
Original Paper

Shaping regional identities through football rivalries: Ripensia Timisoara vs. Rapid Bucharest in interwar Romania

Vasile-Teodor BURNAR¹ & Vlad I. ROȘCA²

¹ PhD, Faculty of History, University of Bucharest, Romania

² PhD, Lecturer at the Faculty of Business Administration, in foreign languages (FABIZ), The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

Abstract

The article explores the interwar rivalry between Ripensia Timișoara and Rapid Bucharest and argues that, apart from football, the two teams both reflected and helped shape regional identities. We show that, as the episodes of the derby were consumed not long after the Greater Union of 1918, this rivalry can also be understood as a confrontation between center and periphery and that it helped the two teams act as 'status makers' of regional identities: through Ripensia, the Banat became aware of its territorial and cultural distinctiveness, while Rapid contributed to a reaffirmation of Bucharest within the newly formed national context. In both cases, football was instrumentalized not only to show supremacy on the playing field, but to construct and circulate identity, both teams claiming supremacy.

Keywords: football derby, cultural identity, status making, affirmation, instrumentalization

Introduction

The interwar period brought a remarkable boom to Romanian football. The 1918 Unification created opportunities for the development of football, but also fertile ground for the birth of sporting and regional rivalries that came to define this period.

Two of the most significant football teams of the interwar era in Romanian football were Rapid București and Ripensia Timișoara, who shared both glory and intense rivalry. Founded just five years apart (Rapid - 1923, initially as CFR București¹; Ripensia - 1928, the first Romanian professional club), they dominated the football landscape of that time, winning 4 Championships and 9 Romanian Cups between them. Between 1932 and 1941, the two teams met 21 times: 11 matches were won by Ripensia, 7 by Rapid, 3 ended in draws (overall goalscoring: Ripensia-Rapid 44-39). The 1930s were years of intense competition, in which meetings between the two clubs were true national derbies, often held with the trophy on the table, such as the Cup Final in 1935, which still remains in football history as one of the national cup finals with the most goals scored: seventh in terms of number of goals (11), the absolute record being 15 (see Gisler, 2012: 106). The matches between the two teams were not only mere sporting events, but they also aroused the interest of the masses. Puia Florica Rebreanu (1980: 81) recalls in her memory book how her father, Liviu Rebreanu, and Camil Petrescu, famous novelists of the interwar period, would go and watch Rapid-Ripensia derbies together and, on their ways home, used to comment in detail on the matches and about the two teams, which demonstrates the importance and popularity that a Ripensia-Rapid headline had in the Romanian society, igniting all social strata, from the working class to the elites.

Several elements contributed to the development of the rivalry between Ripensia and Rapid: (i.) the pride of Transylvania (Banat, the region in which Timisoara lies, here included), which had just united with the Kingdom of Romania ("The Old Kingdom"), and its attempts to create an identity of its own and increase its relevance against the claims to superiority of the capital city, (ii.) the attempts of

¹For the rest of the article, we will use the name Rapid.

Bucharest not to let itself be inferior in front of a superior technical-tactical football from Banat, which challenged the sporting supremacy of the capital city after the Union of 1918, (iii.) the frequent disputes for supremacy, (iv.) the creation of Division A in 1932 and of the Romanian Cup in 1933, which placed the two teams in official competitions and which meant that the games were played with the regularity of a schedule, recording more and more episodes and, by repetition, contributing to the transformation of the game into a derby, (v.) the title won more swiftly by the team from Timișoara (within 5 years after its foundation, in 1933), (vi.) the attention that the press and the public opinion directed towards this game, (vii.) the quality of both teams, which made their match one of the most interesting in the country. Last but not least, the contest for bragging rights also took on a European dimension: from 1937, both Rapid and Ripensia took part in the Central European Cup, where the former achieved better results, reaching the final in 1940.

The emulation aroused by the Rapid - Ripensia derby had many facets, involving fans and club presidents, players and coaches. An analysis of the context in which Rapid and Ripensia established themselves and competed against each other in the interwar period, can provide an interesting picture of one of the most beautiful sporting rivalries in Romania.

The Identity Roots of the Rivalry

Football in Romania in the 1920's and 1930's started to develop into a spectator sport (Rotar and Ursu, 2021). Prior to the First World War, football was in an incipient phase, in which it was only beginning to be discovered and understood by players and spectators alike, but after the War, the game experienced a boom, an increase in public interest from spectators and the press, which also led to the creation of rivalries between clubs. Notably, interwar football in Romania was shaped by nationalism and used for political propaganda (Adam, 2020; Faje, 2015).

The rivalry between Rapid Bucharest and Ripensia Timisoara has more to it than the mere sporting aspect, although this is not necessarily something down only to the two clubs themselves, but also an identitarian divide that has been inherited from forerunning teams, pioneers of Romanian football. In the early days of the game, football was characterized by regional divides, rooted in various reasons, such as the amateur ethos of Southern England versus the working class, professionalized Northern England (Collins, 2018; Schirato, 2007). In Romania, football's territorial divide was similarly based on class or economic disputes, but also had historical aspects linked to it (Parfene, 2019). The first club championship in the country was organized in 1909 and disputed until 1921, only interrupted between 1916 and 1919 due to the First World War (Lakatos, 2007). It is worth noting that, in 1909, Transylvania was not part of Romania, being a province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. At the same time, the eastern part of Romania (the province of Moldova) was not represented in the football championship, which was a southern monopoly. The participating teams, therefore, originated from southern Romania, namely from Bucharest, Ploiești and Craiova, and were made up of a mixture of locals and expatriates who worked in industrial companies, such as oil extraction or textile companies, to which the clubs also belonged (László, 2014). Of the nine seasons played, seven championships were won by clubs from Bucharest and two by clubs from Ploiești, 60 km away from the capital city of the country. As a logical consequence of the Great Union of 1918, starting with the 1921-1922 season, teams from all Greater Romania entered the competition, which had several effects that would ultimately sharpen the South-West rivalry (Boamfă, 2011; Flamaropol, 1986):

- The new teams, with different styles of play than of those in the South, enriched the competitive experience for all teams involved;
- Better technical and tactical skills of the clubs in the West;
- A more professional managerial administration of the teams in the West.

The pre-Union sporting dominance of Bucharest was now opposed to the better organized clubs in the West: the first six championships played after western clubs entered the competition (1921-1927) were won by Chinezul Timișoara. Ripensia was established in 1928 (Rotar and Ursu, 2019), a time by which fellow city club Chinezul already shifted the football power poles from Bucharest to Timisoara. In 1927, Chinezul underwent a financial crisis sprinkled with managerial disagreements (Alexiu, 1992: 19) that would not only stop the series of consecutive titles won, but also allow the space for Ripensia to rise

and take the spotlight, first locally, then nationally.

Once the clubs from the unified provinces entered the national championship, Bucharest's pride was hurt. As Mitu (2017) notices, the issue for Bucharest was not only that Chinezul Timisoara won league after league, but also the quantitative aspect of football's distribution along Greater Romania: most clubs entering the post-Union championships now came from Timisoara, Arad, Oradea, Satu Mare, Cluj-Napoca. The 1921-1922 championship was contested between seven teams from the South (six in Bucharest and one in Ploiești) and 46 from the newly united provinces (a ratio of approximately one team from the South to six teams from the provinces).

As the first phase of the championship was regional and as only the winner of the regional round participated in the national tournament, the stronger the competition in the newly united provinces was, the more valuable the winning team of the regional phase also was, becoming a difficult opponent for the representative of Bucharest, which reached the final phase after a competition that was clearly weaker in quality and quantity, and after fewer matches played.

Most clubs of the time had either working-class or academic origins. What spoke in favor of the clubs from Banat, Crișana and Eastern Transylvania was their cultural heritage: having been under the Austro-Hungarian Empire before 1918, the western part of the country had been more exposed to the Austrian, Czechoslovakian and Hungarian football idea(l)s, dominant for the European game during the first three decades of the twentieth century, whereas Bucharest imported its football culture mostly via students who returned home from studies in France or England. The early professionalization of football in Austria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary led to the emergence of the first international footballing superpowers, a model that would influence Ripensia's concept of being the first professional football club in Romania. The skepticism of the German or French football federations towards the professionalization of the game allowed Central European football to develop faster than the Western European one. When it came to transferring the game and its values to the periphery of the continent, in Eastern Europe, Romania saw the two models coexist: the progressive Central European one, which influenced the western of the country and the more conservative, Western European, which influenced Bucharest and the south of the country. Thus, the two distinct geneses of football in Romania also produced two distinct styles of play that would lead to frictions between the West (represented by Banat and a more technical game) and the South (epitomized by Bucharest and a more physical game) (László, 2014).

The underdog mentality that came to define Transylvanian football

According to the Romanian author Adrian Marino, Transylvania has always had to face throughout history with its status of '*eternal province*'. For centuries, it was a marginal area of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Afterwards, with its incorporation into the mother country, Romania, Transylvania remained the same eternal province, since the center of power moved to Bucharest after the Union (Marino, 2010). This would explain, in Marino's opinion, the tenacious, regionalist mentality of the Transylvanians, who always felt oppressed, humiliated and '*eternal serfs*' in their relationship with the big cities of Vienna (before) and Bucharest (after 1918). As a direct consequence, they developed an exclusivist mentality and a keen sense of being '*different*', which also spilled into sport. This sense is reflected in one of the probably most recognized chants sung, in modern days, by fans of Politehnica Timișoara during games: '*All over the world and all over the country / There is nowhere like Timisoara*'.

Under such conditions, football contributed to the development of two distinct regional identities. The fan chant presented earlier epitomizes Marino's idea that the Banatians understood themselves as being more posh, better educated and more open-minded to culture than southerners, especially those in Bucharest, although Bucharest was the capital city, with more economic and administrative power. The newly forged rivalry between the regions was ignited even more when Rapid Bucharest (1923) and Ripensia Timișoara (1928) entered the scene. The newest representatives of the South and the West not only took over from the recently formed rivalry, but also created a rivalry of their own, which added further tension to the hatred between Bucharest and Timisoara.

As earlier mentioned, between 1909 and 1921, Romanian league football was characterized by a

concentration of power around Bucharest: four teams from Bucharest and two from Ploiești won the national championships in this period of time. Shortly after the Great Union of 1918, several events will shape the future of Romanian football: in June 1919, the Union of Football Clubs is established and Mario Gebauer is chosen president; in June 1921, all regional sports federations are reunited under the helm of the Federation of Sports Societies in Romania; in June 1929, the establishment of the Romanian Football Federation. The Roaring Twenties saw the establishment of many clubs from all parts of the country, including Timișoara and Bucharest. The Great Union meant a conspicuous decentralization of power, shifting the latter towards the west of the country, with Chinezul Timișoara winning six leagues during the 1920s and clubs from Bucharest only two. Ripensia and Rapid were established during these times of decentralization of power, in which Timișoara “stole the show” from Bucharest. Under such circumstances, one more team from each of the regions would not mean anything else than extra flavor to a rivalry already in progress.

Who owns the bragging rights? Who brought football to Romania and who perfected it?

The interwar rivalry between Ripensia Timișoara and Rapid Bucharest can also be understood through the prism of a fiery local sporting pride which, beyond the historical and sociological aspects evoked before, was not the prerogative of either of the regions, although both claimed ascendancy. Clearly, before the teams from the united provinces entered the championship, Bucharest dominated the competition, this being a monopoly of the South. As we have seen, the situation changed after 1921. However, football was also played in other territories of the future Greater Romania, only that those games did not count for the championship that, from 1921-1922, would become ‘national’. Also, before 1918, teams from Banat or Crișana took part in the Hungarian league (Dumitrescu, 2013; Maroti, 2010). It seems that as early as 1892-93, in Transylvanian cities such as Turda, football was played on the model of the great Western capitals (Visinescu et al., 2007). In Timișoara, the first football game was played in June 1899 between schoolboys: the 6th class of the Piarist High School versus the 7th class of the State High School (Ghilezan, 2005: 59-60). At the same time, an aspect that will probably remain forever unexplained is who brought the game to Romania, since both the South and the West offer arguments and historical data according to which football entered the country on their territory. As the rivalry between Ripensia and Rapid grew, so did these passionate claims of supremacy, from the people in the stands to those on the field

Unlikely partners - Constructing Greater Romania through the beautiful game

After the end of the First World War and the creation of the Romanian national state, the Romanians were faced with the great challenge of building a unitary state, from extremely heterogeneous historical provinces, with a vastly different background from each other (Calafeteanu, 1981; Duțu, 2018; Florea, 1983; Scurtu, 2012). The 1920s and 1930s meant, on the one hand, an accelerated and vigorous integration of the new provinces - economically, legislatively, socially, including in the field of sports - into Romania, and on the other hand, they brought a nationalist fervor marked by the joy and feverishness of the construction of a Greater Romania (Dudaș, 1981; Tăgorean, 2018). Compared to 1912, in 1920 Romania had more than doubled in size, with a population twice as large, of which minorities represented more than 29% (Constantiniu, 2010). It was normal, therefore, that in Rapid's interwar squad, but especially in Ripensia's, one could find not only Romanians, but also ethnic minority and foreign players. As an example of diversity and multi-ethnicism, here's how the two teams lined up in 1935, for the final of the Romanian Cup - **Rapid (CFR) București**: Theimler - Rosculeț, Ujlaki - Cossini, Wetzer II, Cuedan - Georgescu, Barbu, Strock, Medve, Junk; **Ripensia Timișoara**: Zombory - Burger, Hoksary - Deheleanu, Kotormany, Lakatos - Bindea, Beke, Ciolac, Schwartz, Dobay. The teams were composed of Romanian players of following ethnic origins: Romanian (Nicolae Rosculeț, Alexandru Cuedan, Stefan Barbu, Vasile Deheleanu, Silviu Bindea, Gheorghe Ciolac), Banatian Svabs (Francisc Theimler, Wetzer II, Strock, Rudolf Burger), Hungarian (Tibor Ujlaki, Geza Medve, Attila Junk, Vilmos Zombory, Balasz Hoksary, Rudolf Kotormany, Eugen Lakatos, Zoltan Beke, Sandor Schwartz, Stefan Dobay), Italian (Vintila Cossini). Of note is also the fact that, on the bench of the winning team that day was an Austrian coach, Carol Wanna, while Ripensia's trainer was the (now) Romanian Rudolf Wetzer, born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, of Jewish descent. The 1935 Cup final is a speaking example of the sporting and ideological rivalry between Rapid and Ripensia. Constantin (2020: 54) describes the final as a symbolic confrontation

between Bucharest and Ardeal, which Mihai, Grand Voivoide of Alba Iulia, future King Mihai, respectively foreign diplomats from Bucharest, attended from the official stand of the ONEF Stadium. The game was a thriller: after 90 minutes, the teams were drawn, 5-5. Rapid won by a goal scored in extra time. Apart from the happenings on the field, a role in developing the rivalry between the two clubs was played by the press. A few days before the match, the sports journal *Gazeta Sporturilor* started to publish the weather forecast for the day of the final, an unusual fact for those times, hence building up momentum (Chirilă, 2022: 75). After the final, the same leading sports daily published a caricature in which a locomotive runs over Ripensia (Constantin, 2020), adding to the rivalry. But, Ripensia didn't let itself fall apart; a year later, they not only came back stronger, but managed a performance that would accentuate the rivalry even more: in 1936, Ripensia became the first double-winner in Romania (championship and cup in the same season) (Beraldi and Osburg, 2018), a performance desired by Rapid as well.

Albeit all the rivalry, if we follow the evolution of both clubs in this period, it has to be said that precisely this "long-distance" competition on sporting grounds also allowed the two teams to contribute, more or less willingly, to the national ideal. In interwar Romania, sport (including football) contributed to the construction of the new state, integrating new citizens into its teams, however great the sporting tensions were at one time or another.

Tension heats up: The "Horse" Dobay is poached by Ripensia from Rapid (summer 1930)

Another point of contention in the interwar rivalry between Rapid and Ripensia was the transfer of the coveted - at the time - "left wing" Stefan Dobay, nicknamed "The Horse" for his sheer strength, his work ethic and his violent shots, which terrified opposition goalkeepers (Apolzan et al., 2019). Born in 1909, he was first registered in 1924, at the club Banatul-Unirea Timisoara (Clenciu, 1992). Three years later, he became regional champion with the senior team. However, in the summer of 1930, Dobay was persuaded by Rapid Bucharest to come to the capital, playing no less than four friendly matches in the club's colours. But local loyalties prevailed, and Dobay - a national team player, taken into consideration for the World Cup in Uruguay - decided to sign with Ripensia Timisoara, the country's first professional club, with a better administrative scheme. What followed was a huge scandal, involving the player, the Romanian Football Federation, Rapid, and Ripensia (considered guilty of the footballer's defection). Following the controversy, Rapid asked the "traitor" Dobay to refund the amounts received for the matches played that summer (Constantin, 2020). The scandal also signaled the first moment of tension between Rapid and Ripensia, one that will persist (Dobay, 1979). All the more so, as Dobay would play ten uninterrupted years in the West, contributing to Ripensia's greatest successes.

A conflict between the center and the periphery

Within the antagonism between Bucharest and the West, Rapid and Ripensia were politically instrumentalized in order to construct and circulate regional identities. Adam (2020) argues that political instrumentalization of Romanian football started in the 1930's against the background of rising authoritarian regimes, which also culminated with the rise of the Rapid-Ripensia rivalry. Football rivalries lead to the formation of beliefs and of territorial pride; it can be argued that the early rivalry between Ripensia and Rapid constituted the origin of a rivalry still persisting today, in which the population of Banat considers itself to be the 'forehead' (ro., 'fruncea') of the country in the detriment of Bucharest (pejoratively described as 'mitici' - meaning arrogant, slick Southerners). Rapid and Ripensia were used as identity makers to highlight regional attractiveness and even to demonstrate regional superiority. It should not be surprising that the rivalry seems to be mainly maintained by the West of the country, while Bucharest takes a more relaxed position, since the newly united Transylvania as of 1918 had to prove itself and to build a distinctive ideology against a more established Bucharest. Hence, the football rivalry was also used as a subversive tool in relation to Bucharest: a Transylvanian pride under construction versus the economic and administrative superiority of Bucharest.

De Waele and Husting (2008) remark that, while international competitions represent the most common medium for affirming cohesion and national identities, sporting competitions within a country serve to consolidate an identity of its own. Whether it is a clash at local, regional or national level, football is a

tool through which particular identities can be presented on a grand level. The authors offer the examples of Scottish clubs Celtic (Catholics founded by Irishmen) vs. Rangers (Protestants and unionists) or Turkish teams Fenerbahce (representing rich merchants of Istanbul) vs. Besiktas (people's club) to prove that such rivalries also enable the affirmation of an identity, with football a preferred medium for showcasing collective identities at whichever level, regional or national.

Moreover, according to the same authors, regional identities, often embodied by football clubs, can stand against desires of homogenization by the center. Famously, in Spain (not only under Franco), the "Classicos" between Barcelona and Madrid came to symbolize the struggle for independence of the former's region vs. the latter's temptation to centralize, an emblem of the capital. Similarly, the Rapid - Ripensia interwar rivalry was a confrontation, on football stadiums and outside of them, between the center (Bucharest) and the periphery (Banat) (just as it is the case today with, say, Marseille and PSG in France or CFR Cluj and FCSB in Romania). A periphery which had just recently united with the rest of the territories to form Greater Romania (1918) and which tried to maintain a distinct identity of its own, without being absorbed by the mentalities of the center. Football was used by Banat to assume a distinctive position that it would occupy in Greater Romania. In the context of Greater Romania, a dyadic relationship existed, in which the central identity from Bucharest reinforced a salient regional identity in Banat, through the efforts of the latter to create and maintain distinctiveness. Under these circumstances, Ripensia acted as a '*status maker*' of Banatian identity and cultural plurality. Rapid did the same for Bucharest, through the antithetic relationship with Ripensia.

The cultural singularity met between 1909 and 1921, when all national championships were won by teams from Bucharest and Ploiesti, was first contested by Chinezul (six consecutive titles between 1921 and 1927) and then by Ripensia during the 1930's. By the time Romania entered the Second World War, football was a question of rivalry between Bucharest and the West of the country, mainly Banat, the national titles being split between the two regions. The contributions of Chinezul and Ripensia to move the footballing power away from Bucharest could still be noticed in the first four seasons played after the War (1946-1950), when three titles went to Transylvania, through ITA Arad/Flamura Rosie and Club Atletic Oradea. The coming to power of the Communist regime and the establishment of Steaua and Dinamo reduced the effects of the footballing plurality which Ripensia contributed to, with the footballing dominance shifting back to Bucharest, which headquartered the administration of the Communist Party, with UTA Arad (former ITA/Flamura Rosie) occasionally managing to break the streak of victories from Bucharest.

Through football, Chinezul and then Ripensia contributed to the construction of Banat as a territory of veneration. The fan chants of Politehnica Timisoara FC from the 2000s do nothing but carry on this tradition:

*Ten, ten, ten we will score against you,
Damn, damn, damn with you,
Rubbish of 'mitici', rubbish of 'mitici',
Let's not catch you here anymore,
Because here is Timisoara, [...]
This is Banat,
This is our country! [...]*

The fact that, in the 21st century, the fans of Politehnica Timisoara praise the Banat against Bucharest in their chants, entails a contribution of Ripensia to the making of Banat into a prominent place of memory used to establish and celebrate collective pride and a distinctive Banatian ethic. The chants are a symbolic expression of the Banatian spatial terms, in which the Banatian territory is understood as a holy place of rectitude and honesty, in disagreement with some national morals, epitomized by Bucharest, the capital city in the South, which, looked at from the West of the country, seem to be characterized by fad and shantyness. It has to be noted, though, that these chants are sung against rivals Steaua and Dinamo, and not against Rapid, whose fans share a friendship with those of Politehnica

Timisoara.

Conclusions

Considering that the first episode of the rivalry between Ripensia and Rapid was consumed a mere decade after the Greater Union, it can be said that this rivalry helped Banatians escape oblivion, but also homogenization by a Southern, Bucharest-driven template, and, through the help of football, become aware of their territorial and cultural distinctiveness, which they transformed into a symbolic aura used to manifest collective identity. On the other hand, in this rivalry, Rapid had a contribution to the football reaffirmation of Bucharest, whose honor and supremacy had been affected after 1921, when the teams from Banat entered the championship and began to dominate it. Bucharest looked to avoid becoming inferior to an increasingly strong football in Banat. Rapid was one of the clubs that held up the flag of the capital city: even if it did not win any championship during the interwar rivalry with Ripensia (four times champion), it still won six Cup finals (two against none other than Ripensia and one against CAM Timisoara) and proved to be a serious opponent for teams from the West.

In fact, we can confidently state that both teams, through this rivalry, did not only dispute their sporting supremacy, but also contributed to the identity affirmation of the regions that they represented: in the case of one, newly arrived, the desire to show what it was able of, in the case of the other, the desire to regain its earlier dominance, a fact observed by Liviu Rebreanu's foster daughter, based on the notes made by her father: "*the Bucharest teams didn't allow themselves to be lower either*" (Rebreanu, 1980: 81). As Faje (2015) observed, football in the interwar era helped disseminate and ground Romanian nationalism. And, while Ripensia did not survive the postwar reordering of Romanian football, the legacy of that decade-long conflict with Rapid still lingers in today's footballing landscape. Ripensia was re-established on July 12th, 2012, taking over the records of the former club (da Silva Neto, 2022). However, the rivalry between the two clubs no longer manifested itself. This can be explained by several reasons. First of all, the lack of continuity to maintain the flame of rivalry alive. 78 years had gone since the last match (16.03.1941) and the next match between the two (26.10.2019), during which the rivalry died out. Ripensia did not exist any longer, and other rivalries appeared at Rapid: a sporting rivalry with Ploiești, the '*Primus Derby*', respectively two sports-political-ideological rivalries with Steaua and Dinamo, both latter clubs founded after the dissolution of Ripensia. Second of all, during all this time, although the stories remained, they were either forgotten by many, or misunderstood by those who did not live them, or simply ignored. Thus, the rivalry was rather maintained for the history books, not being reactivated on the playing field in the recent years. After Ripensia's re-establishment, the teams only met twice (26.10.2019 and 21.02.2021), not enough episodes to reignite the rivalry. Both games took place in the second division, devoid of the brilliance of top flight football or of the earlier Cup finals, and ended in draws. If, for Rapid, there was a stake of promotion from the second to the first division, Ripensia was looking more to consolidate its position in the second tier and, therefore, did not add to the fierceness of the rivalry.

We can also argue that, in the case of the Ripensia-Rapid derby, we are dealing with a phenomenon of trace-wiping, encountered in so many instances in history, in which the powerful use to erase all glory and glamor that once characterized a society, an organization or an individual. Trace-wiping is nothing alien to communist regimes; it is no wonder then, that after March 1945, when the Communist Party came to power in Romania (Salaga, 2019), the traces of the derby that still existed at that time were ignored and set away. After the dissolution of the club, Ripensia was quickly ignored in the national public opinion (it continued to exist in the Banatian collective consciousness), and Rapid began to be marginalized, both in order to make room for the identity affirmation of the new departmental clubs of the Communist Party. The beautiful stories of the derby were also silenced, especially since they had a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional character conveyed through the players that created them, which contravened the communist ideology of the '*new man*', who had to be true-born Romanian. Nevertheless, in terms of football narratives and collective identities, the interwar rivalry between Ripensia and Rapid remains one of the major stories of Romanian sports even to this day.

References

Adam, R. (2020). Football and authoritarianism in twentieth century Romania: between propaganda and subversion. *Soccer & Society*, 21(6), 657-666.

Alexiu, C.C. (1992). *Ripensia. Nostalgii fotbalistice*. Editura Helicon, Timișoara.

Apolzan, D., Sinescu, V., Toma, R., Fratila, R., & Rotaru, R.I. (2019). *Manual De Cultura Fotbalistica: Suport De Curs Pentru Licentele UEFA*. Editura Tana, Musatesti.

Beraldì, M., & Osburg, W.R. (2018). *Die Weltgeschichte des Fußballs in Spitznamen: Von den Anfängen bis zum Fliegenden Holländer*. Osburg Verlag, Hamburg.

Boamfă, I. (2011). Cartografierea distribuției geografice a realităților sportive. Studiu de caz: distribuția crono-spațială a participanților în prima ligă a campionatului României la fotbal (1909-2011). *Cadastru și drept*, (30), 95-105.

Calafeteanu, I. (1981). Consacrarea internațională a desăvîrșirii statului național unitar român. *Muzeul Național*, (5), 357-360.

Chirilă, I. (2022). *Glasul roților de tren*. Editura Vellant, București.

Clenciu, A. (1992). *101 fotbalisti români: Uruguay 1930, Italia 1990*. Editura Divertis.

Constantin, P.N. (2020). *Rapidismul: Istoria Unui Fenomen Sportiv*. Editura Pro Universitaria, București.

Constantiniu, F. (2010). *O istorie sinceră a poporului român*. Editura Univers Enciclopedic Gold, București.

Collins, T. (2018). *How football began: A global history of how the world's football codes were born*. Routledge.

Da Silva Neto, N.G. (2022). *III-1938 França: a Copa do Mundo continua na Itália*. Editora Dialética, São Paulo.

De Waele, J., & Husting, A. (2008, eds.). *Football et Identités*. Editions de L'Université de Bruxelles, Bruxelles.

Dobay, S. (1979). *Sut... goool!*. Editura Sport-Turism, București.

Dudaș, V. (1981). Banatul-prezență activă în lupta pentru făurirea statului național unitar român. *Muzeul Național*, (5), 295-299.

Dumitrescu, G. (2013). Iuliu Bodola, remarkable personality from football in Romania and Hungary. *Ovidius University Annals, Series Physical Education and Sport/Science, Movement and Health*, 13(2), 161-165.

Duțu, M. (2018). *Un secol de stat unitar și drept național (1918-2018). Perspective istorice și cultural-științifice*. Editura Academiei Române/Editura Universul Juridic, București.

Faje, F. (2015). Playing for and against the nation: football in interwar Romania. *Nationalities Papers*, 43(1), 160-177.

Flamaropol, M. (1986). *Fotbal - cadran românesc*. Editura Sport-Turism, București.

Floreac, V. (1983). 65 de ani de la făurirea statului național unitar român. *Carpica*, (XV), 7-20.

Ghilezan, M. (2005). *Furia*. Editura Humanitas, București.

Gisler, O. (2012). *Das große Buch der Fußball-Rekorde: Superlative, Kuriositäten, Sensationen*. Copress Verlag, München.

Lakatos, A. (2007). Repere ale sportul clujean între 1944-1948. *Caiete de Antropologie Istorica*, (10-11), 197-205.

László, P. (2014). The Genesis of Romanian Football. Social Factors and Processes behind the Game. *Belvedere Meridionale*, XXVI(4), 81-94.

Marino, A. (2010). *Viața Unui Om Singur*. Editura Polirom, Iași.

Maroti, Ș. (2010). Din istoria echipei de fotbal a Asociației de Cultură Fizică a Muncitorilor Stăruință

Oradea. 1912-1944. *Palestrica Mileniului III – Civilizație și Sport*, 11(3), 252-256.

Mitu, S. (2017). *De la Burebista la Iohannis. Istorii, analize, satire*. Editura Polirom, Iași.

Parfene, C. (2019). The crusade against ‘Foreigners’: the Romanian national football team through the eyes of a modernist writer. *Sport in Society*, 22(5), 861-870.

Rebreanu, P.F. (1980). *Pământul bătătorit de părintele meu: file de jurnal*. Editura Sport-Turism, București.

Rotar, M., & Ursu, V. E. (2019). English Football in Teams in Inter-War Romania: Football and International Exchanges in the 1930s. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 36(9-10), 910-931.

Rotar, M., & Ursu, V. E. (2021). Romanian religious environments and the development of sports in Romania in the 1930s. *Sport in History*, 41(3), 409-434.

Salaga, D. (2019). Ascensiunea politică și organizarea Partidului Comunist din România până la prelungirea guvernării (6 martie 1945). *Analele Universității Dunărea de Jos din Galați. Seria Istorie*, (18), 61-75.

Schirato, T. (2007). *Understanding sports culture*. SAGE Publications Ltd., London.

Scurtu, I. (2012). Învățământul, știința și cultura Basarabiei integrate în statul național unitar român. *Limba română*, 204(5-6), 96-105.

Tăgorean, P. (2018). Unele aspecte privind asigurarea ordinii publice în perioada „Marii Uniri” (Aspects Related to Ensuring Public Order at the Time of the Great Union). *Revista Academiei de Științe ale Securității Naționale*, (2018/2). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3424752>

Vișinescu, V., Onacă, I., & Ștefănie, T. (2007). *1907-2007. 100 de ani de fotbal în Turda*. Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj-Napoca.

Appendix: Head to Head matches

1932, June 4th, Bucharest: CFR - Ripensia 4:5 (3:2)

1932, September 10th, Bucharest: CFR - Ripensia 3:2 (0:2)

1933, April 4th, Timisoara: Ripensia - CFR 2:1 (0:1)

1934, November 18th, Timisoara: Ripensia - CFR 2:0 (1:0)

1935, May 5th, Bucharest: CFR - Ripensia 2:2 (2:2)

1935, June 6th, Bucharest: CFR - Ripensia 6:5 (2:1)

1935, September 7th, Timisoara: Ripensia - CFR 1:0 (0:0)

1936, March 22nd, Bucharest: CFR - Ripensia 3:2 (1:0)

1936, May 1st, Bucharest: CFR - Ripensia 1:4 (1:1)

1936, October 25th, Bucharest: CFR - Ripensia 5:2 (3:2)

1937, April 11th, Timisoara: Ripensia - Rapid 1:0 (0:0)

1937, June 20th, Bucharest: Rapid - Ripensia 5:1 (1:1)

1938, August 14th, Bucharest: Rapid - Ripensia 0:2 (0:1)

1938, August 21st, Timisoara: Ripensia - Rapid 2:0 (0:0)

1938, November 6th, Timisoara: Ripensia - Rapid 2:1 (0:0)

1938, November 13th, Bucharest: Rapid - Ripensia 3:1 (1:0)

1939, April 24th, Bucharest: Rapid - Ripensia 1:2 (0:1)
1939, October 15th, Timisoara: Ripensia - Rapid 2:3 (0:2)
1940, April 21st, Timisoara: Ripensia - Rapid 1:1 (1:0)
1940, September 9th, Bucharest: Rapid - Ripensia 0:0
1941, March 16th, Timisoara: Ripensia - Rapid 3:0
2019, October 26th, Bucharest: Rapid - Ripensia 0:0
2021, February 21st, Buftea: Rapid - Ripensia 2:2