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## Cultural Nationalism and Associationism in Bukovina in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

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*Culture became one of the most important means for promoting the national ideology among wider social categories within the Romanian society in Bukovina.*

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THE YEAR 1848 meant a decisive stage for the affirmation of the Romanian cultural nationalism<sup>1</sup> in Habsburg Bukovina, as a means to protect and promote the Romanian language, in a context where the central political and administrative power was using a totally different language and culture than the indigenous majority. The political context favorable for satisfying the peoples' requests in the empire emerged in Vienna as a result of the overthrow of the absolutist regime after the March 1848 Revolution, and of the promulgation, one month later, of a temporary liberal Constitution.<sup>2</sup> These factors strongly influenced public opinion and the Romanian national movement in Bukovina. The events in the capital of the empire also generated, besides a social movement, aiming to free the peasants from their duties, a strong political movement, whose main objective was to separate Bukovina from the great province of Galicia, to which it had been annexed in 1786, and to transform it an auto-

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mous province of the Austrian part of the monarchy. The Romanian political elite, mostly landowners of noble origin, Orthodox Church representatives and intellectuals from the country, aware of the huge differences in religion, tradition, nationality and language between the two provinces, considered that provincial autonomy and an own diet would be the way to obtain new rights, while the national interests of the Romanian population would be better protected. The true leader of the Romanian political elite was Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki. He and his father, the old boyar Doxachi, owner of the Cernauca estate, had always offered a welcoming refuge to the Moldavian and Transylvanian revolutionaries, while his brothers, Alexandru and Gheorghe Hurmuzaki, were the founders of the first provincial Romanian publication for politics, religion and literature, suggestively entitled *Bucovina*. This publication represented, between 1848 and 1850, not only a tribune of the political struggle, but also an important means for spreading Romanian culture, becoming, due to the literature published by writers from Transylvania, Moldavia or Wallachia, a true symbol of the Romanian spiritual unity.<sup>3</sup>

The freedom of speech, gained after the March Revolution, gave the autonomists in Bukovina the necessary impulse to fight for the national desideratum. The chosen methods were moderate, involving petitions. As a result, after many debates and public meetings, the Romanian political elite managed to formulate its main political requests, included in a vast petition to be presented to the emperor of Austria, entitled “The Petition of the Land of Bukovina,” written around late May or early June 1848.<sup>4</sup> The fact that this petition was signed by numerous churchmen, led by the Orthodox Bishop Eugenie Hacman, by numerous landowners (Doxachi von Hurmuzaki, Ioan von Mustața, Nicolae von Petrino), as well as by more than 230 people from Bukovina from almost all social layers and ethnicities that existed in the province, sought to highlight, for the central imperial authorities, the existence of general support for the expressed requests.

The signatories of the petition, after expressing the gratitude of the population in Bukovina for the 15 March 1848 imperial patent, which promised to grant civil and political rights to all the people in the monarchy, including the Romanians, requested to be allowed to break free from Galicia and enjoy economic, social, cultural and provincial autonomy, as detailed in the 12 points of the petition. Emancipation through culture was insistently asked for in the second point, where the necessity of founding Romanian primary schools and especially a Romanian language and literature department was considered to be an essential condition for the preservation and development of the Romanian nation. At the same time, they requested that Romanian language should be used in administration and justice, and that those working in the provincial in-

stitutions should know Romanian language and should be selected from among the locals, thus avoiding flooding the province with foreign clerks. This was considered the only way for the people of this small province, considered to be representative for the Romanian nationality, to be able to freely progress, together with the other millions of inhabitants of the monarchy, offering an example to the other Romanians outside the empire and especially to the Romanians in neighboring Moldavia.<sup>5</sup>

The insistence of the Romanian elite on the cultural development of the Romanian nation, through school and education, had an impact on the Habsburg authorities. Thus, in August 1848, the Vienna Ministry for Internal Affairs, admitting the necessity of a Romanian language and literature department, as an important request of the population in the province, recommended to the Ministry of Education to take the necessary steps for founding it within the Institute for Philosophical Studies in the German Gymnasium in Chernowitz, mostly also because there were sufficient financial resources from the incomes of the Bukovina Church Fund.<sup>6</sup> Succeeding in the examination organized in January 1849 by the Ministry of Education, Aron Pumnul, a Transylvanian revolutionary and a refugee in Chernowitz at the time, got the job, thanks to his great knowledge of Romanian language and literature and to the support offered by the Hurmuzaki family.<sup>7</sup> The creation of this department in Chernowitz, unique in the province, was a great success of the cultural nationalism promoted by the elite in Bukovina and offered to the Romanian youth the opportunity to cultivate their national language, thus strengthening the Romanian identity.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, the Normal School for Primary School teachers, with the Romanian language as a subject matter, was founded in Chernowitz. Its purpose was to instruct the future teachers for mainstream schools; their number was expected to increase after Bukovina obtained its provincial autonomy, by the Constitution of 4 March 1849. As a result of the perseverance of the Romanian elite concerning the implementation of the autonomy, the Ministry decree of February 1850 transferred the guidance and the control of the whole educational system from the Catholic Consistory in Lemberg to the Orthodox Consistory in Chernowitz; teaching in Romanian had been previously extended to the Theology Institute and to the Orthodox Seminary in the capital of the province.<sup>9</sup> This was the basis of the national education system, which would develop during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Just like in other multiethnic provinces from the Austrian part of the Habsburg Monarchy,<sup>10</sup> following the concerted efforts of the Romanian elite in the direction of promoting the language in school—frequently ending with heated debates in the Provincial Legislative Chamber<sup>11</sup>—the school network extended gradually also in Bukovina, from primary schools in the rural environ-

ment, up to parallel Romanian classes within the state gymnasiums in the towns and boroughs in the province.

During the neo-absolutist period, the restriction of the citizens' association rights, as a result of the Patent of 26 November 1852, reintroducing the concession system for the founding of societies, as well as other legislative restrictions,<sup>12</sup> put barriers to the creation of cultural societies in Bukovina. The recovery of provincial autonomy in 1861 and the liberal political climate created in the Habsburg Monarchy after the collapse of neo-absolutism stimulated the associative idea with the Romanian population of Bukovina, perceived as an organic necessity of the Romanian society of the time.

**A** FIRST MANIFESTATION in this direction was the founding, on 1 May 1862, of the Reuniunea Română de Leptură (Romanian Reading Society) of Chernowitz, aiming to support the cultural development of the Romanian people. The initiative belonged to a group of young intellectuals led by I. G. Sbiera,<sup>13</sup> helped by Aron Pumnul and especially by the brothers Alexandru and Gheorghe Hurmuzaki.<sup>14</sup> The cultural society in Bukovina was the product of the rising cultural nationalism present among ever larger social categories of the Romanian society, in a province defined by tolerance and ethno-cultural diversity.<sup>15</sup> Concurrently, the society appeared in a larger cultural context—the founding, in Sibiu, in the autumn of 1861, of the Transylvanian Association for Romanian Literature and the Culture of the Romanian People (ASTRA)<sup>16</sup>—and had a huge impact on the Romanians in the Habsburg Monarchy. We notice that one of the founding members of the ASTRA was the great Bukovina landowner, the “baron” Iordache von Vasilco, and among the “ordinary” members we also find Nicolae Criste and the Popovici brothers.<sup>17</sup> The members of the Bukovina Society belonged, as in the ASTRA’s case,<sup>18</sup> to several categories: founding, ordinary, correspondent and honorary. The creation of this cultural society had a significant impact on the Romanians, inside and outside the province, and among the 221 members registered in the first activity year there are Romanian personalities like Mihail Kogălniceanu, Vasile Alecsandri, Dimitrie Bolintineanu etc. or from Transylvania (Andrei Șaguna, George Bariț, Timotei Cipariu<sup>19</sup> and so on). Transformed later, in 1865, after the approval of the statute by the Habsburg authorities, into the *Societatea pentru Cultura și Literatură Română în Bucovina* (The Society for Romanian Culture and Literature in Bukovina), it was not only the longest-living Romanian cultural society (until the end of the Austria-Hungary and even after that), but also the one that had the greatest impact on the cultural development of the Romanians in Bukovina.<sup>20</sup> The main goal of the society was to promote, using different means and methods, the supreme

values of a people: language and culture, as elements strengthening the national consciousness.

If officially the education law of 14 May 1869 was guaranteeing equal treatment for all nationalities in school, putting this principle into practice was much more difficult. Thus, the request of the Romanians to create Romanian parallel classes in the Suceava Gymnasium, founded in 1860 as secondary school with German language teaching, came against many barriers raised by the authorities and was satisfied only after 1881.<sup>21</sup> This reality, as well as the certainty that school was one of the most important factors in the emancipation of the Romanian people, determined, in 1883, a group of teachers from the Gymnasium in Suceava, led by Ștefan Ștefureac and the judge T. V. Ștefanelli, to create the Cultural Society for a Romanian School. It ended up having 14 branches, which operated in the province's towns and villages. The declared goal of the Society was to "work for the advancement of the education of the Romanian population in Bukovina," thus contributing to spread culture among the people.<sup>22</sup> Having a large income due to the administration of funds, to the donations and to the taxes paid by the members, the Romanian School Society supported, in the first place, the children in the Romanian parallel classes in the Suceava Gymnasium, by printing textbooks and extracurricular literature, and offered various forms of assistance or accommodation in its campus for the promising but poor students. At the same time, the society financially supported many students who attended the Normal School in Chernowitz, thus helping in the training of several generations of Romanian primary school teachers. In order to encourage the activity of the schools in the villages, it offered them the necessary textbooks and rewarded the teachers who had well trained children in the secondary schools. By offering scholarships and other forms of support, it helped the best students who had modest financial means, mostly those coming from the rural areas, to later attend the University of Chernowitz,<sup>23</sup> thus contributing to the birth of a new generation of Romanian intellectuals who would use their entire energy for the national interest.

The development of the education system in Romanian and its progress to a superior level after the founding of the University of Chernowitz in 1875 led to the creation of new forms of cultural "associationism" for the youths of Bukovina, in the form of student academic societies. The first society was the Arboroasa Academic Society, founded on national criteria in December 1875 by the Romanian students from the University of Chernowitz, at the initiative of the young Romanian magistrate T. V. Ștefanelli, a former member of the Young Romania Society in Vienna. Among other things, it aimed to contribute to the "mutual improvement of the members at a cultural, literary and national level."<sup>24</sup> Although it had quite a short life, only until 1877, when it was abolished by the

Habsburg authorities because the members of the society had been involved in a famous political scandal, with national connotations, the Arboroasa Society had an intense literary and musical activity, within certain soirées appreciated by the Romanian public in Chernowitz, as described in the papers of the time.<sup>25</sup>

Almost one year after the Arboroasa Society ceased to function, in the winter of 1878, a group of Romanian students, including some members of the former society, decided to establish the Junimea (Youth) Academic Society, adopting the statute, the anthem, the motto and the funds of the former student society.<sup>26</sup> During its almost five decades of activity, the Junimea insistently and firmly continued to promote the national spirit among the Romanians in Bukovina, with a deep impact on its members and on the Romanian public opinion. Financed as an academic society with a clear national-cultural program, it had as a main goal the promotion of the Romanian culture and language. This resulted in a constant activity of the members, who wanted to develop nationality through language and literature.<sup>27</sup> In this respect, there were conferences on topics such as the national history and literature, and literary, drama and musical shows promoting original creations of the members or of some famous Romanian authors. By introducing an exam meant to check the national history and literature knowledge of the candidates for membership in the society, they wanted to fill the gaps in the Romanian students' knowledge, at the same time strengthening their national consciousness. The Junimea Society members, fighting the tendency to consider culture as a privilege reserved to the top people of a nation and considering that it was their duty to raise the cultural level of the masses, carried out a very effective activity for the cultural development of the people, organizing conferences or commemorative festivities and thus contributing to the national-cultural emancipation.<sup>28</sup> Following the same idea and starting with the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the students of Junimea Society dedicated more and more programs to the rural areas, taking an active part in the founding of book clubs or presenting lectures at community centers in different rural localities.<sup>29</sup>

In the same national-cultural context, two other academic societies founded in the 9<sup>th</sup> decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *Întrunirea Academică Română Bucovina* (The Bukovina Romanian Academic Assembly) (1880) and *Societatea Academia Ortodoxă* (The Orthodox Academy Society), aimed to cultivate the love for the country and promote the national language and culture, both among its members and among the people, through a series of specific activities. Even if the Bukovina Society was organized according to the model of the German students' associations, their members having the right to practice fencing, it was a real defender of the national symbol, the tricolor flag, and of national dignity, challenging anyone who would offend the Romanians. A remarkable realization of

the Bukovina Romanian Academic Assembly was the publication of the *Literary Calendar*, featuring the works of several Romanian authors from the province.<sup>30</sup> In its turn, the Orthodox Academy Society, where most of the members were Theology students, substantially contributed to the cultural development of the rural Romanian world, through a series of conferences on literature, morality or religion, as well as by publishing *The Calendar of the People of Bukovina*, which was distributed for free in the villages.<sup>31</sup>

Thus we can say that an important role in the institutionalization of Romanian culture in Bukovina in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was played by students' societies, as well as by the cultural associations. Through their whole activity, the academic societies and the Romanian cultural associations had a substantial contribution to the preservation and cultivation of the national language and culture in this province. At that time, culture became one of the most important means for promoting the national ideology among wider social categories belonging to the Romanian society in Bukovina.

The cultural nationalism expressed by the Romanians in Bukovina, in the 1848 documents or in the later ones, or in the programs and activities of various cultural or academic associations, was always presented in the form of principles and attitudes, without being aggressive to the other nationalities in the province and seeking instead peaceful companionship. Present for the first time in the "Country's Petition" of June 1848, the appeal to language, as a fundamental factor in affirming the national identity, but also in the cultural development of the Romanian nation, through school and education, remains essential for all the national emancipation efforts of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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## Notes

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2. Erich Zöllner, *Istoria Austriei: De la începuturi până în prezent*, trans., vol. 1 (Bucharest, 1997), 438.

3. Teodor Bălan, *Frații Gheorghe și Alexandru Hurmuzachi și ziarul "Bucovina"* (Chernowitz, 1924), passim; Petru Rușșindilar, *Hurmuzăcheștii în viața culturală și politică a Bucovinei* (Iași, 1995), 69 sq.
4. Mihai Iacobescu, *Din istoria Bucovinei: De la administrația militară la autonomia provincială (1774–1862)*, vol. 1 (Bucharest, 1993), 375 sq.; Ștefan Purici, *Mișcarea națională românească în Bucovina între anii 1775–1861* (Suceava, 1998), 184 sq.
5. National Archives, Suceava County Division, *Documents Collection*, pack XIII, document no. 35/1848; also see the integral text of the document, published unabridged, although without signatures, in Cornelia Bodea, *1848 la români: O istorie în date și mărturii*, vol. 1 (Bucharest, 1982), 609 sq.
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7. Mircea Cenușă, "Aron Pumnul—cel dintâi profesor de limba română în Bucovina," *Suceava: Anuarul Muzeului Bucovinei* 16–17 (1990–1992): 270–273.
8. Ion Nistor, *Un capitol din viața culturală a românilor din Bucovina, 1774–1857* (Bucharest, 1916), 59.
9. Iacobescu, 450.
10. Ulfried Burz, "Demographie und Nationalismus am Beispiel Kärnten (1848–1918)," *Transylvanian Review* 18, Suppl. 1 (2009): 356–357.
11. Mihai Ștefan Ceaușu, *Parlamentarism, partide și elită politică în Bucovina habsburgică (1848–1918): Contribuții la istoria parlamentarismului în spațiul central-est european* (Iași, 2004), 156–157.
12. Hans Peter Hye, *Das politische System in der Habsburgermonarchie: Konstitutionalismus, Parlamentarismus und politische Partizipation* (Prague, 1998), 197.
13. Alis Niculică, *Ion G. Sbiera: Viața și opera* (Suceava, 2005), 41.
14. Ilie Luceac, *Familia Hurmuzachi: între ideal și realizare: O istorie a culturii românești din Bucovina în cea de a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea* (Chernowitz–Timișoara, 2000), 52–53.
15. Petru Bejan, "About Hospitality and Tolerance in South-Eastern Europe," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 9, 26 (Summer 2010): 44.
16. For ASTRA's cultural impact, see: Pamfil Matei, "Asociațiunea transilvană pentru literatură și cultura poporului român" (*Astra*) și rolul ei în cultura națională (1861–1950) (Cluj-Napoca, 1986).
17. Ion Lupaș, "Din corespondența lui Șaguna cu bucovinenii," *Junimea literară* 11–12 (1909): 213.
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19. Ion Negură, "Societatea pentru Cultura și Literatura Română în Bucovina," *Suceava: Anuarul Muzeului Județean* 4 (1977): 183.
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22. Iorgu G. Toma, *Școala Română, societate culturală în Suceava* (Suceava, 1908), 36.
23. Ibid., 185 sq.
24. Corneliu Crăciun, *Societăți academice din Bucovina (I): Arboroasa și Junimea* (Oradea, 1997), 17–18.
25. Ilie Dugan, *Istoricul societății academice române “Junimea,”* pt. 1, “Arboroasa” (1875–1877) (Bucharest, 1931), 16–17.
26. Crăciun, 55 sq.
27. Emilian Dan Petrovici, “Societățile academice românești din Bucovina—forme ale luptei de emancipare socială și națională,” *Suceava: Anuarul Muzeului Județean* 8 (1981): 360.
28. Ibid., 364.
29. Dan Jumară, *Societățile culturale academice românești din Bucovina în perioada interbelică* (Iași, 2005), 66–67.
30. Ibid., 71–73.
31. Petrovici, 369.

## **Abstract**

### Cultural Nationalism and Associationism in Bukovina in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

The moment of 1848 constituted a decisive phase in the affirmation of Romanian cultural nationalism in Habsburg Bukovina. The liberal political climate created in the Habsburg Monarchy after the fall of neo-absolutism and after the recovery of the provincial autonomy in 1861 stimulated among the Romanians the adoption of the associationist idea, felt as an organic necessity of the Romanian society of the time. This materialized in the founding of the Romanian Reading Society of Chernowitz in 1862, transformed one year later into the Society for Romanian Culture and Literature in Bukovina, which will last until the end of Austria-Hungary and even beyond. The primary aim of the society was to promote, through various methods and means, the supreme property of a people: language and culture, as forms through which its national conscience is fortified. The Bukovina educational system's development and elevation to a fundamentally superior level through the establishment of Chernowitz University in 1875 led to the appearance of new forms of cultural associationism among the Bukovina Romanians, in the form of certain student academic societies.

## **Keywords**

Bukovina, cultural nationalism, associationism, cultural associations, student academic societies