THE ROMANIAN SCHOOL IN BESSARABIA IN THE FIRST FEW YEARS AFTER THE GREAT UNION

(Summary)

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At the beginning of the 20th century, public education became a more and more difficult subject to administrate as it found itself the centre of interest for all those interested in important political changes or in preventing those changes. The First World War unexpectedly revealed those forces, triggering explosions of nationalism and new enforcements of authority from the public institutions, which sometimes could be considered extremism. Around the empires that were disintegrating, new political realities and utopias appeared which contemporaries tried to make a norm out of, to make them fit into the functional register. At that time, Bessarabia was an outstanding example of this evolution and of the difficulties of complex identity and institutional transfers. More than ever, schooling seemed to be the solution to every problem. State controlled education was considered, at the same time a means and a goal in order to model a society that was adapted to the hopes of the moment: which were, in turn, orthodox, imperial, Russian, democratic, Moldavian or Romanian. These options cohabited and ruled each other out in spite of any official decision, prolonging, outside of the trenches, a war of national, cultural and regional identities.

This article follows the path of the collective identity which was created to be taught in the public schools in Bessarabia from between 1917-1918 (when a new Moldavian and Romanian identity was strengthened), until between 1922-1923, when the Romanian state decided to impose its vision “from above” and to avoid further internal negotiations with its newly acquired eastern province.