

Oscar Roseanu



This is me, Oscar Roseanu, and it is an official photograph for my identity card taken in the 1970?s, in Bucharest.

My name is Oscar Roseanu [changed in 1947 from Oszkar Rosenfeld]. I was born in Petrosani, on 2nd May 1923. I went to college in Bucharest and started a new life. I graduated from the Faculty of Physics and Chemistry of the University of Bucharest.

I stayed in the 'Spiru Haret' High School, in Bucharest, as a chemistry teacher from 1964 until the day of my retirement, in 1986. When I was hired by the 'Spiru Haret' High School, the Romanian teacher who was in charge with the school magazine, 'Vlastarul' ['The Scion?'] retired. I took over the magazine and I became a sort of editor-in-chief. It was the pupils' magazine and it had been founded by Mircea Eliade [Ed. note: (1907-1986), prose writer and essayist marked by the spirituality of the Far East; renowned expert in the history of religions.], who had been among our students. The magazine had also been led by Alexandru Paleologu [Ed. note: (1909-2005), famous essayist and literary critic. He was imprisoned on political charges (1959-1964).], Constantin Noica [Ed. note: (1909-1987), philosopher and essayist. He was placed under house arrest in Campulung Muscel (1949-1958), then he was sentenced to prison for political charges (1958-1964) following a large-scale trial that the communist regime set up for a large number of elite intellectuals.] etc. I established a new section in the magazine that was dedicated to the alumni. They could write about their high school memories. I coordinated the magazine until 1964, the year of my retirement. Even after 1990 I still received phone calls from time to time: 'Hello, is this the editor of 'The Scion' magazine?' Andrei Plesu [Ed. note: born in 1948; philosopher, art critic and essayist.] was one of my students; he wrote the articles in the cycle 'The eternal student of the 'Spiru Haret' High School'. An entire chapter of the magazine was written by these former students, the high school's elite, who told stories from their youth. They took their 'assignment' very seriously.

Do you think I had an easy time? Every magazine had to submit the articles that were to be published to a series of authorities. The first on that ladder was the County Committee of the Union of the Communist Youth. Those comrades were happy our county had such a fine magazine and okayed my articles immediately. Then I had to go the County Committee of the Communist Party. Their approval wasn't hard to get either. But the City Committee of the Communist Party was another story. Comrade Croitoru, the propaganda official, the one who authorized any publication, examined my magazine thoroughly and went: 'I see there's a pupil named Popescu in here; what do you know about his parents?' - 'Comrade Croitoru, he only wrote an article on mathematics; does it really matter what his parents do? It's a school magazine. Instead of being proud our Capital has such a magazine, I see you're making things more difficult for me.' - 'My daughter studies at the 'Balcescu' High School, but they're not publishing a magazine over there; they can't afford that.' What really annoyed him was that his daughter didn't have a school magazine! 'I beg of you, Comrade, authorize at least ten copies!' I went to the printing shop of the father of one of our former students and we actually printed 1,500 copies. No one found out, as they were distributed to our students. I went to the Library of the Academy. The general manager was academician Sahini, a former fellow-student of mine. I asked him to give me a copy of all the issues of 'The Scion'. He told me: 'I can't take out so many items from the library at one time! Besides, some of the issues feature King Michael on the cover. Do you solemnly promise me that you'll get rid of this photo? I wouldn't want to get in trouble.' He gave me 10, then he gave me another 10, until I got all of them. I went to the Institute for Medical Research, where I knew someone. They multiplied 18 volumes - all the issues of 'The Scion' from its beginnings to our days. On the first page there is my name alongside the names of two other teachers. The workers were so excited at what they saw, that they spent several days binding them - the 18 volumes are still in the high school library.