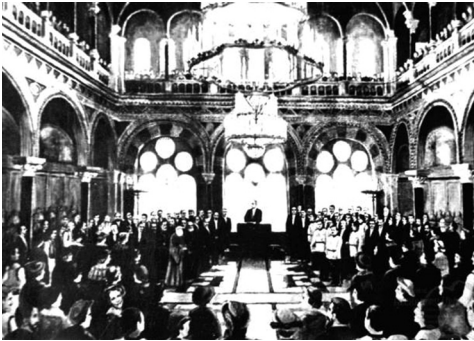


CONSTANTIN  
UNGUREANU

# The Union of Bukovina with Romania in 1918



Chernivtsi, Synodal Hall of the Metropolitan  
Residence: the General Congress of Bukovina,  
28 November 1918

## Constantin Ungureanu

Doctor habilitatus in history, research coordinator at the Kishinev Institute of History, the author of 4 monographs on the history of Bukovina, contributor to a historical-statistical study on the population of Chernivtsi, to a monograph on the Austrian cadaster in Bukovina, and to a textbook on the local history of the region of Chernivtsi.

## Territorial Claims and Projects Concerning the Division of Bukovina during the First Years of the War

**D**URING THE First World War, Bukovina was of great interest to the states in the area. The Austro-Hungarian monarchy wanted the perpetuation and even the extension of the province with territories in northern Bessarabia and northern Moldavia. Russia, relying on the Slavic element in Bukovina and acting on geostrategic interests, claimed the whole province or at least its northern part. Based on the historical right and the ethno-demographic criterion, the Bucharest Government wanted the integration of this territory into Romania. The Ukrainian national movement claimed more than half of the territory of Bukovina, up to the Siret River, including the cities of Cernăuți (Chernivtsi), Siret, and Storojineț (Storozhynets). In Bukovina

A longer Romanian-language version of this article was published in *Confesiuni, cultură, națiune: Perspectivă istorică*, eds. Iulian Boldea and Cornel Sigmirean (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2018), 109–127.

and Galicia there was also a Pan-Slav Russian movement claiming territories of Austria-Hungary for the Russian Empire. The Pan-Russian movement claimed a large territory of Bukovina, up to the city of Siret.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of the war, in the city of Chernivtsi, a Ruthenian Committee was established. It supported Russia's claims regarding this territory and the region of Bukovina between the Prut and the Siret Rivers. In order to combat these claims, in February 1915, Iancu Flondor drew up a memorandum in which he advocated for the rights of the Romanians, referring to Bukovina's territory between the Prut and the Siret Rivers, on the basis of historical, ethnographic, economic, and cultural arguments. Iancu Flondor accepted that Bukovina's territory located north of the Prut River would be lost; he admitted the fact that the western part of the province was compactly inhabited by Ukrainians, but he noted that "it would be much more profitable to give up the 'Ruthenian Mountains' than the disputable territory between the Prut and the Siret Rivers." According to his calculations, 48 localities of the respective territory (including the city of Chernivtsi) were inhabited by 183,390 persons, of which 64,643 Romanians, 46,044 Ruthenians and 72,703 of other nationalities.<sup>2</sup> In his memorandum,<sup>3</sup> Iancu Flondor showed that if it was not possible to obtain the whole of Bukovina, the territory between the Prut and the Siret Rivers with the city of Chernivtsi should not be given away under any circumstances.

While trying to attract Romania into the war on their sides, both Russia and Austria-Hungary promised important territorial concessions, including Bukovina, in favor of Romania. In exchange, the Austrian diplomacy promised Bessarabia, but took into account ceding a part of Bukovina to Romania. In June 1915, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vienna there were negotiations regarding Bukovina. Three alternatives, with the future frontier along specific rivers, were taken into account.<sup>4</sup> According to the first alternative, Romania would have received the districts of Suceava, Gura Humorului, and Solca, as well as the part of the Rădăuți District located south of the Suceava River. The second alternative provided the additional cession of the Stulpicani, Câmpulung, and Vatra Dornei Districts in southwestern Bukovina. The third alternative, the most radical one, provided that almost half of Bukovina, up to the Siret River, should be transferred to Romania. The Austrian experts considered the third alternative to be the most adequate for settling the Bukovina dispute on the basis of the nationality criterion.<sup>5</sup> In all these cases, the specificities of the Romanian settlements on the upper course of the Suceava and the Siret Rivers were not taken into account, for several villages extended on both banks of the respective rivers. The course of events during the war dashed the hopes of the Austrian authorities for attracting Romania on their side, and the discussions regarding possible territorial cessions in Bukovina were not put into practice.

Several Russian projects for the annexation of Bukovina to the Russian Empire were also drawn up during the war. The first project suggested the incorporation of the entire Bukovina into Russia and was proposed in mid-January 1915 by Lieutenant General F. Vebeľ. The second project was proposed by D. N. Vergun, one of the leading experts in the matter of Bukovina and Galicia in Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The author of the project insisted that Chernivtsi and a part of northern Bukovina should remain Russian possessions. By the end of 1916, A. Gerovsky and Anthony, Archbishop of Kharkov, devised a project for the annexation of Bukovina to Russia. According to the authors of the project, the territory of Bukovina, which should have become part of Romania according to the Treaty of August 1916, was the richest, and the Church Fund possessed the most extensive forests in southern Bukovina.<sup>6</sup> The three Russian projects, developed during 1915 and 1916, demonstrate that Russia would have annexed the largest part of Bukovina and the city of Chernivtsi, disregarding the arrangements made with Romania.

After the outbreak of the war, the authorities in Bucharest negotiated the war entry conditions with the representatives of the belligerent countries, hoping to recover at least a part of the territories inhabited by Romanians in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and in Czarist Russia. On 4/17 August 1916, a secret treaty between Romania and the countries of the Entente was signed in Bucharest, whereby France, England, and Russia recognized Romania's rights concerning the Romanian territories in Transylvania, Banat, Crișana, Maramureș, and Bukovina. In Article IV, this secret treaty provided that "the border line will start from the Prut, from a point of the current frontiers between Russia and Romania, close to Novoselitsa, and it will go up the river as far as Galicia's border, where the Prut meets the Cheremosh. From here it will follow the border between Galicia and Hungary up to the Steag point, at level 1,655."<sup>7</sup> Thus, Russia accepted to obtain only the Bukovina between the Prut and the Dniester Rivers, while the rest of the territory, including the city of Chernivtsi, was going to join Romania.

## **Bukovina in the First World War**

**D**URING THE war, Bukovina was seriously affected by military operations; it was occupied three times, almost entirely, by the Russian Army. The military operations carried out on the territory of Bukovina brought great damage to the economy and the population. The men aged between 18 and 53 were conscripted, and numerous inhabitants sought refuge in Austria and other countries. Many industrial enterprises were destroyed or evacuated,

railway lines were dismantled, and roads and bridges were devastated. The agriculture suffered great damages. The biggest destruction occurred in the villages between the Prut and the Dniester Rivers, especially along the border with Bessarabia, where the most violent military confrontations took place.

In the meantime, in Russia, the Bolshevik Revolution was taking place, and on 3 March 1918, in Brest-Litovsk, a separate Peace Treaty was signed between Russia and the Central Powers. At the beginning of 1918, the Parliament in Kiev proclaimed the independence of Ukraine and claimed the territories inhabited by Ukrainians in Galicia, Bukovina, Bessarabia, and Maramureș. On 9 February 1918, the representatives of Ukraine and Austria-Hungary signed in Brest-Litovsk a secret treaty according to which Austria-Hungary was going to receive a significant quantity of cereals, and in exchange, the authorities in Vienna were going to establish a new Austrian province that had to include Eastern Galicia and Bukovina. However, due to the opposition of the Polish deputies and of the events occurred during the war, this problem was not discussed in the Vienna Parliament.

At the same time, in 1917, most of Romania was occupied by the German and Austro-Hungarian Armies, and the Bucharest Government temporarily moved to Iași. Under these circumstances, on 5 March 1918, a preliminary Peace Treaty was signed at Buftea, and on 7 May 1918, the Peace Treaty of Bucharest was concluded, according to which Romania gave up the Romanian territories in Austria-Hungary, and the territory of Bukovina was going to increase with a part of Khotyn County, the Hertsa region in Dorohoi County and the mountain area of Dorna. After signing this Treaty, Romania lost almost 6,000 km<sup>2</sup>, of which approximately 600 km<sup>2</sup> were going to be part of the enlarged Bukovina. Article XI of this Treaty described the boundary in the mountain area of Romania, which was going to be rectified in favor of Austria-Hungary.<sup>8</sup> If this treaty had entered into force, an important area located south of Vatra Dornei, a few villages near the cities of Suceava and Siret, as well as a larger territory in the region of Hertsa, including the commercial towns of Hertsa and Mihăileni, would have been included into Bukovina, thus becoming part of a reorganized Austria-Hungary.

After the peace treaties with Russia and Ukraine were signed, the German and Austro-Hungarian troops occupied significant territories in Ukraine as well as a part of Khotyn County in northern Bessarabia. In the autumn of 1918, the districts of Câmpulung, Gura Humorului, and Siret were going to be extended with the territories ceded by Romania, and a new district with Țurenii (Tsuren) as its capital was going to be founded; this new district was supposed to include the villages in the Hertsa region as well. In addition, a new judicial district was to be created, with its headquarters in Khotyn, comprising the localities of northern Bessarabia that were going to be included into the province of Bukovina.<sup>9</sup>

## The Activity of the Bukovinian Deputies in the Vienna Parliament (October 1918)

**D**URING AUGUST and September 1918, the Allied armies of the Entente countries began extensive offensives on the western front, defeating the Austrian-German troops, which brought closer the end of the war. On 4 October 1918, in the Vienna Parliament, there was a debate over President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points. One of these points provided that the peoples of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy had the right to organize themselves autonomously. However, the Czechs, the Poles, the Hungarians, and the Slavs inhabiting the southern part of Austria-Hungary no longer accepted a political reorganization of the empire and wanted their complete independence from the Vienna authorities.

In the Austrian Parliament, there were 14 deputies sent by Bukovina, elected as early as 1911, out of which 6 were Romanians. During the Parliament meeting of 4 October 1918, Deputy Constantin Isopescu-Grecul, on behalf of the Romanian deputies, requested extended autonomy for the 4 million Romanians in Austria and Hungary, but within a federal monarchy.<sup>10</sup>

On 16 October 1918, King Charles I Habsburg issued the proclamation "To My Faithful Austrian Peoples!", in which he accepted Austria-Hungary's reorganization into a federation of six "independent" states, i.e. the Austrian, Hungarian, Czech, Yugoslav, Polish, and Ukrainian states; Transylvania was going to remain part of Hungary.<sup>11</sup> This Manifesto did not mention the status of Bukovina, but stipulated that its inhabitants were going to decide the manner in which they would be included into the future federal state. In the Austrian Parliament session of 22 October, Deputy Isopescu-Grecul requested for the Romanians of Bukovina and Hungary the right to organize themselves in their own state that would be part of the new confederation of states in Austria.<sup>12</sup>

In the same meeting of the Vienna Parliament, the Social-Democrat Deputy Gheorghe Grigorovici expressed his firm opinion against the splitting of Bukovina and accused Nikolai Wasilko, Ukrainian deputy for Bukovina, that during the peace negotiations in Brest-Litovsk he had opted for the inclusion of Bukovina into the Ukrainian state. In his turn, Deputy Nikolai Wasilko requested the splitting of Bukovina between Romanians and Ukrainians, claiming that the Ukrainians would discuss with the Romanians based on the right to self-determination. The German Deputy Anton Keschmann spoke against the splitting of Bukovina and requested that the political and cultural rights of the German community be guaranteed when settling the national issue in Bukovina and Eastern Galicia.<sup>13</sup>

The last meeting of the Vienna Parliament took place on 28 October, and two Romanian deputies from Bukovina were also present (Constantin Isopescu-Grecul and Teofil Simionovici). On 3 November, Austria-Hungary requested the signing of an armistice and the conclusion of military hostilities, and on 11 November, Germany also signed an armistice putting an end to the war. On 11 November, King Charles I abdicated; thus, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was abolished, and the republic was proclaimed.

## The Founding of the Romanian National Council in Chernivtsi

**T**HE FALL of the Habsburg Empire created favorable conditions for the affirmation of the Romanian national movement in Bukovina. At the end of October, deputies Alexandru Hurmuzachi, Gheorghe Sârbu, Gheorghe Grigorovici, and Aurel Onciul were in Chernivtsi. Alexandru Hurmuzachi, who was also president of the Bukovina Parliament, was hesitant and loyal to the central authorities. In addition, Aurel Onciul maintained his opinion that the Austro-Hungarian monarchy could be reorganized, and he opted for a settlement with the Ukrainians concerning the future of Bukovina. At the same time, a part of the Romanian intellectuals, led by the teachers Ion Nistor and George Tofan, had sought refuge in Romania, most of them in Kishinev.

Under these circumstances, at Sextil Pușcariu's initiative, a group of intellectuals met on 12 October and decided to take action for the affirmation of the national rights of the Bukovinian Romanians. On the same occasion, the decision to publish the newspaper  *Glasul Bucovinei*  (The Voice of Bukovina) was taken. On 16 October, Iancu Flondor, the famous political personality, arrived in Bukovina's capital. In those historical days, he took the leading position in the national movement and expressed a firm position against the splitting of Bukovina based on ethnic criteria.

On 22 October, in Chernivtsi appeared the first issue of the newspaper  *Glasul Bucovinei* , in which the program-article "What Do We Want?" was also published. On 27 October 1918, in Chernivtsi, there was an assembly of the Bukovinian Romanians that was also attended by deputies to the Vienna and Bukovina Parliaments, Romanian mayors, representatives of the political parties and the Romanian cultural associations.<sup>14</sup> The meeting proclaimed itself a Constituent Assembly and adopted a motion by which it decided "the union of the entire Bukovina with the other Romanian provinces into an independent national state" and the work towards this purpose in full solidarity with the Romanians

of Transylvania and Hungary. The Constituent Assembly firmly rejected any attempt that would split Bukovina, but wished to settle issues with the cohabiting peoples.<sup>15</sup>

The first meeting of the Romanian National Council of Bukovina, during which 50 members were elected, was held on 27 October 1918. On the same day, an Executive Committee was created; it consisted of Iancu Flondor (chairman), Dionisie Bejan, Dori Popovici, Sextil Pușcariu (vice-chairmen), and all six Romanian deputies to the Austrian Parliament were appointed as its members.<sup>16</sup>

During the meeting of 27 October, Deputy Gheorghe Grigorovici stated that “we have to come to a certain agreement with the Ukrainians and the other cohabiting nations.” He pleaded for “a Greater Romania that should include all Romanian territories, but an honest and just Romania,” i.e. to do equal justice to inhabitants, regardless of their ethnic origin. On the same day, following Iancu Flondor’s proposal, the departments for foreign affairs, supplies, and administration were established.<sup>17</sup> On 28 October, Iancu Flondor together with Gheorghe Sârbu and Dori Popovici went to the Government Palace and demanded that Governor Joseph Graf von Etdorf hand over the power to the Romanian National Council of Bukovina. Etdorf, however, refused to accept this request.

## The Situation in Bukovina at the Beginning of November 1918

ON 3 NOVEMBER 1918, the Ukrainians organized an assembly in Chernivtsi. Its participants voted for the splitting of Bukovina based on the ethnic criterion. The Ukrainian assembly decided that the city of Chernivtsi, the entire districts of Zastavna, Coțmani (Kitsman), Vășcăuți, and Vijnîța (Vizhnits), the districts of Chernivtsi and Siret, according to the majority established as a result of the last census, and some villages in Storozhynets, Rădăuți, Suceava, and Câmpulung with Ukrainian majorities should become Ukrainian national territories, and the Ukrainian National Council should assume control over these territories.<sup>18</sup>

The Austrian Governor Joseph Graf von Etdorf intended to hand over the power to the representatives of the Bukovinian Romanians and Ukrainians equally, but Iancu Flondor refused this proposition. In the meantime, the situation got out of control. Several administrative buildings in the city of Chernivtsi were occupied by Ukrainian troops. In order to restore order in Bukovina, Iancu Flondor requested the support of the Romanian Government. To this end, on 2 November 1918, Vasile Bodnărescu was sent to Iași. Due to the fact that the

situation in Chernivtsi had become critical, Vasile Bodnărescu requested the intervention of the Romanian Army in Bukovina. Iancu Flondor sent a telegram also to Sever Zotta, who was the director of the Iași State Archives, in which he asked him to contact the Romanian authorities and request the entry of the Romanian troops in Bukovina.<sup>19</sup>

6 November 1918 was a crucial day for the future destiny of Bukovina. On this day, the representatives of the Ukrainians managed to take control of several important institutions in Chernivtsi, and they requested Governor von Etdorf to hand over the leadership to the Ukrainian Council. The Romanian National Palace of Chernivtsi was devastated, and Iancu Flondor and Dionisie Bejan took refuge in the building of the Metropolitan Residence. Aurel Onciul, without consulting with the other representatives of the Romanians, agreed with the Ukrainians upon the creation of a Romanian government for the southern part and a Ukrainian one for the northern part of the province. The city of Chernivtsi was going to be administered jointly and the future Peace Congress was to issue a permanent decision on the fate of Bukovina. Aurel Onciul was appointed Romanian National commissioner, although he did not have the support of the representatives of the Bukovinian Romanians.<sup>20</sup>

On 6 November 1918, the conservative government of Romania, led by Alexandru Marghiloman, handed in its resignation. On the same day, in Iași, a new government was created, led by General Constantin Coandă. In the following days, this government annulled the provisions of the Peace Treaty with the Central Powers and requested the German and Austro-Hungarian troops to leave Romania's territory. On the morning of 6 November, the first units of Romanian border police and gendarmes entered the cities of Suceava, Gura Humorului, and Câmpulung in southern Bukovina, with the purpose of restoring order. On the same day, during the Iași meeting of the Chambers, Constantin Arion, former minister for foreign affairs, claimed that "the government dies because it took Bukovina. It is the most beautiful end we could have hoped for."<sup>21</sup>

In the evening of 6 November, the headquarters of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division led by General Iacob Zadik were set up in the border town of Burdujeni. On 8 November 1918, officer Aurel Popescul and physician Octavian Gheorghian, as delegates of the Romanian National Council, arrived in Burdujeni and transmitted General Iacob Zadik their message, asking him to enter Bukovina and advance towards Chernivtsi as fast as possible. At the same time, General Zadik received orders from the Constantin Coandă Government to head towards the capital of Bukovina.<sup>22</sup>

In this complicated context, Aurel Onciul, in his quality as self-proclaimed Romanian commissioner, went to Suceava and tried to persuade General Iacob Zadik to not cross the Siret line while going north, in order to prevent armed



incidents. Aurel Onciul was still convinced that Bukovina, reorganized on the basis of national principles, would remain part of a federal Austria. Given the fact that his attempt to stop the advance of the Romanian Army in Bukovina was not successful, Aurel Onciul went to Iași in order to convince the Romanian authorities to stop this military action.<sup>23</sup>

On 9 November 1918, in Chernivtsi arrived a unit of 180 Romanian soldiers from Lugoj, which had been passing through Bessarabia and decided to come to the aid of the Bukovinian Romanians. They contacted Professor Sextil Pușcariu and offered their military support for the national action. On the same day, a Romanian plane flew over the city of Chernivtsi dropping copies of the Proclamation of General Zadik that announced the entry of the Romanian Army in Bukovina. The Ukrainian military units gradually left Chernivtsi and headed towards Galicia, where there were significant clashes between the Poles and the Ukrainians. Thus, already on 9 November, the most important institutions in Chernivtsi were under the control of the Romanian National Council, and Father Gheorghe Șandru became mayor of Bukovina's capital. On 11 November 1918, at noon, the Romanian Army under the command of General Zadik entered Chernivtsi without firing a shot, being welcomed with applause in the city's central square. On the following days, the units of the Romanian Army crossed the Prut River and took control of the whole territory of Bukovina and also of the northwestern part of Khotyn County, which until then had been under Austrian occupation.

## The Activity of the Romanian National Council

ON 12 NOVEMBER, the Romanian National Council voted on the temporary fundamental law regarding the powers in the province of Bukovina. On the same day, the Government of Bukovina was formed. It was led by Iancu Flondor and consisted of 11 members (Sextil Pușcariu, Dori Popovici, Nicu Flondor, Gheorghe Sârbu, Radu Sbiera, Ipolit Tarnavschi, Max Hacman, Vasile Marcu, Aurel Țurcan, Cornel Tarnoviețchi, and Octavian Gheorghian) who were responsible for various secretariats. On account of their appointment to the government, four personalities from the leadership of the Romanian National Council (Iancu Flondor, Dori Popovici, Sextil Pușcariu, and Radu Sbiera) submitted their resignations. Dionisie Bejan was elected chairman of the Romanian National Council, and Eusebie Popovici, Nicu Vasilovschi, and Vasile Alboi-Șandru were elected vice-chairmen.<sup>24</sup>

During the 13 November meeting of the Romanian National Council, the government led by Iancu Flondor presented its program for the next period. He

briefly referred to the main areas of the government's activity and promised that a new election law would be prepared. There was the intention to reorganize the gendarmerie and establish a Bukovinian legion. In the field of agriculture, an agrarian reform was meant to provide households with a certain area of land, setting both the maximum and the minimum sizes for these areas. The Government of Bukovina intended to place the education system on national bases, and there were plans for introducing Romanian as language of instruction in secondary schools.<sup>25</sup>

During this meeting, there were debates regarding the manner in which Bukovina was to be administered and the measures that were going to be taken in the next period. The most passionate discussions referred to the attitude towards Ukrainians and the defense of Bukovina's integrity. Deputy Gheorghe Grigorovici delivered a critical speech in reference to the new government of Bukovina and gave some explanations for the fact that the Romanian deputies to the Austrian Parliament had consented to an agreement with the Ukrainians in respect to the northern part of the province. He considered that the situation was momentarily favorable to the Romanians, but in the future there might be a less advantageous context, in which Romania would be facing its eastern neighbor alone.<sup>26</sup>

The position of Gheorghe Grigorovici was partially supported by Florea Lupu. Several members of the Romanian National Council subsequently took the floor and criticized Gheorghe Grigorovici's position. Nicu Flondor, Laurenție Tomoiagă, Cezar Scalat, Alecu Procopovici, Radu Sbiera, and others favored Bukovina's territorial integrity. They referred to the large number of Romanians living on the left bank of the Dniester River and expressed their pessimism regarding a possible agreement with the Ukrainians. They criticized the position of the Romanian deputies to the Austrian Parliament, who wished to negotiate with the Ukrainians and hand over the northwestern part of Bukovina.<sup>27</sup>

In the following days, the Romanian National Council and the Government of Bukovina took action towards re-establishing public order throughout the entire province and for preparing the union with Romania. On 22 November, approximately 100 Bukovinian refugees, led by teacher Ion Nistor, returned to Chernivtsi coming from Iași and Kishinev. On the same day, it was decided that the newspaper *Glăsuț Bucovinei* should appear daily, under the direction of Sextil Pușcariu. The fourth meeting of the Romanian National Council, attended also by Metropolitan Vladimir Repta, took place on 25 November. On that occasion, 50 new members were added to the Romanian National Council, including 12 Bukovinian refugees like Ion Nistor, George Tofan, Filaret Doboș, Aurel Morariu, Teodor Stefanelli, and others.<sup>28</sup> On behalf of the Bukovinian refugees, George Tofan expressed the decision in favor of the unconditional union of Bukovina with Romania.

In its meeting of 25 November, the Romanian National Council supported the government's proposal referring to the organization of a Bukovina Congress on 28 November. During the same meeting, Radu Sbiera, the government official responsible for education, made a declaration regarding the schools. He said that the government supported the right of the ethnic communities to develop autonomously in the field of education.<sup>29</sup> Ion Candrea and other members of the National Council submitted a request regarding the planned agrarian reform to the government. Iancu Flondor said that the government agreed to assign land to the peasants. During the discussions, all the speakers agreed that there was a need to complete the agrarian reform.

## The General Congress of Bukovina (28 November 1918)

ON 28 NOVEMBER 1918, the General Congress of Bukovina met in the Synodal Hall of the Metropolitan Residence in Chernivtsi. This event was attended by 74 members (of the total of 100) of the Romanian National Council, 6 delegates of the Poles, 7 of the Germans, as well as 13 inhabitants of 5 Ukrainian villages. There were also several guests from Bessarabia (Pantelimon Halippa, Ion Pelivan, Ion Buzdugan, and Grigore Cazacliu), from Transylvania and Hungary (Gheorghe Crișan, Victor Deleu, and Vasile Osvadă) as well as the representatives of the Romanian Army led by General Iacob Zadik.<sup>30</sup> The Congress meeting was opened by Dionisie Bejan, chairman of the Romanian National Council. After a short speech, he suggested that Iancu Flondor be chosen to lead the works of this historic meeting. Radu Sbiera was elected secretary of the Congress.

Iancu Flondor read the statement of the Bukovina General Congress, through which “the unconditional and perennial union of Bukovina, in its old boundaries up to the Cheremosh, Colacin (Colaczin) and Dniester Rivers, with the Kingdom of Romania” was decided.<sup>31</sup> Professor Ion Nistor presented a communiqué about the Austrian rule over Bukovina and asked for the proposed motion to be voted. Statements of support for the union of Bukovina with Romania were pronounced by Stanisław Kwiatkowski (of the Polish delegation) and Professor Alois Lebouton (of the German delegation).<sup>32</sup> The motion on the unconditional union of Bukovina with the Kingdom of Romania was adopted unanimously.

During the same meeting, there was a proposition for electing a delegation consisting of 15 members of the congress, which was going to present the union motion to the King of Romania. Iancu Flondor was chosen chairman of the delegation.<sup>33</sup> The next day, this delegation arrived in Iași and solemnly handed

the union document of Bukovina to King Ferdinand and the Romanian Government. After this, the Bukovinian delegation travelled in a special train to Bucharest, accompanying the royal family, the Romanian Government, and the military authorities. They were greeted with great pomp in the capital of Romania on 1 December 1918, on the same historical day on which in Alba Iulia the decision for the union of Transylvania with Romania was adopted.

The union document of 28 November 1918 was confirmed by the Decree-Law No. 3744/1918, signed on 18 December 1918. At the same time, the Decree-Law No. 3745/1918 for the administration of Bukovina was issued, and Iancu Flondor and Ion Nistor were appointed ministers and secretaries of state without portfolios for Bukovina, the former residing in Chernivtsi and the latter in Bucharest. All these decisions entered into force on 2 January 1919, following their publication in *Monitorul Oficial*.<sup>34</sup>

## The International Recognition of Bukovina's Union with Romania

**D**URING 1919, the Romanian authorities made substantial efforts for obtaining the international recognition of the union of Bukovina and the other Romanian provinces with Romania. At the Paris Peace Conference, the Romanian delegation was led by Prime Minister Ion I. C. Brătianu. The Romanian delegation contained also two experts for Bukovina (Nicu Flondor for economic and financial issues and Alexandru Vitencu for ethnographic and geographical matters).

The Romanian delegation encountered greater difficulties regarding the recognition of the union of Bukovina in its historical boundaries with Romania and concerning the treaty on minorities. On 1 February 1919, Ion I. C. Brătianu asked the Peace Conference Supreme Council to recognize the Dniester River as the natural frontier of Romania in Bukovina and Bessarabia, thus cancelling the provisions of the secret treaty of 4/17 August 1916, according to which Romania's future frontier in Bukovina was going to be on the Prut River. This point of view was contested, in March 1919, by Hryhorii Sydorenko, a member of the Directorate of Ukraine led by Symon Petliura, who claimed Bukovina's territory between the Prut and the Dniester Rivers. Later, in May 1919, Sydorenko's request was limited to a portion of northwestern Bukovina, located in the valley of the Cheremosh River.<sup>35</sup>

During the works of the Peace Conference, the union of the entire Bukovina with Romania was contested especially by the American delegation. Already on 21 January 1919, the US delegation drew up a document according to which

Bukovina was divided into two main ethnic regions, separated by a line that passed a mile northwest of Chernivtsi, leaving this city to Romania. In the plenary session of the Commission for Border Demarcation, on 8 February 1919, the US delegate justified the proposed ethnic border as less difficult than the historical border between Bukovina and Galicia. If this recommendation had been accepted, Romania would have lost in Bukovina a territory that, according to the census of 1910, was inhabited by 85,000 Ukrainians and only 300 Romanians; there were no specifications on the number of inhabitants of other nationalities.<sup>36</sup>

The ethnic demarcation of Bukovina was approved by the Supreme Council of the Four Powers on 21 June 1919. Only on 2 July 1919, the Romanian delegation was informed about the decision taken regarding the Romanian-Polish border in Bukovina. On 4 July 1919, the two experts from Bukovina, Nicu Flondor and Alexandru Vitencu, drew up a memorandum in which they proved with historical and economic arguments that the northwestern part of Bukovina had to be included into Romania. They accepted a frontier correction only in the mountain region of Putila, in the Vizhnits District.<sup>37</sup>

In the following days, the American delegation changed its position concerning the border of Bukovina. The paradox of the situation consisted of the fact that, although the frontier was traced based on ethnic criteria, the northwestern region of Bukovina, with a compact Ukrainian population, was not claimed by Poland. Under these circumstances, even one of the American delegates suggested that the basin of the Cheremosh River should be given back to Romania, for economic reasons. Poland was going to receive only a few villages in the far northwest of Bukovina, crossed by the railway connecting the Galician towns of Kolomea and Zalishchyky. A decision in this regard was taken on 1 August 1919, but the Romanian delegation was informed of this decision only after signing the Peace Treaty with Austria.<sup>38</sup>

On 10 September 1919, in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, the Peace Treaty between Austria and the Allied Countries was signed. Romania refused to sign this treaty because it disagreed with the stipulations of the Minorities Treaty and with the proposed borders. The Peace Conference Supreme Council decided, on 12 November 1919, to send an ultimatum to Romania, according to which the country was obliged to sign the two treaties. After a few weeks of intense discussions, the Romanian delegation managed to obtain a few changes in the wording of these two documents, and on 10 December 1919, General Constantin Coandă signed both the Peace Treaty with Austria and the Minorities Treaty. Only after signing these treaties, on 18 December, the Romanian delegation was informed about the decision taken regarding the Romanian border in Bukovina. Outside the country's borders remained five villages in the northwestern part of Bukovina, which were assigned to Poland for economic

reasons.<sup>39</sup> The definitive border of Bukovina was decided on 26 January 1928, when the five villages were returned to Romania.

After the Peace Treaty with Austria was signed, Romania's Parliament ratified this treaty in two consecutive meetings, on 23 and 30 July 1920. The treaty entered into force on 4 September 1920, when the ratification instruments were submitted in Paris.<sup>40</sup> Thus, after 144 years of Austrian rule and after almost one year of negotiations during the Paris Peace Conference, the union of Bukovina within its historical boundaries up to the Cheremosh, Colaczin, and Dniester Rivers with Romania was officially recognized. □

## Notes

1. Ion I. Nistor, *Problema ucraineană în lumina istoriei*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, ed. Ștefan Purici, preface by Gheorghe Buzatu (Rădăuți-Bacău, 1997), 183.
2. Bucharest National Archives, Iancu Flondor coll., inv. 945, file 15, fols. 2–3, 9.
3. For more details on this memorandum, see: Constantin Ungureanu, "Memoriul lui Iancu Flondor, din anul 1915, despre hotarele Bucovinei," *Analele Bucovinei* (Bucharest) 10, 2 (2003): 493–507.
4. Bucharest National Archives, Microfilme Austria coll., inv. 902, roll 5, package IX, 577–589 (extract from Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv Wien, Politisches Archiv I, Karton 818).
5. Constantin Ungureanu, "Trei variante austriece, din anul 1915, de cedare parțială a Bucovinei României," *Analele Bucovinei* 10, 1 (2003): 149–152.
6. Ion Varta, "Proiecte rusești de anexare a Bucovinei în perioada primului război mondial," *Cugetul* (Chernivtsi) 2 (1993): 37–39.
7. Pavel Țugui, *Bucovina: Istorie și cultură* (Bucharest, 2002), 308.
8. *Basarabia, Bucovina, Transilvania: Unirea 1918, documente adnotate și studiu introductiv de prof. dr. Viorica Moisuc* (Bucharest, 1996), 329–330.
9. Erich Prokopowitsch, *Das Ende der österreichischen Herrschaft in der Bukowina* (Munich, 1959), 11–12.
10. *Ibid.*, 29; Radu Economu, *Unirea Bucovinei 1918* (Chernivtsi, 2011), 11.
11. Țugui, 297.
12. Prokopowitsch, 30; Economu, 14, 42–43.
13. Prokopowitsch, 30–31; Economu, 14–15.
14. *Basarabia, Bucovina, Transilvania*, 386.
15. *Unirea Basarabiei și a Bucovinei cu România 1917–1918: Documente*, eds. Ion Calafeteanu and Viorica Moisuc (Kishinev, 1995), 260.
16. *Ibid.*, 20.
17. *Basarabia, Bucovina, Transilvania*, 388–390.
18. Economu, 157.
19. *Ibid.*, 25–26.

20. Țugui, 299; Economu, 27–28, 158–161.
21. Economu, 29.
22. Țugui, 314–315.
23. Economu, 30.
24. *Basarabia, Bucovina, Transilvania*, 412–413.
25. *Ibid.*, 422–425.
26. *Unirea Basarabiei și a Bucovinei cu România 1917–1918*, 290–291.
27. *Ibid.*, 294, 296–297, 299–307.
28. Economu, 156–157.
29. *Basarabia, Bucovina, Transilvania*, 474.
30. Ion Nistor, *Istoria Bucovinei*, edited and bibliographical study by Stelian Neagoe (Bucharest, 1991), 394–395.
31. *Unirea Basarabiei și a Bucovinei cu România 1917–1918*, 333–335.
32. Economu, 176–177.
33. *Ibid.*, 181–182.
34. *Ibid.*, 57–58, 184–186.
35. Daniel Hrenciuc, “Un capitol din recunoașterea diplomatică a Marii Uniri. Problema Bucovinei în cadrul Conferinței de Pace de la Paris (1919–1920): Contribuții istorice,” *Analele Bucovinei* 10, 2 (2003): 441.
36. Economu, 113–114.
37. *Ibid.*, 114–115, 202–203.
38. Hrenciuc, 446; Economu, 116.
39. Economu, 116, 118.
40. Hrenciuc, 448.

## Abstract

### The Union of Bukovina with Romania in 1918

On 27 October 1918, in Chernivtsi, there was a meeting of the representatives of the Bukovinian Romanians that proclaimed itself a Constituent Assembly. At this meeting, “the unification of the whole of Bukovina with the other Romanian provinces into an independent national state” and the work towards this purpose in full solidarity with the Romanians in Transylvania and Hungary were decided. On the same day, 50 members were elected to the Romanian National Council, and an Executive Committee was created; Iancu Flondor was elected as its chairman. On 11 November 1918, the Romanian Army entered Chernivtsi and during the following days it took control of the entire territory of Bukovina. On 12 November 1918, the Government of Bukovina led by Iancu Flondor was formed. On 25 November, 50 new members were added to the Romanian National Council, including 12 Bukovinian refugees. On 28 November 1918, the meeting of the General Congress of Bukovina decided on the “unconditional and perennial union of Bukovina within its old borders up to the Cheremosh, Colaczin, and Dniester Rivers with the Kingdom of Romania.” After almost one year of negotiations, the union of Bukovina with Romania was officially recognized during the Paris Peace Conference.

## Keywords

Bukovina, First World War, Constituent Assembly, Romanian National Council, Bukovina Government, General Congress of Bukovina, Paris Peace Conference