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1848 REVOLUTIONS AND WALLACHIA

ALEXANDRU-GEORGE CERCHEZEANU

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ASSIST. PROF. DR. BÜLENT AKYAY

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| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Referans No | 10259693 |
| Yazar Adı / Soyadı | ALEXANDRU GEORGE CERCHEZEANU |
| T.C.Kimlik No | 99760502794 |
| Telefon | 5054210691 |
| E-Posta | alexandru.cerchezeanu@gmail.com |
| Tezin Dili | İngilizce |
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Prepared by: Alexandru-George Cerchezeanu

ABSTRACT

Wallachia, today southern Romania, was, at the beginning of the 19th century, a relative insignificant province of the Balkan possessions of the Ottoman Empire and a peripheral area of Europe. However, during the first half of the same century, the Wallachian elites and society passed throughout a profound process of transformations that had decisively influenced the country's destiny for the following two hundred years.

The 1848 Revolution from Wallachia was the first genuine manifestation of this phenomenon and the most explicit situation in which Romania's greatest statesmen and personalities (I. C. Brătianu, C. A. Rosetti, Heliade Rădulescu, Ion Ghica, Golescu Brothers *et alii*) had their first taste of political activism and accountability. However, the idealized type revolutionary discourse they did produce dealt with the insurmountable peculiarities of that era and their demarche proved to be a fiasco.

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the overall administrative and revolutionary-missionary performances of the new regime according to a broad documentation: Decrees, Reports, Instructions, Notes, personal letters, *et cætera*).

KEYWORDS: Wallachia, Romania, 1848 Revolutions, Liberalism, Political transition, Governance.

Tezin Adı: 1848 İhtilâlleri ve Eflak

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ÖZET

Günümüzde güney Romanya sınırları içerisinde yer alan Eflak, 19. yüzyıl başlarında Osmanlı egemenliği altındaki Balkan coğrafyası ve merkez aşırı (periferik) Avrupa'nın oldukça ufak bir vilayeti idi. Ancak, aynı yüzyılın ilk yarısında Eflak'ın seçkin sınıfı ve tebaası takip eden iki yüzyıl boyunca bölgenin kaderini derinden etkileyecek olan yoğun bir değişim sürecini yaşadı.

1848 Eflak İhtilali, bu fenomenin gerçek anlamda ilk ortaya çıkışı ve Romanya tarihinin ileri gelen devlet adamlarının ve kişiliklerinin (I. C. Brătianu, C. A. Rosetti, Heliade Rădulescu, Ion Ghica, Golescu kardeşler vb) politik aktivist eylemleri ve yükümlülüğünü ilk olarak deneyimlediği olaydır. Ancak onların ortaya koyduğu idealize edilmiş ihtilal, o çağın önüne geçilemez özellikleriyle mücadele etmek durumunda kaldı ve atılımları bir fiyaskoyla sonuçlandı.

Bu çalışmanın amacı yeni yönetim şekillerindeki idari ve devrim - misyonuna sahip performansların ayrıntılı bir biçimde ve geniş bir araştırma sonucuna dayanarak (kararnameler, raporlar, talimatlar, notlar, kişisel mektuplar vb.) incelenmesidir.

ANAHTAR KELİMELER: Eflak, Romanya, 1848 İhtilalleri, Liberalizm, Siyasal değişim, Yönetim

In loving memory of my grandmother Teodora



PREFACE

During the first half of the 19th century, the Danubian Principalities found themselves in the focal point of considerable shifts in geostrategic and political interest brought on by the diminishment of Ottoman suzerainty, aggressiveness of Russian offensive, decisiveness but relative weakness of European concerns for the issue at hand and projects for reform of the conservative rule by progressive Moldo-Wallachian elites.

Excepting two peripheral European powers, the United Kingdom and the Russian Empire, revolutionary tide affected the entire continent. Unexpectedly, the reactionary club of the Holy Alliance was paralyzed and one after another, the conservative regimes had to agree to liberal concessions that they would have otherwise firmly rejected. Due to geographical vicinity and prestigiousness of the revolutionary events in France, the Italian Peninsula, and Austria, the Wallachian youth was determined to utilize the momentum for their gain.


The 1848 Revolution in Wallachia could be called a historical accident, but it has also presented a kind of political *école* for Romania's greatest statesmen and personalities like I. C. Brătianu, C. A. Rosetti, Heliade Rădulescu, Ion Ghica, Golescu Brothers, *et cætera*.

The main argument of this thesis concerns the governmental performances of the Forty-Eighters during the short revolutionary interregnum of 1848. Gaining power proved mostly an uncomplicated task and the real challenges were the concrete issues that had to be coped with the ideological claims of the movement. For this particular purpose, a remarkable number of zealous, patriotic and devoted revolutionary functionaries were mobilized by the new authorities. Despite its dramatic end and short duration, the liberal leadership managed to accomplish a considerable portion of its programme.

Modern Romanian history is a field of interest that doesn't receive the attention it is entitled to within the Turkish academic circles. When it comes to the Romanian/Wallachian - Ottoman relations, the focus is usually placed at the earlier centuries. This work is intended to try and bridge that gap to some extent. Its main aim is to investigate overall administrative and revolutionary-missionary performance of the new regime according to broad documentation: decrees, reports, instructions, notes, and personal letters.

In order to ensure the historical accuracy of the events and to keep up with the classic Romanian historiography, this thesis is using a double calendar, *i.e.*, Julian, in effect in Romania until the beginning of the 20th century and Gregorian. For the 19th century, a gap of twelve days does exist between the two.

It is also the author's pleasure to acknowledge people who helped him in different ways while he was writing this work. He is foremost grateful to his coordinating professor, Bülent Akyay for immense support and understanding. He is also grateful to lecturer Adrian Niculescu from The National University of Political Studies and Public Administration of Bucharest for useful counsels and receptivity, to his friend Igor from Travnik, who provided inhuman patience, and, last but not least, to his supportive and empathetic parents, Constanța and Vasile.



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ABBREVIATIONS

Anul Anul 1848 în Principatele Române. Acte și documente



INTRODUCTION

The Romanian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia had politically emerged during the 14th century as an outcome of the local boyars' resistance against their suzerain, the Hungarian King. In terms of proportions, the entities were medium states with less than 100,000 square kilometres and with an approximate population of 500,000 inhabitants in the case of the former and 400,000 for the latter. Comparatively, the population of Transylvania was, during the same period, of about 900,000 souls. Between the 15th and 18th century the domestic equilibrium would be seriously altered by an undergoing large-scale migration. In addition to the already settled Pechenegs, Cumans, Hungarians and Western colonists (in Transylvania) there was a new significant infusion of South-Danubian elements (Bulgarians, Serbs, Albanians and Greeks)¹.

Considering the general character of the relationships between the Romanians residing on the north side of the Danube and the Ottomans, it must be stated that the two sides were engaged in early contacts, some of which can be dated during the third quarter of the 14th century². Nevertheless, stable rapports became permanent only later, during the rule of Mircea the Elder (1386-1418) in Wallachia and after Petru Rareș (1527-1538 and 1541-1546) was ousted from the Moldavian throne following an Ottoman military campaign. According to the Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga, the Ottomans who penetrated the area did not possess the image of fanatic Moslems, but were rather associated with the Asian warriors willing to show religious tolerance to their subjects, a fact (*Pax Ottomanica*) that would be applicable at least until the 16th century³. Overall, the long-lasting relationships between Romanians and Ottomans would be influenced by different factors such as the fluctuation of the Ottoman forces, pressure and expansionist priorities, as well as the local's

¹ Vlad Georgescu, *Istoria românilor: de la origini până în zilele noastre* [History of Romanians from Origins

² Basically, the relationships between the two sides were regulated throughout *ahdnâme*, documents generally defined as contractual agreements. Their actual existence and political content was not a topic among the high circles until the diplomatic discussions held in Focșani (1772). Back then, the local elite created, almost *ex nihilo*, contemporary-looking treaties which included some very specific stipulations. However, none of the great powers, not even the Ottoman empire itself - at least until 1878 - tried to challenge their trustworthiness and legitimacy, Mihai Maxim, *Țările române și Înalta Poartă. Cadrul juridic al relațiilor româno-otomane în evul mediu* [Romanian Principalities and the Porte: The Juridical Framework of the Romanian-Ottoman Relations during the Medieval Times], Editura Enciclopedică, București 1993, pp. 20, 25.

³ Tasin Gemil, *Românii și otomanii în secolele XIV-XVI* [Romanians and Ottomans during the 14-16 Centuries], ed. 2, Ovidius University Press, Constanța 2008, p. 31.

capacities to resist (military or not)⁴. However, frequent moments when the local rulers interrupted the tribute payments are extremely relevant in order to understand the complex nature of this relationship and rapports of power. The historical sources accounts for a context full of an unsolved political disputes and diplomatic uncertainties when gifted and adventurous local princes attempted to promote an autonomous foreign policy based on regional rivalries⁵.

Even though the relationship between the parties does not follow a bilateral structure, thus being deeply influenced by various regional events, military confrontation, alliances or political lines of different state actors, it does form an organized system⁶. Initially, given to the political and military context from the end of the 14th century, the status of tributary-protected principalities was established and only later a virtual Ottoman domination was made possible⁷.

During the following century Wallachia and Moldavia played the role of buffer zone in the conflict between the Christian powers (Hungary, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) and the Ottoman Empire. They were scarcely inhabited and were of no importance for any of the main actors involved. Broadly speaking a certain equilibrium regarding the provinces' international status was possible due to the yet functioning alternative bondage system (Ottoman Empire, Poland and Hungary). The collapse of the Hungarian Kingdom (first half of the 16th century) brought significant changes regarding the regional position of both principalities. Ottoman political dominance, now considerably increased, was duplicated by an economic pre-eminence and control, a settlement which would last until the first half of the 19th century⁸. In other words, the disappearance of neighbouring Christian powers left Wallachia and Moldavia without the possibility of addressing their traditional alliance system in order to counteract the Ottoman pressure⁹. Later on, with the arrival of new regional

⁴ *Idem*, p. 19.

⁵ Mircea the Elder swore an oath to the kings of Poland (1387), Hungary (1395) and to the Sultan (1417). Stephan the Great, used the same "multiple-boundage" pattern. He paid the tribute to the Ottomans only discontinuously (1473-1487; 1500-1504) and affirmed his allegiance to the king of Poland and Hungary in different occasions (in 1459, 1462, 1485, respectively in 1475), Georgescu, *op.cit.*, p. 63.

⁶ Gemil, *op.cit.*, p. 323.

⁷ Viorel Panaite, "Wallachia and Moldavia from the Ottoman juridical and political viewpoint 1774-1829", *Ottoman Rule and the Balkans, 1760-1850: Conflict, Transformation, Adaptation*, Edited by Antonis Anastasopoulos and Elias Kolovos, University of Crete, Department of History and Archaeology, Rethymno 2007, p. 42.

⁸ Keith Hitchins, *Românii: 1774-1866* [The Romanians: 1774-1866], Humanitas, Bucureşti 2004, p. 23.

⁹ Gemil, *op.cit.*, p. 274.

powers, such as the Habsburgs (end of the 17th century¹⁰) and the Russians (beginning of the 18th century), the two Romanian provinces commenced, once again, to achieve an increasing military and political relevance and to play a role of “compensation countries”¹¹. Despite the fact that a principled Habsburg-Russia alliance was set up against the Porte, the two Christian powers would never reach the final consensus regarding the future of Wallachia and Moldavia¹².

At the same time, the peculiarities of the “Romanian”-Ottoman relationship represented the cornerstone of the framework in accordance with which the two provinces would be governed, starting from the 14th century onwards. Principles like the preservation of a distinct political existence, administrative and legislative autonomy, territorial distinctiveness (*e.g.* the Muslim Ottomans could not hold immobile possessions), freedom and protection of religion (*e.g.* the building mosques was forbidden¹³) were extracted and enforced according to the rapports between the two sides at a given moment. From this settled ground, two concurrent and complementary interpretations of the Ottoman suzerainty would arise. On one side, in Porte's eyes, Wallachia and Moldavia were, at best, privileged provinces (called *eyâlet-i mumtaze, dar al-zimmet*, and especially during the 18th century *serbestiyet*¹⁴), advantaged but integral parts of the empire (*mülk-i mevrus*). It's worth mentioning that the same view was shared by other European powers. On the other side, the local rulers from Bucharest and Jassy were having their own perception, slightly different from the Ottoman way of looking. According to them, each province was enjoying its own territorial individuality, being separated from the Ottoman domain by an external border¹⁵.

¹⁰ At the end of the 17th century, the Habsburgs passed throughout a series of successful military campaigns supplemented with the territorial annexations of Hungary and Transylvania, Banat (1718), Oltenia (1718-1739) and Bukovina (1775).

¹¹ Gheorghe Platon, *Geneza revoluției române de la 1848: introducere în istoria modernă a României* [The Genesis of the 1848 Revolution: Introduction to the Modern History of Romania], Editura Junimea, Iași 1980, p. 34.

¹² For example, the merge of Wallachia and Moldavia was decided by the Russian Imperial Council in September 1770. However, it was quickly abandoned afterwards due to the severe complications of its enforcement. Just one year later, Empress Catherine refused a buffer-state project proposed by Joseph II. The plans aiming to establish a kingdom of “Dacia” reached climax between 1787 and 1791, but once again the opposition prompted by Vienna, which considered the Ottomans less threatening, prevented any virtual results, Leonid Boicu, *Geneza ‘chestiunii române’ ca problemă internațională* [The Genesis of the Romanian Question], Editura Junimea, Iași 1975, pp. 32, 38, 48; Hitchins, *op.cit.*, pp. 61, 62.

¹³ Gemil, *op.cit.*, p. 53.

¹⁴ Maxim, *op.cit.*, p. 61; Panaite, *op.cit.*, p. 33.

¹⁵ Marian Coman, *Putere și teritoriu: Țara Românească medievală (secolele 14-16)* [Power and Territory: Medieval Wallachia], Polirom, Iași 2013, p. 292.

The centuries-old Ottoman domination precipitated a series of mutations to the political regime of Wallachia and Moldavia. The possibility of building an independent foreign policy and the right of dispatching emissaries in any given area was lost¹⁶. The local rulers, called *Voievod*, *Domn* and *Hospodar* were usually appointed directly by the Sultan and this practice caused, on long term, a dramatic loss in term of jurisdiction for the former¹⁷. However, the title of “Christian prince” and sovereign of his own kingdom (*imperator et rex in suo regno*), contrasting the condition of any regular imperial governor (*beylerbeyi*) compelled to share local power with different other authorities such as *defterdar* or *kadi*, allowed the *voievod* to enjoy considerable prestige¹⁸.

With respect to the logic that stood behind the Ottoman decision of not annexing Wallachia and Moldavia (assuming that there was one), the Romanian historiography produced an immense volume of work. At first, the two failed attempts of transforming Wallachia into a *pashalik*, in 1522 and 1595¹⁹, brought forth the balance between the Ottoman expansionist capacity and the autochthonous people’s determination for resistance as well the usage, by the Porte, of a complex mechanism meant to put pressure on the local political elite in order to secure submissiveness²⁰. The regional-based analysis underlined the possible diplomatic intricacies and political uncertainties that such decision of the Ottomans might have triggered in that part of the continent²¹. Given the vicinity of two different expansionist forces - the Turkish-Islamic and Hungarian-Catholic²² - Wallachia and especially Moldavia and Transylvania could play the key geopolitical role of buffer-states²³, essential in preventing any possible future clashes between sides²⁴. Furthermore, from an

¹⁶ This was mostly the case after the military and political changes during the 1530’s that strengthened the Ottoman dominance. The capitals, Suceava and Târgoviște, were abandoned and the new ruling elite was placed in new settlements, Jassy and Bucharest, less isolated and easily controllable, Olga Untila Kaplan, *Osmanlı Dönemi’nde Romence Basın: 1829-1912*, Gece Kitaplığı, İstanbul 2016, pp. 51, 52.

¹⁷ In its origins, the key political figure of the regime in Wallachia and Moldavia was the Voyevoda / Voievoda. He possessed almost unlimited political and judicial powers as well as some essential economic influences. Its hereditary election allowed, until the beginning of the 17th century, the establishment of local dynasties. However, the increase of the foreign pressure and dominance altered the state's political system, which became dominated by the boyars. The loss of *Hospodar*’s prestige its clearly visible from the Ottoman used terminology. If previously, they were designed by terms *hakim* or *tekur*, starting from the 18th century they were perceived merely as *bey*, Georgescu, *op.cit.*, pp. 50, 66; Hitchins, *op.cit.*, p. 32.

¹⁸ Maxim, *op.cit.*, p. 52.

¹⁹ *Idem*, p. 111.

²⁰ *Idem*, pp. 22, 66.

²¹ *Idem*, p. 51.

²² Gemil, *op.cit.*, p. 33.

²³ Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans. Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1983, pp. 99, 100.

²⁴ Maxim, *op.cit.*, p. 123.

economic point of view, it seems that among the ruling Ottoman elite took shape the belief that an indirect domination through self-governing was more fruitful²⁵.

Economically, in Wallachia and Moldavia the animal husbandry sector enjoyed the highest recognition. Powerful contacts with Central European markets were typical until the collapse of the Kingdom of Hungary in 1526, when the Ottoman Empire became the most important destination for the local products. In contrast with the situation of Moldavia, which was more pliable, Wallachia integrated perfectly within Istanbul's economic framework²⁶. For most of the Romanian historians the depth and magnitude of the Ottoman control over the economy was and still is (in a lesser extent) strongly debated. Most of them adopted a terminology ("commercial monopoly") which brings confusion and misunderstanding. Many authors added nuances and observations. For example, Nicolae Iorga²⁷ had already stated that not all the products were affected. Besides, the administrative constraints peculiar to the pre-modern states prevented a total enforcement of such a strategy (e.g. smuggling was hardly controllable)²⁸. On the other side, historian Tasin Gemil suggested a terminological alternative that seems more specific and unambiguous, i.e. the "right of Ottoman pre-emption towards the Romanian provinces' foreign trade"²⁹. Some authors, although continuing to utilize the term "monopoly", insisted on clarifying that the constraints to sell goods exclusively on the Ottoman market were not all the time absolute, nor injurious. Besides that, the commercial ties with the Western World were never completely cut off (*a contrario*, during the 17th century a growth is recorded³⁰). Finally, most of the latest studies had completely abandoned the assumption that during the medieval ages the Romanian provinces were engaged in commercial activities with the Ottoman counterparts only. Nevertheless, a fair consideration still stands, the economic relations between the two sides did not, all the time, followed the rules of equity and fairness³¹.

²⁵ *Idem*, p. 130.

²⁶ Bogdan Murgescu, *Țările Române între Imperiul Otoman și Europa creștină* [The Romanian Principalities Between the Ottoman Empire and Christianity], Polirom, Iași 2012, pp. 285, 286.

²⁷ The Romanian historian distinguished between three different periods: between the middle of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century the economic relationships were simultaneously marked by an intense exportation and real gains. From that moment and until 1774 the transactions were extremely arbitrary and during the last period (1774-1829), despite the existent "monopoly", the payments were generally adjacent to the market prices, Platon, *op.cit.*, p. 45.

²⁸ Murgescu, *op.cit.*, p. 159.

²⁹ Gemil, *op.cit.*, p. 320.

³⁰ Georgescu, *op.cit.*, p. 40.

³¹ Considering the fact that the Ottoman monopolist measures were condensed during the period between the second half of the 16th century and 18th century, particularly when the Christian states from Europe enjoyed a

The most appropriate methodological tool which can account for the economic regional role that Wallachia and Moldavia had played on long term history is the world-systems analysis, as schemed by Immanuel Wallerstein and applied to the South-Eastern Europe region by Daniel Chirot. The provinces were defined as peripheries of both European and Ottoman systems (without fully belonging to any of them) and even as an Ottoman proto-colony (between 16th and 18th centuries) and a neo-colony, characterized by a shared control of the foreign powers, Ottoman Empire, Russia and Habsburg Austria³².

During the 18th century, the continental transformations had deeply influenced the fate of Wallachia and Moldova as well. The Eastern Question evolved from an affair concerning the formation of an anti-Ottoman front to an issue regarding the European equilibrium altogether³³. Austria and Russia, seeking to exploit “the sick man of Europe’s” decaying state, regarded the area between the Carpathians and Danube as a significant part of their expansionist projections. In Vienna cabinet’s eye the economic considerations were the most important question and the latter was especially interested by strategic aspects³⁴.

Between 1711 (Treaty of Pruth) and 1829 (Treaty of Adrianople/Edirne) Wallachia and Moldavia were ravaged by no less than seven different armed conflicts, in which the locals had voluntarily engaged (1711; 1716-1718; 1736-1739; 1768-1774; 1787-1792; 1806-1812; 1828-1829) and experienced twenty-five years of military occupation. During the same period, the first significant territorial losses took place as well. Oltenia, the eastern half of Wallachia was placed under Habsburg rule between 1718 and 1739, Bukovina, northern Moldavia was surrendered to the Austrians in 1775 and Bessarabia, the eastern part of Moldavia, was integrated into the Russian Empire in 1812. Those episodes were not characterized only by the removal of the Ottoman suzerainty but were also occasions when

superior financial situation, Murgescu suggested that - the so called monopoly - was nothing more than a mechanism meant to protect the Ottoman economy, Murgescu, *op.cit.*, pp. 151, 171.

³² *Apud* Daniel Chirot, *idem*, p. 286; Daniel Chirot, *Schimbarea socială într-o societate periferică. Formarea unei colonii balcanice* [Change in a Peripheral Society; Establishment of a Balkan Colony], Corint, București 2002, p. 147.

³³ Platon, *op.cit.*, p. 12.

³⁴ Giving the inherent financial deficiencies of the Austrian Empire, which could not afford to play a hegemonic role throughout the Italian, German and Balkan areas simultaneously, the only realistic political claims could originate from Saint Petersburg, *ibidem*; Jonathan Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848-1851*, 2nd edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2005, p. 27; Šedivý Miroslav, “From Hostility to Cooperation? Austria, Russia and the Danubian Principalities: 1829-1840”, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 89, No. 4, October 2011, p. 632.

the Western penetrations boosted and when the political preferences of the local elites for the neighbouring Slavic rule became sharply clear³⁵.

Immediately after the Russian-Ottoman War of 1768-1774, the international status of Wallachia and Moldavia altered. Catherine the Great (1762-1796) of Russia abandoned the “northern system” (*i.e.* the alliance with Great Britain and Prussia against France and Austria) and tried to approach Vienna for a concerted action facing the Ottomans³⁶. This meant bigger interests and a more aggressive policy directed towards the Black Sea’s northern regions and a new phase concerning the Ottoman-Russia relationships³⁷. Meanwhile, the Porte’s own foreign policy fundamentals had to readapt in order to prevent the continuous deterioration or at least prolongation of it throughout a series of alliances with the Christian states. The Porte got more entangled into the European political system³⁸. In the Principalities, the clashes between Habsburgs, Ottomans and Russian enabled the local elites to repeatedly express their genuine claims. The most striking example occurred during the peace negotiations conducted at Focșani and Bucharest (July 1772 - March 1773) which gave the boyars the chance to invoke some so called “old treaties” between the Romanian rulers and the Sultan, for the sake of strengthening their own privileges. At that moment, none of the actors argued the historical veracity of the arguments (such a debate will arise only several decades later) and the boyars’ rhetoric had a powerful juridical effect on the final peace treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (10/21 of July 1774) and subsequent *Hatt-ı Şerif* of ratification. For the first time, preconditions were established in order to authorize the restoration of the Ottoman suzerainty within the borders of Wallachia and Moldavia³⁹. Although no immediate outcomes were reported, at the beginning of the 19th century (1802) the Porte would officially recognize the superiority of the Tsar, whose diplomats would play a leading role in the Principalities. From then on, any attempt to alter the newly established status of Wallachia and Moldavia would have risked either a military conflict or a double armed intervention.

³⁵ Nicolae Isar, *Istoria modernă a românilor: 1774-1848* [Modern History of Romanians], Editura Fundația România de Măine, București 2005, p. 21.

³⁶ Stephen P. Duggan, “The Eastern Question. A Study in Diplomacy”, *Studies in History, Economic and Public Law*, Vol. XIV, No. 3, p. 471.

³⁷ Barbara Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation of the Romanian National State (1821-1878)*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1984, p. 4.

³⁸ Gemil, *op.cit.*, p. 292.

³⁹ The stipulations regarding the Principalities guaranteed the Russian right to establish a local consulate, general amnesty, freedom of religion, freedom of movement, exemption from tribute payment for two years, etc; available at http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/hist/eia/documents_archive/kucuk-kaynarca.php (November 21, 2018); Adrian Tertecel, “Tratatul de pace ruso-otoman de la Küçük Kaynarca (1774)” [Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca], *Revista română de studii euroasiatice*, An I, No. 1, Constanța 2005, pp. 186, 187; Boicu, *op.cit.*, p. 41; Marian Stroia, *Românii, marile puteri și sud-estul Europei (1800-1830)* [Romanians, Great Powers and South-Eastern Europe], Editura Semne, București 2002, p. 50.

Secondly, as a direct consequence of the continental mutations, 18th century marked a change in term of Ottoman governance. Immediately after Karlowitz (1699) the centre of European politics was relocated eastwards, Habsburg Reconquista turned Austria into a Balkan power and Russia was admitted into the continental club of great powers⁴⁰. At this point, Principalities became the Ottoman's most threatened outposts and the unique Russian passage towards Danube, Balkans or Istanbul⁴¹. The reliance on the two provinces evolved into an essential tool for the Porte's political existence itself. As a result, the whole rationale of the administrative system was reshaped, turning Wallachia and Moldavia into a "relatively dependent" entities of the Ottoman governance⁴².

In view of such geopolitical crisis, the only answer Porte could make was by strengthening its control under a new institutional design, the Phanariot regime that would last, according to the classical school of interpretation, from 1711 in Moldavia and 1715/16 in Wallachia until the 1821 Uprising⁴³. The period it's usually associated with short reigns,

⁴⁰ Boicu, *op.cit.*, p. 16.

⁴¹ Mihai Bărbulescu, Dennis Deletant, Keith Hitchins, Șerban Papacostea, Pompiliu Teodor, *Istoria României* [History of Romania], Corint, București 2007, p. 244.

⁴² Platon, *op.cit.*, p. 22.

⁴³ According to the same classical historiography, the Phanariotes were the Christian domestic elite of the Ottoman Empire which enjoyed, between the 1660's and 1821, essential positions in domains such as foreign relations with the European states, Istanbul's supply, administration of the strategic areas and military options. Throughout this entire period, they experienced an increasingly political integration into empire's pattern of governance, however their allegiance to the Ottoman ascendancy started to be questioned during the rule of Selim III (1789-1808). In Wallachia and Moldavia they had a dual function - of loyal administrators of the Sultan as well as autonomous Christian rulers, Christine Phillou, "Communities on the Verge: Unravelling the Phanariot Ascendancy in Ottoman Governance", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 51, No. 1, January 2009, pp. 153, 159, 160, 161. Simultaneously, they were charged with the mission to inform the Porte about the latest European events and to collect classified strategic information. The system of collecting data, that they had established, reflected its efficiency when the Sultan received the message about empress Catherine II's death with five days before the Russian ambassador himself, Cafer Çiftçi, "Bâb-ı Âli'nin Avrupa'ya Çevrilmiş İki Gözü: Eflak ve Boğdan'da Fenerli Voyvodalar (1709/1711 Boğdan, 1716 Eflak-1821)", *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Vol. 7, No. 26, Summer 2010, pp. 28, 32-36, 39, 40; Andrei Oțetea, "Înființarea consulatelor franceze în țările românești" [Establishment of the French Consulates in the Romanian Principalities], *Revista istorică*, An XVIII, No. 10-12, October-December, Vălenii de Munte 1932, p. 331. In the area inhabited by Romanians they were called in different ways, such as "foreigners" (*streini*), "Greeks" (*greci*) or "Constantinopleans" (*țaringrădeni*) but never Phanariots (the term appeared only later), Andrei Pippidi, *Hommes et idées du sud-est européen à l'aube de l'âge modern*, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România Bucharest 1980, p. 339; Murgescu, *op.cit.*, p. 55. Although there was a continuous political conflict between the newcomers and the local elite, a cultural symbiosis took shape throughout time. Great local boyars were able to secure their administrative positions. For the whole Phanariot period a research pointed out that most of the members of the local councils, 78% in Wallachia and 81% in Moldavia, were not foreigners and the Phanariotes monopolised only the diplomatic and military positions, Neagu Djuvara, *Între Orient și Occident: Țările Române la începutul epocii moderne: 1800-1848* [Between Orient and Occident: The Romanian Principalities at the Beginning of the Modern Era], Humanitas, București 2009, p. 135; Dan Berindei, *România și Europa în perioadele premodernă și modernă* [Romanians and Europe in pre-Modern and Modern Eras], Editura Enciclopedică, București 1997, pp. 23, 34-36, 38.

Overall, between 1711 and 1821, there were recorded not less than 31 rulers, originating from 11 families, who were appointed for 75 times, Djuvara, *op.cit.*, p. 35; Florin Constantiniu, *O istorie sinceră a poporului român* [A Sincere History of the Romanians], Univers Enciclopedic, București 1997, p. 180.

rulers appointed by Istanbul, an intensification of the economic burden, never-ending conflicts between the *Hospodar* and the boyars, a weakened military and administrative system and failed attempts towards modernizations. However, such developments were recorded even before 1711 or 1715/16. Based on such observations the Romanian historiography has either proposed the existence of a pre-Phanariot or proto-Phanariot period and a chronological adjustment by accepting an earlier date for the virtual inauguration of a new pattern⁴⁴. Historian Vlad Georgescu described Phanariotism as “the distinct social, political and cultural structure of the 18th century”, while the Phanariots, regardless of their ethnic origins (Greeks, Romanians, Albanians, Bulgarians) were described as a sort of “pre-political party” governed by “conservative orthodoxy, anti-Western traditionalism and allegiance to the Porte”⁴⁵. On the other side, some recent historical researches set up different new approaches and perspectives of inquiry. For historian Bogdan Murgescu the “Phanariot” concept is nothing more than a mere construct of the modern historiography. His main argument states that the relationship between Romanians and the Ottomans didn’t pose a considerable qualitative rearrangement between the middle of the 16th century and until the 1820s. For the entire given period, a sole political system was at place⁴⁶.

Despite any terminological contradiction, it is extremely clear that during this period the Principalities were fully incorporated into the Ottoman Empire’s political and military system. After 1730 the local boyars ceased playing a role in election of *Hospodars*, and the two provinces terminated whatever initiatives in military (defence was now Porte’s responsibility) and diplomatic fields. Furthermore, a closer examination of the new regime particularities revealed the fact that its evolution was not linear at all. Before 1752 the Porte opted for a system of rotation, appointing the same rulers to Wallachia and Moldavia consecutively, a practice meant to prevent any prince from accumulating too much political capital. The most striking example is Constantine Mavrocordatos who had secured the position of *Hospodar* for no less than ten times. During the second half of the century, the reigns were shorter, the number of aspirants to *Hospodar* title increased and the financial investments became harder to meet. In other words, the process of selection turned uncontrollable and harmful for the Ottoman Greek elite itself. Particularly from this reason,

⁴⁴ Murgescu, *op.cit.*, pp. 57, 58.

⁴⁵ Georgescu, *op.cit.*, p. 88.

⁴⁶ Murgescu, *op.cit.*, p. 59.

four of the most influential families residing in Phanar district reached an agreement aimed to secure their cartel-like exclusivity⁴⁷.

The eighteenth century was a time of social, economic and cultural reforms aimed at improving the overall situation of the two provinces⁴⁸. Among the most significant ones are the institutional innovations introduced from the 1740s onward and during Alexandros Ypsilantis/Alexandru Ipsilanti (1775-1782) rule in Wallachia. The latter reorganized the judiciary system and established the first European-based courthouses⁴⁹. Another substantial contribution belonged to Ioannis Georgios Karatzas/Ioan Gheorghe Caragea (1812-1818) who focused on centralization, producing a new code of laws⁵⁰ and improving education⁵¹. On a different level, some *Hospodars* tried to improve the life of the peasants who lived in inhumane conditions by passing various decrees, such as the one concerning the freedom of movement (of Constantine Mavrocordatos, August 5, 1746⁵²) and another concerning the normalization of their *corvée* (*clacă*) related duties. However, beside all those attempts for progress and reform their factual impact was uncertain. The periods with truly remarkable princes in command were rather short, isolated and their enlightened policies did not enjoy continual enforcement. It was not uncommon for the local boyars to be among the most determined adversaries of the Phanariot agenda. Sometimes, the arbitrary Ottoman interference was the reason why different projects were abandoned⁵³.

Nevertheless, the immense contribution of the Phanariotes was generally acknowledged. Especially from a social point of view, they were perceived as the first

⁴⁷ Platon, *op.cit.*, p. 35.

⁴⁸ Horia B. Oprea, "Les princes phanariotes et l'euro-pénisation des roumanins", *Balkan Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 1, February 1990, p. 109; Jelavich, *History of...*, p. 104.

⁴⁹ Hitchins, *op.cit.*, p. 35.

⁵⁰ The attempt to organize the chaotic state of the laws was maybe the most lasting contribution of the Phanariot rulers. Despite the continuous usage of the traditional terminology, the body of laws adopted throughout this period was to represent the essential step that the local judiciary system took in order to Europeanize and secularize, Ioan Stanomir, *Nașterea Constituției: limbaj și drept în Principate până la 1866* [Birth of the Constitution: Law and Discourse in Principalities Until 1866], Nemira, București 2004, pp. 21, 22. The codex enforced back in 1780 by Ipsilanti was to be used almost until the eve of Vladimirescu's movement when, a new settlement inspired by the French Napoleonic civil code, took effect in 1818 (until 1865), Isar, *op.cit.*, pp. 37, 38.

⁵¹ Iscru, G. D., *Introducere în studiul istoriei moderne a României* [Introduction to Modern Romanian History], Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București 1983, p. 180.

⁵² Constantin Mavrocordatos was appointed *Hospodar* for ten times and totally held the office for about twenty-two years, Djuvara, *op.cit.*, p. 99.

⁵³ Constantiuniu, *op.cit.*, pp. 185, 186.

political actors that inaugurated, *via* Istanbul, the process of Europeanization⁵⁴ and the first agents of the French culture in Wallachia and Moldavia⁵⁵.

A third category of changes was linked with the increasing presence of the great powers. According to the 1774 treaty, the Christian states earned the right to organize their own diplomatic missions in Bucharest and Jassy. The first who took advantage of this provision were the Russians (1782⁵⁶), followed by the Austrians (1783), Prussians (1785), the French (1796 but recognized in 1798⁵⁷) and the British (1802). After this period, the foreign consulates started to play an important role regarding the local balance of power, governance and administration of the Principalities. For example, the uninterrupted pressure coming from Saint Petersburg forced the authorities in Istanbul to release several charters which confirmed their privileged status in 1774, 1783, 1791 and 1802. In the same time, the Western osmosis within the two provinces equated with a change of a paradigm within the field of European politics. The established “Ottoman-Russian-Austrian monopoly” could no longer effectively regulate Wallachia and Moldavia’s affairs alone⁵⁸. Henceforth, beside Vienna and Saint Petersburg observations, the Ottoman decision-makers would have to take into consideration the political lines of London and Paris alike.

Fourthly, in the light of the already mentioned regional changes, the local elites were compelled to rethink their ways of action. Simultaneously with the Russian political expansion, the boyars got involved into a considerable lobby demarche. Overall, between 1769 and 1830 no less than two hundred and nine drafts of petitions and fiscal or administrative reforms were formulated⁵⁹. The movement itself was stimulated by the domestic crisis and peripheral anarchy which were keeping the Ottoman authorities occupied. Especially after Treaty of Jassy (1792), when, for the first time, Russia and Moldavia had a common frontier on the Dniester River, and after the terror provoked by Osman Pazvantoğlu

⁵⁴ Radu R. Florescu, “The Romanian Impact Upon the Ottoman Tanzimat”, *Güneydoğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, No. 6-7, March 2012, pp. 228, 229.

⁵⁵ Oprişan, *op.cit.*, p. 113.

⁵⁶ Followed by a vice-consulate in Jassy (1784) and a commercial agent in Galaţi (1796), Hitchins, *op.cit.*, p. 63.

⁵⁷ Despite this early institutional establishment of a French diplomatic representation, the government from Paris expressed a sustained interest for the region much later only. During the first decades and especially between 1806 and 1812 they acquired a highly explorative role and were charged with countering the political influence of Russian, Oţetea, *op.cit.*, p. 345. Not until the end of the 1820’s the consuls consciously made real efforts to establish a French educational pre-eminence within the ruling class, Cristian Ploscaru, “Câteva consideraţii privind influenţa franceză asupra culturii politice din Principatele române în primele patru decenii ale veacului al XIX-lea” [French Influence over the Political Culture of the Principalities During the First Decades of the 19th Century: Some Considerations], *Studii şi materiale de istorie modernă*, Vol. XXV, 2012, p. 79.

⁵⁸ Boicu, *op.cit.*, p. 31.

⁵⁹ Platon, *op.cit.*, pp. 18, 41.

of Vidin⁶⁰ the boyar's calls for Tsar's assistance skyrocketed. The effect would be seen in a new chart released by the Sultan in 1802. Sometimes called *Hatt-ı Şerif* of Gülhane the document had an extensive administrative implication for the two provinces. The financial duties toward the Porte were once again reduced and Russia officially became the guarantor of the political stability within Wallachia and Moldavia. In such case, the internal actors of the two provinces could leave behind their lethargic state and adopt a more diverse and vivid range of actions. In practice, especially towards the 1800s the boyars tried to coordinate their movement for (more) autonomy with the foreign policies of Russia, Austria and France. Despite the existence of various schemes, the Russian protectorate would gain the allegiance of most of the elites⁶¹.

In the following chapter, the most important revolutionary developments through Europe and the activities unfolded by the Moldavian opposition and the political line adopted by the Romanian elites from Transylvania will be examined.

⁶⁰ Craiova, the second most important city of Wallachia, was raided and burned twice (1799, 1800) and the immense pressure exerted by the rebel forces made Alexandru Moruzzi/ Alexander Mourouzis to resign. In May 1802 a new wave of plunder triggered a wide exodus, especially among the ruling class, towards Braşov and Sibiu. Those kinds of moments stood at the origin of the continuous requests to establish a local army, *Idem*, pp. 51, 52; Frederick F. Anscombe, "The Balkan Revolutionary Age", *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 84, No. 3, September 2012, p. 580.

⁶¹ Hitchins, *op.cit.*, p. 77.

CHAPTER I

GENERAL EVOLUTIONS OF THE 1848 REVOLUTION IN WESTERN, CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

A. Context

The 1848 Revolutions were eminently a European phenomenon that influenced, in different proportions, the fate of more than fifty states and territories. Excepting the two peripheral powers - United Kingdom and Russia - as well as the Scandinavian and Iberian peninsulas, the continent experienced serious episodes of political violence. The most dramatic incidents took place in France, Italian states, Switzerland, Habsburg's Austria, Bohemia and Hungary. In other regions, such as Belgium, Denmark and Netherlands only by adopting some pre-emptive concessions a more brutal scenario was avoided. Relative easiness with which regimes were overthrown or replaced and ephemeral consensus among the plethora of revolutionary agents represented the common sight everywhere where the protest erupted during spring and early summer of the 1848. As contemporaneous observers used to say, "the revolution stopped at the foot of the throne" and indeed, excluding the American-inspired French case, most of the changes came only with modest implications⁶². Even though the events were usually dismissed as a political failure, 1848 was marked by a series of unprecedented European and global developments. Especially in the west of the continent, the democratic progress was indisputable. Never had the popular participation in the affairs of the polis reached such an extensive number. Maybe the most striking example was Paris, where about 100,000 people were a constant presence of the recently created political clubs⁶³.

To begin with, the economic climate of the 1840s represented the most substantial set of causes which allowed the 1848 Revolutions to take place. These, and not the ideological catalyst, would be responsible for its impressive simultaneity and continental wide diffusion. It was a consequence of increasing demands and pressures imposed on the inhabitants by the states which, eventually have pushed towards alienation and opposition

⁶² Sperber, *op.cit.*, p. 121.

⁶³ *Idem*, p. 168.

against the regime⁶⁴. In addition, the Revolutions would occur amid a period of crisis of the economic transition (1840-1855), characterised by the expansion of the industrial sector and the readjustment of the agricultural export-centred activities⁶⁵. In short term, the second half of the decade witnessed declines in term of agricultural production and thus, a dramatic escalation of the grain and other essential aliments' prices. Furthermore, the industrial depression of 1847 and the stagnation recorded in the textile sector had increased the chances of the intellectual opposition to mobilize the craftsmen and workers⁶⁶.

The growing discrepancies between the prevailing political institutions and social practices, as well as the peculiar "societal problems of early industrialization" period alienated a considerable segment of the educated stratum⁶⁷. It must be mentioned that, between 1833 and 1847, Europe experienced a genuine educational boom, illustrated by a 100% increase in the number of the schools and 300% increase in the number of the students. Momentarily, this gave birth to a group of educated people - a sort of "academic proletariat" - who were unable to profess in accordance with their trainings or integrate within the current political and social establishment⁶⁸.

The continent was politically divided between states governed either by absolute rulers, *e.g.* Russia, Habsburg Empire, Italian states, or by constitutional monarchs like in France, Belgium, Norway and some German states in the south and west (Bavaria, Baden, Saxony) which displayed, in different forms and proportions, adherence to basic human rights, a functional bicameral legislative and different freedoms (expression, association)⁶⁹. Domestically, each state and region had been confronted with peculiar situations of an economic character, like the issue of property and usage of land and with craftsmen and workers' discontents. Nevertheless, the internal causes *per se* couldn't have admissibly explained the simultaneous outbreak of the 1848 Revolutions throughout the continent. The revolutionary contagion, either by the means of horizontal emulation or vertical influence, was essential for the rapid spread of the movement⁷⁰.

⁶⁴ *Idem*, p. 259.

⁶⁵ *Idem*, p. 109.

⁶⁶ Robin Okey, *Eastern Europe, 1740-1985: feudalism to communism*, Routledge, Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2004, p. 84.

⁶⁷ Helge Berger, Mark Spoerer, "Economic Crises and the European Revolutions of 1848", *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 61, No. 2, June 2001, p. 294.

⁶⁸ Sperber, *op.cit.*, pp. 33, 34.

⁶⁹ *Idem*, pp. 56-58.

⁷⁰ Kurt Weyland, "The Diffusion of Revolution: '1848' in Europe and Latin America", *International Organization*, Vol. 63, No. 3, Summer 2009, pp. 394-396.

It must be kept in mind that the ideological load of the events did not contain any marks of a brand-new political rhetoric. Debates about freedom and rights were already part of the intellectual activities which took place within diverse, but limited, political circles⁷¹. Beyond that, the values that would irradiate throughout most of the continent during 1848 were differently perceived in Paris, Vienna and or Bucharest. Excepting the former, where republicanism quickly became the only game in town, most of the revolutionaries only modestly strived to convert the domestic absolutist regimes into constitutional monarchies. Yet, one should not maximize the role and importance played by the socialist thought and worker's groups in the Western areas. In France they were quickly marginalized by the moderates and elsewhere the labour movement lacked the prerequisite strength in order to break the ice⁷².

The proclamation of the universal suffrage was one of the most significant accomplishment of the 1848 Revolutions. In every instance, the biggest winners of the new participatory criteria were not, as one might expect, the democrats, but the monarchists and the authoritarians⁷³. This was partially caused by the failure of the progressive forces to effectively approach and win over the rural electorate. The peasants would be the crucial electoral force of the 1848/1849 period. At that time, the urban workers, in theory the most ideologically close to the radical parties, were still numerical few and scarcely organized⁷⁴.

B. The 1848 Revolutions in Europe

1. Palermo and the Italian States

At the middle of the 19th century, Italians were living in seven different political entities. The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, the most populated, was militarily weak and controlled by the conservative Bourbon dynasty. The middle and some northern areas of the peninsula were under Papal authority. Some of the most prosperous lands, like Lombardy and Venice were under direct, while others, *e.g.* Tuscany, Parma and Modena under indirect

⁷¹ *Idem*, p. 404.

⁷² Sperber, *op.cit.*, pp. 74, 106-108.

⁷³ O. E. Heywood, C. M. Heywood, "Rethinking the 1848 Revolution in France: The Provisional Government and its Enemies", *History*, Vol. 79, No. 257, October 1994, p. 401.

⁷⁴ *Idem*, p. 404.

Habsburg control. The Kingdom of Sardinia-Piedmont, the only power in the region that could have played a more active role through the peninsula was, at its turn, rather politically hesitant and resourceless⁷⁵.

Chronologically speaking, the 1848 revolutionary wave had been inaugurated by the Sicilians and initially took the aspect of nothing more than an ordinary local uprising against the monarchical regime from Palermo⁷⁶. However, at that time, the social background, imbued with general and severe dissatisfactions, had pushed a considerable number of inhabitants to join the rioters' demarche. A violent conflict with King Ferdinand IV's army broke out on January 12. The ruler, unable to control the situation any longer, was forced to conclude a truce and accept the formation of a new government. In order to prevent expansion of the movement, the sovereign conferred (February 10) a constitutional settlement inspired by the French Chart of 1814. That was, for most of the progressive forces, redundant and only an inadequate mean of bringing the end of their dissatisfactions⁷⁷.

The secessionist birth in Palermo had turned relatively liberal while spreading through Naples, Papal States, Toscana and Piedmont, where the kings and princes in command were pressured to adopt compromising stances and grant local quasi-liberal constitutions⁷⁸. However, those initial successes were not fully unexpected. The innovative policies of Pope Pius IX who, in office since 1846, enjoyed the reputation of a liberal ruler, had *volens volent* prepared the ground for a reformist movements. His figure was central to *Neoguelfismo*, a national movement advocating for the Pope's unifying capacity. However, the issue regarding the future form of government splitted the patriotic ranks, with a second main group, led by Mazzini, in favour of a republican regime⁷⁹.

Meanwhile, Metternich's back door exit from the Habsburg political stage gave some much needed courage and confidence to the Italian movement, which soon turned utterly national. A voluntary campaign was unleashed against the Habsburg military forces stationed in the north. Given the strategic drift of the Pope, who could not back up a group of Catholics fighting against another group of Catholics without risking a serious schism, all the revolutionary hopes and expectations focused on Sardinia-Piedmont King, Carol Albert.

⁷⁵ Serge Bernstein, Pierre Milza, *Istoria Europei: Naționalisme și Concertul european (1815-1919)* [History of Europe: Nationalism and the European Concert], Institutul European, Iași 1998, pp. 73, 74.

⁷⁶ Sperber, *op.cit.*, p. 116.

⁷⁷ Mike Rapport, *1848. Year of Revolution*, Basic Books, New York 2008, p. 46.

⁷⁸ *Idem*, p. 79.

⁷⁹ Sperber, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

Under serious popular pressures, he had no other alternative than to become the flag bearer of the Italian offensive against the Austrian troops. Immediately after the Italian revolutionary success in Milano, Carol Albert, had to declare war on Austria and dispatch his army in Lombardy. Not even the king of Naples could remain passive when dealing with the Romantic enthusiasm of the masses for a pan-Italian action that made him dispatch, for a short period some 16,000 of his troops. In Venice, Republic of San Marco was proclaimed (technically a restoration of the republic abolished by the French in 1797) and the Habsburg forces from Milano were chased away. Under those circumstances, the unionist Italian project was in fact conditioned by the military success of the natives against the Austrians. Nevertheless, the main state actors involved failed to cement a cohesive block and sacrifice their domestic and regional interest in favour of a much effective offensive⁸⁰.

Given the fact that the early Russian plan for a concerted military intervention failed to materialise, the Habsburgs had to deal the Italian matter by themselves. In February, General Joseph Radetzky, the governor of Milano, proclaimed the curfew and initiated a campaign of political arrests. Nonetheless, with the new revolutionary effect produced by the news that came from Paris, the local opposition got revitalized. On March 18, the citizens of Milano took up the arms and the Austrian authorities had no other choice than to temporarily abandon the city. However, the new prestige acquired by the House of Savoy, at that point leading the operations, displeased many of the peninsular rulers along with the pope. In fact, shortly after their decision to be part of the anti-Habsburg front, most of them called their troops back, altering thus the military balance on the battlefield⁸¹.

In May, King Ferdinand IV managed to restore his previous position and moved to neutralize the reformist party. In the same time, he called back the forces that were sent to fight against the Austrians in the north. Given the increase weakening of the pan-Italian strengths, General Radetzky, at that time settled further east, launched a counterattack. Defeated at Custoza, the armies of Piedmont completely abandoned Lombardy in August. Subsequently, the assistance provided by the Tsarist troops allowed the Habsburgs to finally be back in charge in northern Italy and the French counter-revolutionary intervention (spring 1849) brought the end of the last revolutionary movement in Rome⁸².

⁸⁰ Rapport, *op.cit.*, p. 352.

⁸¹ *Anul 1848 în Principatele Române. Acte și documente* [1848 in the Danubian Principalities: Documents], VI, Institutul de Arte Grafice 'Carol Gobl', București 1910, p. XVII.

⁸² Rapport, *op.cit.*, p. 381.

2. The Third French Revolution and the Second Republic

The revolutionary eruptions of February 1848 had a double motivation. The most important causes were unsurprisingly economic: the agricultural production of 1845 and 1846 was calamitous and the stagnation within the Parisian manufacturing field gave birth to a critical unemployment rate of about 50%⁸³. Contrary to the situation of all over the continent, where it was more about a conflict caused by the relative recent awakening of the oppositionist liberal or national forces, the February barricades were largely a product of the inherent antagonisms specific to the modern industry. On the other side, the continuous obstruction of the electoral reforms package by the King Louis Philippe and his government led by François Guizot caused considerable political frustration among the opposing groups. In addition, the conservative turn of the July Monarchy through the 1840s caused hostility among many members of the progressive bourgeoisie⁸⁴.

The French insurrection of February 23-25 started with street confrontations between the state forces and the opposition involved in the banquet meetings. The revolutionaries themselves were surprised by the amplitude the movement got and the king, unable to control the situation anymore, was forced to abdicate⁸⁵. A provisional pro-republican government of a rather heterogeneous composition⁸⁶ - poet Alphonse de Lamartine, physicist François Arago, Pierre Marie, Adolphe Crémieux, Alexandre Ledru-Rollin (linked with the publication *La Réforme*), socialist Louis Blanc, few other gazetteers and even a local worker - was announced and, on February 27, the Republic was proclaimed⁸⁷. Despite its democratic structure and high level of representativeness, the essential ministers and institutions were dominated by moderates, making it practically impossible for any ambitious social project to pass. Subsequently, an extensive reform project, including, among others, the universal male suffrage, reduction of the working hours

⁸³ Morna Daniels, "French Newspapers and Ephemera from the 1848 Revolution", *British Library Journal*, No. 24, 1998, p. 219.

⁸⁴ Bernstein, *op.cit.*, 56.

⁸⁵ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Amintiri* [Memories], Nemira, București 2007, p. 93.

⁸⁶ Rapport, *op.cit.*, p. 57.

⁸⁷ Daniels, *op.cit.*, p. 221.

per day, abolishment of the death penalty, freedom for all the colonial slaves and the creation of state enterprises meant to combat unemployment was drafted⁸⁸.

However, as almost everywhere on the continent, the liberal-socialist front didn't last long. Since middle of April, the Provisional Government and the National Guards showed an increasing hostility towards socialists and democrats (accompanied by masses of workers) who, given their electoral modest results had no alternative than to openly push toward genuine social reforms⁸⁹.

In the same time, a true political boom took place. Hundreds of newspapers and numerous political clubs, ranging from communist to conservative were established. The massive participation of the male inhabitants as well as the inaugural presence of some feminist voices were groundbreaking. From a sudden, the total number of those entitled to vote increased from about 200,000 to 9,395,000 people. It took two days (February 23 and 24) to allow such a great number of individuals to express their political preferences. However, it soon became clear that even if the king had left the country, the republican regime didn't seduce a sufficient number of citizens eager to stand for and defend the new order and this gave to the moderate republicans ("tricolour") the chance to secure a parliamentary majority⁹⁰.

Meanwhile, the biggest concern of the republican regime were the social complications of the urban unemployment. Initially, in March, a series of state financed enterprises, the most significant being the National Workshops (*Ateliers Nationaux*) were established. At the beginning, this measure provided jobs for some 13,000 individuals but increasing pressures soon made the government gradually supplement the working force, reaching 29,000 in March and more than 100,000 in June⁹¹. Meanwhile, the governmental tergiversation regarding the workers' issues provoked a desperate reaction of the radical groups. The May 15 coup d'état tried to impose a socialist character to the regime. However, the attempt had failed and in response, the progressive movement lost its leadership and the socialist political clubs were banned⁹². Despite all solutions envisaged by the authorities, the labour question proved to be unsolvable and, on June 4, the National Workshops were shut

⁸⁸ André Narritsens, "1848: la République, la bourgeoisie, la révolution", *Les cahiers de l'Institut d'Histoire Sociale CGT*, p. 7, available at: http://www.ihs.cgt.fr/IMG/pdf_Dossier-5.pdf (January 17, 2019).

⁸⁹ Douglas Moggach, Gareth Stedman Jones, *The 1848 Revolutions and European Political Thought*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge/New York/Melbourne 2018, p. 130.

⁹⁰ Nicolas Roussellier, *Europa liberalilor* [Liberals' Europe], Institutul European, Iași 2011, p. 61.

⁹¹ Narritsens, *op.cit.*, p. 8; Tocqueville, *op.cit.*, p. 337.

⁹² Rapport, *op.cit.*, p. 187.

down. It was a decisive political move of the conservative-dominated Assembly in order to prevent the establishment of a so called “red republic”⁹³. The workers’ dissatisfaction ultimately erupted into a violent and leaderless insurrection. On June 23, the barricades reappeared throughout Paris’ streets. Compared with the barricade episodes from February, the regime had the determination to fight back and that added a remarkable dose of unrestrainable brutality to the events. The Archbishop of Paris himself lost his life while trying to mediate an agreement between the two opposing camps⁹⁴. Eventually, on June 26, the settlement of this “first French class conflict” left behind serious human casualties (about 6,000 dead on both sides) and socio-political consequences (about 15,000 participants were arrested)⁹⁵. June incidents produced the final rupture between the proletarian masses and the republican government causing a decisive reflux of the revolutionary zeal in the capital city and through the departments.

The events from Paris and the subsequent republican developments had unforeseeable external implications. The victory of the French opposition fuelled the continent-wide revolutionary storm⁹⁶. The oppositionist ranks in Vienna and Pest got highly electrified by the fast spreading news and went into action. The formal reassuring notes sent by Minister Lamartine to the European powers didn’t prevent him to deliver vague but encouraging responses to different patriotic leaders that approached him (Polish, Irish, German, Belgian, Italian, Romanian and others). More than that, “the men of February” were the political model from which the Wallachian revolutionary elites took inspiration during their own days in power. All of them were proponents of peaceful changes, preferably within the framework of parliamentary democracy and strongly opposed violence and dictatorship⁹⁷. Similarly, the enforcement of military discipline (June) produced another Europe-wide psychological effect meant to revitalize the reactionary camps⁹⁸.

In terms of foreign policy, the liberals of the provisional government adopted an isolationist attitude. The fear that any external military adventure might radicalize the internal political spectrum prevented the French involvements even in areas where the ideological and geopolitical interests converged, *i.e.* northern Italy⁹⁹. On the other hand, since the possibility

⁹³ Bernstein, *op.cit.*, p. 60.

⁹⁴ Sperber, *op.cit.*, p. 212.

⁹⁵ Bernstein, *op.cit.*, p. 61; Tocqueville, *op.cit.*, p. 338.

⁹⁶ Bernstein, *op.cit.*, p. 53.

⁹⁷ Heywood, *op.cit.*, p. 411.

⁹⁸ Rapport, *op.cit.*, p. 211.

⁹⁹ Weyland, *op.cit.*, p. 403.

that an 1799 anti-French front had not been fully dismissed, the republicans were continuously trying to prove to the main powers that 1848 wasn't a new 1789 and that they were not intending to alter the European *status quo*. In the same time, uncomplicated relations with its neighbours and reactionary states were essential for channelling the available resources in order to potently address the internal labour issue.

After the socialist and liberal phases of the revolution were exceeded and the threats posed by the red summer overcome, the republican regime progressively adopted a rather conservative trajectory. Following the December 20, 1848 elections, when Louis Napoleon became president, the process of revocation of all the political innovations that were recently endorsed had been officially inaugurated. In January 1849, most of the political clubs were closed and the apparition of most of the newspapers suspended¹⁰⁰. The secular curricula and the state monopoly over the educational system (*loi Carnot*) were cancelled and a profound religious law (*loi Falloux*) was adopted by the Assembly during the same year. The electoral law from May 1850 furthermore restricted the possibility of democratic participation by denying to the politically convicted citizens and workers the right to vote¹⁰¹.

3. Habsburg Monarchy

In 1848 the Habsburg dominion was an amalgamation of territories inhabited by no less than eleven distinct groups from which the later nationalities of Germans, Hungarians, Italians, Romanians, Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Ruthenians, Serbs, Slovenes and Croats would emerge. A genuine Tower of Babel, this polyglot arrangement was politically and administratively configured as a “collection of separate provinces” which enjoyed an inherent political and economic organization, special legislation and fiscal order¹⁰². This combination of medieval political and jurisdictional relics, local institutions and centres of power gave birth to an administrative network as complex as it was confusing. The best example was the lands of The Crown of Saint Stephen or Hungarian Kingdom, ruled by a representative of the Imperial Court of Vienna (Palatine) residing in Pest and a superior Assembly of the Magyar elite located in Bratislava (Pressburg). Croatian Kingdom and Kingdom of Slavonia despite being officially a part of this Hungarian Kingdom (a status that entitled them to dispatch

¹⁰⁰ Daniels, *op.cit.*, p. 222.

¹⁰¹ Heywood, *op.cit.*, pp. 408-410.

¹⁰² Sperber, *op.cit.*, p. 31.

representatives in Bratislava), had its own local Parliament in Zagreb and was governed by a Provincial Governor (Ban) appointed by Vienna but formally subordinated to the Palatine in Pest¹⁰³.

During the 1848 revolutionary period, through the empire, the liberal-national movements erupted mainly in four regions, Vienna, Hungarian Kingdom, Polish-inhabited Galicia and the areas with significant Slavic populations. Almost all organized, during the spring and summer, patriotic gatherings in order to legitimize their lists of demands. Croats, who drafted in Zagreb (March) the most progressive claims, were followed by Slovaks (May 10-11), Serbs (May 11) and finally Transylvanian Romanians (May 15-17), who would mobilize the most numerous groups¹⁰⁴.

During the last days of spring, the Habsburg supremacy seemed to be on the brink of total disintegration. The Austrian possessions in northern Italy were almost lost and three different national movements were simultaneously claiming authority in Vienna, Pest and Zagreb, while some other constituent “nationalities” of the empire, Polish, Romanian, Slovenian, Serb, Czech and Slovak were progressively moving towards the same aim¹⁰⁵. However, in just few months, the situation radically reversed and the decisive intervention of the generals defended the imperial interests¹⁰⁶. In fact, their job was significantly simplified by a series of intestine conflicts between the different nationalities and ethnic groups in the empire¹⁰⁷.

The first months of 1849 witnessed an unexpected resurrection of the revolutionary movements in northern Italy, Hungary and throughout the German states. However, apart from the Crown of Saint Stephen, which showed unexpected capacity to resist, all were ephemeral and underwent clear-cut aftermaths.

¹⁰³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁴ *Idem*, p. 144; Rapport, *op.cit.*, p. 146.

¹⁰⁵ *Idem*, p. 216.

¹⁰⁶ Apostol Stan, *Revoluția română de la 1848* [Romanian Revolution of 1848], Editura Albatros, București 1992, pp. 288, 336.

¹⁰⁷ Sperber, *op.cit.*, p. 105.

a. Austria

In 1848, the Habsburg Empire was the European state most affected by the revolutionary incidents. Because of the depth and width of the partisan clashes, the realm was on the brink of total dissolution. The events within the Habsburg Empire started when critical speech of Kossuth Lajos (March 3)¹⁰⁸, influenced by the Parisian incidents, activated the oppositionist potential of the Viennese student community and bourgeoisie¹⁰⁹. The capacity of the capital's inhabitants to stand against the use of violence by the armed forces eventually prompted the political isolation of chancellor Klemens von Metternich (March 15), the well-known defender of the European conservative order. Under such pressures, Emperor Ferdinand had officially shared with the public his intention to enforce a series of classic liberal reforms, such as the grant of basic civil rights, freedom of expression and the creation of a national guard. However, the crowds considered those concessions inadequate and a new uprising erupted on May 15, when the overwhelmed imperials decided to abandon the uncontrollable capital, for Innsbruck. At that time, the liberal movement had free hand in enforcing its own progressive projects, first and foremost, the convocation of a representative Assembly elected through a universal male suffrage¹¹⁰. In this way, the events from Vienna decisively inspired the other nations in the empire to follow this pattern.

Throughout the area inhabited by Slavic population, even though the developments were generally less violent, the level of regional division was considerably higher. The Slovaks from northern Hungary asked for autonomy and political unification with the Czech-Slovaks from Bohemia and Moravia who, at their turn, requested an equal degree of self-government as the Hungarians and Croats. However, an increasing pan-Slavic activism was paralleled and counterweighted by a genuine pan-German movement, a state of affair that practically paralysed the entire province until the Habsburg armies were compelled to intervene¹¹¹.

In Vienna, the revolution was rather one-dimensional, with a liberal-constitutional movement in spring and a student-worker alliance class conflict and political offensive in

¹⁰⁸ Rapport, *op.cit.*, p. 60.

¹⁰⁹ *Idem*, p. 62.

¹¹⁰ Bernstein, *op.cit.*, p. 67.

¹¹¹ Sperber, *op.cit.*, pp.174, 175; Rapport, *op.cit.*, p. 170.

October. On the other hand, the adversities in Prague were, during this period, multifaceted and in Pest displayed a constant national touch¹¹².

Like France, Austria passed through a red summer too, with protests organised in Vienna, Prague, Brno and Ostrava. However, they never reached the amplitude, the dramatic level of violence or the casualties recorded during the Parisian ones¹¹³. Overwhelmed with grievances from basically all its accommodating ethnicities, the Court finally concluded that the strategy of political concessions was rather harmful. As a matter of fact, prospects of a much more repressive policy gained terrain. In practice, such an approach proved significantly more effective throughout the Habsburg domains where a standing culture of protesting the repression was practically inexistent and where the nobility never honestly embraced the liberal programme of the revolution¹¹⁴. Overall, Habsburg authorities appeared capable to single-handedly suppress the revolutionary movements in Prague, Lombardy, Venice and Vienna¹¹⁵. On June 15, Prince Alfred Windisch-Grätz, the appointed general-commander of the entire Imperial Army, received the mission to fully re-establish the internal order. In north Italian Peninsula the first successes followed and on October 23 Vienna was once again under control. The top decision makers, in a strategic movement equated with the restoration of the reactionary philosophy, forced the unqualified Ferdinand to abdicate in favour of a younger ruler, Franz Joseph¹¹⁶.

However, in 1849 the revolutionary movements underwent, like in other parts of the continent, an unexpected revitalization. A new Habsburg-Sardinia conflict arose and in Rome the republic was proclaimed (February 9). Even though the victory militarily belonged to the former, the internal problems (Hungarian conflict, catastrophic finances) and the Franco-British pressures prevented a definitive solution to the Italian question that could have been exclusively on Austria's benefice¹¹⁷.

¹¹² Mark Dimond, "The Czech Revolution of 1848: The Pivot of the Habsburg Revolutions", *History Compass*, Vol. 105, January 2004, p. 2.

¹¹³ Rapport, *op.cit.*, p. 232.

¹¹⁴ *Anul*, VI, p. XXX.

¹¹⁵ Sperber, *op.cit.*, p. 234.

¹¹⁶ Bernstein, *op.cit.*, p. 77.

¹¹⁷ V. P. Potemkin, S. V. Bahruşin, A. V. Efimov *et alii*, *Istoria Diplomaţiei* [History of Diplomacy], Vol. 1, Editura Ştiinţifică, Bucureşti 1962, p. 510.

b. Crown of Saint Stephen

In a very short period that culminated with the Imperial Rescript of March 17, the foundations of a *de facto* independent Hungarian Kingdom - retaining its own government, parliament, army and - had been accomplished. The political concessions obtained by the Magyar elites were possible due to the fragile situation within the Habsburg dominion. During its first months of existence, the newly established order, inspired by the French case, passed a comprehensive package of liberal reforms (The Twelve Points) regarding freedoms and rights, abolishing feudal privileges and serfdom, emancipating the peasantry, equal fiscal contribution, press freedom, *et cætera*¹¹⁸. Given the imperial concern for the Italian problem and court's inability to operate on two fronts, the Emperor was forced to confirm all the innovative legislation of the Hungarian government. At that time, the reactions among the cohabiting nationalities of the kingdom were all positive and hopeful. The dismissal of the Habsburg absolutism and centralism produced high expectations among the patriotic ranks of each community. However, the situation quickly changed. During the summer, the regime's intense campaign for conscriptions had decisively alienated a significant portion of the non-Hungarian population. Following again a French-inspired optic, the liberals from Pest considered Romanians, Serbs, Germans and all the others nothing more than regional communities meant to be assimilated by the Hungarian nation. Under such circumstances, most of the elites belonging to the before mentioned nations ceased to cooperate with Pest and headed toward the Emperor who, aware of his desperate position, displayed a highly benevolent attitude. When all conciliatory attempts proved to be futile, he officially invited his subjects to oppose the Hungarian rebels. After being faced with the Serb uprising in June 1848, Pest successfully dealt with the Croatian (September) as well as Romanian (October) insubordinates¹¹⁹.

On April 14, 1849, the Magyar liberals led by Kossuth Lajos considered they were powerful enough to formally break away from the Habsburg Empire and declare independence. After the Austrian forces lost their military ascendant over the Hungarians, the former saw the Tsarist assistance as the unique intervention that could avoid the dismemberment of the Empire. At its turn, Russia was deeply concerned about the revolutionary influences over its Polish subjects. The Habsburg-Romanov cooperation bore

¹¹⁸ Rapport, *op.cit.*, p. 68.

¹¹⁹ G. D. Iscru, *Revoluția română din 1848-1849* [The Romanian Revolution of 1848-1849], Editura Albatros, București 1988, p. 43; Sperber, *op.cit.*, p. 103.

responsibility for the continuous ebb of the Hungarian movement during the summer until its final capitulation on August 13, at Vilagos¹²⁰.

4. Prussia and The Frankfurt Parliament

In late February, the revolutionary enthusiasm from Paris spread among the liberals of the so-called “Third Germany” (*i.e.* medium and small states outside Austria and Prussia)¹²¹. Subsequently, the local liberal and national movements were further stimulated by Metternich’s fall. From Bavaria and Saxe, the wave turned north and finally reached Prussia, where the ideal of German unity created a rampant enthusiasm among the masses. The forces responsible for maintaining the public order, as well as the administration, were overwhelmed and the mismanagement of this complex situation was responsible for the outbreak of street violence between March 18 and March 19. However, the intervention of King Frederick William IV saved the day. The military forces withdrew from the capital city, general amnesty was proclaimed and a more conciliatory position was adopted. A new Ministry would soon be appointed and a pan-German parliament (*i.e.* a representative constituent assembly) convoked¹²².

On May 18, the 580 elected deputies, including Austrian representatives, gathered in Frankfurt. However, their well-intentioned initiatives faced plenty of limitations. First, most of them were intellectuals who had no previous political experience and would easily engage into theoretical, almost Byzantine, discussions. In addition, the institution lacked any substantial financial and military backing, instrumental for enforcing its decisions. Even so, they managed to adopt of a set of powerful symbolic and unitary arrangements, such as the proclamation of a German provisional government, abolishment of the internal customs and establishment of a single German diplomatic body¹²³. In regard with the institutional and political matters, the consensus had been reached only with great difficulties. At the end of June, the “professors’ parliament”¹²⁴ concluded the procedural aspects of the regime, adopted a constitutional project and elected Archduke John of Austria to the position of Imperial

¹²⁰ Rapport, *op.cit.*, p. 376.

¹²¹ *Idem*, p. 58.

¹²² *Idem*, p. 73.

¹²³ Bernstein, *op.cit.*, p. 72.

¹²⁴ William Pelz, *A People’s History of Modern Europe*, Pluto Press, 2016, p. 66.

Regent (*i.e.* provisional head of state)¹²⁵. Few months later, on March 28, 1849, the Prussian king was formally elected as the hereditary ruler of “Little Germany”. However, the events in Prussia and other German states followed the same scenario that occurred in France. The initial sympathy and for the reformative aims of the governments were overcome by a repressive stance as a consequence of the radical campaigns operated by republicans and fanatics in September 1848 and during the following spring¹²⁶. Influenced by the Habsburg new policy and stimulated by the Russian promises for assistance in case the republic would be proclaimed, Frederick William IV refused the invitation of the Frankfurt Parliament without severely damaging his authority¹²⁷. This represented the final blow to the already moribund national project. The last standing points of the liberal-nationalist movement ended up being crushed by the Austrian and Prussian forces¹²⁸.

The Frankfurt liberals’ inability to generate a solid German federation, their lack of command over regular sources of power, the rupture between the revolutionary factions following social, political or national obstacles as well as the ultimate military Prussian intervention in the affairs of smaller German states were mainly responsible for the revolutionary unionist fiasco¹²⁹.

C. The 1848 Revolutions and Romanians

1. Moldavia: the Legalist Opposition

Ever since Prince Mihail Sturdza became *Hospodar* of Moldavia, back in 1835, a local oppositionist movement, composed mainly of French sympathiser boyars, started to coagulate. Even though the ruler tried to follow a minimalist national policy, after 1840 the

¹²⁵ *Anul*, VI, p. XXIII.

¹²⁶ *Idem*, p. XIX.

¹²⁷ Meanwhile, the events from Vienna (late summer and autumn) made the king to abandon the concessive line in favour of a rather reactionary stance. The political gatherings and clubs were shut down, but some liberal reforms and electoral innovations were kept in order to prevent another violent revolutionary break out, Bernstein, *op.cit.*, p. 81.

¹²⁸ *Idem*, p. 83.

¹²⁹ Willem Cleven, “The Failure of a Revolution: France, Germany and The Netherlands in 1848: A Comparative Analysis”, MA Comparative History, Utrecht University, Spring 2008, p. 49, available at: <https://dspace.library.uu.nl/bitstream/handle/1874/32246/The+Failure+of+a+Revolution.pdf?sequence=1> (December 2, 2018).

repression against those who called for reforms increased¹³⁰. When compared with his Wallachian counterpart (Prince Gheorghe Bibescu, 1842-1848), the Moldavian ruler proved himself more capable of controlling and disciplining the problematic local notables¹³¹. Like the revolutionaries south to Milcov, they were far from being an aggressive self-destructive group of radicals, but rather privileged members of the educated stratum who condemned the abusive practices cultivated by the local princes¹³². The events that took place in Jassy, the Moldavian capital, could be considered a case of a moderate (revolutionary) movement¹³³.

a. Socio-Political Background

The main cause of the legalistic character of the Moldavian pseudo-revolution could only be found in deep socio-political issues. Significantly different from the Wallachian case, the middle boyar class was less secluded from the process of political inclusion and a mechanism of actual co-optation to the administrative apparatus was in place¹³⁴. Despite any modernizing aspect of the Organic Regulation, the regime endorsed by Sturdza was genuinely authoritarian. Against all odds, especially after 1845 and during the extremely censored parliamentary elections of 1846, various groups of boyars vociferously expressed their criticism and complaints. Lascăr Rosetti, a political adversary, despite being rightfully voted in as Deputy of Fălciu County, was constrained to withdraw from the Assembly's sessions¹³⁵. The most important discontents regarded the rigid political regime coordinated by the prince and the continuous Russian interference within the domestic affairs of the Principality. From time to time, the relationship between Mihail Sturdza and the opposition was tense enough to risk the total lock-down of the regime and the Russian Consul in Jassy had to intervene in order to re-secure the Prince's position¹³⁶.

While the administration and the bureaucrats were extremely corrupted, entrepreneur boyars were especially displeased with the fiscal legislation as well as with the newly

¹³⁰ Platon, *Geneza revoluției...*, p. 253.

¹³¹ Bărbulescu *et alii*, *op.cit.*, p. 293.

¹³² Okey, *op.cit.*, p. 74.

¹³³ Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 176.

¹³⁴ Stanomir, *op.cit.*, p. 231.

¹³⁵ Stan, *op.cit.*, pp. 28-30; Mircea-Cristian Ghenghea, "A fost sau n-a fost? Evenimentele din martie 1848 de la Iași: acțiune boierească sau mișcare revoluționară?" [Was It or Was It Not? March 1848 in Jassy: Boyars' Action or Revolutionary Movement], *Analele Științifice ale Universității Alexandru Ioan Cuza*, LX, Iași 2014, p. 468.

¹³⁶ Iscru, *op.cit.*, p.15.

introduced tax for exports. Given the fact that the Assembly was under total control of Prince Sturdza, there were basically no legal alternatives available that the opposition could have used in order to counteract the abuses. Under such circumstances, the resistance followed two different patterns of action. Some chose to address it and look forward to the diplomatic backup that could be provided by both the foreign consulates and the Russian authorities. Others, on the other side, decided to provincialize the movement and left Jassy in order to build an efficient network of oppositionist branches aimed on putting pressure on the central authorities. Eventually, both demarches met with disaster¹³⁷.

In addition to the elitist angle of the oppositionist movement the regime had to deal with episodes of peasantry insubordination and local uprisings that occurred throughout the rural areas. At the same time, the middle-class, inadequately organized (and contrary to its Wallachian counterpart) articulated only a minor ambition for the idea of political participation¹³⁸.

The movement of March was not at all spontaneous. Since 1846, the oppositionist groups subscribed to an innovative political project. However, they were divided by the actual ways of pushing forward the reforms they considered beneficial for their class and society. Most of the boyars rejected the concept of popular participation and the possibility of mobilizing the rural masses. They were only agreeing with a limited and controllable group meant to neutralize, if needed, the guard of the *Hospodar*. This mentality was, again, in high contrast with the Wallachian opposition's *modus operandi* who had a considerable democratic tone since the 1821 Movement¹³⁹.

As soon as the news regarding the events of Vienna and Berlin reached Jassy, the revolutionary enthusiasm intensified. In addition, rumours about a movement in Saint Petersburg, responsible for nothing more than the death of the Tsar himself were flowing through Moldavia¹⁴⁰. Accurate or not, such reports greatly encouraged the oppositionist groups to finally act. A "Call on Moldavians" conjured the creation of an immediate and common front against Sturdza¹⁴¹. Nevertheless, the appeal failed to trigger any factual developments and for a moment, the movement lost speed. All public meetings were

¹³⁷ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 31; Isar, *op.cit.*, pp. 173, 174.

¹³⁸ Iscru, *op.cit.*, p. 17.

¹³⁹ Platon, *op.cit.*, p. 262.

¹⁴⁰ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 32.

¹⁴¹ *Anul*, I, p. 144.

forbidden, and some leaders were exiled, forcing the political adversaries of the prince to reposition underground¹⁴².

b. A Revolutionary Attempt

The Moldavians involved in the March movement were clearly progressive but not at all revolutionary. In their hopes for success, they were counting on Prince Sturdza's good will rather than wishing his overthrow¹⁴³. A true social and political radical character was achieved during its second act only, when the revolutionary emigration took the responsibility of coordinating the movement.

In order to discourage the actions of his adversaries, on March 16/28, the *Hospodar* made public the diplomatic note dispatched by the Russian chancellor Karl von Nesselrode stating the Protector's determination to promptly intervene and restore order in case any revolution would erupt¹⁴⁴. During the following days, in order to know his competitors better, Prince Sturdza falsely claimed he had changed his position and invited the opposition to openly express their grievances. However, the camp of the latter - *i.e.* liberal boyars, intellectuals and middle-class representatives - lacked any common theoretical ground on which the address of the demands could have been made. Therefore, it was necessary to organize a wide-reaching deliberation in the capital city. On March 24/April 5, a significant afflux of notables headed for Jassy perplexed Prince Sturdza¹⁴⁵.

The immense number of noble attendees, (about 1,000), acting like a veritable political club, gathered at Hotel Petersburg on March 27/April 8. A committee made of sixteen members, including the future prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza and poet Vasile Alecsandri was established. In quite a rush, they drafted a formal document *Petiția-proclamațiune în numele tuturor stărilor Moldovei* (shortly Petition-Proclamation) which expressed a wide range of grievances. The printed document was signed by some eight hundred Moldavian notables, including the head of the local church, Metropolitan Meletie. Stating that merely a partial acceptance of the reformist program wouldn't be considered

¹⁴² Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 33.

¹⁴³ Gheorghe Platon, *De la constituirea națiunii la marea unire: studii de istorie modernă I* [From Nation to Union: Studies of Modern History], Editura Universității 'Al. I. Cuza', Iași 1995, p. 169.

¹⁴⁴ Nicolae Isar, *1848 în Țările Române: studii* [1848 in Romanian Principalities: Studies], Editura Universitară, București 2013, p. 18.

¹⁴⁵ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 35.

satisfactory by the opposition, on March 29/April 10, the Petition was handed to Prince Sturdza. For a moment, the *Hospodar*, who disagreed with two of thirty-five points, reiterated his openness to continue the dialogue, but during the evening of the same day, he openly rejected the document *in corpore*. This move radicalized some members of the opposition, who were determined to bring down the “Machiavellian tyranny” of the prince during the following day. Yet, the repressive device of the regime swiftly struck back. Some three hundred signatories of the petition were arrested, and many others exiled to different monasteries and their private estates¹⁴⁶.

c. Grievances and Proposals for Reform

The document itself, made of thirty tree articles, called only for minimal changes and used a language designed to appease authorities and create the image of a legitimate opposition fighting for nothing more than “holly preservation of the [Organic] Regulation¹⁴⁷”.

When comparing the language of the petition with the future revolutionary document of the Wallachians, a huge gap in term of intellectual stance and linguistic approach is noticeable¹⁴⁸. The former were barely advocating to set-up of a moderate liberal regime and measures meant to encourage economic development throughout the existing institutional framework¹⁴⁹.

Most points addressing political matters were only vaguely stated. Basically, the opposition was in favour of a “liberal-constitutional aristocratic” regime in which they could enjoy real autonomy and political immunity. The *Hospodar* would refrain himself from intervening in the electoral processes and ministerial prerogatives. The sessions of the Assembly would be public and any inhabitant of the province would gain right to appeal at its competences. Equally vague and cautious were the prospects for the amelioration of the peasantry standards of living. Other than that, no mentions of equal fiscal contribution, abolishment of the *corvée* or the allotment of the landless villagers had been made¹⁵⁰.

¹⁴⁶ Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 21.

¹⁴⁷ *Anul*, I, p. 177; Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 39.

¹⁴⁸ Stanomir, *op.cit.*, p. 232.

¹⁴⁹ Bărbulescu *et alii*, *op.cit.*, p. 299.

¹⁵⁰ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 41.

More factual were the points regarding economic issues, such as the creation of a commercial court and a national bank in Jassy, improvement of the Galați harbour, introduction of the French commercial code and abolishment of the taxes that were stopping the grain exports from further expansion¹⁵¹. The social issues promising a brighter future for the inhabitants received a high level of consideration: it was reiterate the need for primary schools in all the Moldavian villages, colleges and *pensionnats* for girls in each county seat, navigational school in Galați, school of crafts, a polytechnic institute and a university in Jassy¹⁵².

d. Repression

Unlike Wallachian revolutionaries, the Moldavian opposers implemented no safety measures for the eventuality of an unfavourably end. So, when the *Hospodar* reacted violently, they were caught off guard. The French Consul observed the lack of determination, clearly manifested when “fifty rifles fired in the air in front of M. Mavrocordat’s house were more than enough to make them lose all their courage”¹⁵³. For him, the actions undertaken by the Moldavians could, at best, be described as a “*tentative de révolution*”¹⁵⁴.

Thirteen of the signatories of the petition were sent, *via* Galați, to exile, south of the Danube. However, shortly after, Alexandru Ioan Cuza and other five, managed to escape and took refuge at the British Consulate from Brăila. Subsequently they headed westwards (Blaj, Pest, Vienna and Paris). The remaining seven, after reaching Istanbul, were subject to an (apparently) leisured exile in Bursa (Brusa) for the next seven months, as Sultan’s guests¹⁵⁵.

In the same time, many of the most active Moldavian students from Paris were declared *personae non-gratae*, thus being unable to return home or contribute, in any way, to the following internal developments¹⁵⁶.

¹⁵¹ Isar, *op.cit.*, pp. 19, 20; Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 38.

¹⁵² Iscru, *op.cit.*, pp. 104, 105.

¹⁵³ *Anul*, I, pp. 227-230.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵⁵ Radu Rosetti, *Amintiri: ce am auzit de la alții, din copilărie, din prima tinerețe* [Memories: What I heard from Others, from Childhood, from First Youth], Humanitas, București 2015, pp. 138, 139; Stan, *op.cit.*, pp. 44, 45.

¹⁵⁶ Iscru, *op.cit.*, p. 26.

Although some riots did occasionally erupt throughout rural areas prior to the Russian military intervention, the capital became a safer place for Prince Sturdza¹⁵⁷. Given the alarming situation, the special Russian commissary, General Alexander Duhamel, arrived in Jassy on April 12/24 in order to coordinate the retaliations and temper the malcontent local boyars. In June, interim Consul from Bucharest, Charles de Kotzebue was dispatched with the similar task. After a short period, on June 28/July 9, in order to prevent a revolutionary contagion from the south, Tsarist troops stepped in and established a military administration that lasted until a common Ottoman-Russian settlement was reached at Balta Liman (April 19/May 1)¹⁵⁸. Meanwhile, the oppositionist movement was in desperate need of reorganization. The fact that the ethnic Romanians were still revolutionarily active through Wallachia and Transylvania had greatly worked out as a source of optimism and inspiration.

e. Regrouping and Legitimization

Given Prince Sturza's dynamic intervention from April, the internal political situation didn't allow the opponents to continue their actions. As a matter of fact, most of those who escaped imprisonment decided to emigrate into neighbouring Habsburg territories. During the quasi pan-Romanian congress from Blaj, some had the opportunity to meet with compatriots from Transylvania as well as from Wallachia. For the Moldavians the experience was almost a political revelation that would deeply affect their subsequent actions and thinking. In Braşov, on May 12/24 they secretly drafted the second revolutionary programme labelled *Prinţipiile noastre pentru reformarea patriei* (Our Fundamentals for Homeland's Reformation). Composed of just six articles, the document was the most radical programmatic product of the year. Given its private character, the language used had the advantage of being expressive and undisguised, which made the claims unrealistic and ideational. The allotment of the peasants without compensation, abolishment of all privileges, equal financial contribution, innovative political institutions and the creation of an independent state by uniting Moldavia and Wallachia were all among the mentioned demands. In consideration with the last, the document recorded the most advanced stance regarding the future of the two provinces. The other petitions and memoirs (*Dorinţele partidei naţionale în Moldova/The requests of the Moldavian National Party*, written in

¹⁵⁷ *Idem*, p. 147.

¹⁵⁸ *Anul*, I, p. 517.

August and *Proiect de Constituție pentru Moldova / Constitutional Project for Moldavia*), purposely avoided to use the word independence itself and were speaking of “real” and “true” autonomy¹⁵⁹.

The others regrouped in Galicia, where an important revolutionary centre, that quickly turned into a constant threat for the Moldavian authorities during the following months, took shape¹⁶⁰. Here, the ideological gap that stood between them and the avant-gardist Wallachians became highly insignificant throughout the lines of a new political programme from August *Dorințele partidei naționale în Moldova* (The Wishes of the National Party in Moldavia)¹⁶¹. The document was the consequence of the collaboration between the two revolutionary committees established under Bucharest’s influence in Jassy and Chernivtsi (today Ukraine). Most grievances were analogous with those comprised within the Proclamation of Islaz, *i.e.* legislative and administrative autonomy, civil and political equality between all the citizens, election of a new Assembly able to legislate¹⁶², freedom of speech, free and equal education, religious freedom, abolishment of the death penalty and corporal punishments, abolishment of the all feudal ranks and privileges, abolishment of the *corvée*, allotment with compensation, decentralization and so forth¹⁶³. Mihail Kogălniceanu, one of the capital theoreticians of the movement, drafted *Proiect de Constituție pentru Moldova* (Project of Constitution for Moldavia), considered the first example of a modernly structured - with chapters and articles - constitution from the Romanian history¹⁶⁴.

Meanwhile, the members of the opposition that stayed in Moldavia followed a different pattern of action. In May and June, taking advantage of the Ottoman and Russian Commissars’ presence, the propagandistic campaign versus Prince Sturdza resumed. On June 12/24, a deputation led by metropolitan Meletie offered Talaat Efendi (the top official sent from Istanbul) an explanatory statement (basically the opposition’s version of the events)

¹⁵⁹ Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 23.

¹⁶⁰ *Anul*, I, p. 521.

¹⁶¹ *Anul*, IV, p. 89.

¹⁶² Roxana Gheorghe, “Momentul revoluționar 1848: constituțiile și documentele oficiale ale revoluției de la 1848 și rolul lor în modernizarea structurii politice a statului / The Revolutionary Moment of 1848: The Official Constitutions and Documents of the Revolution from 1848 and their Role in the Modernization of Political Structure of the State”, *Analele Universității ‘Constantin Brâncuși’ din Târgu Jiu, Seria Litere și Științe Sociale*, No. 2, 2010, p. 208.

¹⁶³ Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 51.

¹⁶⁴ Stanomir, *op.cit.*, p. 79.

regarding the incidents from March¹⁶⁵. Subsequently, they persistently but vainly tried to engage in a dialogue with the new Ottoman commissary, Süleyman Pasha. However, the things couldn't advance in a satisfactory manner for the opposition. Its diverse membership failed to organize a united "national party" (body) and even to forge a boyar-peasantry coalition. For the June-September period, when Bucharest became the main centrum of radiation of the liberal, democratic and patriotic ideas, their actions were strongly influenced by the Wallachian Provisional Government.

2. Transylvania

The Romanian historiography had generally considered the events from Transylvania as a genuine liberal and nationalist revolutionary movement. However, some recent studies increasingly questioned the correctness of this classical terminology. According to historian Marius Diaconescu, the real revolution belonged to the Hungarians, who stood against the absolutist Habsburg rule¹⁶⁶. No matter how liberal their policies were, the lack of egalitarian approach regarding the rights of the minorities, convinced most of the Romanians to show aversion. Their actions could partially be displayed as counter-revolutionary or warlike, an etiquette they received especially through the contemporaneous Western media and public perceptions¹⁶⁷. However, not all of them embraced the forms of passive/active resistance as the Romanians living in Partium (western parts of Transylvania) preferred to cooperate with the Hungarian regime¹⁶⁸.

a. Historical Background

Throughout centuries, the process of feudalization in Transylvania went hand in hand with the cultural assimilation of the Romanian nobility. Since 1437, "The Brotherly Union" (*Unio Trium Nationum*) of Hungarian, Saxon and Székely elites, monopolized the

¹⁶⁵ Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 50; *Anul*, I, pp. 525-539; Vasile Maciu, "Les Relations Roumano-Turques Pendant la Révolution de 1848", *Belleten*, Vol. XXXV, No. 139, July 1971, p. 186.

¹⁶⁶ Marius Diaconescu, "Avram Iancu și (contra)revoluția românească din Transilvania în 1848-1849" [Avram Iancu and the Romanian Counter-Revolution from Transylvania], *Historia*, An XI, No. 113, May 2011, p. 15.

¹⁶⁷ Adrian Niculescu, *Aux racines de le démocratie en Roumanie - Pruncul român (=L'enfant roumainin): premier journal libre roumain - chronique de la Revolution valaque de 1848*, Clusium, Cluj-Napoca 2008, p. 226.

¹⁶⁸ Isaru, *op.cit.*, pp. 163, 164.

political offices of the Principality. This led to the loss of any kind of formal collective political and administrative responsibilities among ethnic Romanians who kept their identity intact. In addition to this “regime based on segregation”, the official status of the local confessions furthermore enlarged the gap between the dominants and the dominated¹⁶⁹. From the 16th century, while Catholicism, Lutheranism, Calvinism and Unitarians were formally recognized, the Orthodox practitioners were merely tolerated. All in all, the caste-like condition of the Romanians did not significantly change after 1541, when the province passed under the Ottoman administration, nor throughout 18th century, when the Habsburg Dynasty extended its influence to the region¹⁷⁰.

The Romanians tried to escape from such a tactical deadlock by using the tools of the religious education, provided by the state itself after a part of the Orthodox leadership submitted to the papal authority back in 1697. Subsequently, for a short period, the reform adopted by Emperor Joseph II (1780-1790), had a beneficial effect over some strata of the Romanians communities, whose general living conditions improved (*e.g.* the Greco-Catholic intelligentsia from Blaj and the Orthodox officers of the border regiments from Orlat and Năsăud¹⁷¹).

From a cultural point of view, the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century were essential periods for the cultural progress and political emancipation of the Romanians. Intellectuals, such as Gheorghe Șincai (1754-1816), Petru Maior (1761-1821) and Ioan Budai-Deleanu (1760-1820), with studies in Vienna, were able to carry on prolific scholarly careers and promote the history and culture of their own nation throughout various publications¹⁷².

b. Politico-Administrative Particularities

During the 18th century the regions inhabited by Romanians passed through a series of administrative transformations. In 1779, three Banat counties became part of the Hungarian Kingdom. In the south, the military frontier continued to be under Vienna’s

¹⁶⁹ Georgescu, *op.cit.*, p. 55.

¹⁷⁰ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 8.

¹⁷¹ The two regiments were created at the middle of the 18th century, and the circumscription of the Romanian inhabitants had liberated a significant part of the community from the feudal duties, Bărbulescu *et alii*, *op.cit.*, p. 240; Berindei, *Români și...*, p. 15.

¹⁷² *Idem*, p. 76.

command, but in 1836, the Western Transylvania, called Partium, passed under Pest's authority too¹⁷³. In Transylvania itself, despite the existence of a local Diet in which the Romanians were excluded, the political-administrative ascendancy had an imperial character. Even with a so-called Vlach majority, the principality had an unchallenged Magyar political character. Since, Emperor Joseph II revoked most of his centralist and enlightened reforms on his deathbed, the local Hungarian nobility continued to be the most effective politico-economic agent of the province. During the following decades, the rule of Francis II (1792–1835) was generally associated with censorship, political conservatism and police state¹⁷⁴.

The politico-administrative particularities of the province played an important role in shaping the operative ways and even the discourse adopted by the progressive Romanian elites. The immense prestige of the Habsburg Dynasty and the substantial political potency of the Hungarian oligarchy were crucial in maintaining a moderate and circumspect stance¹⁷⁵.

c. Socio-Cultural Particularities

From a social point of view, an enormous number of serfs and nobles was typical for Transylvania. Besides, the general conditions of living for most of the population were similar with those of Wallachia and Moldavia. Regarding the ethnic composition of the province, according to the Austrian statistics from 1780s, of the total number of about 2,5 million inhabitants, 63,5% were Romanians, 24,1% Hungarians, while the rest were Saxons and Székely¹⁷⁶. Given the practical inexistence of any Romanian seigniorial political elite, the national movement became the responsibility of the intellectual churchmen, like the Unitarian bishop Inochentie Micu-Clain (1692-1768), who had coordinated the actions aimed to improve the Romanians' conditions. The social origin and background deeply shaped their discourse and methodology. The social-cultural particularities of the province had also influenced the political thinking of the progressive patriots. Given the detrimental treatment of the Romanians in spite of their numbers, the discourse contained a profound democratic

¹⁷³ Iscru, *op.cit.*, p. 11.

¹⁷⁴ Okey, *op.cit.*, p. 61.

¹⁷⁵ Carpathinus, "1848 and Roumanian Unification", *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 26, No. 67, April 1948, p. 392.

¹⁷⁶ Georgescu, *op.cit.*, p. 105. According to Turcynski, at the middle of the 18th century, Romanians represented about 52% or the total population, Emanuel Turcynski, *De la iluminism la liberalismul timpuriu. Vocile politice și revendicările lor în spațiul românesc* [Enlightenment and Liberalism: Political Claims Throughout the Romanian Territories], Editura Fundației Culturale Române, București 2000, p. 33.

tone which separated from the Wallachian romantic-revolutionary line and embraced the prudence of the cultural combativeness.

In difference to religious leaders like Micu-Clain, a great number of the intellectuals from the first half of the 19th century had a completely different social background. They were genuine *homines novi*, raised in families made of peasants, serfs, priests, merchants and artisans (e.g. Timotei Cipariu, Aron Pumnul, Andrei Mureșanu, Avram Iancu)¹⁷⁷. Meanwhile, the numbers of their countrymen, receptive to patriotic messages, constantly increased. As to say, during 1830s and 1840s, the social basis of the national movement reached the middle and lower peasantry as well as the residents of the mining hubs. Besides the Romanian theological centres from Blaj and Sibiu, multilingual and diverse educational options were available: Catholic high school in Cluj-Napoca, juridical school in Târgu Mureș, Saxon schools in Sibiu and different others in Pest. In 1848, about 10,000 Romanians were attending the courses of at least one of them¹⁷⁸.

d. The Impact of the Hungarian Revolution

If in Moldavia and Wallachia the Parisian struggles were vital for the revolutionary mobilization, in Transylvania the tide of events from Vienna and Pest was fundamental. A week after the revolutionary enthusiasm that arose in the Hungarian capital, the youth of Cluj-Napoca (a significant university-city) organized an extensive movement meant to voice out their solidarity. Practically, those were the first revolutionary actions from the entire region. During the following days, the project envisaging the political unification of Transylvania with the Crown of Saint Stephan, an important phase in bringing together some four million Hungarians into a Great Hungary, was gathering an increasing number of adherents. On March 23, the Magyar nobility took the first legal steps in order to accomplish the plan by a decision of the local Diet. Eventually, despite the protesting voices, the unification had been unanimously voted for on May 30¹⁷⁹.

¹⁷⁷ Oana Indrieș, “Generația de intelectuali de la 1848: românii din Transilvania și slovaci” [The Intellectuals of 1848: Transylvanian Romanians and Slovaks], p. 247, available at: http://diam.uab.ro/istorie.uab.ro/publicatii/colectia_bcsc/bcsc_7/30_indries.pdf (May 23, 2019).

¹⁷⁸ They basically represented the middle-class of the ethnic Romanians: village priests, high clerics from Blaj and Sibiu, professors, lawyers, jurists, physicians, newsmen, custom officials, officers of the Military Frontier, merchants from Brașov, Sibiu, cattle owners, Stan, *op.cit.*, pp. 17-19.

¹⁷⁹ *Idem*, p. 64.

Meanwhile, a part of the ethnic Romanian youth begun setting the foundation for an independent political movement. For the time being, its leaders approved the recent reforms and liberal innovations meant to meliorate the existence of the Romanians living in Transylvania and Banat. Such were the gatherings in Timișoara (March 18) or, together with their Hungarian counterparts in Oșorhei¹⁸⁰. However, in just a few weeks, the last article of the Magyar program, *i.e.* the unification with Transylvania, had irremediably divided the Romanian leaders. The pivotal role in arguing, first for a conditioned union and subsequently for an oppositionist movement, was played by a minority of intellectuals from Blaj. There, during the second half of the month, Timotei Cipariu and Aron Pumnul tried to establish a common position regarding the grievances that the Romanian elites had to put forward. In Sibiu, the core-centre of the Orthodox spirituality, the radical Simion Bărnuțiu stood out and quickly became the *éminence grise* and the real coordinator of the movement¹⁸¹. In his manifest *Provocațiune* (Challenge) from late March he emphasises that no preliminary discussions about the unification should start without the assurance that political rights of the Romanian community would be respected. On the other side, some figures looked hopefully at the union, perceived it as a reparation of all the injustices done by the Habsburgs and as a possibility to embark upon a true “golden age”¹⁸².

The high level of confusion and the striking dissimilarities present among Romanians faded. This allowed some first determined actions to take place at the end of March, when the elites from Blaj and Oșorhei, low in manpower but highly engaged, decided to inquire the inclinations and ambitions of the inhabitants and plenary deliberate on April 30. Yet, the demarche was far from being simple. Logistic disagreements arose between the young “chancellors”, who were in favour of a highly representative gathering and the clerics, who wished to convoke but a meeting of notables and high churchmen¹⁸³.

The relationship between the peasants and the nobles was, in many villages, even before first news regarding the revolution reached the provinces, already sufficiently strenuous. Throughout the rural areas of western Transylvania that were closer to the

¹⁸⁰ *Idem*, pp. 69, 70.

¹⁸¹ Simion Barnutiu (1808-1864), born in a family of intellectuals, followed the courses of theology and philosophy in Blaj, where subsequently (1829) became teacher himself. In February 1842 he protested against the Magyarization of Romanians, a stance that attracted Greco-Catholic bishop (Ioan Lemeni)’s disapproval and the loss of his entire offices. Since 1844 and still the 1848 Revolutions had erupted, he studied law at the Saxon university from Sibiu, *idem*, pp. 127, 128.

¹⁸² *Idem*, p. 77.

¹⁸³ *Idem*, p. 89.

revolutionary nucleus of Pest and Vienna, the serfs quickly rose to action, refused to perform their agricultural duties and violated the feudal order by cutting forests, commercializing alcoholic drinks and slaughtering cattle from the estates¹⁸⁴.

While Romanians passionately debated possibilities for action, the cohabiting nations of the province had a much clearer stance. The Székely population, with a military base of their own, became the most faithful ally of the Magyar liberal government. On the other side, most of the Saxon communities refused, in many ways, to subdue themselves before the new authorities and restated their allegiance to the Habsburg Dynasty. Regarding the interethnic relationships between the Romanians and the Székely, the contacts continued to be rigid. Alternatively, at the end of March, the local German rulers from cities like Sibiu, Mediaş and Sighişoara formally acknowledged Romanians as the fourth nation of the Principality. However, the things didn't evolve further, as the benevolent acts of the Saxons were not transformed to a genuine coordination between the two movements¹⁸⁵.

The reaction of the Magyar authorities to the growing patriotic movement of the Romanians greatly contributed to the creation of an intra-ethnic solidarity. Local governor Teleki József kept the actions of the Romanian patriots under watch. Despite the call for prudence that came from Vienna, arrests were not ceased¹⁸⁶.

e. Blaj, April 18/30, 1848 - The First National Romanian Assembly

The possibility of a total break up between the Imperial Court and the Hungarian government became, in Romanians' eyes, more and more likely. On May 11, the royal military commander, General Anton Pulchner, criticised the lack of submission to the liberal innovations of the local administration in Transylvania¹⁸⁷. At the same time, the inhabitants reacted to the fact that the agrarian liberal reforms were not yet enforced. In numerous places and in total disregard to any ethnic sensitiveness, peasantry uprisings erupted. Some members of the nobility were fearfully reminding of *La Nuit de la Saint-Barthélemy* episode, when a considerable number of French Protestants were massacred in Paris and other places by the

¹⁸⁴ *Idem*, p. 96.

¹⁸⁵ *Idem*, p. 71.

¹⁸⁶ *Idem*, pp. 98, 99.

¹⁸⁷ *Idem*, p. 119.

Catholics¹⁸⁸. Others were even willing to officially recognize the political relevance of the Orthodox confession and to grant its bishop, Andrei Şaguna, the right to participate at the sessions of the provincial council (Diet). As a matter of fact, this kind of developments encouraged the Romanian patriots to adopt a more engaged political line. In order to legitimise their following actions they decided to agree upon the most important decisions only within the framework of general meetings. During the 1848 events, four main assemblies of that kind were organized and most of them took place in Blaj: April 18/30, May 3/15-5/17 and September 3/15-16/28¹⁸⁹.

The first gathering (April) occurred under a profoundly hostile environment. Given the fact that Governor Teleki József only agreed with a limited representation of the Romanians, the pressures exercised by the authorities prevented many leaders from attending¹⁹⁰. Nevertheless, this didn't stop approximately 6,000 persons, of which 4,000 peasants from the nearby villages, in making their appearance in Blaj at the set time. While the clerics remained passive, the progressive youth took the initiative and unmediatedly addressed the masses, in a move that put considerable pressure on the still hesitant elites to reconsider their position. Their discourses were a call for order, patience and a careful look at the future evolutions according to which they were to act¹⁹¹.

Even though the assembly did not produce, nor disseminate any official document, it guaranteed nonetheless the tactical victory of the young group of patriots, *e.g.* Alexandru Papiu-Ilarian, Ioan Buteanu, Avram Iancu and Simion Bărnuţiu as well as the gradual abandonment of the collaborationist paradigm. At the end, a call for a general gathering, on May 3/15, was launched¹⁹².

f. Blaj, May 3/15-5/17, 1848 - The Second National Romanian Assembly

Despite all the obstructive attempts and procedural artifices used by the Hungarian authorities, the call for a general assembly of the Transylvanian Romanians scored an unexpected success. According to different sources, from its first up to the last day, the

¹⁸⁸ *Idem*, p. 122.

¹⁸⁹ Isar, *op.cit.*, pp. 52-67.

¹⁹⁰ Dan Berindei, "O adunare simbol - Blaj, 3/15 mai 1848" [Blaj, May 3/15, 1848 - A Symbolic Gathering], *Historia*, An VIII, No. 77, May 2008, p. 53.

¹⁹¹ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 106.

¹⁹² *Idem*, p. 149.

unprecedented number of participants gathered in the range from 20,000 to 60,000. Socially speaking, the most receptive category of inhabitants proved to be the rural dwellers. Except for a few cases, the whole community of any given village attended. In the same time, the meeting represented an opportunity for a pan-Romanian forum to take place. Transylvanian teachers and revolutionaries from Wallachia, outlawed members of the Moldavian opposition and elites from Bukovina, came together and debated, besides the specific local issues, the fate of all the Romanians¹⁹³.

Due to an unexpected popular presence, the meeting had to be relocated to the outskirts of the town, to a place named since then, with a denomination so typical to the 1848 atmosphere, *Câmpul Libertății* (The Field of Liberty). Formally, it was headed by two presidents *i.e.* the two bishops, two vice-presidents and ten assistants¹⁹⁴.

On May 2/14, the speech of Simion Bărnuțiu resolutely reiterated the fundamentals of “equal freedom”, the genuine *condicio sine qua non* of any unionist prospect with Hungary¹⁹⁵. In the same time, the organizers voiced, by a collective oath invoking the name of the Emperor, the Romanian nation and the assembly, their loyalty for the Habsburg House. During the following days, both stances were integrated into the body of the official document adopted, *Petiția națională* (The National Petition). Although the economic field was not completely ignored (freedom of trade and abolishment of tithe), most of the grievances were of political essence. Throughout the sixteen articles of the petition one can clearly observe the influence of Bărnuțiu. The establishment of a new political order founded on a “constitution” based on “justice, freedom, equality and fraternity” (Article 15) was expressed. Equally important was the political admission of the ethnic Romanians within the local councils and their co-optation into the general administrative apparatus (Article 1). Furthermore, the (re)establishment, in disregard with the confessional variations, of a free, independent and equal Romanian Church was sought for (Article 2). During those times, the Orthodox community was administrated by the Serbian Metropolis of Karlowitz (Sremski Karlovci), while the Greco-Catholics fell under the Catholic Episcopate of Strigonium (Esztergom). Finally, principled grievances were drafted regarding the improvement of the

¹⁹³ *Idem*, pp. 134, 296.

¹⁹⁴ *Idem*, pp. 141, 145.

¹⁹⁵ *Idem*, pp. 138, 139.

public and rural school system, formation of a national guard commanded by Romanian officers, abolishment of censorship and the recognition of all the public gatherings¹⁹⁶.

In the end, the organizing groups were still unable to reach a final methodological consensus and a proper way of action, a fact that produced irreconcilable dissensions between the secular party lead by Bărnuțiu and the clerics, headed by Bishop Lemeni.

Nevertheless, with the working sessions concluded, two delegations were charged to deliver their grievances to both the Imperial Court and the Cluj-Napoca Diet. At the same time, the leaders decided to establish a Permanent Romanian Committee of twenty-five, located in Sibiu and placed under Bărnuțiu's undisputed authority¹⁹⁷.

g. Hungarian Administration

Subsequently both delegations failed to receive any kind of acknowledgement. The provincial council unanimously voted in favour of the unification on May 17/29 and the Emperor, politically isolated at that time in Innsbruck, had no alternative but to endorse it on June 10¹⁹⁸. This practically confirmed the Magyar pre-eminence within all the Transylvanian matters. Some Romanians, *e.g.* bishop Șaguna and a group of archpriests, simply accepted the regime changes and decided to continue to lobby for a Romanian emancipation exclusively throughout the legal methods. On the other side, the position of the Romanian patriots increasingly radicalized. Upon their return from Cluj-Napoca, the frustrated leaders began to cultivate the idea of insubordination and creation of a genuine Romanian administration¹⁹⁹. During the same time, beyond the rhetorical reactions, the vote on unification politically activated the two military Romanian centres of Orlat and Năsăud which refused to follow the orders coming from Pest and the inhabitants from Apuseni Mountains who organized themselves as popular militias²⁰⁰.

Meanwhile, according to the new administrative and political status of Transylvania, the Magyar authorities were progressively instituting a bureaucratic apparatus. The office of an extraordinary commissary, with administrative, executive and fiscal prerogatives was

¹⁹⁶ Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 56.

¹⁹⁷ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 148.

¹⁹⁸ Rapport, *op.cit.*, p. 146.

¹⁹⁹ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 152.

²⁰⁰ Diaconescu, *op.cit.*, p. 17.

created²⁰¹. The recent developments, as the general assembly from Blaj suggested to the Hungarian elites that the Romanian movement posed a greater risk than they had initially considered. Daco-Romanism and Pan-Slavism were, at that point, considered equally dangerous. As a matter of fact, in the Magyar leaders' eyes, a more serious set of decisions were at hand. On the orders of the provincial council, at the end of May, the Romanian committee from Sibiu was dissolved and, in June, a campaign meant to establish a firm control over the entire province had been launched. The "agitators" were arrested, and the Hungarian inhabitants were advised to arm themselves and form local guards of *honved* ("defender of the homeland")²⁰².

However, despite the fact that Transylvania was at that time under the authority of the liberal Hungarian regime, the potent local nobility managed to block, for a while, some essential reforms proposed by Pest, like the liquidation of the feudal privileges. This made the hopeless peasants take the matters into their own hands and stand against the societal order. They refused to fulfil the *corvée*, claimed property over the land, got engaged in illegal forest cutting and fishery in the lakes owned by the nobles. The increasing social pressures finally made the Diet of Cluj-Napoca abolish all the privileges held by the aristocrats during the Ancien Régime on May 7/19. From that moment serfdom ceased to exist in Transylvania²⁰³.

h. Romanian Reactions to the Hungarian Administration

After bishop Şaguna, the spiritual leader of the patriots, went for the legalist way of action, the so called "enthusiasts", *i.e.* the progressive nationalists concentrated around Simion Bărnuţiu, facing increasing impediments, were forced to turn their actions underground. From then on, the moves of the Romanian elites were less tributary to a rationally organized plan and were rather spontaneous and influenced by the political decisions of the Hungarian regime.

The conscription law represented the main source for a new wave of tensions and clashes. The Hungarian administration, in an uninspired move, used the military forces against the uncooperative Romanian peasants, a decision that led to confrontations and ultimately strengthened the Romanians' solidarity and determination for resistance. In June,

²⁰¹ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 166.

²⁰² *Idem*, p. 182.

²⁰³ *Idem*, p. 167.

in Alba-Iulia County, twelve peasants lost their lives during a fight that triggered a wave of outrage among their countrymen. The final separation between the Court and the Hungarian Revolution led, especially during August and September, to a serious need for troops that caused the eruption of a new tide of skirmishes over the organization of the *honved* guards²⁰⁴.

In September, in Turda County, about 4,000 inhabitants stood against the authorities coming to enlist the new recruits. The situation escalated fast and some twenty-three villagers were killed. This tragedy made the outbreak of an open ethnical conflict unavoidable. The Romanian regiment of the Military Frontier finally intervened and released some of the patriotic leaders from detention. Immediately, a call for a general mobilization against the Hungarian authorities was launched. The latter's decision to definitively secede from the Imperial Court further fuelled and legitimised the disobedient movement of the Romanians. On October 18, General Anton Puchner, the commander of the Habsburg forces in the region, had formally declared that Magyars were simply insurgents that needed to be opposed with the assistance of all the loyal subjects²⁰⁵.

i. Blaj, September 3/15 – 16/28, 1848 – The Third National Romanian Assembly and the Romanian Administration in Transylvania

In accordance with the latest political developments, the Romanian patriots gathered once again in Blaj in order to agree on the more appropriate course of action. The irrecoverable split between the Imperial Court and Pest gave Romanians the best opportunity to play a higher political and military role. The gathering itself, described as rather a “camp of a peasantry army than a political deliberation”, clearly illustrates the result of the dramatic Magyar policies to which the province was submitted to during the last weeks²⁰⁶.

Many of the decisions were in fact mere reiterations of older grievances, such as the protestation against Transylvania's unification with the Hungarian Kingdom and the loyalty to the Emperor. In addition, it was among the first occasions when the call for insubordination to the new authorities was launched and when the patriots formally solicited the Imperial Military Command weapons and equipment in order to arm the Romanian

²⁰⁴ Iscru, *op.cit.*, p. 155.

²⁰⁵ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 294.

²⁰⁶ Iscru, *op.cit.*, p. 158.

peasants. In terms of local governance, the assembly requested the formation of a provisional administration in accordance with the ethnic composition of the province²⁰⁷.

Without achieving any precise backing from the Austrian authorities, the Romanian patriots themselves, in disregard with Puchner's opposition, took the initiative and laid the cornerstone of a political and military administration. Through most of Transylvania, a total number of fifteen prefectures (initially four) were established. Each of them, headed by a prefect, was supposed to provide men power in order to form a legion of 8-10,000 soldiers²⁰⁸. Besides its military functions, the prefect, formally subordinated to the Austrian command, fulfilled political tasks alike. The purpose of this apparatus was to supply a new administrative body and to dissolve, *manu militari* if necessary, the existing Magyar guards. In charge with the coordination of such an extensive and strong-willed demarche was the Romanian National Committee, chaired by Bărnuțiu and renamed, after being officially recognized by General Puchner on October 4/16, the "Appeasement Committee"²⁰⁹.

Another characteristic of the patriotic movement of the Romanians in Transylvania was that, even if for a short period of time, they had managed to establish a genuine administrative device. At the beginning of October, under tremendous pressure displayed by the local populations, the Magyar authorities had either retreated or were in full process of evacuation from areas like Sibiu, Blaj, Năsăud and Cluj. Precisely that power vacuum provided the Romanian elites the opportunity to step in. Even though the fact that there were almost no adversary forces left behind, the administrative shifts were not always peaceful. In collaboration with the imperial forces, the control over Hunedoara County, Alba-Iulia and Ocna Sibiului was unproblematic. However, in North-West and North-East (*Trei Scaune* county or *Háromszék*) areas of Transylvania, still dominated by the Magyars or Szekely the disputes lasted until November. The city of Cluj-Napoca itself had been occupied on November 6/18. At that moment, the Austrian military leadership considered the threats posed by the Hungarian Revolution irrevocably settled. Whole Transylvania and Banat were under the Habsburg control once again²¹⁰.

Basically, throughout the 1848 autumn, the relationships between Romanians and Hungarians resembled most to a state of war. For a considerable period of time, *i.e.* between

²⁰⁷ Stan, *op.cit.*, pp. 296-299.

²⁰⁸ *Idem*, p. 321.

²⁰⁹ Between October 18 and March 11, 1849, General Puchner was officially the civil and military ruler of Transylvania.

²¹⁰ *Idem*, pp. 310, 318.

October and May 1849, the total chaos spread through the entire territory. Each side attempted to impose itself by force and executions, while plundering and tortures were, on the both sides, common. From this point of view, the situation highly resembled a war of extermination like the one witnessed in Bosnia and Croatia after 1990²¹¹.

j. Sibiu, December 16/28, 1848 – The Fourth National Romanian Assembly

Despite the fact that Transylvania was currently cut off from the Hungarian Kingdom, in the light of the anticipated offensive against the Habsburg forces, a Romanian gathering became necessary. The new emperor, Francis Joseph expressed sympathies that further increased the confidence of the Romanians²¹².

In Sibiu, some 250 delegates of both confessions adopted a thirteen points new resolution. The actual purpose was to provide a practical framework for the rather intellectual programme they had previously adopted in May. The proportionality between the number of each ethnic group and its officials, the settlement of the conflict between nobles and former serfs with the allotment of the latter, the formation of a representative government, official recognition of the Romanian National Committee as well as the dissolution of the local council from Cluj-Napoca were among those requests. The unification between Transylvania and the Hungarian Kingdom was once again rebuffed²¹³.

Meanwhile, the talks about a creation of an autonomous entity inhabited by the Romanians from Transylvania, Banat and Bukovina were equally advanced²¹⁴. With the final formula reached, in February 1849, the political leadership officially forwarded their proposal, “Statement of the Romanian Nation from the Great Principality of Transylvania, Banat, Neighbouring Territories of Hungary and Bukovina” to the imperial authorities²¹⁵.

The document, considered one of the most significant products of the patriotic movement of 1848, was eventually rejected by the Court for its politically noxious principles. The grievances of the patriots were automatically repudiated when the March Constitution proclaimed the *status quo ante* and re-established the historical autonomies and

²¹¹ Diaconescu, *op.cit.*, p. 18.

²¹² Isaru, *op.cit.*, p. 166.

²¹³ *Idem*, p. 167; Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 68.

²¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

²¹⁵ Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 70.

administrative divisions of the Empire. In compensation, Francis Joseph promised to all the constituent nationalities (counting the Romanians too) a new series of rights, such as the access to the administrative offices and the possibility to organize their own autonomous churches²¹⁶.

k. The Resurgence of the Hungarian Revolution in Transylvania

After the Hungarian authorities completely lost control over Transylvania and nearby territories, the idea of obtaining inhabitants' submission through persuasive-violent techniques was ultimately abandoned. After the ultimatum Kossuth had launched to Romanians in October, proved to be of no use, the military assault became the unique solution taken into consideration in Pest²¹⁷.

After the end of the same month, the Magyar forces were increasingly preparing for intervention and the flow of events unfolded with considerable speed and unpredictability. On December 25, the 10,000 troops led by General Jozef Bem, occupied Cluj-Napoca²¹⁸. The imperial troops, led by General Wardener, were defeated and the Tsarist forces repelled. Most of the Transylvanian lands were once again governed by Pest. The invasive forces soon occupied Năsăud (the seat of the Romanian regiment) and Blaj. However, during the following weeks the impetus of the Hungarian offensive slowed down because of the domestic issues the Revolution had to deal with at home. During the last days of 1848, a Serbo-Croatian army led by General Windischgrätz forced the Hungarian government to abandon Pest and establish itself in Debrecen. In February, another attempt to capture Sibiu and Braşov was averted by a last moment intervention of the nearby camped Russian troops. In such a context, for General Bem, the conquest of southern Transylvania remained an impossible task to achieve. However, next month, with the arrival of new forces and using a brilliant stratagem, the general had finally managed to occupy Sibiu (March 11, 1849) and Braşov (March 20). In this way, a new Hungarian administration, doubled by a brutal repressive campaign was inaugurated all over the former principality²¹⁹.

²¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

²¹⁷ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 333.

²¹⁸ By March and May 1849, the total number of forces under Magyar command reached 18,000 and 30,000 respectively, *idem*, p. 356.

²¹⁹ Isclu, *op.cit.*, p. 169.

The comeback of the Magyar forces was followed by the dissolution of most of the Romanian troops of armed peasants. Sibiu's fall corresponded with the Romanian National Committee's disintegration but meanwhile, throughout Apuseni Mountains, the sole area still controlled by the Romanians, Avram Iancu organized a "war council". Nonetheless, the general situation was severe: surrounded by thousands enemy soldiers and lacking firearms, ammunition and supplies. In parallel, the unyielding defiance in the mountains finally forced the Hungarian leaders in Debrecen to initiate diplomatic attempts in order to obtain the submission of the disobedient Romanian elite. Still, due to the continuous military aggression of the former, these demands were never genuinely taken into consideration²²⁰.

I. Conciliation Attempt

In autumn, "under the spell" of the French diplomacy, the political position of the Hungarian revolutionaries regarding the rights of the minorities passed through an essential repositioning²²¹. In the same time, the fact that all dispatched memorandums were rejected, made a part of the Romanian elites to agree with a re-opening of the dialogue with the Hungarian side. Meanwhile, Wallachian Nicolae Bălcescu, motivated by an anti-absolutist attitude, stepped in, left Istanbul and approached General Bem and Kossuth, at that time Governor of Hungary. The confederate project and the military help, that the Magyar forces were essentially in need for, were the capital topics of the negotiations. In fact, during that time, some other Wallachians were advocating for a Romanian-Magyar front that, they hoped, would eventually banish the Tsarist forces from the region, then ally themselves with Omer Pasha (the commander of the Ottoman troops) and reinstitute the liberal government in Bucharest²²².

However, the reality was completely different than the expectations. The high-level negotiations could not bridge the extreme animosity and hatred dominating the middle and low ranks of the population on both sides. Most of the Romanian leaders were never fully convinced of the probity and frankness of their former adversaries. In the same time, Pest was still reluctant about the degree of concession the minority groups should benefit from. When the defeat of the revolutionary forces became a certainty, the Hungarian government finally

²²⁰ *Idem*, p. 176.

²²¹ Carpathinus, *op.cit.*, p. 416.

²²² Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 72; Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 375.

adopted, on July 2/14, 1849, the “Project for Pacification”, a document which granted considerable rights to the Romanian community. However, such a decision was obsolete and the military leaders from Apuseni Mountains decided not to intervene in the conflict between Magyar and Habsburg-Russian forces²²³.

m. Russian Intervention and the Collapse of the Hungarian Revolution

Since the beginning of the numerous movements that arose throughout the Habsburg domains, its military machine mostly proved capable to maintain the situation under control. For the whole 1848-1849 period, despite some successes scored by the reactionary actors, such as Prince Alfred Windisch-Grätz in Prague, the situation in Hungary remained highly fragile. Despite that, the imperials continued to be confident and excluded any call for the military assistance of neighbouring Russia²²⁴.

However, the Hungarian declaration of independence and General Bem’s achievements on the battlefield, had forced the imperials to reconsider their position. In late May, an agreement which stipulated the free use of the 240,000 Russian soldiers by the Habsburg authorities, was concluded. The likeness to withstand such a massive offensive was beyond the capacities of the Magyars’ whose movement finally died out after the fall of Komarom, on October 2²²⁵.

A period of repression followed, and the curfew was prolonged until 1854²²⁶. In order to secure the absolutist character of the regime, the imperial authorities made that all the innovations operated during the last two years to be abrogated²²⁷.

n. Significance

The events that took place between April 1848 and August 1849 marked many premieres for the Romanian inhabitants of Transylvania. Among them, the unheard level of

²²³ Rapport, *op.cit.*, p. 375.

²²⁴ Sperber, *op.cit.*, p. 218.

²²⁵ Isclu, *op.cit.*, p. 176.

²²⁶ *Idem*, p. 197.

²²⁷ *Idem*, p. 240.

political participation and political organization, the civil rights activism and the establishment of the first Romanian administration in the province's modern history.

Despite that, compared with their Wallachian counterparts, among Transylvanians, the concept of political autonomy was less developed. However, the circumstances of 1848 opened a new era in term of rhetorical construction of the Romanian movement for recognition. The gatherings of the same year, from Blaj and Sibiu, demonstrated that the political fear of the Hungarian majority was ultimately extirpated from the Vlachs' mentality²²⁸.

However, from a purely political point of view, the outcomes were rather disappointing and that gave birth to a phenomenon of civic passivism that spread among the patriots during the following decade. Avram Iancu, maybe the most illustrative example, completely retired from the public arena for the rest of his life. Such protestation was motivated by the fact that the Imperial Court broke its word and discredited itself by refusing to concede the rights that the Romanian representatives had requested. Nevertheless, from a social point of view, some positive changes, such the *corvée* abolishment were eventually secured (January 1850)²²⁹.

3. Banat and Partium (“The Western Parts”)

The Romanian movement in Banat and Partium, both administratively linked to the Hungarian Kingdom since the second half of the 18th century, was almost simultaneous with the patriotic actions in Transylvania. However, the geopolitical and domestic peculiarities made the basic dissatisfactions of the Romanians living there essentially different. In order to secure a genuine confessional and educational autonomy, the separation from the Serbian Orthodox hierarchy was regarded as a top priority. Despite that they too sought political self-governing alike and their first choice regarding the actual ways of fulfilling it went to the legalist approach rather by mutiny and passive insubordination. The venture of Eftimie Murgu, maybe the most renewed representative of the Banat Romanians was the most emblematic case. He ignored the invitation to chair the meeting in Blaj and preferred to cooperate directly with the Hungarian authorities in Pest. His stance could best be explained

²²⁸ Ioan Chindriș, *Naționalismul modern* [Modern Nationalism], Clusium, 1996, pp. 145, 147.

²²⁹ Diaconescu, *op.cit.*, pp. 14-18.

by the fact that through this region the Serbian monopoly and the pan-Slavic threats were far more concerning than the potential increase of the Magyar control²³⁰.

Given the stringent vicinity of the Hungarian Revolution, the westernmost areas inhabited by ethnic Romanians were under the influence of the progressive-minded movement much earlier than the Transylvanians themselves were. Events in Pest quickly produced repercussions in Banat and former Partium. The social improvements were significant: the peasants who possessed land were acknowledged as the legal owners and serfs' obligations were abolished. This kind of measures greatly discharged the societal tensions and prevented the occurrence of any tempestuous developments²³¹.

A group of Romanian leaders gathered in Arad (April 12/24) and formally invoked Pest's assistance against the Slavic offensive²³². Starting by declaring their loyalty for the Hungarian Ministry and calling upon the long-lasting common history of cohabitation, the document adopted during the meeting referred to the creation of an independent local church, usage of the Romanian language in confessional, educational and military affairs and ministerial representation²³³. Contrary to what happened in Transylvania, in order to gain recognition of their grievances and aspirations, a significant number of Romanians decided to join the *honved* forces when the conscript call was launched²³⁴.

With the eruption of the Serbian-Magyar conflict, the situation became increasingly tensioned. After the political project for reform of the former was refused by the authorities, a pan-Serbian congress was held, in May, at Karlovitz. Here, the Serbian leadership proclaimed the autonomy of their nation and requested the control over a territory raging through Vojvodina and the Kingdom of Croatia, Slovenia and Dalmatia. Under such circumstances, the Magyar government perceived the Banat Romanians as the most effective tool that could counterweight the Serbian political demands. When the time came for them to act, the Serbs tried to reach an agreement with the Romanians. However, caught in the middle and without fully agreeing with any of the two sides, their divided leadership, decided to adopt a rather observational position²³⁵.

²³⁰ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 188.

²³¹ *Idem*, p. 102.

²³² *Idem*, p. 105.

²³³ Available at: http://enciclopediaromaniei.ro/wiki/Peti%C5%A3ia_de_la_Pesta (May 23, 2018).

²³⁴ Stan, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

²³⁵ *Idem*, p. 326.

Eventually, Eftimie Murgu's rhetoric had decisively contributed to the final victory of the Magyar propaganda and to the consistency of a collaborationist framework between the Romanians from Banat and the Magyar authorities. A Blaj-inspired meeting was organized in Lugos̄ on June 15/27. With the attendance of about 10,000 individuals, a new position of the Romanians had been formalized: full autonomy, establishment of a Romanian army, acquirement of an official status for the Romanian language and complete severance of the administrative and dogmatic ties with the Serbian hierarchy²³⁶.

In late summer and especially during the autumn, given the continuous postponement of the confessional-cultural autonomy legislation and to the dramatic developments in Transylvania, a significant wave of empathy made many Romanians in Banat to reconsider their allegiance for Hungarian government²³⁷. An explicit oppositionist core was born within the inferior layers of the society, where the Magyar campaign of extensive conscription produced the most stringent reactions. Meanwhile, the critics of Murgu's inactivity from Timișoara (Mocioni brothers, Petru Cermena) managed to take control of the movement and give it a brand new orientation²³⁸.

In February and April 1849, Banat was the scene of intense clashes between the Hungarian troops led by General Bem and the Habsburg loyalists. Despite the fact that the Imperial Constitution of March formally rejected the grievances expressed by Romanians, the latter refused to switch sides and repeatedly claimed, through other memorandums, the communitarian rights and freedoms they considered themselves entitled to benefit from. Following the final victory of the Imperials, Banat was retracted from the Crown of Saint Stephan and organized as a province of its own²³⁹.

4. Bukovina

Bukovina, like Transylvania and Banat, was part of the Habsburg Empire. The Romanian population was considerable but concentrated in the rural areas, while the towns were mostly controlled by German, Ruthenian and Jewish communities.

²³⁶ Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 62.

²³⁷ *Idem*, p. 326.

²³⁸ *Idem*, p. 327.

²³⁹ Zoran Marcov, "Voivodina sârbească și Banatul timișan sau Voievodatul Serbia și Banatul timișan?" [Serbian Voivodina and the Banatul Timișan or the Serbian Voivodeship and the Banatul Timișan], *Oameni, evenimente, tradiții din Banatul de câmpie*, Artpress, Timișoara 2015, p. 7.

The local movement in Bukovina was primarily influenced by the revolutionary events in Galicia, whose Governor, a prominent liberal figure, launched a courageous reformist policy long before the Imperial Court would do the same (September 1848). Almost in parallel with the oppositionist actions in Jassy (March), in Chernivtsi, the most important city of Bukovina, a revolutionary group headed by Hurmuzaki brothers (Eudoxiu, George and Alexandru) had been established. In May, an assembly drafted a list of grievances that subsequently were submitted to the Emperor. The claims were rather moderate: autonomy through separation from Galicia, establishment of a local Diet, improvements of the educational infrastructure for the Romanian speaking population, regulation of the peasant and church matters, adoption of stimulating measures (fiscal relief) aimed to further develop the animal husbandry sector²⁴⁰. Like in Banat, the agrarian question had not reached the critical magnitude and the antagonist potentiality it did in Transylvania. This was one of the reasons why the elites could not gain the masses approval nor the support of the local clerics²⁴¹.

The province fully enjoyed the new liberal provisions and in June, elections were organized. Six Romanians and one Ruthenian deputies were sent to the imperial Diet from Vienna. However, given their precarious training (the elected representatives originated from the inferior stratum and thus had no knowledge of German), the Romanians were rather spectators than actors during the sessions²⁴².

At the same time, in Bukovina, a great number of Moldavian opponents of prince Sturdza who were forced to leave the principality, found political asylum and a suitable environment to continue their activities. During his exile there, Mihail Kogălniceanu, drafted one of the most significant documents of the 1848 movements: *Dorințele partidei naționale din Moldova* (The Wishes of the National Party in Moldavia)²⁴³.

In the end, in Bukovina, the Romanian revolutionaries recorded the highest achievements. According to the Imperial Constitution from March 1849, the administrative autonomy was guaranteed through the separation from Galicia and formation of a duchy

²⁴⁰ From 1786 Bukovina was administratively incorporated to Galicia.

²⁴¹ Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 64; Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 201.

²⁴² *Idem*, p. 202.

²⁴³ Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 65.

placed under Emperor's direct authority. Politically, the right to hold a local diet furthermore strengthened the level of self-governance the province enjoyed at that moment²⁴⁴.

In this chapter, the author intended to present the European tide of revolutionary events that preceded and influenced the movement of the Wallachians. In the following chapter, the politico-institutional developments of the first half of the 19th century, the repercussions of the Russian increasing pre-eminence, the structural changes of the 1830s and 1840s, the pre-revolutionary preparations, the first days in power and the immediate administrative challenges of the regime will be discussed.



²⁴⁴ Robert A. Kann, Zdenek David, *Peoples of the Eastern Habsburg Lands: 1526-1918*, University of Washington Press, Seattle 1984, p. 439.

CHAPTER II

THE WALLACHIAN REVOLUTION OF 1848



Map of Wallachia *apud* Félix Colson, *De l'état présent et de l'avenir des principautés de Moldavie et de Valachie, suivi des traités de la Turquie avec les puissances européennes*, 1839.

A. Historical Background

The classical line of reasoning adopted by the Romanian historiography during the 20th century placed the responsibility for the 1848 Revolutions to three main simultaneous developments that were labelled, at their turn, as “revolutions”, *i.e.*, the qualitative and quantitative demographical mutations of the late 18th and 19th centuries, the agrarian peculiarities of the early capitalist period (among others: increase of production, worsening of the peasantry conditions, *et cætera*) and the modern ideological innovations²⁴⁵.

However, despite the cumulative effects of the mentioned phenomena, undoubtedly the most important socio-politic and economic issues within the Wallachian society during the 19th century had a profound agrarian nature. From the 1840s, an increasing number of individuals belonging to the ruling stratum, *i.e.* young liberal boyars, turned increasingly

²⁴⁵ Platon, *De la constituirea...*, pp. 151-162.

vocal in favour of a reform plan meant to meliorate the conditions of the peasants²⁴⁶. The same group of men were also against the authoritarian rule of Prince Bibescu who, unlike the Moldavian Prince who managed to silence the opposition in 1846, adopted a rather two-faced attitude²⁴⁷. In other words, he was willing to sanction some of the most popular social and patriotic innovations for as long as his dominant position was not seriously threatened. By early 1847, the Roma slaves found in Metropolitan church's and monasteries' possession were liberated and the procedure by which a Moldavian could obtain citizenship, properties and hold public offices in Wallachia was simplified²⁴⁸. Through these policies, he hoped to attract to his side young progressive-minded boyars that could have otherwise grown into a competitive force to his rule²⁴⁹.

Beyond that, some other grievances slowly emerged. Immediately prior to the outbreak of the revolution, a considerable wave of discontent sprang along all the other strata of the society. In administration, the personnel started feeling alienated by the criteria for promotion, *e.g.* personal connections, rank and financial potency. Low retribution encouraged bribes and the judiciary was among the most affected domain. In January 1848, a Greek who failed to solve, through legal routes, the process of succession from his father, attacked with yataghan the functionaries of the Justice Department. At that moment, his act deeply shocked the Wallachian society²⁵⁰.

The peasants, estimated to represent about 95% of total population of two million, witnessed, since the enforcement of the Organic Regulation, a continuous worsening of their economic conditions²⁵¹. This frequently led to insubordination of the rural population and, similar to the previous decades (*e.g.* the 1821 Movement), Oltenia, or Little Wallachia, the eastern half of the principality, caught most of the authorities' attention²⁵². Places like Islaz, the village heavily associated with the beginning of the revolution, already had a considerable

²⁴⁶ Iscru, *op.cit.*, pp. 82, 83.

²⁴⁷ Bărbulescu *et alii*, *op.cit.*, p. 299.

²⁴⁸ A. D. Xenopol, *Istoria românilor din Dacia Traiană. Istoria politică a Țărilor Române dela 1822-1848* [History of Romanians: Political History of the Principalities From 1822 Until 1848], Editura Cartea Românească, București 1930, p. 150.

²⁴⁹ Anastasie Iordache, *Principatele române în epoca modernă II: administrația regulamentară și tranziția la statul de drept (1831-1859)* [The Romanian Principalities II: Organic Administration and Rule of Law Transition], Editura Albatros, București 1998, pp. 190, 191; Cornelia Bodea, *Lupta românilor pentru unitatea națională: 1834-1849* [The Unionist Struggles of the Romanians], Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, București 1967, p. 89.

²⁵⁰ *Anul*, I, pp. 131-135.

²⁵¹ Niculescu, *op.cit.*, p. 135.

²⁵² Stan, *Revoluția română...*, p. 213.

background of militancy and activism. Peasant uprisings erupted there in 1819 and 1820²⁵³. In April 1848, the inhabitants of Zănoaga village (Câmpului District), led by the local priest, refrained from their feudal duties in favour of the leaseholder. Others, individually or collectively, were determined to desert from the giving estates in search of better working conditions²⁵⁴.

The middle-class, approximated to about 50,000 individuals, was greatly dissatisfied about the high levels of taxes and the continuous refusal of the authorities to grant them political rights²⁵⁵. However, despite the strength that some of the branches managed to assemble (e.g. the tanners from Bucharest), the lack of class solidarity and bourgeoisie mentality made any sort of concerted effort unsustainable²⁵⁶.

Meanwhile, the suzerain court and especially the Protector carefully kept the modernizing proceedings under watch in order to prevent any over-daring consequences. Even though the Porte had been gradually reduced to “*une fiction diplomatique*”²⁵⁷ and, since the 1830s, the Russian agenda was “*déguisés en firmans*”, the latter’s ascendance continued to be cloaked and, in most of the occasions, indirectly exercised²⁵⁸.

1. Internal Situation

In the Principalities, the nineteenth century started with a long and demanding Russian military presence (1806-1812)²⁵⁹ that would stir up the gradual but decisive opposition against the policies promoted by Saint Petersburg²⁶⁰. At this early point, a minor group of boyars ended up invoking, in 1800 and 1810, the France’s First Consul’s support in

²⁵³ Platon, *Geneza revoluției...*, pp. 146, 167; Iscriu, *op.cit.*, pp. 170-175.

²⁵⁴ Paul D. Popescu, *Prahova în vremea revoluției de la 1848: (1848-1852)* [Prahova During the 1848 Revolution], Mectis, Ploiești 2001, pp. 114, 115.

²⁵⁵ Niculescu, *op.cit.*, p. 135.

²⁵⁶ *Idem*, p. 15.

²⁵⁷ *Anul*, I, p. 518.

²⁵⁸ Article in *Le Siècle* (July 3/15, 1848), *Anul*, II, p. 285.

²⁵⁹ According to a Russian source, in 1808, from the entire income of Wallachia - of 2,737,809 lei, 1,969,968 were directed towards the maintenance of the army. Next year, Moldavia contributed with an amount of 1,569,720 lei from its total, 2,561,866, Jelavich, *Russia and...*, p. 13; Victor Taki, “Russia on the Danube: Imperial Expansion and Political Reform in Moldavia and Wallachia, 1812-1834”, *Dissertation in History*, CEU eTD Collection, 2007, p. 77; Alexei Agachi, *Țara Moldovei și Țara Românească sub ocupația militară rusă (1806-1812)* [Wallachia and Moldavia under Russian Occupation], Casa Editorială Demiurg, Iași 2008, p. 14.

²⁶⁰ Between 1806 and 1812 the attitude of the local elite towards Russia passed throughout serious mutations. Already in 1813 the Austrian consul Raab observed that a considerable section of the boyars were by now searching a new foreign political patronage, Boicu, *op.cit.*, p. 72; Agachi, *op.cit.*, p. 296.

order to establish an independent kingdom or a protectorate. However, little was accomplished and despite all the contestations, the international power and prestige that Russia enjoyed secured its hegemonic position in Wallachia and Moldavia²⁶¹.

The next essential moment, which would have a considerable impact on Principalities' modern history occurred in 1821 during the *Philike Hetairia*'s attempt to attract the Christians from the region into a war against the Ottomans. The calamitous general context from the beginning of the 1820s - *i.e.* overwhelming, corrupt and abusive administration, depopulation caused by military conflicts and epidemics, low economic potential²⁶² - gave birth to a large wave of discontentment that turned into a spontaneous peasantry uprising in January 1821 (eastern Wallachia). Its leader, Tudor Vladimirescu, was a relative modest local authority and a merchant who possessed some military background (he voluntarily joined the Russian forces during the 1806-1812 war). It should be mentioned that the movement had no explicit anti-Ottoman rhetoric and besides trying to establish diplomatic contacts with Emperor of Austria and with the Tsar, Tudor corresponded with the Ottoman authorities from Vidin and Ada-Kale²⁶³. In March, the movement laid out its grievances: complete abolishment of the Greek administration, creation of a local army of 12,000, a three years long exemption from paying the tribute, *et cætera*²⁶⁴. The peasantry action was paralleled by another one, a lobbying movement directed towards two main Christian powers (Russia and Austria) and coordinated by the boyars who had left the country for Braşov and Kishinev. Among their most ardent request were the termination of the Phanariot system, the restoration of principality's former privileges, stabile border on the Danube River and a guaranteed free trade²⁶⁵.

²⁶¹ Sorin Iftimi, "Un boier moldav la cumpăna de vreme Iordache Catargiu" [Iordache Catargiu: A Moldavian Boyar at the Intersection of Time], *Magazin istoric*, An XLII, No. 3 (492), March, 2008, p. 42; Felician Suciuc, "Revoluția Franceză, Napoleon I și Țările române" [French Revolution, Napoleon I and the Romanian Principalities], *The Proceedings of the "European Integration - Between Tradition and Modernity" Congress*, Vol. 2, Editura Universității 'Petru Maior', Târgu-Mureş 2007, p. 639.

²⁶² Stroia, *op.cit.*, p. 174.

²⁶³ *Idem*, p. 176; Jelavich, *History of...*, p. 210. Otherwise, for Hitchins the facet of the movement was nothing more than a cover for its actual purposes *i.e.* political independence, Hitchins, *op.cit.*, pp. 183, 184. The anti-Ottoman character was highlighted by Isar alike. The hypothesis of Tudor, a merely Russian agent (like Alexandru Ipsilanti itself) was pointed out giving the fact that he took part in 1806 campaign and received the Saint Vladimir order on tsar's behalf, Isar, *op.cit.*, pp. 53, 70. Furthermore, Florin Constantiniu underlined the same anti-Ottoman character by revealing the correspondence between Tudor and the Wallachian boyars which spoke of "Christian community" and "our homeland", Constantiniu, *op.cit.*, pp. 200, 201.

²⁶⁴ Iscru, *op.cit.*, p. 237.

²⁶⁵ Platon, *op.cit.*, p. 67; Pompiliu Eliade, *Influența franceză asupra spiritului public în România. Originile: studiu asupra societății românești în vremea domniilor fanariote* [The French Influence and the Romanians' Mentality. The Origins: A Study of the Romanian Society during the Phanariot Era], Editura UNIVERS, București 1982, p. 321.

Ultimately, both Greek and Vladimirescu's movements failed achieving any lasting success²⁶⁶. The Wallachian leader ended up assassinated and the forces of *Philike Hetairia* suffered a military defeat at Drăgășani (June). A sixteen months long Ottoman military occupation (until autumn 1822) followed. In the same time, the boyars' campaign went on and between 1821 and 1822 only no less than seventy-five petitions were dispatched toward various influential Ottoman, Russian or Austrian politicians. This had partially shaped the Porte's final decision of formally ousting the Phanariots in September 1822. Nonetheless, the new *Hospodars* were once again appointed: Grigore IV Ghica (1822-1828) in Wallachia and Ioniță Sandu Sturdza (1822-1829) in Moldavia. Since Russia was not part of the new political settlement, the arrangement had been generally interpreted as a blow that its *de facto* protectorate suffered as well as a mean to provide a larger basis for autonomy for the two principalities. However, despite the fact that both rulers were deeply involved in various reformist attempts, the time was not on their sides. The military context (Ottoman presence and Russian occupation, 1828-1834) would impede any kind of quick progress²⁶⁷.

On the other hand, the 1821 moment was essential for the formation of a Romanian national identity. In Wallachia the conflicts between "Greeks" and "native" (*pământean*) boyars had an almost century long history, but never before reached such an amplitude. The unification of the two provinces was already a theme since the third quarter of the 18th century. It was invoked, for example, by Mihai Cantacuzino in 1772, Nicolae Mavrogheni in 1788, Ioan Cantacuzino in 1790 or Ștefan Crișan-Körössi in 1807²⁶⁸. After Vladimirescu's movement, the campaign for reforms promoted by the local boyars gained its true momentum. Between 1821 and 1831 at least 120 projects were recorded and the proposals for a union between Wallachia and Moldavia proliferated²⁶⁹. The idea of including Transylvania within such a pan-Romanian projection could be found, from time to time, exposed

²⁶⁶ The Romanian historiography mainly claimed that this double movement failed because of the erroneous political calculations done by the leadership of *Philike Hetairia*, who overestimated the level of sympathies of the autochthonous elite. Although the local boyars culturally belonged to the Greek world, they sincerely wished for the removal of the Phanariot clique. In addition, the official opprobrium of the Russian authorities (which came on 17/29 of March 1821), a crucial element of any possible Christian movement, triggered an irremediable partition between Tudor and Ipsilanti, Bărbulescu *et alii*, *op.cit.*, p. 288; Hitchins, *op.cit.*, pp. 181, 182.

²⁶⁷ The new rulers will successfully strengthen the actual level of autonomy (in term of domestic interference and jurisdiction over the foreign subjects) at the expense of the Ottoman authorities south from the Danube, Habsburg policies and other foreign diplomats, Panaite, *op.cit.*, p. 26; Apostol Stan, *Protectoratul Rusiei asupra Principatelor române: 1774-1856. Între domnie absolută și anexiune* [The Russian Protectorate and the Principalities: Between Absolute Rule and Annexation], Editura SAECULUM I.O., București 1999, pp. 53, 57-61.

²⁶⁸ Georgescu, *op.cit.*, p. 131, 132.

²⁶⁹ Mihnea Berindei, "Affirmation de la conscience nationale roumaine et apparition de l'état-nation", *Slavica Occitania*, No. 27, Toulouse 2008, p. 46.

throughout different arrangements alike. Additionally, the first half of the 19th century witnessed some further relevant mutations in terms of political thinking and conceptualization. During the 1821 Uprising and especially afterwards the elitist understandings of “nation” or “homeland” were steadily abandoned by the most liberal of its members. For an increasing number of boyars the “people’s interest” turned into a political creed²⁷⁰.

Since the 1830s the double domination exercised by the Russian and Austrian empires gained strength and took a proper institutional shape²⁷¹. While the former expressed mainly political aspirations, the latter virtually dominated the economic life of the Principalities. Under Tsar Nicholas’s pressures²⁷² a bilateral convention regarding the fate of Wallachia and Moldavia was signed on October 7, 1826 in Akkerman. For the first time, an international convention contained an explicit Additional section concerning the situation of the Principalities²⁷³. Its stipulations would significantly alter the character of the political regimes from Bucharest and Jassy. The *Hospodar* would be elected by a local council (called *Divan*) and confirmed by both the Sultan and the Tsar for a seven years term. The Ottoman military presence as well as the economic obligations were significantly reduced. This recent political settlement of the two provinces was confirmed by the 1802 *Hatt-ı Şerif*. However, the conflicting nature of the Ottoman and Russian interests could no longer prevent the eruption of a new confrontation²⁷⁴.

The victory of the Russians (who had just annexed the Danube Delta) confirmed the Serbian autonomy and ensured the Greek independence. Regarding the Principalities, the Treaty of Adrianople/Edirne (September 2/14, 1829) had formally established the Tsar’s protectorate and reduced the Porte’s domination to minimum (*i.e.* tribute payment and

²⁷⁰ Georgescu, *op.cit.*, p. 133.

²⁷¹ Šedivý, *op.cit.*, p. 658.

²⁷² This sequence of events was deeply influenced by the genuine context of Balkan and continental international relations. In 1826 Tsar Nikolas sent an ultimatum to the Porte in which he claimed, among other, the restitution of the autonomous institutions from Wallachia and Moldavia and the confirmation of the 1812 settlement regarding the Serbian question. Pressed by a Russia-United Kingdom protocol the Sultan accepted the tsar’s conditions throughout Akkerman convention, Potemkin *et alii*, *op.cit.*, p. 471.

²⁷³ Boicu, *op.cit.*, p. 81.

²⁷⁴ This specific procedure of nominating rulers for a limited period of time aimed to loosen the Porte’s influence and to increase the stability of the local government, Stroia, *op.cit.*, p. 219.

Hospodars' confirmation²⁷⁵). Such stipulations made Wallachia and Moldavia again resembling to a buffer zone model than an Ottoman privileged possession²⁷⁶.

The 5th article of the document stated, among others, the administrative autonomy, the Danube's thalweg based frontier, the surrender of the Ottoman *kaza* of Turnu, Giurgiu and Brăila, the principle of *Hospodars* life-long ruling, the free trade and abolishment of the Ottoman "monopoly" and the establishment of a local militia. At the same time, a long Russian military domination (1828-1834) marked the golden age of the Neva Cabinet's influence within the Principalities²⁷⁷.

Regarding the internal evolution of the Principalities during this period, the most important development was the establishment of an administrative code of laws meant to accelerate the process of modernization and to institutionally guarantee an increasing gap between the Porte and the two provinces²⁷⁸. Practically, the level of the Russian domination was unprecedented. The documents (one for Wallachia and one for Moldavia²⁷⁹) were the result of the collaboration between the local boyars and the Russian authorities. Not surprisingly, their objective was to maintain the societal order and the privileges the local aristocrats were enjoying²⁸⁰. The two *Règlement Organique* (they were originally wrote in French) were enforced, without Sultan's approval, on July 1831 in Wallachia and, at the beginning of the following year, in Moldavia²⁸¹.

Despite the clear evidence that the Organic Regulations were instrumental for the boyars' socio-political predominance, the fact that no autocratic neighbouring state had

²⁷⁵ Bărbulescu *et alii*, *op.cit.*, p. 291.

²⁷⁶ Mustafa Ali Mehmed, *Istoria turcilor* [History of the Turks], Editura științifică și enciclopedică, București 1976, p. 308.

²⁷⁷ The terminology used by the treaty was aimed at creating the image of a Wallachian and Moldavian "principalities" as an essentially different part of the Ottoman empire itself, totally contrasting with the former Sultanic denomination of *memalik-i mahruse* (all protected domains), Ștefania Costache "Westernization as Tool of Inter-Imperial Rivalry: Local Government in Wallachia Between Ottoman Control and Russian Protection (1829-1848)", *New Europe College, Yearbook 2011-2012*, Bucharest, p. 66.

²⁷⁸ Murgescu, *op.cit.*, p. 289; Anastasie Iordache, *Principatele române în epoca modernă I: domniile pământene și ocupația rusească (1821-1831)* [The Romanian Principalities I: Local Rule and Russian Occupation], Editura Albatros, București 1996, p. 226. Some recent studies narrated the process of modernity not as an objective Eurocentric phenomenon, but rather as a set of imperial techniques used by various great powers in order to legitimize its intrusions and interferences. The "modern" institutions endorsed by the Russian authorities were primarily meant to bring the local political spectrum under the rigid control of Sankt Petersburg, Costache, *op.cit.*, pp. 57, 77.

²⁷⁹ However, in most of the cases, the provisions of the two documents were surprisingly similar. This made historian Neagu Djuvara look upon them as a single regulation, Djuvara, *op.cit.*, p. 353.

²⁸⁰ Bărbulescu *et alii*, *op.cit.*, p. 291; Stanomir, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

²⁸¹ Cristian Preda, *Rumâni fericți. Vot și putere de la 1831 până în prezent* [Blessed Romanians: Power and Vote Since 1831 Until Today], Polirom, Iași 2011, p. 35.

enforced, until that time, a similar type of document meant to modernize the society, made the event itself look somewhat revolutionary. The principles of rational, although not entirely liberal government and a partial separation of powers between the judiciary and executive branches were for the first time introduced²⁸². The idea of a planned budget, drafted by the prince and approved by the Assembly, was unprecedented. State's political, fiscal and juridical functions were heavily systematized and the Church influence in civic matters was significantly restricted²⁸³. The provincial law courts and the courts of appeal were created. The primitive corpus of bureaucrats received a fresh new hierarchical re-organization²⁸⁴. The taxation system was heavily simplified and the internal customs were abolished. An embryonic army took shape and multiple initiatives of imposing discipline within various areas like hygiene, sanitation, infrastructure and prison system crystalized. Finally, the overwhelming similarities between the two codes and the policies they had guaranteed paved the way for a possible union between Wallachia and Moldavia²⁸⁵.

The political regime resembled very much to a national and elective monarchy²⁸⁶. Political representation followed a quasi-liberal criterion and an unsophisticated parliamentary life was inaugurated. The assembly was mainly weak and had almost ceremonial attributions in terms of law making. On the other hand, the extraordinary assembly, meant to elect the new prince, was convoked only once, in Wallachia (1842)²⁸⁷.

Yet, the type of reforms that Russia was promoting could not satisfy the most liberal and democratic members of the boyar class. Their critics were especially directed towards the fact that the upper ranks of the elite had completely confiscated the political arena and the access of any outsider was prevented, that Assembly did not had a representative character²⁸⁸

²⁸² Iordache, *op.cit.*, pp. 234, 235.

²⁸³ The two Organic Regulations inaugurated a gradual and unprecedented process of secularisation to which the Church only apathetically resisted, Constanța Vintilă-Ghițulescu, *Evgheniți, ciocoi, mojiți. Despre obrazele primei modernități românești (1750-1860* [Evgheniți, ciocoi, mojiți. Regarding the Facets of the First Romanian Modernization], Humanitas, București 2015, pp. 162, 163.

²⁸⁴ The bases for a rudimentary body of bureaucrats regulated by distinctive but vague criteria regarding accession or promotion was established. However, in practice, the lack of instruction and the system based on "money and protection" prevented any profound and far-reaching evolution, *idem*, pp. 241, 242, 245, 251.

²⁸⁵ In Wallachia three regiments, each composed of two pedestrian battalions and two esquadrons, were to be settled in Bucharest, Craiova and Ploiești. One regiment totalized the approximate number of 1,500 soldiers, Iordache, *op.cit.*, pp. 246, 247.

²⁸⁶ Stanomir, *op.cit.*, p. 101.

²⁸⁷ The Assemblies from Wallachia and Moldavia, in contrast to the Western tradition, were rather composite councils than genuine parliaments. They were summoned by the *Hospodar* and exercised consultative functions only, *idem*, p. 21, Niculescu, *op.cit.*, p. 39.

²⁸⁸ In 1832, during the first elections, the total electorate of Wallachia and Moldavia was composed of 799 persons, Cristian Preda, "Primele alegeri românești" [First Romanian Elections], *Studia Politica: Romanian Political Science Review*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2011, pp. 208, 209.

and that the agrarian order had not been in any way improved. In practice, all the “organic” princes that ruled until 1848 (*i.e.* Alexandru Dimitrie Ghica, Gheorghe Bibescu and Mihail Sturdza) experienced long-lasting conflicts with their nobleman adversaries, like Ion Câmpineanu, Mitică Filipescu and, afterwards, with the Forty-Eighters group²⁸⁹.

Giving their immense contribution to the internal development of the Principalities, the Organic Regulations passed throughout a sharp examination. On one side, historians like Vlad Georgescu acknowledged the fundamental significance of the “first eclectic Romanian Constitution”²⁹⁰ and Anastasie Iordache pointed out the heteroclitite and bizarre character of this fundamental law²⁹¹. According to Christian Preda, a political scientist, those documents could be considered constitutions especially because they introduced the first separation of powers in the region. On the other side, Tudor Drăganu, a constitutional law scholar, considered the two Organic Regulations constitutional and administrative codes rather than modern constitutions *per se*²⁹². Radu Carp, a member of the academia, took a similar stance, but invoked an institutional argumentation: a weak assembly and the lack of ministerial responsibility were the mechanisms without which the two regulations could not have been counted as genuine constitutions²⁹³.

Beyond any abstract and methodological aspect of this matter, the proper enforcement of the Organic Regulations triggered numerous complications, conflicts and confusion. The most important of all were the political clashes between two of the most important institutions, the Prince and the Assembly. Theoretically, both were part of the decision-making process, the former holding the right to initiate and the later the possibility to discuss and introduce amendments. However, both had the power to veto each other’s decisions, a mechanism which, in time of acute political antagonism, could have provoked a total institutional disruption²⁹⁴. However, during extreme cases, the *Hospodar* was able to dissolve the Assembly and govern alone, throughout decrees and both princes that ruled in Wallachia between 1834 and 1848 had opted for such a practice. The former, Alexandru

²⁸⁹ Turczynski, *op.cit.*, p. 123.

²⁹⁰ Georgescu, *op.cit.*, p. 120.

²⁹¹ Iordache, *op.cit.*, p. 233.

²⁹² The two Organic Regulations did not contain a section regarding the rights and freedoms of the citizens and, prior to its enforcement, the inhabitants were not democratically consulted by the authorities, Cosmin Lucian Gherghe, “Regulamentele Organice și dezvoltarea vieții constituționale românești” [Organic Regulations and Development of the Romanian Constitutionalism], *Revista de Științe Politice*, No. 30-31, Craiova 2011, p. 13; Jelavich, *History of...*, p. 266.

²⁹³ Preda, *Rumâniile fericiți...*, p. 36.

²⁹⁴ *Idem*, p. 57.

Dimitrie Ghica (1834-1842) did it in order to silence the considerable oppositional movement that controlled the Assembly and its leader, Ion Câmpineanu, in 1837. They were especially discontent about the Russian attempts to include an additional article to the Organic Regulation that would have had nullify the recently gained rights²⁹⁵. Obviously, the small oppositional movement was not very effective in its actions but the affair itself was maybe the most illustrative example of Tsar's influence at that particular moment²⁹⁶. The latter, Gheorghe Bibescu (1843-1848) would rule without the assistance of the Assembly for about two years, between 1844 and 1846, after the boyars stood against the project of leasing a certain number of mines to a Russian major. However, the *Hospodar* could not stand victorious every time either. It was the emblematic moment of 1842, when the Wallachian opposition was able to obtain prince's repudiation from the throne²⁹⁷.

In addition to the Russian-controlled modernization process, during the first half of the 19th century, the discourse on innovation was under another indirect Western influence too. It is well known that the French cultural model enjoyed, at that time, the genuine acknowledgement of the local boyars²⁹⁸. Its agents, mostly Greeks and Armenians were the bearers and distributors of a diverse spectrum of teachings, ranging from Classicism, Neoclassicism, Enlightenment, Romanticism, Nationalism, Liberalism and Republicanism²⁹⁹. For the local notables, the French pattern meant a triple attempt of synchronization (or imitation) in terms of elites' features, juridical vocabulary and institutional frame³⁰⁰.

²⁹⁵ After the six years long Russian military occupation, the Additional article basically cancelled the anatomy that Wallachia and Moldavia was meant to enjoy. The two Organic Regulations became genuine "tobogans" designed to secure the Russian control by weakening the Ottomans or the local resistance. Meanwhile, Saint Petersburg's major diplomats operating in Bucharest and Jassy gained a primary role within the two Principalities' domestic politics and *Hospodar's* elections, Iscru, *op.cit.*, p. 9; Carpathinus, *op.cit.*, p. 390; Niculescu, *op.cit.*, p. 40.

After Tsar Alexander death (1825), the Russian plans to partition the Ottoman Empire have been gradually abandoned by the new monarch, who preferred exercising control and influence from within, Nicolae Ciachir, "The Adrianople Treaty (1829) and its European Implications", *Revue des études Sud-Est Europeennes*, Vol. XVII, No. 4, pp. 706, 707; Jelavich, *Russia and...*, p. 31.

²⁹⁶ Potemkin *et alii*, *op.cit.*, pp. 483, 485; Ștefan Cazimir, *Alfabetul de tranziție* [The Alphabet of Transition], Humanitas, ed. 2, București 2006, p. 27; Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 107.

²⁹⁷ Preda, *op.cit.*, pp. 58, 59.

²⁹⁸ From the middle of the 18th century France, perceived as "the elder Latin sister" started to enjoy a continuously increasing influence. Excepting the decade between 1850 and 1860 its importance was primarily cultural rather than political and unconscious rather than deliberately (post-1848), Djuvara, *op.cit.*, p. 336; Eliade, *op.cit.*, p. 4; Gheorghe Platon, *România în veacul construcției naționale. Națiune, frământări, mișcări sociale și politice, program național* [Romanians During the Era of National Project: Social and Political Movements, National Program], Editura Enciclopedică, București 2005, p. 182.

²⁹⁹ Ploscaru, *op.cit.*, pp. 67-69; Dan A. Lazaresco, "Le sens des revolutions européennes de l'est de l'Europe en tant que consequences directes des Revolutions françaises de 1789-1848", *History of European Ideas*, Vol. 11, 1989, p. 144; Suci, *op.cit.*, p. 635.

³⁰⁰ Stanomir, *op.cit.*, p. 9.

A more direct contribution belonged to the various French specialists who were assisting the Ottoman authorities in domains like engineering, navigation and artillery³⁰¹. Besides that, after 1789 a considerable wave of French emigrants (aristocrats, bourgeois, landlords and clerics) spread all over Europe. Some of them transited and even established throughout the areas inhabited by ethnic Romanians as merchants, tutors, personal teachers, *et cætera*. Obviously, the local boyars did not immediately sympathise with their principles, but *via* the Greek channels, they would find inspiration in different revolutionary features and adapt them according to their purposes³⁰², *e.g.*, the project of a democratic republic of Dimitrie Sturdza from 1804³⁰³. Finally, the most personal and immediate French connections arose when the first consuls of the Republic and the Empire were appointed in Bucharest and Jassy. Despite the fact that until the 1800s, the influence of the French Revolution was rather insignificant, some disparate testimonies showed that the inhabitants were not entirely indifferent to the events that occurred miles away³⁰⁴. For example, a rapport sent by the local Jacobine Hortolon in 1793 to his superior from Istanbul, Descorches, states that “almost all the merchants from Janina and Albania who reside here [Bucharest] were sans-culottes”³⁰⁵. Few years later, the first French consul in Bucharest, Émil Gaudin (1797) and the vice-consul from Jassy, Louis Joseph Parrant, candidly took part in the revolutionary propaganda³⁰⁶. However, such demarches were far from being longstanding and a more pronounced French interest in Wallachia and Moldavia would arise only after the 1830 Revolution³⁰⁷.

In respect to the general situation of the Wallachian and Moldavian societies, economic condition and cultural development several observations must be done. Due to a decrease of the mortality rate and of fiscal stabilization, during the first half of the 19th

³⁰¹ Bernard Lewis, “The Impact of the French Revolution on Turkey. Some Notes on the Transmission of Ideas”, *Journal of World History*, Vol. I, No. 1, July 1953, p. 108.

³⁰² Lazaresco, *op.cit.*, p. 151; Constantin Şerban, “Ecourile Revoluției franceze în țările române în secolul al XVIII-lea” [The Impact of the French Revolution in the Danubian Principalities During the 18th Century], *Revista de istorie*, Vol. 42, No. 6, 1989, p. 574.

³⁰³ According to a different source, its author was Ioan Cantacuzino (1791), Turczyinski, *op.cit.*, p. 90.

³⁰⁴ Otherwise, during this period, the French foreign policy mostly ignored the issues regarding the South-Eastern Europe and Near East. Minor changes of position would be recorder only after 1794, Hitchins, *op.cit.*, p. 66; Stanomir, *op.cit.*, p. 49; Isar, *op.cit.*, pp. 35, 36.

³⁰⁵ Berindei, *Români și...*, p. 99.

³⁰⁶ The actions of those local diplomats were coordinated with those unfolded by the first three French republican ambassadors in Istanbul - Descorches (1793), Verninac (1795) and Aubert du Bayet (1796) - who took advantages from the Porte's benevolent stance towards the revolution itself, perceived as extremely harmful to the Christian powers, Lewis, *op.cit.*, p. 119; Nicolae Isar, *Relații și interferențe româno-franceze în epoca Luminilor (1769-1834). Studii* [Romanian-French Relations During the Age of Enlightenment], Editura Universitară, București 2017, p. 47; I. Lupaș, *Istoria unirii românilor* [History of the Romanian Unification], Editura Scripta, București 1993, pp. 168, 169.

³⁰⁷ Berindei, *op.cit.*, p. 107.

century a significant demographic growth was reported³⁰⁸. While in 1831, less than two million resided in Wallachia, after three decades the numbers showed a spectacular increase of 400,000 souls³⁰⁹. Besides, starting in the 1830s, migration from rural areas caused the enlargement, both in number and size, of the urban settlements³¹⁰. Between 1821 and 1848 the urban population doubled and in Wallachia not less than thirty-five towns were catalogued³¹¹. Nonetheless, except for Bucharest, with 58,892 permanent inhabitants in 1832³¹² and Craiova, the province's second most important settlement, other cities hardly exceeded a number of 5,000 dwellers³¹³.

The social structure of Wallachia and Moldavia was based on the medieval pattern. However, the fragmentation of the groups was not as rigorous as throughout Central and Western Europe, then giving birth to a hybrid system, "mi-féodal, mi-capitaliste"³¹⁴. *Grosso modo*, the entire population was divided into four classes: boyars³¹⁵, clerics, urban residents and peasantry³¹⁶. The political developments and especially the changes introduced by the Organic Regulations strengthened the premature middle-class but, in the same time, increased the gaps elsewhere. Generally, the relationship between the boyars and the peasants worsened, the latter being forced to provide a bigger amount of physical work for the

³⁰⁸ The plague had been eradicated and the cholera epidemics from 1831 and 1848 were less violent than in the past. In the same time, the inoculation campaigns continuously spread, Hitchins, *op.cit.*, p. 216.

³⁰⁹ Bărbulescu *et alii*, *op.cit.*, p. 294; Hitchins, *op.cit.*, p. 79.

³¹⁰ Since their formation, the urban underdevelopment was a constant characteristic of the region. In Wallachia, during the 15th century, only 15 cities were record but the number increased to 29 at the end of the 17th century. Nonetheless, were poorly inhabited, their number usually varied from 1,000 to 2,500 residents, Georgescu, *op.cit.*, p. 46. Subsequently, at the beginning of the 19th century the urban share was of only 8%, a number much inferior to the European average, Murgescu, *op.cit.*, p. 320; Turczynski, *op.cit.*, p. 29.

³¹¹ Bărbulescu *et alii*, *op.cit.*, p. 294.

³¹² Florian Georgescu, "Aspecte privind împărțirea administrativă și evoluția demografică din Bucureștii anilor 1831-1848" [Regarding the Administrative Division and the Demographic Evolution of Bucharest Between 1831 and 1848], *Materiale de istorie și muzeografie*, Vol. 3, Muzeul de Istorie a orașului București 1965, pp. 62, 63; Chirot, *op.cit.*, p. 175.

³¹³ Preda, *op.cit.*, p. 30.

³¹⁴ Berindei, "Affirmation de...", p. 43.

³¹⁵ Towards the middle of the 19th century, the total number of the boyar families was approximated to 400, however, only 1/8 were represented by old families, the rest being of foreign origins or recently co-opted throughout enrichment. Nonetheless, the formers were the owners of no less than 75% of the land possessed by the boyars, Chirot, *op.cit.*, p. 173.

³¹⁶ Prior to the reforms that abolished serfdom (1746 in Wallachia and 1749 in Moldavia) the peasants were divided into three main categories: free owners, free but non-owners and serfs. During the first half of the 19th century, the status of land workers suffered deep mutations. The former "masters" - now called "owners" - managed to secure 1/3 of the domain, while the peasants used the rest (without owning it). However, the latter received land not according to their needs but considering the capacities they had to work that land itself. In exchange, for receiving land, they were compelled to perform various agricultural labours (*corvée* for 12 days a year, plow, cut and transport forest wood for a day per year) or to fulfil household and administrative tasks for the owner of the land, Ilie Corfus, *Agricultura în Țările române: 1848-1864. Istorie agrară comparată* [Agriculture in the Romanian Principalities: A Comparative History], Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București 1982, pp. 23, 24.

formers' benefice. Some extreme cases accounted up to fifty-six days in a year. However, in many instances, special regional and local conditions gave birth to some highly different conditions. The most dramatic ones were recorded throughout Moldavia. The peasants residing here were forced to strive for more than twenty days, as the official regulations stated. Beyond Milcov, the river that separated the two provinces, the villagers were much more active and influential. Prior to the 1830s, there were many cases when the local boyars could not impose, especially throughout the western half of the province (Oltenia or Little Wallachia) the lawful quota of twelve days³¹⁷.

The Organic Regulation enforcement gave birth, particularly in the rural areas, to a new category of peasants. Made mainly of teachers and priests, they were enjoying better standards of living than the bulk of their community. Likewise, the ruling class, who merely accounted for 2% of the total population of Wallachia, had peculiarities that varied from region to region³¹⁸. For example, while before mentioned were mostly attracted by state offices, the Moldavian ones were profoundly involved in agricultural activities and a higher social cohesion prevailed among their ranks. In the same time, it was relatively easy for enriched individuals without any aristocratic background to acquire an official title. This practice, widely used by the *Hospodars* of that time, altered the actual composition of the whole class, which "bourgeoisized"³¹⁹. Although the powerful and older boyars were still loyal to their conservative philosophy and way of life based on privileges, the waves of newcomers proved themselves determined and compact enough in order to put pressure on the former³²⁰.

Particularly at this point stood the roots of the most crucial cleavage throughout the entire Romanian modern history. What divided the ruling class in the Principalities was the opposition between old and new. The first camp, represented by great and exclusivist boyars, were proponents of the Russian policy and wanted nothing more than the preservation of their

³¹⁷ Chirot, *op.cit.*, p. 160; In Moldova, 84, Constantiniu, *op.cit.*, p. 214. In fact, prior to the Organic Regulations, the fiscal burdens were much more exhausting for the peasants than the labour obligations, Georgescu, *Istoria românilor...*, p. 102; Iordache, *op.cit.*, p. 245.

³¹⁸ Georgescu, *op.cit.*, pp. 100, 101.

³¹⁹ Diana Mishkova, "Balkan Liberalisms: Historical Routes of a Modern Ideology", *Entangled Histories of the Balkans. Volume Two: Transfers of Political Ideologies and Institutions*, edited by Roumen Daskalov and Diana Mishkova, Leiden 2014, p. 109.

³²⁰ Especially throughout the 1830s and 1840s many officials, intellectuals, free agents, merchants and landholders formed the so called "new" class of boyars. However, one should not assume that they were totally antagonistic to "old" boyars. Enjoying the lawful privileges of the traditional nobility was theirs priority, Platon, *Geneza revoluției...*, pp. 116, 136, 181; Stan, *Revoluția română...*, p. 15.

political, social and fiscal privileges. They were opposed by different groups made of low and middle rank boyars who were pressing them to increase the level of political participation³²¹.

During the first half of the 19th century, contrary the situation in the other Balkan areas, the Principalities did not possess a real middle-class capable of pursuing its own interests on the political arena. Most of its potential members were in fact small boyars, with boyar mentality³²², who struggled to purchase an official title which would have allowed them to advance throughout the local *cursus honorum*³²³. From a different point of view, the precarious educational system in Wallachia and Moldavia was responsible for the late foundation of an autochthonous class of technicians. During the 1830s, the professional school of Bucharest used to produce a number of about forty artisans per year³²⁴ and in Jassy, the local craftsmen were merely a minority³²⁵. In time, traders, artisans, lawyers, doctors, architects, teachers, *et cætera* became the most dynamic group of the urban population.

The people of the Principalities haven't witnessed any significant modifications of economic nature during the first half of the 19th century. The way agriculture and industry were structured remained unchanged and animal husbandry continued to be the main economic activity until the 1830s³²⁶. Peasants were the primary working force and the use of technology was rather experimental. In this period the first manufactures were established. The steam machines, imported predominantly from Austria and England implied the use of foreign technicians along with local workers. During the second quarter of the century the agricultural production and the exports based on raw materials skyrocketed³²⁷. Meanwhile, infrastructural projects such as building bridges, paving roads and upgrading the city-ports of

³²¹ The most representative act was the "carbonaro constitution", a document filled with grievances and suggestions for reform (among others separation of power, superiority of the Assembly, creation of a Upper House, salary for every functionary) drafted by a 3rd class boyar, Ionică Tăutu. Obviously the document was rejected by central authorities but the incident showed that the call for reforms did not originated solely from the French sympathisers of the upper stratum, but from a wider palette of sources, in this case, Polish or possibly Russian, Taki, *op.cit.*, pp. 238-240.

³²² Dionisie Eclesiarhul Chronicle (1815) it is maybe the most illustrative source regarding the townsmen's mentality during the first decades of the modernization period. According to the author, the Russians, considered as the defenders of Orthodoxy, surpassed France in term of prestige and attractiveness, Lucian Boia, *Între mit și conștiința românească* [Myth and Romanian Conscience], Humanitas, București 2011, p. 61.

³²³ Vintilă-Ghițulescu, *op.cit.*, pp. 48, 49.

³²⁴ *Idem*, p. 260.

³²⁵ Platon, *op.cit.*, p. 129.

³²⁶ *Idem*, p. 167.

³²⁷ Between 1831 and 1865, the total number of cultivated land throughout southern Wallachia increased from 740,000 acres to 2,830,000, Bogdan Murgescu, *România și Europa. Acumularea decalajelor economice (1500-2010)*, Polirom, Iași 2010, pp. 122, 123. The multiplication of landholders' numbers - 246 in 1831 and almost 700 four years later - it is explanatory for the expanding agricultural concerns. Cereal exports from both provinces increased from 39,000 tones, between 1812 and 1817 to about 100,000 tones just before the 1848 revolution, Platon, *op.cit.*, p. 127.

Brăila and Galați were launched. The first steamboat arrived at Brăila in 1834 and in a short period of time the marine traffic proliferated³²⁸.

However, the most important economic centre was Bucharest. After 1774, trade and manufacturing sectors had substantially flourished. At the beginning of the following century, the artisans that resided in the city, organized in forty guilds, reached the number of about 15,000. Beside an increasing number of Romanians, several thousand Germans managed to build up a cohesive community which had its own journal (*Bukarester Deutsche Zeitung*) and brewery. Among others, Jewish Sephardic and Aromanian communities represented another significant slice of the population³²⁹. Many of them would either be sympathizers or active participants during the 1848 Revolution³³⁰.

Starting with the last quarter of the century, a series of general social, political and economic changes prepared the ground for the formation of a Romanian national consciousness. In fact, the phenomenon was specific to the entire European South-East area and was based on different factors of intensities varying from region to region. For example, the emergence of a middle-class was essential in the Serbian and Greek cases of nation building. As already stated, in Wallachia and Moldavia the boyars were the most willing to embrace innovations. The Ottoman crisis and instability from its border provinces (see the case of Osman Pazvantoğlu), the spread of the Enlightenment ideas and nationalist thinking among greater popular masses and the political implications of the autochthonous military experience of the Christians-Ottomans wars proved to be a fecund environment for the liberal ideals of the oppositionist boyars³³¹.

The first half of the 19th century was a decisive period for the Romanian elites who took the crucial decision to adopt the model of the European civilisation. The cultural contrasts between 1800 and 1848 were associated, in Neagu Djuvara's words, with a leap

³²⁸ *Idem*, pp. 207-208; Chirot, *op.cit.*, pp. 153, 154; Paul Cornea, *Originile romantismului românesc. Spiritul public, mișcarea ideilor și literatura între 1780-1840* [The Origins of the Romanian Romanticism. Public Sphere, Movement of the Ideas and Literature Between 1780 and 1840], Cartea Românească, București 2008, p. 360; Murgescu, *op.cit.*, p. 116.

³²⁹ Djuvara, *op.cit.*, pp. 194, 199.

³³⁰ G. Zane, *Bălcescu: opera - omul - epoca* [Bălcescu: Work - Life - Era], Editura Eminescu, București 1975, p. 172.

³³¹ The national conscience took shape in Transylvania where the Romanians were a homogenous group that lacked a nobility class, a fact that prevented the division according to any social criteria. In Wallachia and Moldavia, especially until the first quarter of the 19th century, the national rhetoric was accessible only to a restricted number of intellectuals who had not yet turned it into a political tool.

“from the medieval ages to the contemporaneousness”³³². In less than two generations, the intellectual foundations of the elites from the two provinces had radically changed and the society, on a whole, became extremely polarized³³³.

The internal control and censorship sponsored by Saint Petersburg gave little to none hope that any political movement would benefit from the freedom of expression. The literary activities were everything that the authorities were tolerating and sometimes actively supported. During the 1830s and 1840s, literature became the main channel for dissemination of ideas like unity, independence and sympathy for the lower classes³³⁴. At the same time, almost every cultural organization that had been created, *Societatea literară* (The Literary Association, 1827), *Societatea filarmonică* (The Philharmonic Association, 1833³³⁵), *Asociația literară a României* (The Literary Association of Romania, 1845) - was doubled by a secret society where exchanges of views on political issues were common³³⁶.

The press, since the publication of the first journals in Romanian back in 1829, made only a little progress. Their usual content consisted of political, economic and administrative regional news, official rapports as well as a bulletin including information from abroad. The compilation process was carefully observed by the authorities. In 1838, *Gazeta de Transilvania* of Brașov (*Kronstadt*) became the first Romanian paper published in Transylvania. In contrast with the Wallachian and Moldavian publications, this paper had a pan-Romanian programme, with coverage and collaborators exceeding the borders of the province itself³³⁷.

During the first half of the century, nationalist leaders increasingly turned their investigatory attention toward the past. They used the Romanticist tools in order to create a heroic history that was in conflict with the unfortunate present. Their efforts were not without consequences. In this period the “Orthodox consciousness” ceased being the main pillar of the Romanian identity, now moving closer to a “national consciousness” pattern³³⁸. If in the 18th century, on the other side of the Carpathian Mountains, a pure Latinist heritage had been

³³² Djuvara, *op.cit.*, pp. 7, 14.

³³³ Cazimir, *op.cit.*, pp. 8, 16.

³³⁴ Hitchins, *op.cit.*, p. 233.

³³⁵ Cornea, *op.cit.*, p. 384.

³³⁶ Bodea, *op.cit.*, p. 51.

³³⁷ In 1842, the magazine had 635 subscribers, from whom 148 were Transylvanians, 265 Wallachians and 149 Moldavians, Apostol Stan, “Presa românească în deceniul premergător revoluției de la 1848 - ferment al conștiinței naționale” [Romanian Press Before the 1848 Revolution: Ferment of the National Conscience], *Revista de istorie*, Vol. 42, No. 2, 1989, pp. 131, 133.

³³⁸ Boia, *op.cit.*, p. 69.

extensively postulated³³⁹, in Wallachia and Moldavia the new historians, less intransigent (e.g. Mihai Cantacuzino), embraced a double Dacian-Roman approach. However, beyond different nuances, *grosso modo*, all the nationalist intellectuals considered that the common origin, language, history and traditions legitimized their political and cultural aspirations³⁴⁰.

Another essential element concurring at the emergence of the modernist group was the education. During that time, the Church oversaw the “public” elementary schooling, which meant that most of the classes were being incorporated to churches and monasteries. Alternatively, private (*pensionnat* for boys or girls) and domestic (personal professors and tutors) forms of instructions were available. At the upper level, in both capitals, Bucharest (1680) and Jassy (1707) the former princely academies continued to function prior to the 1821 Uprising. The language they used was Greek, but French, Italian and German were equally taught. The first superior courses in Romanian were opened at the colleges established by Gheorghe Asachi in Moldavia (1814) and Gheorghe Lazăr in Wallachia (1818). Thereafter, during the 1830s, the educational system was placed on brand-new foundations. The new institutions, *Academia Mihăileană* in Jassy and *Colegiul Național Sfântul Sava* in Bucharest would represent the base of the future universities established thirty years later. The latter, throughout its Transylvanian patriotic teachers, had a great role in transferring the immense national enthusiasm existing beyond the mountains to the hearts of the future revolutionaries³⁴¹.

Yet, in spite of the diverse range of training institutions available in the capital and other larger provincial towns, prior to the Organic Regulations’ enforcement, the education in rural areas was not yet accessible. A system of village schools was inaugurated only in 1837. The community alone bore the responsibility for its proper functioning, a procedure that often gave birth to local conflicts between the teachers and the peasants. In order to avoid a possible obstacle for the smooth running of the agricultural duties, classes were held between October and April. However, from a quantitative point of view, the situation evolved rapidly.

³³⁹ Georgescu, *op.cit.*, p. 131.

³⁴⁰ Boia, *op.cit.*, pp. 64, 65.

³⁴¹ Ethnic Romanian intellectuals living under the Habsburg monarchy such as Gheorghe Lazăr, Eftimie Murgu, Aron Florian, Ioan Maiorescu, Vasile Fabian Bob, August Treboniu Laurian, Gavril Munteanu, Simion Bărnuțiu, Nicolae Nifon Bălășescu, Ioan Micle, Ștefan Suceiu, Miron Pompiliu, Ioachim C. Drăgescu, I. C. Massim turned the Principalities into a “spiritual colony of Transylvania”, Chindriș, *op.cit.*, p. 187.

After five years only (1842), a total number of 2,213 schools with more than 48,000 pupils were recorded³⁴².

Despite the gradual introduction of diversified educational opportunities, the needs of the local elite were not entirely met. More and more young boyars were pursuing a formational itinerary in Western Europe. During the first two decades, the visits were exclusively personal and not necessarily aimed at achieving recognition by gaining a diploma. Two brothers, Gheorghe and Barbu (Știrbei) Bibescu, both future *Hospodars*, finished their studies in Paris³⁴³. Due to the France realities of that time, with Restoration in full swing, most of the Moldo-Wallachians turned genuine conservatives. From the 1820s the state officially promoted this tendency throughout a system of scholarships and four students from Bucharest were sent to Pisa. During the next decade, the things evolved furthermore. The number of visitors multiplied and the capital of France became their first preference. Like in the past, the majority focused on classic and humanist studies, very few being attracted by technics or medicine³⁴⁴. In addition to this statistical aspect, the so called “second wave of visitors”, students of the 1830s and 1840s, assimilated not only knowledge but political culture and ideology as well. They were attracted by Classical Liberalism, Democracy and even Socialism. Many of them were constantly following the debates held by the French deputies and equally constant was the Romanian presence within the masonic lodges³⁴⁵. It was only a matter of time until they started debating vocally the topics that were forbidden at home. The direct contacts established, after 1835, with Adam Czartoryski and other members of the Polish exile were a true revelation for the most of the Moldo-Wallachian patriots³⁴⁶. Not only the organizational side of their activities had changed - now they had a meeting place and a reading room - but the ties with the Polish intellectuals contributed to a better dissemination of the “Romanian question” on the European scale³⁴⁷. Beginning as simple students, they now became veritable representatives of their own nation.

³⁴² Platon, *op.cit.*, p. 263.

³⁴³ Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 128.

³⁴⁴ Most of the students were interested in a diversified and practical training, which has not always ended with obtaining attestation. To give one example, Alexandru Ioan Cuza, the future ruler, attended history, law and medicine courses. Only the very few followed specific instruction. Nicolae Kretzulescu graduated medicine and Dimitrie Filipescu law, Ovidiu Muntean, *Imaginea românilor în Franța la mijlocul secolului al XIX-lea* [Perception of Romanians in France at the Middle of the 19th Century], Editura Napoca Star, Cluj-Napoca 2005, pp. 22, 37, 38.

³⁴⁵ Berindei, *Românii și...*, p. 148.

³⁴⁶ Robert A. Berry, “Czartoryski's Hôtel Lambert and the Great Powers in the Balkans, 1832-1848”, *The International History Review*, Vol. 7, No. 1, February 1985, p. 46.

³⁴⁷ Muntean, *op.cit.*, p. 31.

In the same time, partially as a result of increasing Romanian presence in Paris and Western Europe, the daily issues regarding Wallachia and Moldavia got a better coverage within several publications of that time. In 1837, for the first time, an article (*La Valachie et la Moldavie*) signed by a Romanian student, Mihail Anagnosti, was published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Next year, Ion Ghica's printed brochure, *Poids de la Moldo-Valachie dans la question d'Orient. Coup d'oeil sur la dernière occupation militaire russe de ces provinces*, suggested, for the sake of the regional stability, the creation of an independent and united Romanian kingdom as a mean to separate Russia from the Ottoman Empire³⁴⁸. At the same time, in July 1838, the French paper *La National* established a regular column *Correspondance valaque*, which generally criticized Saint Petersburg's policies, advocated for a buffer-state project and for a more strong-willed interventions from Paris and London³⁴⁹.

2. Opposition and Secret Organizations

The 1830s were a period during which a relative powerful and coherent nucleus of boyars initiated a resistance movement within the Wallachian Assembly itself. However, they were not merely Prince's political adversaries, but also promoters of progress and Westernization. Ion Câmpineanu, the leader of the opposition, was famous for being the first boyar who had liberated his serfs and another, Manolache Bălăceanu, for allowing the organization of a Fourierist-wise *phalanstère* social experiment in 1835 and 1836 on his estate in Scăieni³⁵⁰.

After the parliamentary opposition had been silenced in 1838, the progressive Wallachians became increasingly conspiratorial. The new activities were inaugurated by the same Ion Câmpineanu who, in order to counteract the Russian influence, sought the help of the West. Contacts with the Polish emigration led by Adam Czartoryski were established and, in 1839, he became the first Romanian to pursue a lobby tour through Paris and London. However, he failed to link the European interests with the Wallachian question and upon his

³⁴⁸ *Idem*, pp. 26, 33.

³⁴⁹ *Idem*, p. 34.

³⁵⁰ <https://vimeo.com/119034417>; <https://www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/falansterul-de-la-scaieni-un-experiment-social-uitat>, <https://ninulescu.wordpress.com/2012/03/10/falansterul-din-scaieni/> (March 7, 2019).

return, the authorities decided to put an end to this kind of approach by arresting Câmpineanu³⁵¹.

Nevertheless, the oppositionists quickly reorganized and, in 1840, a revolutionary secret organization was established. The group leader, Dimitrie Filipescu (a boyar and the first Romanian to obtain a law doctorate in Paris) was, in comparison with Câmpineanu, a radical. Many of the organization's younger collaborators, such as Nicolae Bălcescu, Cezar Bolliac and Dimitrie Macedonski, would develop into essential figures of the 1848 Revolution. Despite the fact that the authorities performed a crack-down of the group, the movement of 1840 represented the turning point when a definitive theoretical foundation of the Forty-Eighters was established³⁵². Within the domestic arena, the most reputable of the progressive boyars resumed their activities, with British and French backing³⁵³. Meanwhile, the youth reorganized abroad, and in Paris, the liberal capital of the continent, they found the most fertile environment.

Due to their delicate condition, with most of their leaders under detention and with an obedient Assembly inaugurated in 1846, progressive boyars shared no prospects that would allow them to develop a legalist movement independently. In response to the draconic political censorship, they oriented themselves toward alternative cultural ways of expression: satire, poetry and theatre pamphlets. In the same time, cultural organizations became the perfect curtain for the civic activities of the political clubs. Worth pointing out as the most illustrative examples *Societatea română* (The Romanian Society) and *Societatea studenților români din Paris* (The Society of the Romanian Students from Paris). Officially focused on educational and pedagogical matters, the latter was in fact a branch of the secret organization *Frăția* (The Brotherhood). Established in 1843, by Ion Ghica, Nicolae Bălcescu and Christian Tell, this structure is generally acknowledged as the main architect of the 1848 Revolution in Wallachia³⁵⁴.

³⁵¹ Radu R. Florescu, "R. G. Colquhoun, Ion Câmpineanu and the Pro-Western Opposition in Wallachia, 1834-1840", *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 41, No. 97, June 1963, p. 409.

³⁵² Boicu, *op.cit.*, p. 88.

³⁵³ Jelavich, *op.cit.*, p. 270.

³⁵⁴ Anastasie Iordache, *Pe urmele lui Dumitru Brătianu* [The Life of Dumitru Brătianu], Editura Sport Turism, București 1984, p. 88.

3. French Influence and Revolutionary Contagion

If until early 1800s the fate of the Principalities was usually decided between Istanbul Saint Petersburg and occasionally Vienna, the 1803-1812 period was deeply influenced by the French-Russian rivalry. Subsequently, the new continental order of 1815 did not produce any significant changes. The politicians of that time considered that the Treaty of Bucharest (1812) was fully adequate for the time being. However, in the background a newly escalated British-Russian antagonism increased London's interests in the Danube region. Alongside Klemens von Metternich, a serious defender of the Ottoman *status quo*, now stood Percy Smythe, 6th Viscount Strangford, the British ambassador in Istanbul between 1820 and 1824. The Russian statesmen could no longer ignore the European positions in regard to Wallachia and Moldavia. From one point of view, this extremely sophisticated system of alliances and conflicting interest was the reason that the two provinces have not been portioned among the neighbouring countries, as happened with Poland in 1772, 1793, 1795³⁵⁵.

Starting from the 1840s the Eastern Question, also encompassing the Principalities, got more and more Europeanized. The increasing Russian presence at the lower parts of the Danube alarmed the Western powers. After setting the foundations for a British-Austrian commercial and navigational cooperation in 1838, Lord Viscount Palmerson managed to convert the former Ottoman-Russian collaboration (Unkiar-Iskelesi, 1833) into an enlarged European Conference (July 1840) which incorporated France and Prussia alike³⁵⁶.

First, presence of the progressive and patriotic boyars from Wallachia and Moldavia in France was instrumental in forging a common identity. Câmpineanu's visit from 1839 had already intensified the collaboration between the two groups and the fact that they spoke the same language in a foreigner territory had ultimately enhanced their Romanian selfdom. Furthermore, some of them, like Iancu Bălăceanu, Brătianu and C. A. Rosetti, established their first contacts in Paris, while attending the lectures of the same French intellectuals³⁵⁷.

³⁵⁵ Platon, *op.cit.*, p. 25.

³⁵⁶ Constantin Ardeleanu, "Naviagația pe Dunăre și Tratatul austro-britanic din iulie 1838" [Navigation on the Danube and the British-Austrian Treaty of 1838], *Studii și materiale de istorie modernă*, Vol. XXIV, 2011, pp. 53, 55.

³⁵⁷ Iancu Bălăceanu, *Memoriile unui pașoptist-model: amintiri politice și diplomatice 1848-1903* [Memoirs of an Archetypal Forty-Eighter: Political and Diplomatic Remembrances], from French by Georgeta Filitti, Humanitas, București 2019, p. 24.

Secondly, the French experiment had deep formative effects on the Moldo-Wallachian elites. After the infusion of progressive minded individuals, like A. G. Golescu and C. A. Rosetti in 1845 and Nicolae Bălcescu in 1846, the community was inclined to be more dynamic³⁵⁸. At the same time, the increasing Romanian presence in Parisian masonic lodges (e.g. *Athénée des étrangers*) and the contacts established with different French scholars, had radicalizing effects. Jules Michelet's book, *Le peuple*, Edgar Quinet's orations, political debates in the Assembly, connections with Socialist and Democratic circles, and the social events of which they were either observers or active participants were remarkably formative³⁵⁹. One might state that, through education, the Forty-Eighters transformed themselves from simple Wallachians into genuine Europeans³⁶⁰.

With the first wave of political unrests, in February and March, those situated in Paris passed through a veritable "revolutionary school". Some of the most passionate turned active fighters on the barricades and subsequently became members of the civic guard that was established in the city (e.g. Dumitru Brătianu, Costache Negri, Vasile Mălinescu)³⁶¹. On February 12/24, Bălcescu, at that time also in Paris, sent to Vasile Alecsandri, along with an exalting description of the latest events, a piece of velvet torn from king's throne in Tuileries Palace³⁶². Few days later, the representative of the Romanian students visited the new authorities of Paris and offered, in sign of solidarity, the tricolour flag (red, yellow, blue)³⁶³. At that very moment, they ceased perceiving themselves merely a group of students from a peripheral province of the Ottoman Empire, but rather the authentic speakers of the Romanian nation in front of the Free Europe, whose support they were seeking. Despite that it eventually turned to be "rather a fascination than a reality", the assurances of top politicians like Alphonse de Lamartine highly increased their determination and since March, many of them were already on the way back to Bucharest³⁶⁴.

³⁵⁸ Bodea, *op.cit.*, p. 58; Isar, *1848 în...*, pp. 137, 138.

³⁵⁹ Bodea, *op.cit.*, p. 84; Anastasie, *op.cit.*, p. 48.

³⁶⁰ Niculescu, *op.cit.*, p. 268.

³⁶¹ Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 13.

³⁶² Berindei, *Românii și...*, p. 180.

³⁶³ Dan Berindei, "Tinerii români de la Paris și revoluția din februarie 1848" [The Romanian Youth from Paris and the February Revolution], *Historia*, An VIII, No. 76, April 2008, pp. 21-23.

³⁶⁴ Stan, *Revoluția română...*, p. 28.

B. Beginning of the Revolution and the Ascendancy of the Liberal Forces

In February 1848, the likelihood of a serious progressive movement in Wallachia was highly negligible. In the Assembly, the Prince spoke about recent accomplishments and addressed new projects³⁶⁵. Only throughout the lines of the correspondence with the Grand Vizier, a certain degree of seriousness and concern was associated with the alarming news which came from the west of the continent³⁶⁶. And in fact, from some points of view, there were not so many reasons for concern. In Paris, only a small minority of the about one hundred Romanian students openly subscribed to the republican and democratic programs and their doctrinal dissimilarities made any demarche to deal with significant organizational difficulties³⁶⁷.

As the revolutionary wave reached Vienna, thus drawing closer to Bucharest, the latter were finally forced to cooperate and to reach a common position³⁶⁸. Following a period of intense deliberations, the Moldo-Wallachian Parisians agreed, on March 8/20, a general ideological program to stand for. With the sole exception of the agrarian issue, all other features were borrowed from the 1840 movement³⁶⁹. However, the consensus on the actual ways of unleashing the action turned to be more problematic. Bălcescu's proposal regarding an initial start in Wallachia only, and a subsequent expansion to the North-East, was rejected by the Moldavians. The final project, in the form of a simultaneous outset, on which they eventually agreed upon, was fully compromised with Prince Sturdza's brutal intervention³⁷⁰.

During March and April, the activities undertaken by the domestic opposition continued to be rather apathetic. According to French consul, Doré de Nion, only placards and petitions claiming civil rights concession and abolishment of the feudal order managed to disrupt the silence of the Wallachian capital. An anonymous petition made of twenty three articles and comprising precise recommendations for the reform (*e.g.* abolishment of the *corvée* and ranks, peasant allotment, increase of the number of persons entitled to vote,

³⁶⁵ Anul, I, pp. 122, 123.

³⁶⁶ *Idem*, p. 145.

³⁶⁷ Berindei, *Românii și...*, p. 147.

³⁶⁸ Bodea, *op.cit.*, p. 107.

³⁶⁹ *Idem*, p. 108.

³⁷⁰ Dan Berindei, *Epoca unirii* [The Unionist Era], Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, București 1979, p. 20.

limitation of the number of deputies to 120, ministerial responsibility and the revision of the Organic Regulation) was sent to the Prince³⁷¹. In the same time, the Russian authorities got more and more preoccupied. The diplomatic note of Karl Nesselrode, Chancellor of the Russian Empire, dispatched to the General Consul from Bucharest, Charles de Kotzebue, on March 16/28, confirmed the eternal concerns. Any sort of internal disorder would be met with an immediate military intervention³⁷². As a matter of fact, no widespread adherence for a purposeful anti-Russian attempt could be established. In turn, in order to legitimize the reformist movement and to prevent a possible Russian interference, the plotters were energetically trying to gain Prince Bibescu's backing. At that time, the latter was still perceived as the ideal leader the revolutionary patriots could get in order to enforce their program³⁷³.



Prince Gheorghe Bibescu, ruler of Wallachia (1842-1848), by Venrich³⁷⁴.

³⁷¹ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 53.

³⁷² *Idem*, p. 55.

³⁷³ *Idem*, p. 52; Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 26; Iscru, *op.cit.*, p. 19.

³⁷⁴ *Colecția Academiei Române, apud Xenopol, op.cit.*, p. 148.

1. Preparations and Planning

The revolutionary planning reached new stages when the progressive Wallachians residing in Paris were at home. During the first days of April, Bălcescu and A. G. Golescu arrived. They were quickly followed by Brătianu brothers³⁷⁵. This group, to whom Ghica, Rosetti and Nicolae Crețulescu adhered as well, took the initiative of the conspiratorial arrangements. In order to deal with the main logistics issues of the moment, on May 10/22, a Committee and an Executive Commission were established. Due to his immense popularity, the local poet and intellectual Ion Heliade Rădulescu, despite being a proponent of the legalist *modus operandi*, was also co-opted. A similar thing occurred with Ion Cămpineanu, at that time still a living symbol of the older oppositionists³⁷⁶.

In pursuance of their political success, the movement needed military backing and since the recently established militias were filled with patriots, this goal didn't represent an issue. *Frăția*'s ranks were, by that time, stuffed with a considerable number of officers like Captain Nicolae Pleșoianu, Major Christian Tell, Major Ioan Voinescu II, Lieutenants I. Deivos and Alexandru Christofi³⁷⁷.

Compared to the Moldavian movement, the Wallachian opposition was not only more effectively organized, but presented a considerable degree of societal representativeness and diversity. While the little boyars presented the most active and dynamic element, some great boyars, bourgeoisie, urban dwellers and dependent peasants were equally engaged³⁷⁸.

The start of the revolutionary activities, based on the backing of the French government, was planned for April 11/23, the Easter day³⁷⁹. Determined to express the non-violent character of the movement, as well as to take the authorities by surprise, the revolutionaries decided to initiate the uprising simultaneously in three different centres: Ploiești, Islaz and Bucharest³⁸⁰. Shortly after, the French Republican backup proved to be futile and the Provisional Government recommended that no action should be taken without

³⁷⁵ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 59.

³⁷⁶ Members of the Revolutionary Committee: Ștefan Golescu, Nicolae Golescu, Radu C. Golescu, Alexandru C. Golescu-Albu, Dumitru Brătianu, Ion C. Brătianu, Nicolae Bălcescu, Costache Bălcescu, Alexandru C. Golescu-Negru, Constantin A. Rosetti, Cezar Bolliac, Ion Ghica, Ion Eliade, Ion Cămpineanu and Executive Commission: N. Bălcescu, A. G. Golescu-Negru, Ion Ghica (replaced, after May 17/29, by C. A. Rosetti), Iscru, *op.cit.*, p. 61.

³⁷⁷ Popescu, *op.cit.*, p. 88.

³⁷⁸ *Idem*, p. 12.

³⁷⁹ Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 27.

³⁸⁰ Iscru, *op.cit.*, p. 60.

any previous agreement with the Ottomans. Once again, postponement was regarded as the most suitable solution³⁸¹.

In the meantime, the revolutionary developments had been paralleled by an intensification of the repressive measures enforced by the authorities. Under the pressure of Russian General Consul Kotzebue and Extraordinary Commissary Duhamel, Prince Bibescu took the necessary strategic measures in order to isolate the province. The newspapers from Braşov were forbidden, the Transylvanian teachers attending Blaj meeting (in May) were declared *personae non gratae*, and, in early June, some local leaders, like Rosetti and Tell, were arrested³⁸².

In the light of new developments, the revolutionary plans were again reshaped. Instead of a simultaneous start, the uprising was intended to follow the 1821 pattern, with an unique triggering point (in Islaz), followed by a quasi-military march through Dolj, Romanaţi, Argeş, Vlaşca, Dâmboviţa and Ilfov Counties toward the capital³⁸³.

2. Beginning of the Revolution

On June 9/21, after a short religious ritual (*şfeştanie*) was performed, a Proclamation with all the projects for reform, was publicly lectured by Heliade Rădulescu. It bore a clear Western load and represented a classical liberal document associated with the Forty-Eighters literature³⁸⁴. During the entire revolutionary period, *i.e.* from June to September, the Proclamation, in fact a Declaration of Rights, was presented as the main pillar of the regime. In the eye of the executive and for the rest of the leadership it was a true Constitution or, at minimum a Constitutional Project³⁸⁵.

The revolutionary leaders, labelled “God’s Ministers” (*miniştrii lui Dumnezeu*), were blessed and, while an oath was given on the “Constitution” and the Bible, the first Provisional Government, composed of Heliade Rădulescu (a sort of *primus inter pares*³⁸⁶), Ştefan Golescu, Major Tell, Captain Nicolae Pleşoianu and priest Radu Şapcă, was

³⁸¹ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 203; Popescu, *op.cit.*, p. 14.

³⁸² Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 27.

³⁸³ *Idem*, p. 30.

³⁸⁴ Bărbulescu *et alii*, *op.cit.*, p. 300.

³⁸⁵ Gheorghe, *op.cit.* p. 223.

³⁸⁶ Niculescu, *op.cit.*, p. 53.

proclaimed. Enjoying Gheorghe Magheru's backing (at that moment Governor of Romanai County and Commander of all the troops camped in Oltenia) in no time, the remote rebel initiative grew into an escalating enterprise³⁸⁷.

Meanwhile, in Bucharest the movement failed to achieve any strong results. On June 9/21 few juvenile revolutionaries tried to assassinate Prince Bibescu, but their action did nothing more than triggering a disproportionate reaction from the authorities. Many of the leaders were detained and those who were lucky to escape left the venue and dispersed throughout the countryside. However, without even realizing it, the Prince was left without his most effective base of support, the military. Only two days later, when Bibescu's ordinary visit to the barracks turned into a patriotic display of the revolutionary thinking, it became clear that the soldiers of the National Militia were definitely opposing a violent suppression of the movement. It was then only a matter of time until the regime would collapse³⁸⁸.

On a background of uncertainties and doubts and given the lack of any kind of news from Oltenia, in an almost spontaneous manner, on June 11/23, the grand bell of the Metropolitan tower had announced the mobilization of the conspirators³⁸⁹. A group of young revolutionaries read the Proclamation of Islaz to the merchants, tanners and butchers from Lipsani Street. The political developments unfolded with great rapidity and practically without any form of resistance from the establishment. Subsequently, an enthusiast crowd of about 6,000 souls³⁹⁰ compelled the Prince to place his seal on the Constitution and approve the formation of a Provisional Ministry, a sort of Cabinet in miniature, with the following composition: Nicolae Golescu (Ministry of Internal Affairs), Ștefan Golescu (Ministry of Justice), Colonel Ion Odobescu (Head of the Army), Heliade Rădulescu (Ministry of the Ecclesiastical Affairs), Gheorghe Magheru (Ministry of Finance) and Nicolae Bălcescu (Secretary of State). C. A. Rosetti, at that time in detention, was appointed Chief of the Police³⁹¹.

In order to formally express their strong protestation against the latest changes, the Russian top officials, Commissary Duhamel and Consul Kotzebue, left Bucharest. Bibescu, politically isolated, surrounded by progressive forces and fearful of an eventual military

³⁸⁷ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 219.

³⁸⁸ *Idem*, pp. 221, 222; Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 36.

³⁸⁹ *Anul*, I, pp. 595, 596.

³⁹⁰ *Idem*, p. 611; Marin Mihalache, *Generalul Gheorghe Magheru* [General Gheorghe Magheru], Editura Militara, 1969, p. 27.

³⁹¹ *Anul*, I, p. 513.

intervention, abdicated and fled to Braşov (June 13/25-14/26), where most of the conservative members of the Assembly also took refuge. Within that new context, the legitimacy of the revolutionary regime was heavily challenged, and a compromise solution was sought³⁹². Eventually, the nominations were a mélange of radical and moderate revolutionaries, leaders of the older regime (Ion Odobescu), boyars with good reputation (Ion Câmpineanu) and figures with immense societal prestige (Metropolitan Neofit). On June 14/26, the Provisional Ministry was reconfigured as follows: Nicolae Golescu (Ministry of Internal Affairs), Ion Câmpineanu (Ministry of Justice), Colonel Ion Odobescu (Head of the Army), Heliade Rădulescu (Ministry of Public Instruction), Ioan Voinescu II (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a premiere), C. Filipescu (Ministry of Finance) and the formation of a Provisional Government composed of Metropolitan Neofit (Chairman), Heliade Rădulescu, Ştefan Golescu, Christian Tell, Gheorghe Magheru, Gheorghe Scurtu, assisted by four Secretaries (C. A. Rosetti, Bălcescu, A. G. Golescu and I. C. Brătianu) was approved³⁹³.



Group of revolutionaries carrying the tricolour flag (blue, yellow, red) with *Dreptate, Frăție* (Justice, Brotherhood) inscription, both formally consecrated as national symbols in the first decree of the Provisional Government, on June 14/26³⁹⁴.

³⁹² Iscru, *op.cit.*, p. 67; Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 224.

³⁹³ *Anul*, I, p. 564.

³⁹⁴ *Idem*, p. 522.

C. Regime's Safeguards: Administrative Functionaries, Armed Forces and Revolutionary Preaching

During the entire period of the Forty-Eighters's rule, the conservation of power and the defence of the regime they established represented the most ardent and delicate issue to be dealt with. At least during the first days, rapid and unexpected success of the movement had politically paralyzed the reactionary boyars. Nevertheless, shortly after, the things had significantly changed. What was instrumental for the boyar activation was the letter dispatched by Kotzebue from Focșani, in which he basically demanded that the Metropolitan, the formal head of the government, re-establish the *status quo* of June 11/23, either by securing Bibescu's return or by establishing a regency (*Căimăcămie*)³⁹⁵. The same document claimed that the Russian army, in order to correct the immaturity and incapacity of the Moldo-Wallachians elites (*ne peuvent pas se gouverner eux-mêmes*) had already crossed the Prut River in Moldavia³⁹⁶.

This sort of reports placed an immense pressure on the new leadership, of which most were in their twenties and thirties and without any kind of background in terms of conducting political and administrative matters. However, despite the continuous conspiracies of the reactionary forces still residing in the province, the Provisional Government had successfully maintained its political supremacy and quickly recovered after two counter-revolutionary coups on June 19/31 and June 29/July 11.

In turn, the revolutionaries provided a somewhat remarkable answer to the regime's incapacity to militarily defend itself in case of foreign intervention. In the same time, the probability of a Tsarist or Ottoman intervention caused some lesser reformist vigorousness. The non-violent techniques became the most efficient alternatives destined to exhibit the strength and the legitimacy that the Provisional Government and the Regency enjoyed. Under these circumstances, the establishment of the military force at the revolutionaries' disposal was considered a paramount necessity that the authorities appealed to during their early days in power. On June 15/27, some 15-20,000 people assembled in the outskirts of the capital city on a place named *Câmpia Libertății* (Field of Freedom) took the collective oath of

³⁹⁵ *Idem*, pp. 655-657.

³⁹⁶ *Idem*, p. 656.

Constitutional submission³⁹⁷. The merchants and some of the craftsmen, like the tanners from the capital, were truthful defenders of the regime. In addition, the rural inhabitants were equally willing to safeguard the leadership and its policies. To give only a simple example, in late July, during the ongoing Ottoman-Wallachian discussions, some 15,000 peasants were temporarily located in Bucharest³⁹⁸.

Overall, the administration, the organization of the National Guard, the capacity to secure loyalty of the Army and various operations aimed to anchor revolutionary mentality all over the region and consolidate the newborn institutions through political clubs, activism and propaganda, represented facets of the same edifice: the new regime's methodological construct designed to ensure the final triumph of the Constitution.

1. Two Counter-Revolutionary Attempts

Paradoxically, members of the reactionary nobility and landowners took advantages of the newly proclaimed civil rights as much as the progressives did. The right of free assembly allowed them to openly gather and discuss how to overturn the government. On June 19/31, at the Momolo Hall, more than six hundred disgruntled boyars formed the club of the landowners³⁹⁹. Among its leadership were Colonel Ion Odobescu (Chief of the Army) and Colonel Ion Solomon (Chief of the 3rd Regiment). The Government representative, Gheorghe Magheru, tried calming down the spirits by delivering a reassuring message. However, the conservatives were relentless and during the evening of the same day, with the pretext of congratulating the government, the two colonels arrested, "in the name of the landowners", the members of the government present at that time inside the administrative palace (Tell, Eliade, Golescu brothers, Bălcescu, and A. G. Golescu)⁴⁰⁰.

The counter-revolutionary coup's success was but short-lived. The young members of the progressive movement, *e.g.* Ion Brătianu and Cezar Bolliac, managed to mobilize a crowd of about 7,000 residents and what followed had greatly resembled, on a much lesser scale, the Parisian scenes of street fights and barricades⁴⁰¹. Their decisive action allowed government to become once again functional. In the aftermath, at least eight people lost their

³⁹⁷ Bălăceanu, *op.cit.*, p. 31; *Anul*, I, p. 617.

³⁹⁸ Stan, *op.cit.*, pp. 253, 254.

³⁹⁹ *Idem*, p. 226.

⁴⁰⁰ *Anul*, I, pp. XLVIII, 700-703.

⁴⁰¹ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 227.

lives, but the episode demonstrated the degree of popular sustenance that the regime was holding at that time (some 30,000 people took part at the memorial services organized for the victims⁴⁰²). Although there were voices that requested otherwise, the leadership, influenced by Heliade, rejected any kind of vengeful and repressive campaign that would possibly furthermore radicalize the population⁴⁰³.

The reactionary enterprises didn't fade out during the following period. The continuous correspondence between Metropolitan Neofit and Kotzebue credited, less than ten days later, the theory of an inevitable military occupation. On June 27-28/July 9-10, the news of a Russian intervention spread throughout the capital and during the following night, the Government retreated toward the mountainous areas nearby Rucăr. On June 29/July 11, a concerted action against the most recent initiatives was launched. A Regency (*Căimăcămie*) of three, composed of Neofit himself and two boyars: Ban Teodor Văcărescu and Emanoil Băleanu, formally outlawed the Provisional Government and a Circular of the Ministry of Internal Affairs proclaimed the *restitutio in integrum* of all the legal stipulations of the Organic order⁴⁰⁴. During the same day, a Proclamation of the Regency appealed to the functionaries of the Old Regime that had not cooperated with the revolutionaries and invited them to take their offices back⁴⁰⁵. The provincial administration, partially overturned, received orders to destroy the materials issued since June 11/23⁴⁰⁶. At the same time, the Regency tried to establish diplomatic contacts with all foreign representatives present at that time in the province in order to assure them that the revolutionary storm had been overcome⁴⁰⁷.

Nonetheless, the rumours of a so-called invasion of the Tsarist troops were swiftly refuted and the reactionaries had easily lost the upper hand⁴⁰⁸. After only one day in power, the mini regime of restoration was disbanded. The Metropolitan was forced, once again, to reconsider his position and retract the claim that the Provisional Government was a rebellious construct⁴⁰⁹.

⁴⁰² *Anul*, II, p. 35.

⁴⁰³ Stan, *op.cit.*, pp. 227, 228; *Anul*, I, p. 696.

⁴⁰⁴ *Anul*, II, p. 172.

⁴⁰⁵ *Idem*, p. 175.

⁴⁰⁶ *Idem*, p. 171.

⁴⁰⁷ *Idem*, p. 175.

⁴⁰⁸ *Idem*, pp. 325-327.

⁴⁰⁹ *Idem*, p. 174.

Following the defeat of the second coup, even though the order was completely restored in the capital, Russophile boyars silenced and some encouraging news came from Istanbul, the conspiratorial activities proliferated through the immediate surroundings and in Oltenia⁴¹⁰. On July 18/30, the situation in Craiova was described as “almost anarchical” and local authorities, as well as the insufficient members of the National Guard, were overwhelmed⁴¹¹. Local Administrator’s efforts to arrest the leaders of the reactionaries were obstructed by the high level of solidarity existing among the residents of the city. Due to this chronic incapacity for intervention, Craiova continued to represent a command centre for the counter-revolutionary forces for about two more months⁴¹².

2. Governmental Reorganization

During their short period in power, the revolutionary leadership had to deal with the judicious issue of the recognition, both from the Porte and other European states. Given the fact that, beside the Russians, the Ottoman officials also considered the Organic Regulation still in force in Wallachia, the Provisional Government faced a long-standing crisis of external legitimacy. For a considerable time, the former tried to compensate it with some unequivocal demonstrations of public backing. The gathering of June 15/27 was archetypal. Later, when the Special Ottoman Commissary Süleyman Pasha crossed the Danube and settled in Giurgu, the government had no choice than to reorganize itself in accordance with the line exposed by the Porte dignitaries.

On July 23/August 4, amid significant popular mobilization, the Provisional Government voluntarily resigned and rhetorically called the people to appoint a Regency (*Locotenență domnească*)⁴¹³. During the following day, the Publication No. 341 decreed that the former ministers, *i.e.* Metropolitan Neofit, Heliade Rădulescu, Ștefan Golescu, Christian Tell, N. Mincu and Gheorghe Magheru would be the new members of the central administration⁴¹⁴.

However, this formula was also in contradiction with the Ottoman criteria and, at the recommendations of the French and British consuls, on July 28/ August 9, the proposal was

⁴¹⁰ *Idem*, p. 447.

⁴¹¹ *Idem*, pp. 578, 579.

⁴¹² *Idem*, p. 675; *Anul*, III, p. 460.

⁴¹³ *Anul*, II, p. 690.

⁴¹⁴ *Idem*, p. 705.

renewed for only three of them: Heliade Rădulescu, Christian Tell and Nicolae Golescu⁴¹⁵. The Commissar agreed and official contacts with the Regency were settled. Even if for a very short interval, the military occupation of Wallachia had been in this way averted⁴¹⁶.

3. Administration

“In the name of God and Holy Cross, I swear that, from all my strengths, I will be faithful to the Romanian Nation, protecting it against any sort of aggression and oppression. I swear that I will never stand against the interests of the Nation and I will defend, even with the price of my life, the twenty-two articles enacted by the People” (The vow swore by authorities and commoners during the Revolutionary interregnum⁴¹⁷)

The most crucial actors of the regime were the central and local administrations, on whose responsibility fall an immense amount of tasks and a wide range of prerogatives. At the top of this bureaucratic pyramid stood the office of Administrator, one for each of the seventeen counties of Wallachia⁴¹⁸. Their main task was to maintain the internal order and to organize the elections⁴¹⁹. For such purpose, the central authorities would invest a lot of trust into the persons appointed in such positions. As a collective Report of the Vlașca Commissars for the Ministry of Internal Affairs (July 17/29) was stating, in order to best address their essential responsibilities, the Administrators were entitled to “dictatorial powers”. In turn, the latter should have to demonstrate an impeccable reputation as “true Republican and Romanian” and to prove an immense capacity for work and dedication⁴²⁰. A Circular of the Ministry of Internal Affairs from August 6/18 would state that it was expected for him to work “at least twelve hours each day”⁴²¹.

⁴¹⁵ Iscru, *op.cit.*, p. 220; *Anul*, III, pp. 1, 7.

⁴¹⁶ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 254.

⁴¹⁷ *Anul*, I, pp. 591, 592.

⁴¹⁸ Slam-Râmnic, Brăila, Buzău, Prahova, Ialomița, Ilfov, Dâmbovița, Vlașca, Teleorman, Muscel, Argeș, Olt, Romanai, Vâlcea, Dolj, Gorj, Mehedinți.

⁴¹⁹ Nicolae Mihai, “Violență și revoluție în lumea rurală din Oltenia la 1848” [Revolution and Violence in Rural Oltenia During the 1848 Revolution], *Caiete de antropologie istorică*, An I, No. 2, July - December 2002, p. 68.

⁴²⁰ *Anul*, II, p. 565.

⁴²¹ *Anul*, III, pp. 250-252.

Early Administrators were appointed immediately after the movement was launched in Islaz and before the revolutionaries had obtained their final victory. Two Circulars of the Ministry of Internal Affairs from June 13/25 and June 14/26 replaced all leading officials from Slam-Râmnic, Brăila, Buzău, Prahova, Vlașca, Mehedinți, Vâlcea, Gorj, Dolj and Teleorman Counties⁴²². Due to great instability and difficult tasks, the regime was always in search for the most proficient titulars. Only ten days after the first set of appointments, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Report No. 3,412) submitted to the Provisional Government a list of eight new Administrators (the others were reconfirmed)⁴²³. On July 9/21, following the second counter-revolutionary coup, the regime operated some new nominalizations. The scenario was repeated and the Decree No. 207 installed different Administrators in seven counties. The remaining ones were again reconfirmed⁴²⁴.

Some were appointed, most probably, as a result of their satisfactory records, in more than a single county. S. Filipescu coordinated the officials from Slam-Râmnic (since June 13/25), Buzău (since June 23/July 5) and Vlașca (since July 7/19)⁴²⁵ and Costache Cerchez from Vâlcea (since June 14/26) and Muscel (July)⁴²⁶. Others, like Ion Negulici, in Prahova and Dimitrie Goleșcu, in Brăila, also by virtue of their achievements, remained in the same positions throughout the entire interregnum⁴²⁷.

In some other cases, new appointments were required due to the refusal of some Administrators to take over their new tasks. The invocation of medical reasons proved to be symptomatic: on June 23/July 5, the appointed Administrator of Mehedinți found this new position in contradiction with “the very poor state of my health condition”⁴²⁸ and one week later, Olt Administrator motivated a similar decision with his mother’s delicate wellness⁴²⁹.

The early tasks (June 13/25) delivered to the Administrators were mostly related with the preservation of the public order and with the establishment of the National Guard⁴³⁰. In some districts, like Dolj, Gorj, Mehedinți, Vâlcea and Romanați, an additional emphasis was placed on the organization of *pandours* based military forces⁴³¹. On July 6/18, Decree

⁴²² *Anul*, I, pp. 555, 558, 561.

⁴²³ *Anul*, II, p. 39.

⁴²⁴ *Idem*, pp. 358, 359.

⁴²⁵ *Idem*, p. 340.

⁴²⁶ *Anul*, I, p. 294.

⁴²⁷ *Idem*, p. 555.

⁴²⁸ *Anul*, II, p. 41.

⁴²⁹ *Idem*, p. 185.

⁴³⁰ *Anul*, I, p. 555.

⁴³¹ *Idem*, p. 560.

No. 186 informed the Administrators about other priorities. According to this document, in order to achieve peasants' submission, reputable members of the community had to be persuaded and won over the revolutionary side. Each Administrator was supposed to convoke in the Seat County a priest and a local notable from each village. With the latter's help, the authorities intended to convince the workers to continue their agricultural duties until further instructions⁴³². In other cases, the Administrator received tasks that might resemble superficial but which, for the Provisional Government were essential. For example, the Address No. 4,173 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to Ilfov Administration from July 14/26 stated that the Administrator had to supervise the transfer of some "six charts filled with wildflowers" which would be used to decorate the theatre hall where the Ottoman Commissar would be present⁴³³.

As the revolutionary regime stabilized, the instructions turned more explicit and conclusive. A Resolution of the Ministry of Interior (July 17/29), followed by a Circular of the Ministry of Internal Affairs from August 6/18, gave the Administrators authority to provide a pro-revolutionary personnel in all key positions of the district (Secretary, Policeman and District Administrators)⁴³⁴. Besides that, the document reiterated the competences that Administrators had in term of spreading the revolutionary discourse, counter the reactionary activities, vitalize the peasants and "teach them what equality means"⁴³⁵. Also, according to a later set of instructions (Circular No. 5,388 of August 13/25), they were in charge of overseeing the activities of the Commissars and to intervene if a radical line was implemented⁴³⁶.

To establish the precise degree of Administrators' accomplishments it's basically impossible and the sources accounts for a diversity of developments. If in Buzău County the prospects were so positive that the Ministry had officially congratulated the local authorities⁴³⁷, in Vlașca, a report of the County Inspector from early September, stated that the revolutionaries failed to achieve any significant progress: the Guard was practically non-existing, the lower functionaries were not loyal to the new regime, the population of the

⁴³² *Anul*, II, pp. 315, 316.

⁴³³ *Idem*, p. 506.

⁴³⁴ *Idem*, p. 566.

⁴³⁵ *Anul*, III, pp. 250-252.

⁴³⁶ *Idem*, p. 412.

⁴³⁷ *Anul*, IV, p. 150.

county was distrustful, the vow was performed in few places only and the Commissars were rather apathetic and inconstant⁴³⁸.

Regarding the middle (Administrator of District) and lower level (Secretary, Mayor, Policeman, Village “Chancellor” or *logofăt, et cætera*) of civil functionaries, especially during the first weeks of the regime, little change was undertaken. Like in France, even if considerable uncertainties of allegiance did exist, their presence was essential in order to hold the regime on its feet⁴³⁹. Where the former authorities submitted and no defiance was paraded, (*e.g.* Vâlcea County) the following developments were most unproblematic⁴⁴⁰. In addition, cholera and emigration caused by the fear of eventual revolutionary incidents made most of the provincial functionaries abandon their posts. This was especially the case of the judiciary. The former’s firmness could not be favourably addressed even at the intervention of the Ottoman Commissar from August 1/13, and had to be reiterated by the Regency, though the Decree No. 409 four days later⁴⁴¹. Regarding the civil functionaries, the majority of them did return to their positions after continuous governmental insistences and after the epidemic died out (in Romanați and Teleorman Counties this situation persisted until August 19/31⁴⁴²). In many cases, the District Administrators were fearful and preferred to isolate themselves at the headquarters and not pursue an active campaign on the field⁴⁴³.

Due to regime’s weakness, a considerable number of officials continued to disobey the revolutionary policies. The latter decided to adopt a stronger position on July 16/28, when the Decree No. 295 requested that the Administrators appoint only trustable individuals as District Administrators, Policemen and Mayors⁴⁴⁴. Nonetheless, the directives set in motion a slow process that recorded only moderate progress, thus forcing the Ministry of Internal Affairs to renew the order on August 6/18⁴⁴⁵.

As stated, the main responsibility of the revolutionary authorities was the preservation of the internal lawfulness⁴⁴⁶. In order to correct the eventual abuses of the Administrators and oversee the ways in which they settled the conflicts between individuals,

⁴³⁸ *Idem*, p. 149.

⁴³⁹ Sperber, *op.cit.*, pp. 148, 149.

⁴⁴⁰ *Anul*, II, p. 105.

⁴⁴¹ *Anul*, III, pp. 144, 244.

⁴⁴² *Idem*, pp. 233, 601.

⁴⁴³ *Anul*, II, p. 564.

⁴⁴⁴ *Idem*, p. 535.

⁴⁴⁵ *Anul*, III, p. 251.

⁴⁴⁶ *Anul*, I, p. 570.

groups and other functionaries, the office of County Inspector was established. On August 6/18, the Decree No. 410, appointed two such officials in Muntenia or Great Wallachia, the eastern half of the province⁴⁴⁷.

4. Propaganda and the Expansion of the Revolutionary Phenomenon

The project to expand the movement throughout the entire province had two main objectives. The first was of a rather missionary character and targeted especially the villagers. They were potentially the most efficacious social forces that could fundamentally guarantee the triumph of the revolution's program. However, on the field, the circumstances were alarming. In many places, the lack of instruction and the power vacuum created numerous epicentres of insubordination that would complicate their undertakings. On the other side, the Commissars for Propaganda (or simply Commissars), *i.e.*, the officials responsible to maintain the high zeal of the movement, had a complementary commitment alike. They were charged to observe and counter the activities of the reactionary forces and prepare a safe environment for the upcoming elections⁴⁴⁸.

The actual creators of this body were A. G. Golescu and Nicolae Bălcescu⁴⁴⁹. They once again took inspiration from France, where, in the same year, Alexandre Auguste Ledru-Rollin established a similar body⁴⁵⁰. Decree No. 90 (of June 24/July 6) stated that, in order to counter the misinterpretations of the Governmental directives and ideology, one or two Commissars would be issued for every county⁴⁵¹. In those positions, the Provisional Government intended to distribute capable and devout revolutionaries whose loyalty was beyond any doubt⁴⁵². Many were young educated and nationalist Transylvanians and at least twelve of them were recruited by A. G. Golescu from Braşov and Sibiu⁴⁵³. In addition to the one hundred regular Commissars recorded in the entire province, the Decree No. 92 from June 24/July 6, instituted an auxiliary body of schoolteachers, headmasters and candidates for

⁴⁴⁷ *Anul*, III, p. 262.

⁴⁴⁸ *Idem*, pp. 105-107.

⁴⁴⁹ *Anul*, II, p. 618.

⁴⁵⁰ Nicolae Mihai, *Revoluție și mentalitate în Țara Românească: 1821-1848. O istorie culturală a evenimentului politic* [Revolution and Mentality in Wallachia: A Cultural History], Aius PrintEd, Craiova 2010, p. 220.

⁴⁵¹ *Anul*, II, p. 56.

⁴⁵² *Anul*, III, pp. 105-108.

⁴⁵³ *Anul*, VI, p. LXV; Carpatinus, *op.cit.*, p. 406.

positions of educators aimed to assist the former⁴⁵⁴. Nonetheless, the campaign of explaining the revolutionary message to the population was not going smoothly and the same order had to be issued again through a Circular of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on July 9/21⁴⁵⁵.

The Commissars themselves received contradicting instructions, to appease landowners and encourage villagers, and most of them proved a high degree of dedication especially regarding the second part. A set of Instructions dispatched to them in July, presented the work of a Commissary eminently as a field one, responsible to approach “with brotherly words” both peasants and landowners and “instil to the peasants the affection for freedom and rights”⁴⁵⁶. They played a central role, almost liturgical, amidst the political ritual purposely conceived to gain the subscription of the population. Not without cause, they were labelled “priests of the Constitution”⁴⁵⁷ and it was in their hands to establish a durable communion between the revolutionary discourse and the masses of peasants⁴⁵⁸.

In most cases, the activity of the Commissars reduced to the organization of public meetings with the residents of a specific area. The people, gathered at churches, monasteries or in open air, were spectators to the public reading of the Proclamation and speeches of local personalities: Administrator, Commissar, Schoolmaster. The tricolour flag was blessed and hoisted, and the amounts of documents issued by the Old Regime were ceremoniously ignited. In many regions, the most elaborated services were organized on June 20/July 2 (Vâlcea and Călărași Counties)⁴⁵⁹. In some fastidious occasions, the ritual included rifle volleys, public lightings, toasts with champagne, bread and wine distributions for functionaries and poor and ended with dances⁴⁶⁰.

The regional conditions and the determination of each Commissar were essential. In July, when the propaganda was systemically inaugurated and the Commissars were present all over the province, they faced a harsh reality: a considerable part of the villagers were uncooperative and aggressive⁴⁶¹. In many areas, the power vacuum allowed the villagers to disregard the previous regulations. The owners’ monopoly for commercializing alcoholic

⁴⁵⁴ *Anul*, II, p. 60.

⁴⁵⁵ *Idem*, p. 360, 361.

⁴⁵⁶ *Anul*, III, pp. 105-107.

⁴⁵⁷ *Anul*, II, pp. 201-203.

⁴⁵⁸ Mihai, *op.cit.*, p. 253.

⁴⁵⁹ *Anul*, I, pp. 689, 684.

⁴⁶⁰ *Anul*, II, p. 2.

⁴⁶¹ Apostol Stan, *Revoluția de la 1848 în Țara Românească: boieri și țărani* [Romanian Revolution of 1848: Boyars and Peasants], Editura Saeculum I.O., București 1998, p. 154; *Anul*, III, p. 97.

drinks was violated⁴⁶² and they were disposing at will of some of their possessions: fishing lakes (cases recorded in Ilfov, Dolj, Mehedinți Counties), grape and fruit fields, forests⁴⁶³ (Ilfov, Teleorman, Olt, Romanați, Dolj, Mehedinți Counties)⁴⁶⁴, heystacks (Gorj)⁴⁶⁵. When the authorities tried to address these issues, the villagers simply ignored the orders and the armed forces had to assist the administrations (Orders of July 10/22 and July 15/27). Even if this practice was rather ineffective, the revolutionaries did generally refrain from using regular troops in order to re-establish the discipline across the districts (a sole case was recorded in Ialomița County)⁴⁶⁶.

It is impossible to determine the exact rapport between the cases of revolutionary submission and regime failure to impose itself. The Inspector of Prahova, Dâmbovița and Muscel reported a highly satisfactory picture: the campaigns of the Commissars met their purpose and most of the inhabitants (villagers and landowners) accepted the new authorities and Guard was established. Due to their accomplishments, the Inspector proposed the number of Commissars be reduced to two in each District⁴⁶⁷.

Overall, the propaganda scored almost equal volume of realizations as drawbacks. In Pitești District (Argeș County), the villagers influenced by reactionary boyars and priests, refused to accept the “flags of liberty” (August 7/19)⁴⁶⁸. In Teleorman County, during July and August, from a total number of two hundred villages, the vow was performed only in seventy-two⁴⁶⁹. In Romanați County (August 13/25), both the guard and the vow were far from being concluded⁴⁷⁰. Meanwhile, on August 5/17, in one department of Buzău County, the mission was almost completed⁴⁷¹. In regions with unfolding cholera epidemic (Vâlcea County, July⁴⁷²) and with a significant number of foreign residents (Brăila was basically a Greek and Bulgarian colony), the population proved rather insensitive toward the revolutionary calls⁴⁷³. The same occurred in the villages inhabited by privileged peasants who

⁴⁶² Corfus, *op.cit.*, pp. 111, 112.

⁴⁶³ Popescu, *op.cit.*, pp. 124, 125.

⁴⁶⁴ *Idem*, pp. 122, 123.

⁴⁶⁵ *Idem*, p. 105.

⁴⁶⁶ *Idem*, pp. 107, 108.

⁴⁶⁷ *Anul*, IV, pp. 169, 170.

⁴⁶⁸ *Anul*, III, p. 277.

⁴⁶⁹ *Anul*, I, p. 504; *Anul*, III, p. 118.

⁴⁷⁰ *Idem*, p. 402.

⁴⁷¹ *Idem*, p. 241.

⁴⁷² *Anul*, II, p. 593.

⁴⁷³ *Idem*, p. 660.

felt estranged by the prospect of losing their fiscal and social advantages⁴⁷⁴. The Commissar of Dâmbovița Department (Muscel County) reported, on July 19/31, that within such a community, despite all his efforts to establish the guards and organize the vow, little or nothing was achieved⁴⁷⁵.

In other instances, the initiative was more successful. On July 16/28, Commissar of Nucșoara Department (Muscel County), informed the Ministry of Internal Affairs that most of the villagers were showing receptivity towards his approach⁴⁷⁶. According to a Report of a Commissar from Buzău County (August 2/13), from the thirty-three villages he visited, none posed significant problems and the inhabitants were all orderly performing their agricultural duties⁴⁷⁷. Similar news came from Râmnicul de Sus District (Slam-Râmnic County)⁴⁷⁸, Olt⁴⁷⁹ and Teleorman Department (of Teleorman County)⁴⁸⁰. In Ocolul District (Romanați County), the proceeding had even reached the phase of the electoral preparations⁴⁸¹.

In some cases, however, the passion and fanaticism displayed by various Commissars during their Jacobin activities (Gorj County, July⁴⁸²) alarmed the authorities and their repeated calls for offensives against the landowners made the Ministry of Internal Affairs to step in⁴⁸³. On August 13/25, the Administrators were finally assigned to identify and remove from their positions the overzealous agents⁴⁸⁴.

In conclusion, even though the high-ranking Wallachian officials did declare, in early September, that the Commissars had greatly achieved their tasks⁴⁸⁵, the drawbacks of the revolutionary efforts were self-evident. On August 24/September 5, the Commissars of Vlașca County reported to the Regency that the rhetoric used was now insufficient and something eminently practical was required as to prevent the widespread disaffection of the

⁴⁷⁴ *Idem*, p. 746; Corfus, *op.cit.*, p. 110.

⁴⁷⁵ *Anul*, II, p. 589.

⁴⁷⁶ *Idem*, p. 534.

⁴⁷⁷ *Anul*, III, p. 166.

⁴⁷⁸ *Idem*, p. 146.

⁴⁷⁹ *Anul*, II, p. 748.

⁴⁸⁰ *Idem*, pp. 774-776.

⁴⁸¹ *Idem*, p. 745.

⁴⁸² *Idem*, p. 588.

⁴⁸³ Popescu, *op.cit.*, p. 65.

⁴⁸⁴ *Anul*, III, p. 412.

⁴⁸⁵ *Anul*, IV, p. 169.

villagers⁴⁸⁶. However, given the current priorities of the revolutionary leadership, their warnings were unanswered.

5. The Armed Forces: Regular Troops, National Guards, *Pandours*

Prior to the revolution, regular armed forces of Wallachia were comprised of three infantry regiments, three cavalry divisions, three barges on the Danube, one artillery battery and one firefighter company⁴⁸⁷. They were expected to number about 10,000 troops⁴⁸⁸, but in reality the statistics were rather deplorable. Furthermore, in addition to its numerical scarcity, the loyalty of the soldiers was questionable and the Provisional Government had to come up with complementary ways of ensuring a fair military and public protection. The mobilization of the fighters from Oltenia, the *pandours* and the creation of a body of armed citizens were the solutions that the authorities had eventually embraced.

A Ministry of War, headed by Christian Tell, was created⁴⁸⁹ and Decree No. 123 (of June 28/July 10) established its bureaucratic structure. The main aim was to organize the current forces of the militia, local gendarmerie (*dorobants*) and recruit some new ones, *pandours* and voluntaries⁴⁹⁰.

The recruitment and organization of the irregular forces were coordinated by General Magheru, appointed “Captain General of the all non-regular forces, *dorobants*, voluntaries from Romania and general inspector of the National Guards” on June 18/30 (Decree No. 39) and June 21/July 3 (Decree No. 59). Still, things were hardly progressing. On June 25/July 7, the Administrator of Romanați reported that only an insignificant number of *pandours* enrolled (twenty-five). Low retribution⁴⁹¹ and cholera epidemic⁴⁹² were among the reasons that made the locals think twice before engaging in something they perceived as an uncertain effort. Later, the total number of active *dorobants* gathered by Magheru throughout Oltenia reached, on August 9/21, a thousand souls and during the following week a body of six thousand volunteers was formed⁴⁹³. Nonetheless, due to financial reasons, they

⁴⁸⁶ *Anul*, III, p. 647.

⁴⁸⁷ Iscru, *op.cit.*, p. 139.

⁴⁸⁸ *Anul*, II, p. 276.

⁴⁸⁹ *Idem*, p. 274.

⁴⁹⁰ *Idem*, pp. 153-156.

⁴⁹¹ *Idem*, p. 78.

⁴⁹² *Idem*, p. 517.

⁴⁹³ *Anul*, III, p. 297.

were at that moment disbanded⁴⁹⁴. In early September, in an increasingly unfavourable environment, the Ministry of Internal Affairs decided that all the available forces had to be mobilized⁴⁹⁵.

The National Guard, a typical creation of the democratic revolutions, was especially acknowledged in the Western world since 1789. In Wallachia, its establishment was one of the first political demarches of the new regime and represented the way in which the backing of the middle-class townsmen and villagers was institutionalized⁴⁹⁶. It represented a relative success in towns and borough where its membership had a significant foreign composition⁴⁹⁷. Transylvanian Saxon, Austrian, Jew, Greek, Armenian, Magyar, Polish, French and Italian ethnics were all endorsing the regime in the capital⁴⁹⁸. Modest persuasive skills and acute need of manpower eventually made the authorities form an auxiliary body of hired guards, on June 21/July 3⁴⁹⁹. In order to counter the poor participation, the Provisional Government adopted, in July, a project which stated that every male resident aged twenty-one to fifty years old would become a *de jure* member of the Guard (Decree No. 60)⁵⁰⁰.

Through the districts, the main responsibility regarding the creation of the Guard belonged to Administrators and Commissars. The fact that the Guardist could be mobilize in case of invasion against the Russian forces, made most peasants to adopt a very prudent position⁵⁰¹. Despite of all the assurances, in some cases, the authorities eventually gave in and accepted that the mentality of the villagers was implacable. For example, in Vlaşca County, on September 1/13, the Guard was not established⁵⁰².

Promoting loyal militaries was the preferred way of the revolutionaries to express the Governmental gratitude following sensitive moments when their assistance proved essential. Shortly after the first counter-revolutionary coup, Decrees No. 50 and No. 51 (June 20/July 2) announced a series of advancements. Among other, Captain Pleşoianu became

⁴⁹⁴ *Idem*, p. 542.

⁴⁹⁵ *Anul*, IV, p. 152.

⁴⁹⁶ *Anul*, I, p. 564.

⁴⁹⁷ *Anul*, II, p. 36.

⁴⁹⁸ Niculescu, *op.cit.*, p. 125.

⁴⁹⁹ *Anul*, II, p. 12.

⁵⁰⁰ *Idem*, pp. 14, 15, 291.

⁵⁰¹ *Idem*, p. 654.

⁵⁰² *Anul*, IV, p. 149.

Major and Christian Tell was elevated from the rank of Colonel to General, Pleșoianu from Major to Colonel and Chief of the 3rd Regiment⁵⁰³.

In this chapter, the author examined the historical background of the principality, the revolutionary arrangements and the bureaucratic aspects of the revolutionary interregnum. The following chapter will place emphasis on the foreign agenda of the revolutionary government, on the doctrinal clashes between the most vital local matters (property over land, civil and political rights, equality, freedom of expression) and on the overall contribution of the Forty-Eighters to the Romanian modern history.



⁵⁰³ *Anul*, I, p. 688.

CHAPTER III

A CASE OF REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNANCE

A. Foreign affairs

In terms of international affairs, Wallachia benefited from a special position. Even though the province, together with Moldavia, officially belonged to the Ottoman Empire, the late advances of the Russian offensive had substantially reshaped the regional equilibrium. Because of that, during summer events of 1848, the Tsarist position had to be taken into consideration by all involved actors. Against Saint Petersburg, the Wallachian revolutionaries alone had no chances of success. As any project of armed resistance was out of the question, the only reliable settlement left was diplomatic. Another ideal scenario was to secure Porte's backing, along with some support from France and United Kingdom. However, this projection was highly unrealistic: the former was insufficiently strong, and the latter had no serious reason to get involved. The Ottoman Empire, confronted with severe military shortages, couldn't unilaterally act nor maintain, for a considerable amount of time, an orientation that would disregard the Russian interests.

On June 5/17, prior to launch their actions, the revolutionaries approached Ottoman officials and submitted them a memorandum that was rebuking the Organic Regulation and the Russian protectorate. Other diplomatic representatives of the Great Powers were equally approached. However, the reactions were far from being encouraging⁵⁰⁴.

The diplomatic enterprises of the Provisional Government and of the later formed Regency, followed two distinctive routes. First, contacts with foreign representatives found at that time in Bucharest were maintained and the authorities formally notified them about the most important developments, among others: the formation of a new political leadership (June 14/26⁵⁰⁵) and of the counter-revolutionary coup of June 19/31⁵⁰⁶. In turn, lacking a formal recognition from the Ottomans and without clear instructions from their ministers, the consuls were reluctant to approach the revolutionaries. Following Süleyman Pasha's

⁵⁰⁴ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 210.

⁵⁰⁵ *Anul*, I, p. 565.

⁵⁰⁶ *Idem*, p. 689.

recommendation (August 2/14), with the exception of the Russian representative, all members of the diplomatic body established official relations with the new authorities⁵⁰⁷.

The second route comprised lobbyist demarches through most important political and diplomatic centres of the time: Istanbul, Paris, Vienna and Frankfurt. Governments and Parliaments were equally appealed, but eventually the enterprises proved to be overdue. The first initiatives of Dumitru Brătianu, aiming to establish a political alliance with the liberals of Pest and Vienna failed⁵⁰⁸ and the decision to send a Wallachian emissary in France was simply taken too late⁵⁰⁹. Subsequently, on July 22/August 3, Ion Maiorescu was chosen to promote the Romanian case in front of the German Confederation. Regardless the cordial welcoming and interest of the Foreign Minister Anton von Schmerling, before any significant progress could be recorded, the revolutionary government in Bucharest ceased to exist⁵¹⁰.

1. Wallachian-Ottoman Relations

Since first news arrived from Paris, the Ottoman authorities were carefully following the revolutionary events on the continent and, as the movement spread eastwards, a set of administrative and military precautionary measures were adopted⁵¹¹. On the other side, for the Wallachians, to maintain constant contacts with the Porte represented the utmost priority. On May 17/29, the Executive Commission secretly chose to place Ion Ghica in Istanbul⁵¹². His presence in the Ottoman capital was meant to prevent the eruption of a clashing situation within suzerain-subject relationship and to counter the Russian lobby. In order to justify the revolutionary movement, Ghica, in a Memorandum presented to the Porte and to the foreign Ambassadors in Istanbul, claimed that the Organic Regulation, endorsed by the Neva Cabinet, failed in its mission of becoming a vehicle for modernization in both Wallachia and Moldavia⁵¹³. In addition, with the help of the French officials and Divan's Dragoman, Ghica

⁵⁰⁷ *Anul*, III, p. 167.

⁵⁰⁸ Iscru, *op.cit.*, p. 143.

⁵⁰⁹ *Anul*, II, p. 620.

⁵¹⁰ *Anul*, IV, p. 276.

⁵¹¹ Hamiyet Sezer Feyzioğlu, "1848 İhtilalleri Sırasında Osmanlı Devleti'nin Balkanlar ve Adalar'da Aldığı Önlemler", *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Tarih Bölümü Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Vol. 25, No. 39, pp. 51, 52, 54, 55, 57, 58.

⁵¹² Dan Berindei, "Osmanlı Devleti ve Eflâk'taki 1848 İhtilâli", XIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi, 4-8 Ekim 1999, Vol. III, No. 1, p. 134.

⁵¹³ *Anul*, II, pp. 198-201.

was able to meet Rifaat Pasha, the Ottoman Minister of War. Despite that he was welcomed “*avec bonté*”, it turned impossible to reach any sort of factual agreement⁵¹⁴.

Following the success of the revolution, on June 15/27, Ioan Voinescu II, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, informed his Ottoman counterpart of the latest evolutions and gave positive assurances regarding the objectives of the Wallachian “*revolution pacifique*”⁵¹⁵. On June 27/July 9, an official Address imploring Sultan Abdülmeçid to approve the Constitution was dispatched to Istanbul. The same guarantees were reiterated: the events from Bucharest, labelled “*mouvement unanime, spontané, pacifique*”, presented no intention to alter the rights of any power inside the province and displayed no wish for independence⁵¹⁶.

In early July, news that the Sultan, with the exception of few articles, approved the Constitution and Ghica was officially recognized as Capuchehaia (*kapı kahyası*)⁵¹⁷ gave birth to extensive optimism among the Wallachians who were, at that time, struggling to earn the good will of Ottoman emissaries⁵¹⁸. Even though he was carrying an irreconcilable message from Istanbul, aimed to annihilate the latter’s “*actes illégaux*” and to “*rétablir l’ordre et la tranquillité*”⁵¹⁹, Süleyman Pasha and his companion, Tinghir Efendi, were treated with immense consideration⁵²⁰. On August 8/20, a sumptuous welcoming ceremony was organized. Two arches of triumph were erected and about 40,000 inhabitants cheered in favour of the Commissar⁵²¹. His decision to recognize the Regency was most unexpected and perceived as a fundamental victory for the new regime⁵²².

Nonetheless, the positive developments in Wallachia were swiftly countered by the Russian aggressive intervention in Istanbul. In a diplomatic note, the Tsar pressed the Sultan to condemn the regime adjustments, the conduct of his Commissar and to order the Ottoman troops to occupy Bucharest⁵²³. From this point onwards, a new phase of the Wallachian diplomacy was inaugurated. The helplessness of the revolutionary project was confirmed

⁵¹⁴ *Anul*, I, p. 610.

⁵¹⁵ *Idem*, pp. 594, 595.

⁵¹⁶ *Anul*, II, p. 146.

⁵¹⁷ *Idem*, p. 376.

⁵¹⁸ *Idem*, p. 322.

⁵¹⁹ *Idem*, pp. 607, 608.

⁵²⁰ *Idem*, p. 578; Maciu, *op.cit.*, p. 389.

⁵²¹ *Anul*, II, p. 363.

⁵²² *Anul*, III, pp. 18, 376.

⁵²³ Andrei Alexandru Căpușan, “Diplomați, diplomație și acțiune diplomatică românească la 1848” [Diplomats, Diplomacy and Diplomatic Romanian Actions], *Historia*, An VIII, No. 84, December 2008, p. 43.

with Fuad Efendi's appointment as the third Commissar responsible for the Danubian Principalities. Equipped with a harsh rhetoric and condemning the "*actes révolutionnaires*", he was determined to finally restore the order of the Organic Regulation in collaboration with the Russians led by Duhamel⁵²⁴.

2. Wallachian-Russian Relations

Despite the fact that since the 18th century and especially during the first half of the 19th century Russia was perceived as the genuine protector of South-East European Christianity, the Forty-Eighters, obsessed with the annexationist theme and threats, aimed to reverse this tendency. For them, the uncomplicated domination of a decaying empire was most convenient⁵²⁵.

On March 14/26, when the revolutionary tide started to gather steam throughout the Western Europe, Tsar Nicholas formally condemned the events. Two days later (March 16/28), Chancellor Nesselrode delivered his instructions to the Russian representative from Wallachia and Moldavia⁵²⁶. The document, which eventually became public, stated that the Protector would not tolerate any subversive manoeuvre designed to alter the *status quo*⁵²⁷.

Following the success of the revolution, on June 12/24, Russian General Consul Kotzebue protested against the latest regime change and withdrawn from Bucharest⁵²⁸. In a preventive move, the Russian forces unilaterally entered Moldavia on June 18/30. Their main aim was to hamper the extension of the movement eastwards and to alarm the new government of Wallachia. In turn, the Provisional Government and the Regency naively tried to approach the Tsar and ask him, with an almost menacing tone, to recognize the state of affairs after June 11/23 by invoking its popular legitimacy and Western support⁵²⁹.

All in all, during the entire revolutionary interregnum, Russia proved to be the most redoubtable adversary of the Constitution. Its main channel of intervention was Istanbul, where the able Russian diplomacy was neutralizing Ghica's struggles⁵³⁰. Additionally, a

⁵²⁴ *Anul*, III, pp. 656-669.

⁵²⁵ Boia, *op.cit.*, pp. 258-259; Jelavich, *Russia and...*, p. 39.

⁵²⁶ *Anul*, I, p. 168.

⁵²⁷ *Idem*, p. 169.

⁵²⁸ *Idem*, p. 544.

⁵²⁹ *Anul*, II, pp. 58, 59.

⁵³⁰ *Anul*, III, p. 752.

campaign portraying the Wallachian movement as a rebellious act headed by a minority was set up with the sole purpose to discredit and delegitimize⁵³¹. Finally, on July 19/31, the Russian Cabinet, appealing to Bucharest, Akkerman and Adrianople/Edirne Treaties, announced its intention to intervene against the “*minorité turbulente*” that was controlling the province⁵³².

3. Wallachian-French Relations

Prior to the 1848 Revolutions, French officials and diplomatic representatives expressed mostly disinterest for the Danubian Principalities. From time to time, the two provinces, regarded as intermediary spots between the Ottoman Empire and Russia, would gain some ephemeral strategic weight within the geopolitical calculations⁵³³.

Despite the existence of a doctrinal and personal bond, the Provisional Government didn't rush to approach the Republicans in Paris⁵³⁴. When the plans for a Hungarian alliance failed, the Wallachian attention shifted more westwards. However, the France of July didn't resemble anymore with the France they left behind in April⁵³⁵. Following the counter-revolutionary coup, the Wallachian establishment appealed once again to the French authorities. The need for sponsorship was renewed: “we ask [France] no sacrifice, no manpower, nor material; but to speak in Europe in our favour and publicly declare itself ready to military intervene against any armed assault [on Wallachia]”⁵³⁶.

Meanwhile, the Wallachian lobby in Istanbul managed to gain General Aupick's support and on June 15/27, Voinescu II had explicitly asked the former's assistance in matter of Ghica's recognition too⁵³⁷. However, as the general was in a delicate position himself (the French Republic was not recognized by the Ottoman Empire until August 13/25) and without specific instructions from Paris, little could have been done. His Memorandum attempted to rebuke the Russian critics by claiming that the Wallachian movement was nothing more than

⁵³¹ Iscru, *op.cit.*, p. 227.

⁵³² *Anul*, II, p. 609.

⁵³³ Muntean, *op.cit.*, p. 122.

⁵³⁴ *Anul*, II, p. 134.

⁵³⁵ Iordache, *Pe urmele...*, p. 95.

⁵³⁶ *Anul*, I, p. 681.

⁵³⁷ *Idem*, p. 593.

an inoffensive attempt focusing on domestic reform. However, it wasn't enough to convince Ottoman Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rifaat Pasha, of the Bucharest's good intentions⁵³⁸.

After the second reactionary coup, the revolutionaries were faced with a dramatic reality. Regime's capacity for self-defence was fragile and urgent solutions had to be considered. On July 1/13, Ghica solicited General Aupick the French military (20,000 rifles) and diplomatic assistance⁵³⁹ and for a moment, he managed to gain his interest for the military resources of the region. Shortly after, three subalterns of the general were on their way to Serbia, Wallachia and Moldavia⁵⁴⁰. On the other hand, in early August, the Regency had finally placed A. G. Golescu as its agent in Paris. His mission had trustful goals: make the French Cabinet and Parliament discuss the Wallachian issues, buy some 50,000 rifles, obtain a loan to establish a national bank and persuade the French to adopt a more active position in Istanbul⁵⁴¹. Eventually, partial accomplishment did occur, but the time was no longer on the Wallachians' side.

B. Revolutionary Discourse and Governmental Approaches

In Wallachia, similar to many other regions of the continent, the 1848 Revolution inaugurated a new political paradigm. In Bucharest, between the Forty-Eighters and the classic elite existed an impassable cleavage. The former's way of thinking, behaving and speaking differed from their predecessors, and their discourses were incomprehensible for most of the residents. This phenomenon, sometimes labelled "Lamartinian revolution" had deeply influenced the developments throughout the interregnum⁵⁴². To assure that their intentions and, more importantly, their discourses made sense in villagers' minds was truly challenging. In many cases, this was the starting point of a plethora of complications the regime had to deal with.

⁵³⁸ *Anul*, II, pp. 195-197.

⁵³⁹ *Idem*, p. 233.

⁵⁴⁰ *Idem*, p. 686.

⁵⁴¹ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 247; *Anul*, III, p. 148.

⁵⁴² Iordache, *Principatele române...*, p. 221.

The Proclamation, although essential in securing the popular support and instrumental during the revolutionary ceremonials (vows) was nothing more than a possibility, a prospect and a scenario that might at one point occur⁵⁴³.



Seals used by the Provisional Government and Regency⁵⁴⁴

Beyond that, from its beginning, due to the great ideological pluralism of the leadership, the movement proved to be made of two irreconcilable groups, divided, before anything else, by the final goal and by the ways to achieving it⁵⁴⁵. The moderates, headed by Heliade Rădulescu, Christian Tell and Nicolae Golescu, imaged a practical and realistic plan of reforms enforceable only with the Ottoman blessing. On the other hand, the radicals, with their main spokesman Nicolae Bălcescu, had a self-sufficient and self-reliant movement in mind, based on the most advanced democratic thoughts of the time. A unique *modus operandi* never existed and, in many ways, this factionalism could explain the adjustability and unskillfulness in drafting and enforcing the governmental policies. In other words, during the entire period they had been in power, the revolutionary authorities had to reconcile the text of the Proclamation with the concerns and suspicions of the boyars, along with the pressing agricultural matters of the province.

1. Civil Rights

As a typical creation of the European liberalism, the Proclamation placed a strong emphasis on individual and civil rights, as well as on the active involvement of citizens in

⁵⁴³ Stanomir, *op.cit.*, pp. 204, 216, 217.

⁵⁴⁴ *Anul*, III, p. 777.

⁵⁴⁵ Stanomir, *op.cit.*, p. 175.

societal matters⁵⁴⁶. From this point of view, the document significantly resembled a classic Declaration of Rights occasionally amalgamated with a political program of state-building and reform⁵⁴⁷.

By asserting that “every Romanian is free, every Romanian is a boyar, every Romanian is a Prince”, the Article No. 2 proclaimed equal political rights for every inhabitant of the province and, since all the old titles of privileged were abolished (Article No. 17), encouraged the citizens to manifest themselves⁵⁴⁸. In addition, Article No. 21 announced that political rights would be enjoyed no matter of one’s religion or confession. Two provisions (Articles No. 18 and 19) annunciated that all types of corporal punishments, aimed to “discredit citizens’ dignity” and the death penalty were, from then on, against the law⁵⁴⁹.

Once in power, the Provisional Government maintained its revolutionary enthusiasm and a series of enforcing decrees were issued. The Decree No. 2, of June 14/26, had officially put an end to the existence of civil ranks⁵⁵⁰. Dated at the same day, Decree No. 7, abolished in civil and military matters the physical and the capital punishments. In consonance with the gravity of each sentence, imprisonment would have had replaced the corporal beatings⁵⁵¹. By Decree No. 21 of June 16/28, all those convicted for political doings were released of charge⁵⁵².

Free exertion of the political rights was consolidated by the informal encouragement that came from the revolutionary leadership and citizens were advised to assemble and politically organize in clubs or associations⁵⁵³.

a. Freedom of Expression (Speech, Writing, Printing)

In 1848, wherever the revolutionary movements triumphed, the censorship was eliminated. An unprecedented quantitative and qualitative wave of media output was recorded. If in Austria, during Metternich era, the journals authorized for print were only

⁵⁴⁶ Bărbulescu *et alii*, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

⁵⁴⁷ Valeriu Șatropa *apud* Stanomir, *op. cit.*, pp. 216, 217.

⁵⁴⁸ *Anul*, I, p. 495.

⁵⁴⁹ *Idem*, p. 496.

⁵⁵⁰ *Idem*, p. 567.

⁵⁵¹ *Idem*, p. 569.

⁵⁵² *Idem*, p. 618.

⁵⁵³ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 232.

seventy-nine, just a few months later, due to the remarkable ascendancy of the liberal forces, its number more than quadrupled⁵⁵⁴. At the same time, the style had dramatically altered from a framing that only the educated strata could comprehend, to a type targeting everyone⁵⁵⁵. Furthermore, the neutral spread of information ceased to represent the main pursuit of the gazettes. The Forty-Eighters considered that the press had an immense potential for the civic formation of the future citizens and that was one of the best tools that could stabilize the newly established regimes⁵⁵⁶. In Wallachia, the authorities not only verbally supported the publications and guaranteed a favourable institutional frame but also offered financial aid in case of capital shortages⁵⁵⁷. All over their pages, political topics formed most of the content, and commentaries and theoretical articles proliferated⁵⁵⁸.

The censorship was formally outlawed on June 14/26 by Decree No. 3 and, with some reserve regarding its misuse and calumny, the absolute freedom “to speak, write and publish” was promulgated. A diverse range of multilingual (Romanian, French, German and Greek) newspapers, publications, brochures, pamphlets, posters and flyers were dispersed almost everywhere⁵⁵⁹.

Most of the gazettes that appeared in Bucharest and in few other important cities like Craiova and Brăila, greatly varied in terms of printing life. Some were merely timid attempts that quickly faded out after few apparitions, like *Constituționalul* (The Constitutional, one number), *Reforma* (The Reform, ten numbers). However, other gazettes enjoyed considerable longevity. *Naționalul* (The National) had twenty apparitions, *Monitorul* (The Observer) seventeen, *Poporul suveran* (The Sovereign People) twenty-six and *Pruncul român* (The Newborn Romanian) thirty-nine⁵⁶⁰. The last two, both progressives and addressing similar themes, were probably the most significant⁵⁶¹. Equally prominent, some other publications had a specific target audience and field of interest: *Invățătorul satului* (The Village’s Teacher) addressed exclusively to the rural residents, *Amicul comercianților* (The Friend of

⁵⁵⁴ Sperber, *op.cit.*, p.161.

⁵⁵⁵ *Idem*, p. 162.

⁵⁵⁶ *Anul*, I, p. 578.

⁵⁵⁷ *Anul*, III, p. 705.

⁵⁵⁸ Dan Berindei, “Presa românească în 1848” [The Romanian Press in 1848], *Historia*, VIII, No. 79, July 2008, p. 55.

⁵⁵⁹ *Anul*, I, p. 568.

⁵⁶⁰ Niculescu, *op.cit.*, pp. 66, 67.

⁵⁶¹ *Idem*, pp. 158, 198, 199.

the Merchants) to the middle-class and *Roumania* (in German), to the German-speaking communities of Brăila and Bucharest⁵⁶².

The newspapers from above played an essential role in revolutionary days. In addition to the informing reports and various narrations of the latest domestic and foreign developments, in most of the gazettes the pages were filled with explanations and expositions on the official revolutionary discourse, as well as messages that were considered too radical in order to be officially assumed by the Provisional Government itself. For example, No. 10 of *Poporul suveran* (of July 21/August 2) contained a protestation versus the passage of Ottoman troops in Giurgiu⁵⁶³. Landowners' fears and villagers' inertia were equally addressed in different propagandist articles. The most radical of the gazettes played the role of platforms for the governmental criticisms to be launched. An article from of *Pruncul român* No. 14 (of July 15/27) denounced the irrelevance of the constitutional project for political representation in regard to the social realities of the province and in No. 22 of *Poporul suveran* (August 27/September 8), the leadership was accused of adopting an inappropriate stance towards the general political affairs of the province⁵⁶⁴.

Taking all that into account, the gazettes represented the only lasting and palpable effect of the Wallachian Revolution. Most significantly, the future unionist advocates would walk on the footsteps of the Forty-Eighters's "journalism".

b. Emancipation of the Roma Slaves

Given the fact that in Wallachia the Roma servants owned by state and Church were already liberated in 1843 and 1847, the Article No. 14 of the Proclamation was intended to extend the legislation to private slaves as well⁵⁶⁵. No statistic regarding their numbers were available, but a census from 1856 approximated the Roma slaves at 50,000⁵⁶⁶. Obsessed with order, the revolutionaries decided to adopt preventive measures against the possible social effects that such an *ex abrupto* release of a considerable number of individuals might

⁵⁶² *Idem*, pp. 66-69.

⁵⁶³ *Anul*, II, p. 626; *Anul*, III, pp. 722-724.

⁵⁶⁴ Niculescu, *op.cit.*, pp.107, 108; *Anul*, III, pp. 722-724.

⁵⁶⁵ *Anul*, I, p. 496; Venera Achim, "Emanciparea țiganilor și programul legislativ al guvernului provizoriu din 1848" [The Emancipation of the Roma Population and the Legislative Program of the 1848 Provisional Government], *Revista istorică*, Vol. XX, 2009, No. 1-2, p. 63.

⁵⁶⁶ *Idem*, p. 64.

produce. Proclamation No. 118 (of June 26/July 8), demanded of the former Roma subjects to carry on with their duties until July 10/22 and advised them to start looking for paid jobs⁵⁶⁷. In turn, as to prevent any last moment abuses by their previous owners, the same document stated that if violence was used, the latter would lose their right to compensation⁵⁶⁸. Nonetheless, those responsible for friction would be found on both sides⁵⁶⁹.

On June 28/July 10, the authorities appointed a Commission of three (Cezar Bolliac, Petrache Poenaru and Ioan, the Abbot of Snagov Monastery) to draft the exact procedure of the emancipation. The owners were invited to communicate and provide the necessary documentation for the slaves they possessed. However, the bureaucratic framework that the Commission designed proved to be another hinder for an already complicated process. Giving the widespread boycotts of the slave owners, the Commission eventually decided to release attestations straight to the Roma population and establish a maximum period of two months for the former owners to apply for compensation. In addition, in some places, the firm resistance of the latter impeded a smooth evolution on the matter. For example, in Dolj County, in August, most of the Roma population was still not formally released⁵⁷⁰. However, despite the odds, on August 16/28, due to the high number of requests, the proposal to establish a second Commission at Craiova was approved by the central authorities⁵⁷¹. Overall, Address No. 20 of the Commission stated that during that period a total number of 20,000 certificates were released⁵⁷².

2. Agrarian Question

a. Political Stances

The agrarian question was of vital importance for the economic progress of the province as was intrinsically linked with the political background of the revolutionary policies. Given the low number of members of the local middle-class, as well as their extraneous provenance, the rural inhabitants remained the main reservoir of public endorsement. Furthermore, since the villagers were the primordial receiver of the

⁵⁶⁷ Iscru, *op.cit.*, p. 135.

⁵⁶⁸ *Anul*, II, p. 106.

⁵⁶⁹ *Idem*, pp. 728, 729.

⁵⁷⁰ Achim, *op.cit.*, p. 69.

⁵⁷¹ *Anul*, III, p. 483.

⁵⁷² *Idem*, p. 330.

revolutionary discourse, their expectations, with the passage of time, increasingly turned into pressures directed against the Provisional Government and the administration⁵⁷³.

Article No. 13 of the Proclamation (“the emancipation of the landless peasants and their allotment with compensation”) bore a very vague formulation⁵⁷⁴. This might prove that the plotters were able, during the early phases of revolutionary planning, to meet no more than a theoretical consensus. In such case, the decision regarding the actual ways of enforcement was postponed. Highly interpretable, this allowed the peasants to become enthusiastic and alienated the landowners⁵⁷⁵.

b. Administrative Arrangements

Immediately after the triumph in Islaz, Christian Tell and Pleșoianu were determined to outlaw the *corvée* for good, but Eliade, who meanwhile won Magheru’s support, decided to provide a set of concessions that would have prevented the break-off with the landowners. On June 13/25, in Craiova, the first serious reactionary reply, although a failure, toned down the initial determination. During the following day, the Provisional Government issued Proclamation No. 15, which basically postponed the application of Article No. 13 for three more months. In order to prove that the authorities were working in the interest of both groups, a daily payment of two *lei* was promised to the villagers⁵⁷⁶. Nonetheless, the position of the Provisional Government shortly after changed and, on June 21/July 3, a new proclamation was published. Given the critical condition of the economy, the peasants were informed that providing agricultural employment, this time without payment, was compulsory. On the other hand, the remaining feudal duties and taxes were abolished⁵⁷⁷.

The tone used by the highest ranks of the moderate revolutionary leadership was clearly aimed to reconcile the peasants and the owners. In an attempt to exonerate the boyars, the Proclamation of June 16/28 claimed that the responsibility for the lamentable condition of the Wallachian peasantry was born from “the harmful laws and from the mistakes made by

⁵⁷³ Stan, *Revoluția de la 1848 în Țara Românească: boieri și țărani* [Romanian Revolution of 1848: Boyars and Peasants], pp. 105, 107.

⁵⁷⁴ Niculescu, *op.cit.*, p. 136.

⁵⁷⁵ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 97.

⁵⁷⁶ *Anul*, I, p. 615.

⁵⁷⁷ *Anul*, II, p. 17.

the Princes”⁵⁷⁸. Unsurprisingly, authorities’ messages failed to produce durable results and despite the dispatch of the Commissars in the rural areas, insubordinations escalated in many villages. This made the Provisional Government harden its position. The Proclamation of July 6/18 stated that those who continued to pass on their duties would be considered responsible for the eventual losses⁵⁷⁹. Few weeks later, proving that the disputes were far from being solved, the authorities turned to threats (stripping of the right to become proprietor) in order to persuade the villagers to attend the campaign of autumnal sowing (Ministry of Internal Affairs’ Proclamation No. 5,450 of August 16/28)⁵⁸⁰. During the last days of the regime, the attitude softened but the Regency continued to refuse the immediate enforcement of the Article No. 13. Another Proclamation, of September 2/14, stated that, in order to receive any kind of salary, the villagers had to complete the feudal duties they owed for the current year⁵⁸¹.

At the same time, the lesser revolutionary officials, especially the propaganda Commissars and some devout Administrators, pursued a contrary line. Their lavish discourses about a new order and rights (the obligations were harder to explain and get assimilated by the villagers), easily radicalized the Wallachians. Undoubtedly, many of them were sincerely believing that the *corvée de facto* ceased and they were now free of any constraints. When the authorities observed this phenomenon and adopted the appropriate measures during the second half of August, the tendency could no longer be easily repelled, and the intervention of the central authorities proved mostly fruitless. Large numbers of peasant simply continued to ignore the orders and proclamations⁵⁸².

Ultimately, the Provisional Government intended to settle the impasse through political negotiations and hold discussions, on equal grounds, between the representatives of landowners and villagers. The revolutionaries were again inspired by the French Luxembourg Commission, the challenges and dramatic finale of which would, after all, they repeat⁵⁸³. The aim of the leadership was to credit the idea that a solution to the agrarian issue of the province would not be imposed by the authorities but depicted from a negotiated solution proposed by the two sides themselves. Decree No. 215 (July 9/21) established that the Commission had to be composed by elected representatives of the both the landowners and

⁵⁷⁸ *Anul*, I, p. 615.

⁵⁷⁹ *Anul*, II, p. 314.

⁵⁸⁰ *Anul*, III, p. 477.

⁵⁸¹ *Anul*, IV, p. 172.

⁵⁸² Corfus, *op.cit.*, p. 109.

⁵⁸³ Zane, *op.cit.*, p. 118.

villagers of each county⁵⁸⁴. However, the process of selection planned for July 25/July 6, faced a considerable boycott on the boyar side (cases recorded in Ilfov and Vâlcea Counties⁵⁸⁵). The peasants, involved in political matters for the first time in the modern history of the Principality, proved to be extremely receptive and cooperative⁵⁸⁶.

For a while, the outcomes were encouraging. What followed was a sort of “minor agrarian parliament” (Nicolae Iorga)⁵⁸⁷ that debated, among other things, about ownership, emancipation, and the amplitude of the allotment⁵⁸⁸. Between July 9/21 and August 19/31, eight meetings were held. Eventually, the landowner deputies agreed with *corvée* eradication but the works in Commission reached a deadlock when the two sides couldn’t come to terms regarding the actual surface of land each peasant had to receive⁵⁸⁹.

Added to this procedural dysfunctionality, the position of Süleyman Pasha who, on August 10/22, reconfirmed his unconditional support for the *status quo* of land ownership within the principality, made the Commission work redundant⁵⁹⁰. Ultimately, on August 19/31, the Decree No. 460 of the Regency announced, *sine die*, its suspension. With this decision even de last optimism of the villagers inevitably started to fade.

3. Constitutional Design

a. Political Stances

The Wallachian revolutionaries’ plan of reforms did contain important elements of regime articulation and constitutional design. Article No. 5 of the Proclamation stated that the Prince, accountable to a representative Assembly (Article No. 4), would be elected for a mandate of five years. This disposition, apparently imported from the French Constitution of 1793⁵⁹¹, increased the anxiety of the antidemocratic circles and alarmed the Ottoman authorities. Any preconditions regarding the social and economic status of the candidates

⁵⁸⁴ Anul, II, pp. 359, 360.

⁵⁸⁵ *Idem*, p. 727; Anul, III, p. 342.

⁵⁸⁶ Stan, *Revoluția română...*, p. 240.

⁵⁸⁷ Corfus, *op.cit.*, p. 113.

⁵⁸⁸ Iscru, *op.cit.*, p. 134.

⁵⁸⁹ Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 43.

⁵⁹⁰ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 241.

⁵⁹¹ Stanomir, *op.cit.*, p. 215.

were rejected⁵⁹². The project was completed with the principle of ministerial responsibility (Article No. 7) and by the convocation of a representative Constitutional Assembly, called to draft the future Constitution (Article No. 22)⁵⁹³.

b. Administrative Arrangements

Even though the revolutionary discourse presented the organization of elections and convocation of the Constitutional Assembly as top priorities, the reality demonstrated the Provisional Government and Regency's chronic evasion, hesitation and the complete lack of vision.

The Wallachian leadership adopted a stronger position only after the failure of the second counter-revolutionary coup. The Decree No. 258 of July 14/26, supplemented and amended by the Instruction No. 314 of July 19/31, instituted the universal manhood suffrage for the first time in the history of the province. A quota of representation of one deputy for 10,000 souls was established. A Central Electoral Committee was appointed and a voting age requirement was introduced: twenty-one for the primaries and twenty-five for the secondary electors⁵⁹⁴.

According to population, each county and major city was entitled to a specific number of delegates: three (Craiova), four (Brăila), eight (Ialomița, Muscel), nine (Slam Râmnic), eleven (Olt), twelve (Vlașca), fourteen (Buzău, Dâmbovița, Romanați, Gorj), fifteen (Ilfov), sixteen (Argeș, Vâlcea, Bucharest), nineteen (Prahova), twenty (Mehedinți) and twenty-one (Dolj)⁵⁹⁵.

Given the amount of uneducated men and bureaucratic incompetence, the authorities had to opt for an indirect electoral process⁵⁹⁶. The primary elections were expected to be held on August 9/21. The residents, divided in groups of twenty-five families each, were entitled to send a single representative in the County Seat. The electoral process was public, and every candidate's confidence was individually tested by the positioning of the voters: in favour to the right, against to the left. During the final vote, planned for August 18/30, the

⁵⁹² *Anul*, I, p. 495.

⁵⁹³ *Idem*, p. 496.

⁵⁹⁴ *Anul*, II, p. 498.

⁵⁹⁵ Iscru, *op.cit.*, p. 136; *Anul*, II, pp. 495-500.

⁵⁹⁶ Preda, *op.cit.*, p. 61.

“elective deputies” had to designate, by secret vote, the two hundred and fifty members of the Constitutional Assembly⁵⁹⁷.

Initially, it was expected that the Assembly would open on August 25/September 6 in Bucharest but, due to subsequent complications, two consecutive decisions to postpone it were necessary. On July 26/August 7 (Decree No. 344) the electoral calendar was remodelled: primary elections shifted to August 19/31 and the final ones to August 29/September 10⁵⁹⁸. One reason for this decision was the prospect of an expected military intervention and another had a pure logistic rationale. Not all the Administrators reported that the terrain was suitable for the organization of such a wide popular consultation so promptly. Some were dealing with cholera (Romanați County)⁵⁹⁹ and others, without invoking any explanation, proposed different terms (Gorj and Buzău)⁶⁰⁰. Exceptions did exist. On July 26/August 7, in Giurgiu County, the first phase of the election was organized. However, the initiative failed to gain the interest of most of the villagers and due to a weak turn out, they were not for the moment, conclusive⁶⁰¹.

Finally, Decree No. 444 (of August 16/28) once again postponed, this time *sine die*, the organization of elections and the convocation of the Constitutional Assembly⁶⁰².

C. The Last Revolutionary Developments and The Restoration

Once the flow of events turned increasingly unpropitious for the revolutionary regime, the leadership adopted two different types of conduct⁶⁰³. The members of the Regency and the rest of the moderates easily conciliated with the defeat. Heliade Rădulescu claimed that, no matter what, the nonviolent character of the movement had to be retained. On the other side, in Bălcescu’s view, precisely the sets of concessions that the new authorities decided to embrace were responsible for their failure⁶⁰⁴. During their last days in power, the radicals’ frustrations were responsible for the apparition of a broad and

⁵⁹⁷ *Anul*, II, pp. 497, 601.

⁵⁹⁸ *Idem*, p. 749.

⁵⁹⁹ *Idem*, p. 596.

⁶⁰⁰ *Idem*, pp. 638, 640.

⁶⁰¹ Cornelia Bodea, *1848 la români: o istorie în date și mărturii* [1848 and the Romanians: Data and Confessions], Vol II, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București 1982, p. 773.

⁶⁰² *Anul*, III, p. 480; Popescu, *op.cit.*, p. 62.

⁶⁰³ Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 48.

⁶⁰⁴ *Idem*, p. 82.

uncompromising set of actions⁶⁰⁵. On September 6/18, the capital was scene of a moving episode. The impersonated Organic Regulation and Registry of Titles (*Arhondologia*) were placed on a coffin and carried in procession to the Metropolitan, where they were publicly burned. The electrified crowd torn down the monument erected in honour of Pavel Kiseleff, the guarantor of the Regulation⁶⁰⁶. During the following days, the ritual was repeated in different places in Wallachia by the most Jacobin of the revolutionaries: in Craiova (September 10/22), Caracal (September 13/25) Râmnicu Sărat, Târgu Jiu, Buzău, Pitești, Câmpulung and Ploiești⁶⁰⁷.

At the same time, Wallachians tried to repeat the strategy that worked in Süleyman's case. During late August and early September, they attempted to convince Fuad Efendi of the movement's good intentions and counter the accusations of Duhamel and Kotzebue⁶⁰⁸. However, the Ottoman forces were slowly penetrating the province. After a small army was encamped at Brăila, the Commissary crossed the Danube at Giurgiu and advanced toward Bucharest, accompanied by some 14,000 soldiers. When it became obvious that the Regency could not arrive at terms with new emissary, the triumvirate composed of Heliade Rădulescu, Christian Tell and Nicolae Golescu simply decided to leave their offices and the Administrative Palace⁶⁰⁹.

On September 13/25, all new authorities, boyars, and notables were convoked by Fuad on the outskirts of the capital city, at Cotroceni Monastery. When the revolutionaries protested the accusations that were brought against them (a rebellion conceived in "the spirit of communism")⁶¹⁰ as well as against the latest measures adopted, they were all arrested⁶¹¹. With revolutionary leadership in detention, the Ottoman forces advanced towards the city. After several incidents in Dealul Spirii barrack, caused rather by misapprehension than a deliberate clash⁶¹², Bucharest came under Porte's direct control and a single Regent or *Kaymakam* (Constantin Cantacuzino, a Russophile) was appointed⁶¹³. An operation to expel

⁶⁰⁵ *Anul*, IV, p. 195.

⁶⁰⁶ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 280; Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 48.

⁶⁰⁷ *Anul*, IV, p. 246; Mihai, *Revoluție și...*, p. 155.

⁶⁰⁸ Popescu, *op.cit.*, p. 159; *Anul*, III, p. 152.

⁶⁰⁹ *Anul*, IV, p. 288.

⁶¹⁰ *Idem*, p. 319.

⁶¹¹ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 281.

⁶¹² Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 49; Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 284.

⁶¹³ Iscru, *op.cit.*, p. 238.

all the material products of the Provisional Government and the Regency (of three) was soon launched (Decree No. 99 of Fuad Efendi and Cantacuzino, September 24/October 6)⁶¹⁴.

Meanwhile, the leadership in Oltenia, vocal and still strong-willed about their political programme, attempted to set up armed resistance in the north-west of Wallachia. In charge of the mission was Gheorghe Magheru, recently appointed Governor of the seven counties in the west of the province (Decree No. 541, September 11/23)⁶¹⁵. Based in Vâlcea County, in a military camp that he previously established at Răureni, Magheru made a call to general mobilization on September 14/26 and encouraged the population to reject the new authorities and their directives⁶¹⁶. The representatives of the European powers were equally approached in order to force a diplomatic mediation. On September 16/28, he condemned the dual military intervention and invoked the external support in defence of the revolutionary regime⁶¹⁷.

On September 15/27, the Russian troops led by General Alexander von Lüders crossed the river that was separating Moldavia from Wallachia⁶¹⁸. According to the Proclamation No. 80, released by Duhamel on the following day, the demarche had a dual purpose: to restore, in cooperation with the Ottomans, the public order, and to prevent any revolutionary contagion from beyond the Carpathians where the Hungarian Revolution was still in full swing⁶¹⁹. After passing through Focșani on September 28/October 9 and heading towards Magheru's position, Russians reached Bucharest and two military commands were instituted⁶²⁰.

Considering new political and military developments and due to equipment shortages, Magheru had ultimately decided that his initiative was harmful to the revolutionary movement and the military camp in Oltenia was disbanded on September 28/October 9⁶²¹. Apparently, the crucial reason for his decision was the intervention of the British Consul Robert Colquhoun, intimate friend of the progressive leadership and a resolute fighter against the Russian advancement in Europe⁶²².

⁶¹⁴ *Anul*, IV, p. 501.

⁶¹⁵ *Idem*, p. 297.

⁶¹⁶ *Idem*, pp. 355, 357.

⁶¹⁷ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 286.

⁶¹⁸ Bărbulescu *et alii*, *op.cit.*, p. 301.

⁶¹⁹ Popescu, *op.cit.*, pp. 226, 227.

⁶²⁰ *Anul*, IV, p. 713.

⁶²¹ Stan, *op.cit.*, p. 286.

⁶²² *Anul*, IV, p. 538.

However, even though the formal revolutionary force ceased to exist, the process of political restoration wasn't a simple matter-of-course. While the residents from Slam Râmnic submitted to the older regime without complications on September 15/27⁶²³, the newly appointed *Ocârmuitor* (Governor) of Argeş was rejected by the locals⁶²⁴. In one village of Vlaşca County the consigned officials were assaulted⁶²⁵ and in the notorious village of Islaz one of the most powerful resistance movements took place. Some five hundred peasants, coordinated by local priests, denied the legitimacy of the new order⁶²⁶. A significant number of transgressions was reported in Ilfov County too. On September 27/October 9, nine villages in the district were still considered rebellious (*i.e.* refused to handle the documents released during three previous months and provide unpaid work for the landowners)⁶²⁷. Some centres of defiance and opposition proved resilient and the authorities had to intervene *manu militari*. On October 10/22, the Cossacks crushed the resistance of villagers from Piatra (Teleorman County)⁶²⁸.

The new authorities cancelled, one by one, the innovations that were previously enforced. Decree No. 184 (September 28/October 10) declared null and void all the legislation concerning the emancipation of the Roma. Except for an insignificant number of slaves that were voluntarily liberated, the rest returned to their previous juridical condition⁶²⁹.

In dealing with former participants of the movement, Fuad Efendi was in favour of proclaiming a general political amnesty. On September 25/October 7, a decree signed by Fuad and Cantacuzino presented a list of twenty-two revolutionaries sentence to exile, among them Heliade Rădulescu, Christian Tell, Golescu brothers, Cezar Bolliac, Bălcescu brothers, C. A. Rosetti, Ioan Voinescu II and Brătianu brothers. However, this approach proved to be ephemeral and the revolutionary leadership that was arrested in Bucharest was “accidentally” liberated during their transportation⁶³⁰. At the same time, Russians adopted a completely different stance by orchestrating an extensive campaign of repression. A Commission of Inquiry was established under their supervision and special investigations, targeting the priests and monks involved in propaganda activities were launched. In charge of the mission,

⁶²³ *Idem*, p. 407.

⁶²⁴ *Idem*, p. 409.

⁶²⁵ *Idem*, p. 463.

⁶²⁶ *Anul*, V, p. 127.

⁶²⁷ *Anul*, IV, p. 558.

⁶²⁸ *Idem*, p. 155.

⁶²⁹ *Idem*, p. 572.

⁶³⁰ *Idem*, pp. 516, 517; Iscreu, *op.cit.*, p. 237.

the Metropolitan himself had already identified six suspects by the end of September⁶³¹. The officials and the collaborators of the defunct regime were also under watch. On October 16/28, in Buzău County, twenty former functionaries and revolutionaries were put under arrest⁶³². In Craiova, Pitești, Ploiești and other cities, schoolmasters that showed revolutionary zeal were removed from their positions⁶³³. Contrary to any expectation, the following months brought an intensification of the oppressions⁶³⁴. If the number of people found in detention on September 17/29 in Bucharest decreased to fourteen from more than a hundred four days earlier, in Văcărești Monastery (on the outskirts of the capital) a number of ninety-two arrested were recorded during November only, among them officials, peasants and priests⁶³⁵. The convicts were so many that the nearby monasteries, *e.g.*, Plumbuita, Căldărușani, Cernica, were similarly turned into *ad hoc* prisons⁶³⁶. Eventually, most of the prisoners were released before 1849, but despite receiving freedom, they had to endure ostracism: teachers couldn't return in schools and revolutionary landowners had their estates sequestered⁶³⁷.

In May 1849, the Sovereign and the Protector finally reached a new settlement for the Principalities and a Convention was signed at Balta Liman. According to what would be the last agreement of its kind, the pre-eminence of Russia was additionally strengthened⁶³⁸. However, the decision turned to be catastrophic to the Tsarist soft power in Wallachia, where their agenda started to alienate new categories of inhabitants (like the conservative boyars)⁶³⁹. Between 1849 and 1856, the Organic Regulations were restored and the authority of the Princes significantly reduced to that of high Ottoman officials appointed by the Sultan⁶⁴⁰.

⁶³¹ *Anul*, IV, pp. 554, 555.

⁶³² *Anul*, V, p. 171.

⁶³³ *Idem*, p. 202.

⁶³⁴ *Idem*, p. 593.

⁶³⁵ *Idem*, pp. 545, 546.

⁶³⁶ *Idem*, p. 104.

⁶³⁷ Popescu, *op.cit.*, pp. 148, 149, 171.

⁶³⁸ Boicu, *op.cit.*, p. 93.

⁶³⁹ Jelavich, *Russia and...*, p. 50.

⁶⁴⁰ Preda, *Rumâniilor fericiți...*, p. 65.

D. The Revolutionary Emigration and Its Lobby in Western Europe (1848-1856)

Following their liberation from detention, or simply trying to escape Ottoman and Russian authorities, the progressive Wallachians known by their conspiratorial records, spread all over the continent. They could be found in Paris, Istanbul, London, Trieste, Bursa, Izmir, Chios Island, *et cætera*. The hopes for a renewal of the revolution had not immediately died out. During following spring, the revolutionaries led by I. C. Brătianu (Paris) and those in Istanbul (Ghica, Bălcescu) assumed that a recurrence of the movement in Transylvania was yet achievable⁶⁴¹. However, nothing could be done and the exile was torn apart from the inside by different dissensions⁶⁴². The Ottomanophile members of the Regency (Heliade, Tell and Golescu) wanted to ensure their leadership of the movement in future. On the other side, the Forty-Eighters that regrouped in Paris established The Romanian Democratic Committee (June 1849) adopted an anti-Ottoman stance and expressed inclination toward a conspiratorial way of acting. Subsequently, the impasse was surpassed and a common organization, The Romanian Association, was established in Paris⁶⁴³.

During the following years, Moldo-Wallachian exiles attempted to exert influence on the public opinion in the West. Contacts with other revolutionary leaders like Giuseppe Mazzini, Ledru Róllin and Arnold Ruge were strengthened⁶⁴⁴ and many of those in the exile become collaborators of some French gazettes (*La Réforme*, *Le Courrier français*, *La République*, *La Révolution démocratique et sociale*, *La Tribune des peuples*, *L'opinion publique*, *Le Journal de la vraie République*, *La Voix du peuple*, *L'Europe démocratique*, *Le Siècle*⁶⁴⁵). A Commission for Propaganda (Bălcescu, Mălinescu, Dimitrie Brătianu) had the responsibility to establish a common editorial line for the Romanian magazines that would be published. Collective works, the radical “*România viitoare*” (“Future Romania”, November 1850), “*Junimea română*” (“The Romanian Youth”, 1851) and “*Republica română*” (“The Romanian Republic”, 1851, 1853) were in favour of unification of the two provinces and for

⁶⁴¹ Apostol Stan, *Ion C. Brătianu. Un promotor al liberalismului în România* [Ion C. Brătianu. A Romanian Promoter of Liberalism], Editura Globus, București 1993, p. 46.

⁶⁴² Isar, *op.cit.*, p. 107.

⁶⁴³ Stan, *op.cit.*, pp. 47, 48.

⁶⁴⁴ Isar, *op.cit.*, pp. 114, 115, 265.

⁶⁴⁵ Muntean, *op.cit.*, p. 61.

the political freedom of their inhabitants⁶⁴⁶. At the same time, individual books and brochures were published by Bălcescu, C. A. Rosetti and Heliade Rădulescu.

Meanwhile, European context became unfavourable for the development of a revolutionary movement. After Napoleon III's coup (December 1851), France shifted towards an autocratic regime and in November 1852 Bălcescu, the most zealous of the revolutionaries, passed away. When the Crimean War erupted, exiles reconsidered their positions and embraced the old political line adopted in 1848, *i.e.* countering Russia with Ottoman assistance⁶⁴⁷. Amidst the war and especially during the Peace Congress held in Paris, the Moldo-Wallachians were extremely active regarding a favourable settlement for their homeland⁶⁴⁸. Those efforts were doubled by a lobby movement of several French personalities, many of them close collaborators of the revolutionaries. Jules Michelet book, *Légendes démocratiques du Nord* (1853), Edgar Quinet articles from the magazine *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1856), and Saint-Marc Girardin's for the *Journal des Débats* were fervent calls for the union of two provinces⁶⁴⁹.

The exile that the Moldo-Wallachians had to endure after the failure of their movements was in fact an opportunity meant to Europeanise their cause and win over the backing of some important French intellectuals and opinion-makers⁶⁵⁰.

In this this chapter, the author examined the foreign agenda of the revolutionary government, the doctrinal clashes between the most vital local matters (property over land, civil and political rights, equality, freedom of expression) and the overall contribution of the Forty-Eighters to the Romanian modern history.

⁶⁴⁶ Isar, *op.cit.*, pp. 109, 110.

⁶⁴⁷ *Idem*, p. 116.

⁶⁴⁸ *Idem*, p. 255.

⁶⁴⁹ *Idem*, p. 121.

⁶⁵⁰ Muntean, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

CONCLUSION

Wallachia, a kingdom created during the 14th century, had played, during most of its existence the role of a buffer zone between the regional powers: Ottoman Empire, Kingdom of Hungary, Poland, Austria and Russia. This allowed the province to enjoy, through history, a considerable, but fluctuating degree of self-governance.

Since the beginning of the 18th century (Treaty of Pruth, 1711), the strategic weight of Wallachia had gradually increased as the region became the scene of the most important military conflicts between Austria, Ottoman Empire and Russia (1711, 1716-1718, 1736-1739, 1768-1774, 1787-1792, 1806-1812, 1828-1829).

The frictions from abroad constituted, in the same time, an opportunity for the autochthonous political leadership to acquire a heavier position in regard to the future of the province. A flexible strategy allowed the Romanians from both Wallachia and Moldavia to gain, following the 1821 Movement and 1829 Treaty of Adrianople/Edirne, an unprecedented level of administrative autonomy.

Due to its repeated military success, from the beginning of the 19th century and especially during the 1830s and 1840s, Russia took the lead of the Modernization/Westernization process. An innovative set of legislation, the Organic Regulation was enforced and an embryonic army was created. During the same period, the French cultural model prevailed through the local upper class and was instrumental in providing progressive political models for the younger elites.

With the exception of the two peripheral powers, United Kingdom and the Russian Empire, the revolutionary tide of 1848 had basically affected the entire continent. Surprisingly, the reactionary club of the Holy Alliance was paralyzed and one after another, the conservative regimes had to agree with liberal concession that otherwise would have firmly rejected. Due to its terrestrial vicinity and prestige, the revolutionary events from France, Italian Peninsula and Austria represented an opportunity that the Wallachian youth intended to make the most use of.

During spring and summer, the revolutionary tide faced no serious resistance from the establishment and throughout most important European cities, the barricades phenomenon assured the relative easiness of the movement's victory. With the exception of France, the

aims were largely moderate, the most peculiar one being the conversion from an absolutist model of governance to a constitutionalist one.

The economic climate of the 1840s was largely responsible for the relative simultaneity of the movements. The famine or near-famine conditions of 1845 and the industrial depression of 1847 had frustrated the workers and craftsmen. Those were doubled by the discontents of a so called academic proletariat who got increasingly alienated by the education boom of the first half of the century.

Through the Italian Peninsula, the revolution had started as an ordinary uprising against the monarchist forces in Palermo (January). The intervention of the authorities proved a fiasco and the movement acquired a liberal nature while spreading north, in Naples, Papal States, Toscana, Sardinia-Piedmont. Metternich's back door exist in Vienna added a profound nationalistic meaning to the Italian movement and a wide anti-Habsburg enthusiasm unleashed. Although victorious for a while, the conflicting interests of the Italians and the dissensions between the ruling dynasties were unable to halt the Austrian comeback in July. Eventually the French military intervention in Rome brought all the revolutionary plans to an end by April 1849.

In France, the economic conditions had irritated a significant number of workers and the growing authoritarianism of the July Monarchy had politically frustrated the progressive bourgeois. The merged efforts of both groups had a total unexpected outcome and in February the Republic was proclaimed. This event would deeply influence the oppositions and liberal circles from all over the continent. However, the new authorities maintained a moderate line which failed to effectively meet the pressing issue of the urban unemployment. In time, this alienated the Socialist and Democrats, and the inevitable clash between the two sides took place in June. Louis Napoleon electoral victory (December 1848) was an impulse for the European monarchs to embrace a resolute counter-revolutionary stance.

Within the Austrian Empire, revolutionary centres in Vienna, Kingdom of Hungary, Polish inhabited Galicia and through the territories of Czech and Croats made the empire look, in late spring, on the brink of total dissolution. However, interethnic conflicts among the revolutionaries and capable generals were mainly responsible for providing such an unexpected settlement for the Habsburg Dynasty. Like France, the states of Central Europe had too experienced a red summer although less violent and less intense. Nevertheless, that

had equally convinced the authorities to replace the liberal declarations with military campaigns and abandon the yielding line.

In Prussia and throughout the German States, the liberal movement, victorious in March, had acquired an increasing unionist character to whom King Frederick William IV was forced, for a while, to subscribe. Despite the initial success and subsequent enthusiasm, the flow of events followed the same pattern: the radicals damaged the image of the movement and the reactionary fears gained ascendance. The Russian backing was equally a decisive factor that made the king to reconsider his attitude.

The first territory inhabited by Romanians that witnessed a (pseudo)revolutionary episode was Moldavia. However, the movement lacked any firm doctrinaire message and was directed mainly against the abuses of Prince Mihail Sturdza. Social and political conditions of the province were largely responsible for the legalist character of the initiative. Eventually, Prince's double role managed to expose and overcome the opposition.

In Transylvania, the Romanian elites were overall proponents of a cultural activism rather than pushing toward a political agenda. The reform plans and the liberal messages delivered by the Hungarian revolutionaries were initially received with both retain and optimism. However, the intransigent turn of the government in Pest, *i.e.*, the decision to annex the province to the Hungarian Kingdom (May) and the subsequent campaigns of forced circumscription created wide interethnic solidarity among Romanians of both confessions. Under such circumstances, the latter proved the ideal "victims" of the imperial *divide et impera* approach and the policy of tergiversations. The military cooperation with the Habsburg generals allowed for a Romanian administration to be established in Transylvania from where the Hungarian revolutionary regime was temporarily ousted. From this point of view, the actions of the Romanians could better be described as counter-revolutionary.

During the first half of the 19th century, Wallachia was a principality that posed a considerable amount of clashing geostrategic and political interests: Ottoman dying suzerainty, aggressive Russian offensive, a relatively weak but decisive European concerns, projects of reform of the progressive Moldo-Wallachian elites and a conservative rule. During late 1840s, the political, economic and social divisions reached a considerable degree of extension, comprising middle and little boyars, administrative and juridical functionaries, members of the middle class and peasants. When the revolutionary wave shook, one after

another, some of the most stable European countries, the Wallachians were lacking only a subterfuge in order to let loose.

The Parisian experience of the Wallachian students had revitalized the opposition and the proclamation of the French Republic was perceived by the revolutionaries as an urge for immediate action. The secret organization *Frăția* (Brotherhood), in fact an umbrella group that gathered opponents with different ideological positioning played the most important logistic role in order to secure the movement's victory.

The first revolutionary acts followed the 1821 Movement's pattern of military march upon the capital. With relative ease, the conspirators managed to gain political ascendancy within the province and quickly recovered from two counter-revolutionary coups on June 19/30 and July 29-31/July 11-13.

The authorities were easily overrun and the new administration established by the revolutionaries for the following three months turned to be the real provocation that regime had to endure. From one point of view, the mobilization of Administrators and Commissars responsible for revolutionary propaganda was remarkable. Many proved devotion, patriotism and great zeal in dealing with their tasks. Both were essential for the governmental policies aiming to prevent a break between the revolutionary discourse and the governmental practices that would have otherwise put in motion a domino of peasantry discontents.

The Forty-Eighters treated with the highest consideration the relations and the diplomatic contacts with the Ottoman Empire, Russia, France and other European states. Prior to the outbreak of the movement, one of the leading members of *Frăția* was dispatched to Istanbul in order to assure the Suzerain of their good intentions. Nonetheless, due to the Russian strong position from the Ottoman capital, his mission proved to be a Sisyphean task.

Some of the revolutionary endeavours did prove, if not lasting, a profound symbolic load. Among others, freedom of the press, emancipation of the Roma slaves and the abolishment of the capital punishment were proclaimed.

Despite insurmountable adversities (reactionary boyars, lack of external support, Russian offensive, apathy of a considerable section of population, *et cætera*), the governmental replies that the revolutionaries came up with were remarkable. Administration, defence and propaganda received special attention and new approaches in term of foreign policy were defined. Revolutionary authority established in June was *de facto* genuine *école*

of statecraft. Many top functionaries would play crucial roles in the process of modernization and state and nation building launched one decade later. Ion Ghica was appointed Prime Minister no less than five times, C. A. Rosetti was, on many occasions, Minister of the Internal Affairs and one of the founding fathers of the Romanian Academy, I. C. Brătianu, founder of the Liberal Party, still holds the title for the longest Prime Minister mandate in the Romanian history (1876-1888).

The events in Bucharest and the news about the challenges that the Provisional Government and Regency had to face had easily spread in the Western gazettes (among others: *Le National*, *Journal des Débats*, *Le Siecle*, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, *Allgemeine Zeitung*). The Romanian Question left the field of informal talks of French, Italian, and Polish circles and emerged, helped by the energetic campaigning of the exiled, as one of the main European issues of the 1856 Peace Conference.

Overall, the movement of 1848 was not about heroic actions and immediate accomplishments. The reformist program of the Wallachian Forty-Eighters turned to be a standing plan of action that accompanied the rest of the modern Romanian history. 1848 testified that the political regime of the 1840s was no longer in line with the societal developments and that the order (Organic Regulation and privileges) could not be any longer maintained without the Russian intervention.

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