” (*Documentele Unirii*, VI, p. 102–103);

– “retained by disease from participating”, announces archpriest Dobre (*Documentele Unirii*, IV, p. 676);

– “completely bedridden, I regret my absence” (*Documentele Unirii*, IV, p. 226)

– “being diseased”

– “hindered because of the disease that reigns in my family...” (*Documentele Unirii*, I, p. 97)

– “Following the Spanish illness for more than three weeks and its subsequent consequences, with deep regret...” (*Documentele Unirii*, I, p. 51)

– “I lie in Spanish disease with burning in my lungs [...] but I am with you dear Romanian brothers and with all the fire and warmth of my soul [...] I adhere to the decision of the Constituent Assembly”, announced Ioan Sociu from Sibiu (*Documentele Unirii*, VI, p. 54);

– “We regret that because of the disease that afflicts us we cannot take part personally in the great Romanian national assembly, but we are with you in soul”, transmitted priest Nemeș and teacher Chintoanu from Satu Nou of Bârsa (*Documentele Unirii*, IV, pp. 146–147);

– “I am very sorry, that due to being sick, I cannot take part personally... But I assure you that I am with soul in the middle of my brothers... My whole being is mastered by the ideal...”, announced Vasile Stan from Sibiu (*Documentele Unirii*, IV, pp. 28–29);

– In similar manner, several others announced the disease: president of the Sibiu Craftsmen’s Meeting, Victor Tordășianu, archpriest Tămaș from Popești (Bihor), Coriolan Papp from Oradea, Petruțiu from Chișinău-Criș (“sick, confined to bed”), lawyer Grozda from Buteni, Arad (“ill [with the Spanish flu], I deplore that I cannot be present”), Romul Câdea from Cisnadie (“due to a long illness”).

Overall, the Spanish flu was an impediment to the organization of the National Assembly in Alba Iulia, but not a fundamental one. Practically, no obstacle could tame the national momentum, which was at its peak. The meeting took place and the enthusiasm of the day was immense. The medical doctors, “about 20 in number” (*Românul*, 1918, no. 22, p. 4), grouped in the sanitary service of the Assembly, also contributed to the success of the organization. At Câmpul lui Horea, where over 120,000 people gathered, there were at least three health

and first aid points. In order to be visible from a distance, at each such point two flags were hoisted: one tricolour and one white with a red cross. Each point was led by at least one doctor, aided by two health officers. Furthermore, each point was equipped with a stretcher, tools and medicines of first necessity, but also with means of locomotion (Marin, 1993, p. 58; Marin, 1989, pp. 586–587). However, the sources do not mention to what extent the health and first aid points were faced with cases of influenza.

Across the world, crowded celebrations of the end of the war increased the number of diseases, during the second wave of the pandemic (Spinney, 2020, p. 63). The same effect must have occurred after the National Assembly in Alba Iulia. But by the end of the year of 1918, most parts of the world had been free of the flu. In some parts of the world, which were previously quarantined, restrictions had been lifted. It is, perhaps, what favoured the outbreak of the third wave of the pandemic, in 1919, with a degree of virulence that surpassed the first two. Europe reached its peak in the first months of 1919, when the works of the Peace Conference had already begun in Paris. However, the evolution of the Spanish flu was more closely related to the change of seasons than the 2020 pandemic: in May of 1919, the pandemic had already ended in the northern hemisphere, and would linger for a few more months in the southern hemisphere with a few more outbreaks in smaller areas in 1920 (Spinney, 2020, pp. 64–65).

The Conclusions. The Spanish flu represented a hindrance for the organization of the National Assembly in Alba Iulia, yet it was not seen as an important one. Organizers had not proceeded accordingly to the amplitude of this threat. Even though there was a significant number of sicken representatives, who were elected to be part of the National Assembly, the meeting took place and the enthusiasm of the day was greater than ever.

Regarding the knowledge related to the pandemic, this was of very poor quality and impregnated with non-scientific ideas or believes. Few doctors tried to spread scientifically proven information (but considering the medicine coordinates of 1918) throughout the press, but the impact was not considerable.

The present article may be considered as an outset for an extensive research, although, at this instance, it seems there are not so many potential sources left for this matter.

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