## The Journalistic Path of Pamfil Şeicaru (I) from "The Quiver" to "The Word"

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**Abstract:** Pamfil Şeicaru is one of the most important journalists that Romania had. In his long journalistic career, the terrible journalist created newspapers and magazines, impressed the audience with his writing, faced the powerful men of that time and contributed to strengthen the role of media in the Romanian society. Even if he was not enrolled politically or held political and ministerial positions, after creating *The Current* newspaper, Seicaru became one of the most powerful people in the interwar Romania. The journalist's path of knowledge to glory was not easy. Seicaru experienced both success and the bitter taste of defeat.

Keywords: history of the press; pamphlet; blackmail; journalism

Pamfil Seicaru is one of Romanian journalists who have clearly left their mark on journalism interwar era. His journalistic work was special. Until having his own newspaper, the journalist worked in many newsrooms. Regardless of the publication in which he signed, he managed to be noticed both by readers and by peers. Pamfil Seicaru entered in the world press at the age of 17, when he was still in high school. In June 1911, the young journalist published the sketch "On an empty stomach" in the journal "Freamatul /The Quiver" from Tecuci. His used signature back then was Pamfil Şeicaru Popescu. "Freamatul /The Quiver", a literary and scientific magazine, appeared first in Tecuci, during January-December 1911, bimonthly, having as directors Constantin Doboş and Dimitrie Sbârnea, and then to Barlad, from January to December 1912, directors George Tutoveanu şi Dimitrie Sbârnea. In the Barlad stage of the journal, the young Pamfil Seicaru discovered the secrets of organizing a publication, where he occupied the function of Editorial Secretary. Since 1912, i.e. after the end of Freamatul /The Quiver magazine, he had collaborations with many literary- artistic or political publications.

The experience in magazine "Ramuri/Branches" is very important for the young Şeicaru's journalistic career. The publication was released at Craiova by C. Şaban-

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Făgețel. From this man he learned what was to build on *Curentul / The Current newspaper* that a "creative passion is always pertinacious." (Şeicaru, *Writings from exile* (I), 2002, p. 371) *Ramuri/Branches* was one of the few publications in the country that had their own printing. In one of the portraits gathered under the title *Writings from exile*, Şeicaru notes that "due to his exuberant enthusiasm and optimism capabilities, C. Făgețel managed to build the palace *Ramuri/Branches* magazine and publishing house. (Şeicaru, *Writings from exile* (I), 2002, p. 371) We believe that the example of C. Şaban-Făgețel played an important role when Pamfil Şeicaru designed the creation of the *Anonymous Society The Current*. Şeicaru's journalistic activity is interrupted by Romania entering into the war.

During the "negotiations from Buftea", Pamfil Şeicaru was in Iasi. The young officer and other employees have asked for help of C. Argetoianu, the Romanian Foreign Minister at that time, in order to release a "trenches-newspaper" (Şeicaru, Writings from exile (II), 2002, p. 113), and in April 1918 it was released Arena/The Arena newspaper. The gazette was printed in the typography Lyrics and Prose, owned by Alfred Hefner, and it was seen as a reaction to the newspaper, of the General Headquaters, România/Romania. Along with Şeicaru Pamfil in the newspaper they were: Al. A. Busuioceanu, Al. Hodoş, Demostene Botez, Adrian Brudariu, Ion Vinea, Alfred Hefter, C. Iarca, I. G. Costin etc. In October of that year, the editorial team spread. It must be said that in parallel with Arena/The Arena's activity, Şeicaru wrote in other newspapers, more or less important.

It is important to note that in this period, Pamfil Şeicaru meets Cezar Petrescu. The two friends go together to Bucharest, where they release in January 1919, "political-literary magazine controversy" *Hiena/The Hyena*. In a portrait dedicated to Cezar Petrescu, Şeicaru mentions the difficulty that the two journalists encountered when coming up to the title of their magazine: "We were looking for a title for hours in the small room of Stirbei Voda street, at the coffee shop; we listed titles only to immediately convince ourselves that they did not comply with what we wanted to suggest to our readers. *Hiena/The Hyena* title was chosen by Cezar. I did not like it because it reminded me of an infected, coward animal, and he justified the choice, making me a complete theory of dead ideas corpses; corpses which required rendering a service. The magazine was released; above the title, Cezar drew a hideous hyena." (Şeicaru, *Writings from exile (I)*, 2002, p. 401)

The publication was released in Bucharest, from January to March. The editorial staff worked in Cernăuți starting with April until the end of the year, when it was brought back to Bucharest. It must be said that *The Hyena* worked, with interruptions, until February 1924. Over the years, among the publication staff there were important names of Romanian culture, such as: Demostene Botez, Ionel Teodoreanu, Tudor Arghezi, Al. Busuioceanu, Ion Barbu, Perpessicius, Lucian Blaga, Gala Galaction, N. Iorga, D. Karnabatt, Ion Minulescu etc. As noted Ion Hangiu, "besides polemical articles for the government or opposition, institutions

and politicians, *Hiena/The Hyena* has fixed headings: entrapment, *Per pedes apostolorum*, books and magazines" (Hangiu, 1996, p. 227). The magazine was noticed since its first issue and Pamfil Şeicaru was invited by Constantin Mille to write for *Adevărul/ The Truth* and *Dimineaţa/The Morning*. Also, in February 1919, N.D. Cocea released the newspaper "*Chemarea /The Calling*" and suggested the young journalist to join the editorial team. The Şeicaru's collaboration of at the Cocea's newspaper lasted only three months.

Şeicaru continued to write for *Adevărul/The Truth* and *Dimineața/The Morning*. until May, when he accepted the proposal of Iancu Flondor to take the lead, along with Cezar Petrescu of the newspaper *Bucovina* from Cernăuți. Bucovina combated the Liberal Party policy, defended by "The voice of Bucovina, and promoted the National Party of Romanians in Bukovina. According to Pamfil Şeicaru, by that time, the newspaper of Cernauti was under the leadership of Ghita Stoica, who left the newspaper's editorial office after a scandal provoked by an article of his in which Austrian students companies were ridiculed. (Şeicaru, *Writings from exile* (I), 2002, p. 402) In a letter to the historian Valentin Radu, Pamfil Şeicaru shows why he agreed to go in Cernauti: "Unbelievable wages: 400 lei per month, when I was gaining half at *Adevarul/The Truth*; it was clear that more than the difference in wages tempted us at *Bucovina*, for us to know the mood of the new state population Bomania, from the Nistru to the Tisa." (Şeicaru, 1992, p. 119.) Meanwhile, Şeicaru took care of the releases of series of Cernauti of *Hiena/The Hyena*.

Bucovina advocated for the improvement of union in all constitutional areas with the country of all Romanian historical regions. The Gazette had assumed also the role of the popularization of Romanian literature in the north of the country. In the two pages of the newspaper there could be read also excerpts from works by authors such as Ion Creangă, Al.A. Busuioceanu, Ion Gorun, Al. Cazaban etc. Thus, the newspaper wanted to remove the effects of policy pursued for decades, by the Austrians, who "worked with great zeal to distort the Bucovina Romanian spirit." (Seicaru, "What should retain Bucovina's people?", 1919, p. 1) In this respect, it is worth mentioning the open letter addressed by Seicaru to the mayor of Cernauti that delayed to replace the statue of Queen Elizabeth, who was in front of the government palace, with the poet Mihai Eminescu: "I often wondered, Mr. Mayor, what's the point in having the statue, so little aesthetic in fact, of the Queen Elizabeth, now, when for ever, Bucovina will remain Romanian? [...] I'm sure Mr. Mayor that you know that the Culture and Literature Society is trying to raise money for the monument of the Romanian poet Mihail Eminescu. How Elizabeth statue will raise all, ought to donate Society bronze culture and literature. Thus, through you, the City Hall would facilitate and hasten the raising of this monument that would adorn the city, making great honor in the mean time the Romanians in Bucovina. "(Seicaru, Open letter to Mr. Mayor of Cernauti, 1919, p. 1)

The editorial office led by Seicaru did not hesitate to harshly criticize the government policy. For example, between 23 September and 1 October, on the first page, just below the title of the newspaper it appeared the next message on citizen participation in elections for the nomination of the members of first Parliament of Great Romania: "The election became a mere formality, they will take place under the regime of the state of siege and censorship, we ask that instead of an unnecessary constitutional comedies we should suspend the elections, only for government candidates to be appointed deputies by ministerial decree. It is even fairer and more logical."

The special political situation of Great Romania compels the state authorities to be very careful with what it is published in newspapers, and a journalist as Pamfil Şeicaru could not enter into conflict with the representatives of the Power. Consequently, the newspaper, that he led, felt several times the anger of Censorship. Not infrequently, following the *intervention* of censors, *Bucovina* came up with pages almost empty, instead with paragraphs removed from some articles, having introduced the next word "censored". The issues of 10 October and 4 November, for example, the word *censored* appeared 20 times. If we think that the gazette had only two pages, we may say that the intervention of the censors was considerable. Also, some items were eliminated entirely, leaving only the signature of the author. Such a situation encountered A. Ber. Dumbrăveanu, in issue 199 of the newspaper, dated November 27, 1919.

Pamfil Seicaru's name figured on the frontispiece of the newspaper Bucovina, in the position of director until December 1919. Back in Bucharest, he continued to release Hiena/Hyena and accepted Ion Mihalache's proposal to go to Tara Nouă/ The New Country, the Peasant Party newspaper. Thus, the publication's management that defended the interests of the peasants was insured by Pamfil Şeicaru and Eugen Crăciun, a party representative. The editorial secretary was Cezar Petrescu, and among the collaborators they were: Dem. Theodorescu (signing D. Ghirca), Gib Mihăescu, Victor Ion Popa, I. Livianu etc. Mill Ionescu-Berbecaru was in charged of publishing the newspaper. Tara nouă /The New Country presented to the public the peasant ideology and highlighted, since its first issue, that "the war for the union of all Romanians showed that the peasants, although they were unlearned, they were much wiser people than the scholars from cities believed, until then." (Mihalache, *Tara nouă /The New Country*, 1919, p. 1) In the pages of the gazette Seicaru showed that "the Peasant Party organizes in class party to give full bright force to the class-consciousness of the peasantry and to specify at the same time its purpose in such complex mechanism in the social life." (Şeicaru, Class Party, 1920, p. 1) The journalist indicated that the Peasants stretch "the hand of all democratic forces to remove the oligarchy octopus that is caught on to the thousands of tentacles, dominating the masses." (Seicaru, The revolutionary peasantry, 1920, p. 1) Pamfil Seicaru signed not only the articles

with political content but, as we might think, but also "Cronica teatrală /The Theatrical Chronicle".

In April 1921, Pamfil Şeicaru released the newspaper "Ora /The Time", which will run until September of that year. At that Ora /The Time talented journalists collaborated such as: D. Karnabatt, N. Davidescu, Camil Petrescu, Victor Ion Popa etc. Ora /The Time newspaper had unfortunately a short life. Şeicaru explains this by saying that "the newspaper was too intellectual, refusing to make even a minimal concession to the public taste" (Seicaru, Writings from exile (II), 2002, p. 365). Another interesting phase of terrible journalist's career is Gândirea /The Thinking magazine. Since May 1923, Seicaru was part of the editorial board of the publication. The first article in this magazine written by Seicaru was registered in October 1921 and its title was "Between the French and German book". According to his confessions, Pamfil Seicaru participated in the organized literary meetings of Gândirea /The Thinking in 1923, "through provincial towns with Mihail Sadoveanu, G. Tutoveanu, G. Topârceanu, Păstorel Teodoreanu, Al. Cazaban, Ionel Teodoreanu, Nichifor Crainic, Demostene Botez, Eugen Titeanu, G. Bacovia, Ion Minulescu." (Seicaru, Writings from exile (I), 2002, p. 435) Since the issue 7-9, in July-August 1927, Pamfil Seicaru was not listed anymore as a member of "the editorial team". It is worth pointing out that in the early journalistic career, Pamfil Şeicaru used more signatures: P.Ş.; Arc (*The Arena*, Iasi, 1918); P. Arcaşu (idem); Pamfil Popescu-Şeicaru (The Quiver, Tecuci, 1911); Scar (The Hyena, Bucharest, 1919); Sar (idem); Saru (idem); P. Seicaru (*The Quiver*, Barlad, 1912). (*Guarding*, 1973, p. 693)

1924 is bringing the explosion of Pamfil Şeicaru's career. During that period, the journalist was working with the *Neamul Românesc/The Romanian Nation* newspaper, of N. Iorga. The personal life of the journalist Pamfil Şeicaru was strongly influenced by the personality of Nicolae Iorga. In September 1917, returned from the front, the officer Şeicaru Pamfil went to Iasi, home of the great historian, to expose the spiritual state of those in the trenches. That was when a special bond between the two began. Although he did not considered himself a man of his entourage, Şeicaru was often invited to participate in trips made by the professor in the provinces of Oltenia. Şeicaru appreciated N. Iorga and did not allow anyone to buckle his image. Mircea Eliade felt personally what could happen to those who dared to attack the great professor. In *Cuvântul /The Word*, the young Eliade made the imprudence in an article to criticize the "method" of N. Iorga work, claiming, inter alia, that, for many years, he no longer read, but skimming through books. The article was to provoke a real earthquake in the editorial office: "The day after the article, going on to the editor, I find Pamfil Şeicaru chased by

anger: You've done it to us!, hissing it between his teeth. [...] From that moment on, I was not allowed to write about Iorga in *Cuvântul /The Word* [...]" (Eliade, 1997) Between Iorga Şeicaru there were also tensions, however, and their battles were fought, often in the newspaper pages. For example, Liviu Rebreanu shows in his Diary that in the spring of 1938, *Curentul/The Current's* director was scolded badly by the great historian, "that digs everywhere, because the king said in a board meeting that he loves Şeicaru." (Rebreanu 1984, p. 140)

Neamul Românesc/The Romanian Nation was brought to Bucharest as "the organ of the rally of all those who, in parties or in addition to them, wanted a life supported by the national realities" (Iorga, 1972, p. 396), on May 10, 1906. After the national unity in 1918, Neamul Românesc/The Romanian Nation reflected the economic, social and political troubles of the country. In the early 1924, Nicolae Iorga's newspaper had a very small circulation. The delicate situation of the gazette is described by Nichifor Crainic: "The newspaper yearned without readers, with mediocre fillings, that always accompanied the Iorga's article, always interesting." (Crainic, 1991, p. 188) According to Pamfil Şeicaru, this situation was because the great historian "had no technical understanding, or accepted to fit into the technique." (Seicaru, 2007, pp. 265-266)

In March of 1924, the close friends of N. Iorga decided to surprise him; he was in Paris, at that time making the *Neamul Românesc/The Romanian Nation* a modern newspaper. In a work dedicated to the great historian, Pamfil Şeicaru speaks of the close friends' "conspiracy" "...a number of professors' devoted people of Oltenia decided to use his absence from the country to make of *Neamul Românesc/The Romanian Nation* a newspaper in the true sense of the word. At his return, N. Iorga will have had a pleasant surprise and he would be found in the fulfilled fact." (Şeicaru, 2002, p. 190) C.Ş. Făgeţel assumed the role of organizing a committee responsible for raising the needed funds to achieve the goal. The amounts collected by the Committee of C.Ş. Făgeţel were not sufficient to ensure the functioning of the newspaper until it would have gained financial independence. The money problem was solved by Enacovici Titus, a member of the National Democratic Party, which made a contribution of 800,000 lei.

Thus, in the issue of 24 February it was made the following announcement: "From March 1, *Neamul Românesc/The Romanian Nation* will appear in large format in 4, 6 and 8 pages per day. The Editorial office has provided the daily collaboration of: Nichifor Crainic, Cezar Petrescu, Al. Lascarov-Moldovanu, G.M. Ivanov, Apostol Culea and Victor I. Popa took care of the page destined to the cultural life. *Neamul Românesc/The Romanian Nation* will continue this campaign with increased powers to restore the moral order in the political life domain." The lead of the editorial team was provided by Pamfil Şeicaru. In early 1924, terrible journalist was among the collaborators of the *Neamul Românesc/The Romanian Nation*. To understand what issues preoccupied him during this period we will list names of a

few titles of articles bearing his signature "Economic Recaps" (16 January), "Political Perspectives" (17 January), "Students and Parliament" (January 30), "The Justice is shaken" (8 February), "Politics and demagogy" (9 February), "The banking feudalism" (16 February).

The new format of the newspaper, the article signed by Pamfil Şeicaru occupied the most visible position in the newspaper, in the top half, the columns 3-4. Also the written headlines were highlighted by the font, which was clearly different from those used for other items. These tricks were certainly well known by Seicaru ever since he was editorial secretary in the journal Freamatul/The Quiver. The newspaper was now enjoying a successful market. N. Crainic tells that, at the end of March, the professor returned from Paris and made a stop at Craiova, where he was shown the newspaper's collection. The publication, edited in a new format would be categorized by the great historian as "a Western newspaper". (Crainic, 1991, p. 188.) The harmony in the newspaper survived almost four months. Following an incident that had as protagonists Ion Dragu and Vlădescu-Răcoasa a collaborator of the Professor, Şeicaru expelled the latter from the newspaper. In response to this decision after merging Îndrumarea/The Guidelines with Neamul Românesc /The Romanian Nation, Iorga fired three of Pamfil Şeicaru's most important collaborators. The professor's decision had the following justification: "He wanted a political newspaper and that is why he demanded the Calabria's people hats to leave, i.e.: Nichifor Crainic, Cezar Petrescu and Victor Ion Popa" (Şeicaru, 2002, Writings of exile (II), p. 192). After the dismissal of three journalists, Pamfil Şeicaru left the Neamul Românesc /The Romanian Nation's editorial office.

After the collapse of Şeicaru team, N. Iorga newspaper has lost its luster, and in a note published on the front page of the newspaper on 9 July 1950, right next to the professor's article, there was the following announcement: "During these months of holiday, in which political and social events in the country and abroad, are not likely to reclaim a too long developing *Neamul Românesc /The Romanian Nation* will appear at 12 o'clock of the day, in only two pages. The heavy sacrifices that a newspaper has to fight nowadays - and a party political newspaper particularly the technical difficulties that seem like they are against it, and on which all the press once gave the alarm, we have imposed this provisional measure. But as our friends and readers can find, even from this number, if you had to reduce the reserved special collaborations, we can be, as in the past, in terms of political timeliness and events of the day, just as a sheet as complete as any other. "The editorial dissolution led by Şeicaru Pamfil, after an "unexplained mood" of the greatest journalist "that our race gave - Nicolae Iorga" (Crainic, 1928, p. 1.), created the premises of the release of *Cuvântul /The Word*.

After he left the editorial staff of the *Neamului Românesc/The Romanian Nation*, the journalist convinced Enacovici Titus to give up the role of financier of the 100

newspaper of Professor N. Iorga to financially support the release of a new newspaper - *Cuvântul /The Word*. Enacovici provide new media company about 12 million lei.

As shown in the very first issue of the newspaper came out on November 6, 1924, the editorial team consisted of the following editors and contributors: C. Gongopol, Pamfil Şeicaru, Cezar Petrescu, Nichifor Crainic, Ion Dragu, G.M. Ivanov, P. Costin, T. Devechi, Al. Radian, Al. Maniu, L. Blaga, Wf. Ionescu, I. Tolan etc. The gazette was printed in Eminescu typography. The first office of *Cuvântul /The Word* was located on the 4 Lutheran Street. The new publication was directed by C. Gongopol. But he was director in name only, as shown by Crainic: "He composed his chronicles of flat puns and move away safely." (Crainic, 1991, p. 189)

The program was brought to the public in the first issue of the newspaper, by three articles. In "What is The Word", an article signed "The Word", where is spoken of the impartiality of the editorial team: "A politically independent newspaper written by intellectuals who, at the same time, have not broken the formal links with a party where they gave their whole collaboration - this one that they would seek to exploit the equivoques amateurs and the commercial opponents of our press enterprises. (Cuvântul /The Word, 1924, p. 1) In the "Prologue to a political investigation", G. (C.) Gongopol revealed the "new" elements in Cuvântul /The Word: "according to the set guidelines, Cuvântul /The Word undertakes a political inquiry on the more or less smooth roads, more in the light or in twilight of the party ... It seems nothing new and vet it will be. As for the first time an independent newspaper is determined to take their role seriously." (Gongopol, 1924, p. 1) Finally, the article "What is The Word" signed by Nichifor Crainic, is given the mission to which the editorial team enrolls: "We wish that our inkpot is the cleansing hurricane cave. We believe in the strength of the word. Of the corrosive and tonic word. It created the world, it knocked it down and it will rebuild it." (Crainic, 1924, p. 1) The newspaper editors declared to be the defenders of militant traditionalism of Eminescu and supported the National and Peasant Party, political parties which merged in 1926.

Cuvântul /The Word had as gravity center the article, under the guarantee of journalist's signature. This feature of the newspaper was highlighted by Mircea Eliade in his Memoirs: "... for me, as for all my generation, the Cuvântul /The Word was not a newspaper as any other. We considered it more of a journal, because the articles were signed". (Eliade, 1997, p. 122) The political articles were written by Pamfil Şeicaru, C. Gongopol and Nichifor Crainic, who sometimes signed his articles "Radu Miroslav". Cezar Petrescu, who signed also as "Ion Darie", wrote comments for non-political events. Engineer Enacovici Titus wrote economic articles. It must be said that his signature was also encountered in Tara nouă/ The New Country. For example, the issue of June 29, 1919 the newspaper of the Peasant Party, the engineer Titus Enacovici noted that the "owners do not

declare the exact extent of their estates" (Enacovici, 1919, p. 1). Thus, it is possible that Şeicaru and Enacovici would have met at the editorial office of *Tara nouă/The New Country* newspaper, that is before the "Neamul Românesc /The Romanian Nation episode".

The good organization of editors and quality articles would soon make the *Cuvântul /The Word* a successful newspaper. *Cuvântul /The Word* became the gazette of the intellectual elite. According to Ion Vinea, Şeicaru "was the animator of the newspaper and without the title, he was the chief-editor, and his signature was the most sought" (apud Victor Leaf, 2001, p. 342). A.P. Samson shows also that the terrible journalist was "the loudest and the most read editor of the newspaper" (Samson, 1979, p. 101). Moreover, the article of Şeicaru occupied the best position on the first page: the middle three columns in the center pages. Despite the success of the newspaper, the glory period of Şeicaru at *Cuvântul /The Word* was not long.

The editorial team remained unchanged until 1926, when Nichifor Crainic became the Editorial Secretary at the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Arts. Having accepted the position of Editorial Secretary, Nichifor Crainic assumed the role of appointing the man who would keep the heading weekly "Duminica/Sunday", which was destined for religious matters, until he would be returned to the editorial office. The editors circulated the names of two possible replacements: T. Arghezi and Gala Galaction. Crainic had another proposal: "It was hard to decide because I did not find this kind of written journalistics. Passing through the Capsa coffee shop I saw Nae Ionescu and I remembered that he published in *Ideea europeană/The European Idea* several unsigned notes in defense of orthodoxy. I returned to our editorial office and proposed Nae Ionescu" (Crainic, 1991, pp. 203-204).

The editors of *Cuvântul /The Word* showed disbelief in the capacity to do journalism of the proposed one. In addition, in those days, there were rumors about a scandal that occurred at the Banca Blank that involved manly Nae Ionescu. It was said that, as general director of the Center Books, falsified the balance sheet for a significant amount, with which he would have bought a villa in Bonaparte Park. It is also said that Aristide Blank had given up the idea to notify the police after Nae Ionescu was bound by a written declaration that he would return, in installments, the amount of nearly one million lei, acquired by fraud. Finally, Nae Ionescu was supported by editorial team and, after a short period of time he became the man of confidence of Enacovici Titus. Winning the confidence of Enacovici, he was entrusted with the task of reorganizing the editorial team. According to the plan established by Nae Ionescu, the places on the page, i.e. all types of articles were assigned in rotation, to each journalist. Thus, the new head of the editorial staff had taken the right of Pamfil Şeicaru to write the article in the center of the first page. "Finally, as shown Nichifor Crainic, Şeicaru, who left the axis of the newspaper

and, frankly, treasured Nae Ionescu, was disposed from the editorial team." (Crainic, 1991, p. 205) Ion Vinea stated that the terrible journalist "received quietly the blow. He knew what to expect. The instrument of affirmation and fight, created after a work of over a year, would fall into the hands of another, of a person more resourceful than he was." (apud Victor Frunză, 2001, p. 343)

In late 1927, Pamfil Şeicaru and other journalists have left the editorial office of *Cuvântul /The Word* only to release *Curentul/The Current*, one of the most important Romanian newspapers from the interwar era.

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