

# Belgian Opinions Regarding the Issue of Transylvania at the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (1892–1896)

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**R**ELATIONS BETWEEN Romania and Austria-Hungary had always been strained by problems arising from the political interests concerning the Transylvanian Romanians. The period between the years 1892 and 1896 was particularly difficult due to the signing of the Memorandum (1892) asking for political rights to be granted to Transylvanian Romanians.<sup>1</sup> Many Romanian students in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire protested in Romanian towns against the Hungarian domination.<sup>2</sup> During that time, the national consciousness of Romanians was more vigorous than ever and securing the autonomy of Transylvania was seen as “the decisive step towards union” with the Romanian Old Kingdom.<sup>3</sup> The purpose of this study is to present views and opinions expressed by Belgian diplomats in relation to the approach taken by the Romanians in the Old Kingdom with regard to their Transylvanian brothers. The issue of Romanian-Hungarian conflicts was also discussed in the Brussels media or even by the Romanian students in Belgian universities who demonstrated alongside the Cultural League in Paris. Belgian political reports sent from Bucharest and Vienna, various Belgian newspapers and various Belgian prints media have been used for the purpose of this research.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century brought with it political, social, economic and cultural transformations and changes for the whole of Europe. These were due to several more or less beneficial European currents, French, German and British. What is certain is that the world needed further changes, which did occur. The Belgian press also suffered from these new ideas and perceptions, especially between 1894 and 1914. As historian Pierre Van den Dungen maintains, the Belgian press was forced to adapt to the needs and demands of society, influenced by “the evolution of mentalities and political struggles with that of technical progress.” Exceptions are found in the publications the conservatives, have kept their traditional principles, where the newspaper is the official organ and promoter of “doctrinaire and ultra” ideas.<sup>4</sup> One of the possible reasons why Transylvanian Romanians failed to support their cause at European level is due to the poor training of young journalists who do not meet the new requirements adopted at the 1896 Budapest International Congress of the Press.<sup>5</sup> Many “fighters” preferred to publish their cause in the foreign press for two reasons: first, to make their problems known to Europe, and second due to the Hungarian repression, especially after the adoption of the Memorandum in 1892.<sup>6</sup>

The main political and diplomatic issues at European level in the period we want to address were the creation of new alliances between Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy, on the one hand, and France, Great Britain and Russia, on the other. The proposed topic plays a secondary role in the broader European context, but is significant for the political context of the Romanian and Austro-Hungarian states. Certainly, the issue of Transylvania was also addressed by historiography or by the French, English or Ottoman diplomatic circles, but Belgium paid more attention to it due to the problems it encountered in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, similar to those of the Transylvanians. Aurel Filimon and Gheorghe Platon are the main historians who introduced the Romanian-Belgian relations in the Romanian historiography, followed by the historians Laurențiu Vlad, Ioan Scafeș, Philippe Beke and many others. Historians Nicolae Bărbuță and Nicolae Bocșan also made valuable contributions to the research of Romanian-Belgian relations by publishing in 1980 the essay *Romania's Independence in Belgian Perspective*. Nicolae Bărbuță also approached the proposed topic, especially the years 1865–1870, using unique and valuable sources from Belgian historiography.

Throughout the twentieth century, various studies appeared on the problems of minorities within the Dual Empire. They were subjected to certain more or less Marxist methodologies, which eliminated the old principles. At the same time, Hungarian historians introduced new perceptions and changes in national historiography, using international resources to fill in their existing gaps.<sup>7</sup> Of course, current historiography has been forced to supplement and change the perceptions of the previous century, using more and more post-communist historiographical sources.<sup>8</sup>

Following the War of Independence and the signing of the Berlin Treaty, diplomatic agencies were promoted to the rank of legations. The new ministers appointed to Bucharest held the title of plenipotentiary, and also benefited from the presence of legation secretaries, first and second class. Evidently, there were also attachés and counselors, and together they made up a genuine diplomatic corps. Between 1878 and 1914, Belgium had eight plenipotentiaries. Frederick Hooricks was the first Belgian plenipotentiary accredited to Bucharest in 1884. Between 1892 and 1899 this position went through a period of instability, and four resident ministers were accredited to Bucharest: C. A. Garnier-Heldewier (1892), the Baron Georges Charles Lambert Lamoral Forgeur (1892–1894), Count Charles d'Ursel (1894–1896), Charles Maximilien, Count of Lalaing (1896–1899). The following plenipotentiary Belgian ministers were Baron Eugène Beyens (1899–1909), the Baron Edmond de Gaiffier d'Hestroy (1909–1912) and Maximilien-Henri van Ypersele de Strihou (1912–1917).<sup>9</sup>

Following discussions between P. P. Carp and D. A. Sturdza concerning the Romanian position in case of a war between Russia and Austria-Hungary, Forgeur wondered which side Romania would choose. Additionally, the Belgian diplomat admitted in his political report that P. P. Carp was confident that the Hungarians would adopt a new policy with regard to the Romanian Transylvanians so as not to trigger a conflict. However, in the opinion of the Belgian, this attitude of the liberal political circles causes many problems for domestic politics. Sturdza seems to have been the only politician capable of grasping the nature of the problem, which he would have probably abandoned if he were to win the upcoming parliamentary elections. Furthermore, Forgeur was well

aware of Sturdza's political orientation, who favored the alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary, as well as the Transylvanian issue. But ultimately the resident minister considered that the current attitude of Lascăr Catargiu's government was "wise and absolutely correct," and that Romania should not, under any circumstances, adopt a position of neutrality.<sup>10</sup> His colleague in Vienna, Werner van den Steen de Jehay, seems to explain much better the decisions taken by the Romanians in 1892: King Carol I's visit to Budapest with Emperor Francis Joseph strengthened relations with the Central Powers. Austria-Hungary wanted to eliminate Russia's influence in the Balkans and strengthen the security of its borders. Therefore, the emperor had to convince Bulgaria also to "join" his alliance.<sup>11</sup>

A much greater analysis and attention is observed in reports sent by the new Belgian plenipotentiary in Vienna, Baron Émile de Borchgrave. If his former colleague formulated his impressions based on the press or rumors, Borchgrave presents in great detail the issue of the Transylvanians suppressed by the Hungarian population, both politically and culturally. The plenipotentiary presents the hypocrisy of the Hungarian administration which did not respect the laws adopted by themselves on the status of nationalities. Moreover, he mentioned the emperor's response to the three million Romanians: "The King . . . cannot analyze the Hungarian issue since in the Hungarian capital..." and "the Hungarian minister is the only one competent in this matter." Reading the last two pages of this report, we consider that the Belgian diplomat seems to be influenced by the Romanians across the Carpathians. He does not present his exact source, but wants to strengthen his arguments by which the "Transylvanian minority" is supported by the Romanians and the king:

*After the last visit of King Carol to Sigmaringen [1892], students of the University of Bucharest asked him to intervene on the fate of Romanians in Transylvania: "We ask your Majesty to speak to friends [in this case the Hungarian government] of our country as a man about the Romanians in Hungary. Speak as King of the Romanians; because the land where you reign is limited, but the people your Majesty loves have no boundaries."*

Borchgrave also wanted to present the answer of King Carol I to the Hungarian Count Gustav Kálnoky:

*You have 3 million Romanians. You cannot suppress them as a dominant nation. You have the right to seek to be fair and faithful. You have the task of choosing what is right and reasonable. Other countries take this issue into account, which does not pertain to the majority of the nation. Treat the Romanian problem the way you treat the Hungarian problem and they will have no reason to complain.*<sup>12</sup>

The abovementioned text was received from the Bucharest students,<sup>13</sup> but unfortunately we cannot know if Romanian king really conveyed this message to the Hungarian minister and which was in reality the interest pursued by the Belgian.

Nevertheless, during the parliamentary session held on 23 December 1893, the liberal politicians expressed harsh criticism of Romania's position which seemed to be merely

“a boulevard between Russia and Austria.”<sup>14</sup> Due to the fact that the government was going to lean more toward an alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary, following P. P. Carp’s speeches the liberals held peaceful demonstrations in front of the royal palace.

**I**N MAY 1894, Hungarians took legal action against the Transylvanian Romanians who had published in a newspaper a Memorandum addressed to the emperor Francis Joseph asking, among other things, for the autonomy of Transylvania. The Belgian also mentioned on this occasion that this particular problem of the Romanians inside the Carpathian arc held no interest to the Moldo-Wallachians. On the contrary, he indicated that, should Transylvania unite with Romania, the directions of foreign policy might change considerably.<sup>15</sup> In this case, the Hungarian authorities again suppressed the Romanian Transylvanians, after the national assembly of Blaj (1868), where they proposed the “Pronunciamento” document in which they demanded autonomy and recognition of the laws set forth in the Sibiu (Hermannstadt, Nagyszeben) Diet. Of course, the requirements were not adopted, and the organizers of the demonstration were punished.<sup>16</sup> The Romanian government was showing increasing lack of interest with regard to the Transylvanian issue, “wishing to maintain amiable relations with Austria-Hungary.” However, the Belgian secretary of the diplomatic corps noted the sympathy of the Romanian people toward their “Transylvanian brothers,” as shown by their demonstrations in front of the Bucharest government. The protests were usually organized by cultural leagues, speaking “in very strong words against Hungary.” The conduct of the general population against the Austrian-Hungarian government was deemed as “exasperating” and “appearing to lean toward Russia.” The secretary noted the hypocrisy of the Cultural League, which seemed to ignore the treatment of Bessarabians by the Russians.<sup>17</sup> Count Charles d’Ursel adopted the same position of support for the cause of the Transylvanian Romanians. He notes that, while the Transylvanians were fighting for their rights, the Moldo-Wallachian Romanians sent their ministry of foreign affairs to Galicia to salute the Habsburg emperor.<sup>18</sup>

The cause of minorities within the Dual Monarchy is further discussed in the newspaper *Indépendance belge* in 1867, emphasizing the favorable measures that the Austro-Hungarians had adopted, without granting equal rights to minorities.<sup>19</sup> In April 1894, several Romanian students demonstrated against the trial brought by the Hungarians and in support of the *Tribuna* newspaper (of Sibiu), which had published a Memorandum addressed to the emperor asking for the autonomy of Transylvania, the introduction of the Romanian language in schools, participation of Romanians in political life, etc.<sup>20</sup> On 3 May, 49 rallies were organized in Romania against the Transylvanian trials. Approximately 500,000 people took part in these rallies. At the same time, many telegrams were sent to King Carol I asking him to intervene in support of the Transylvanians.<sup>21</sup> In May 1894, the Romanian consul in Budapest, Nicolae B. Cantacuzino, announced the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alexandru N. Lahovari, that the Hungarian authorities had taken harsh measures against the Romanian Transylvanian students, suspending their scholarships, not offering graduation diplomas, and expelling them from universities.<sup>22</sup>

*Journal de Bruxelles* covered the relations between Transylvanians and Hungarians throughout history and until 1894. It criticized harshly the attitude of the Romanian

political establishment which showed “little concern for its own people.” Félix de Breux, the author of the article entitled “Les Roumains et Hongrie” published in *Journal de Bruxelles*, after presenting the causes leading to the Cluj (Klausenburg, Kolozsvár) trial, wondered “what will follow after all this agitation?” He maintains that the only thing the Romanians might achieve is a weakening of Hungarian “domination” and that the Hungarians would be

*eventually forced to yield, based on the same principle invoked against the imperial government, the principle of nationality. I don't believe that this manifestation could cause significant harm to the empire: the Romanians are dispersed in various districts and mingled with other nationalities.*

Félix de Breux notes the love of Transylvanians for the emperor. In his perspective, the separation of Transylvania from Hungary would be impossible, because if Romanians were to dominate this region, how could the Hungarians, the Szeklers and the Transylvanian Saxons “find themselves under the Romanian yoke? . . . And what about Bukovina?” The author argues that, had there been a desire for a Greater Romania, the Habsburg Empire would have disappeared. Thus, de Breux demonstrated that the efforts made by Romanians during that time had failed and lacked logic.<sup>23</sup> Even if the Romanians within the Dual Monarchy had been more or less successful, they continued to claim their own rights in local newspapers with references to “oppression and the will to react.”<sup>24</sup> After the emperor’s visit to Budapest in September 1894, the Hungarian political class agreed “to overcome this momentarily difficult situation.”<sup>25</sup>

Reading the new report of the Belgian diplomat Borchgrave of 30 September 1894, we notice his attitude and keen interest in the Transylvanians, probably trying, indirectly, to support their cause. According to this report, Count Kálnoky seems to be the only Hungarian representative trying to maintain a balance regarding the new events in Sibiu, while Albert Apponyi’s party tried to rebuke even King Carol I, who seemed to support the “Romanian League,” sponsoring Transylvanian schools with money and books. Moreover, the diplomat presents the reproach that the Romanian king addressed to writer Ioan Slavici, saying that he recognized only one “emperor” of the Dual Empire, not a “king” of Hungary.<sup>26</sup> But it is already well known that the League supported the Romanian National Party in Transylvania “in its campaign against the Hungarian government.”<sup>27</sup> In the following days, the Belgian diplomat sent the brochure that the Romanian activists had addressed to Count Kálnoky, saying that he did not know how the Romanian king, on his return from Germany, would be able to “satisfy the Hungarian cabinet, the German chancellor, and the Romanian patriots.”<sup>28</sup>

During the visit of Count d’Ursel at Peleş Castle on 10 November 1894, the king confessed that he was not affected by the death of the Tsar Alexander II, because he considered him to be a dangerous person, bound at any time to create new conflicts in the Balkans. In the new report, the Belgian diplomat wondered whether this opinion might explain why Carol I was moving closer to the Triple Alliance.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, the sovereign mentioned, during the parliamentary session held on 27 November 1895, that

*Europe can feel nothing but respect and confidence with regard to this peaceful, hard-working people which has always fulfilled its international obligations and only asks for the same respect to be returned.*<sup>30</sup>

Furthermore, the diplomat noted that the foreign policy of Romania seemed to have become increasingly closer to the Central Powers, diminishing the sympathy of France, which had “offered it a place in Europe.”<sup>31</sup> To highlight this closeness of Romanians to the cabinets in Vienna and Berlin, d’Ursel announced the visit of the Romanian sovereigns to the imperial court in Vienna. German newspapers, followed by the Belgian ones, reported that Romania, and in particular its government, was formally committed to the Triple Alliance. On the contrary, in his opinion, the amiable relations between the two sovereigns had determined a radical shift in the events occurring in the Balkans.<sup>32</sup>

The issue of Romanian Transylvanians was discussed in Parliament on 25 September/7 October 1894 by the liberal D. A. Sturdza, who claimed that the conservatives had contributed to the crushing of the Romanian movement beyond the mountains. However, rumors from Austria-Hungary contended that the Romanians were the ones supporting the Romanian press and schools in Transylvania, plotting against the Hungarian security. In the Orpheus Hall, Sturdza argued that

*the liberal party can accede to power only by holding a banner inscribed with the freedom of the three million Romanians under the Hungarian yoke, through the adoption of equal citizen rights across the entire kingdom of Saint Stephen.*<sup>33</sup>

Based on suspicions or reliable sources, the Belgian economist Émile de Laveleye discussed in his 1870 publications the revolt of minorities and the help they would receive from their “brothers,” and claimed that the union would happen. Moreover, he argued that it was absurd for Transylvania and Croatia to be annexed to the crown, because otherwise the Hungarian population would be oppressed since there were already “secret battles.” That is why the Belgian economist suggested to the Hungarians that they must also accept the German and Austrian principles.<sup>34</sup>

At the Interparliamentary Conference on arbitration and peace held on 10 August 1895 in Brussels, the Romanians did not have many supporters on the issue of the Transylvanians in Austria-Hungary: the English subjugated the Irish, the French pursued their political-commercial interests with Vienna and Budapest, the politicians of Bukovina did not want to attend this meeting, etc. The Belgian political class and press agreed to support the Transylvanian cause, but to a limited extent.<sup>35</sup> V. A. Urechia was one of the supporters of the Transylvanians at this Brussels Conference, preparing and inviting politicians and journalists from Transylvania, Banat and Bukovina to face the Hungarian delegates. The Romanian politicians were aware that they could not win the vote of the European peoples, but they wanted to paralyze the “Hungarian action” along with other minorities: Serbs, Croats, Slovaks, Czechs and Poles. At the same time, he wanted to prevent the organization of the next interparliamentary conference in Budapest in 1896, considering it a country unfriendly to Romanians.

On 20 July 1895, Auguste Beernaert, president of the Belgian Chamber and of the forthcoming Conference of 12 August 1895, invited V. A. Urechia to join him, along with other politicians, in debates with other European peoples. Of course, the former minister of denominations responded by trying to involve the Belgian politician in the Transylvanian issue and expressed dissatisfaction with the large number of Hungarian participants in this meeting.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, V. A. Urechia met with various Belgian politicians and journalists,<sup>37</sup> but only the newspaper *Journal de Bruxelles* published the Romanian's letter against the Hungarian group. In reality, the position of this newspaper was rather neutral, not supporting anyone's cause.<sup>38</sup>

In February 1896, the newspaper *Indépendance belge* agreed to publish the letter sent by M. E. Papamichalopol warning the West against the Russian danger already present in the Balkans, as well as calling attention to the treatment inflicted on the Romanian Transylvanians by the Hungarians, who did not grant them local autonomy, the right to expression and education in Romanian, or the right to take part in political life.<sup>39</sup> In the streets of Bucharest people still chanted "Down with the Millennium." The Count of Lalaing, the new Belgian minister resident in Bucharest, considered that the liberal party had borrowed some conservative ideas regarding the issue of the Romanian Transylvanians, renouncing some of their principles. Furthermore, he was convinced that Romania "gravitates around the Triple Alliance," pursuing its own political and economic interests. Similar to how Europe was favorable to the Romanian cause inside the Carpathian arc, we can also note that the Belgian diplomat supported the granting of rights to Romanians in the diaspora. The same conviction is shown in his political report dated 27 May 1896, in which he mentions that, at the end of spring 1896, the Romanian League consisted mostly of conservatives, which could create new problems for the liberal government in terms of assigning the new budget for the Romanians in Transylvania. However, the Count of Lalaing was hopeful that the conservative party would take patriotism into consideration and would support their brothers in the Banat and elsewhere.<sup>40</sup>

The press, as well as the Romanian society, responded to the presence of Emperor Francis Joseph at the royal court of Carol I between 17/29 September and 18/30 September 1896. The reason for the visit was a plausible one—to inaugurate a new navigation canal at the Iron Gates, on the Danube. But the real reason for the visit made by the Habsburg emperor to Bucharest was to extend the secret treaty of alliance between Romania and the Triple Alliance. The visit "also affirmed Romania's position in relation to its ally."<sup>41</sup> The visit continued to Peleş, where other members of the Romanian royal family were also present, having arrived from Germany. The Transylvanian journal *Tribuna* also announced the official visit to Bucharest of "our monarch, His Imperial Highness and King, Francis Joseph."<sup>42</sup>

In the opinion of the Belgian count, this event proved once again the amiable relations between the two nations. The Bucharest society, as well as the Romanian Transylvanians, were quite irritated in July by the Romanian political orientation. New manifests would be published in the local press. Furthermore, the Cultural League in Paris organized new manifestations against the "Hungarian pressure" on behalf of Romanians, Serbs, and Czecho-Slovaks. An aspect that was not yet clear from the perspective

of the count was that, despite the fact that Romania was gravitating around Vienna, it had resumed its relations with Greece, had started to move closer to Serbia and Montenegro, accepting the Russian protectorate in the Balkans. However, he called attention to the fact that, following the Romanian-Russian cooperation between 1877 and 1878, Bessarabia, another Romanian territory, was still a part of Russia.<sup>43</sup> At the same time, at the end of September, Tsar Nicholas II was to visit the French capital to celebrate the amiable relations between Russia and France.<sup>44</sup> On 30 September, the Belgian press mentioned that the purpose of the visit made by the Austrian emperor to Bucharest was to sign an alliance treaty between Romania and Austria-Hungary, specifically an agreement to join the Triple Alliance. Following Vienna's decreasing influence in the Balkans, *Indépendance belge* claimed that Austria-Hungary used this auspicious moment in its relations with Romania to obtain a military force of 300,000 soldiers in the event of a new war starting in the Balkans. The same newspaper urged Romanians to "not fall into the arms of Austria-Hungary" while their brothers beyond the Carpathians were under the Hungarian yoke. Some promises had been made to grant certain rights to Transylvanians, but the author of the article, Ion N. Roman, informed the West that, in reality, these promises were never fulfilled. Moreover, he called for the continuation of protests in Paris, Bucharest, Belgrade, Budapest, Vienna and Agram on the occasion of the celebration of the Millennium.<sup>45</sup>

The following section presents some impressions expressed by the Count of Lalaing with regard to the atmosphere in Bucharest during the visit of the Habsburg emperor. As Francis Joseph set foot in the capital, the population and the army cheered for him. At the same time, the Romanian royal family, alongside the Duke of Saxa-Coburg-Gotha, greeted the visitor at the Railway Station in Bucharest. On the main streets, the two sovereigns were regarded by the people "as victors." On every pole there was a flag with the coat of arms of the royal houses. In the evening, there were more lights in the city than ever before. The Count of Lalaing appreciated that the streets in the capital were also decorated with Hungarian flags, and the fact that protesters had left the resolution of the Romanian Transylvanian issue in the care of the government, hoping that someday Romania would be "side by side" with Hungary. Obviously, the foreign diplomatic corps also took part in the event, and the Belgian diplomat had a brief discussion with the Austrian emperor about the exhibition in Brussels in 1877. Dinner was served at the palace only in the presence of politicians and diplomats "within the Triple Alliance." After the speech delivered by Carol I, an unknown Romanian individual, who had taken part in the royal dinner, addressed the emperor with the following words: "Accept me in the Triple Alliance." The Austrian replied promptly: "I cannot make a decision yet." This time, the count seemed to support the closeness between Romania and Austria, taking into consideration their geographical, political, and economic position which could only bring them closer together, while the king and the political establishment seemed genuinely delighted by the visit. Furthermore, he noted that this was the first time that a monarch from a powerful dynasty had set foot on Romanian land, and the "nation was flattered in its vanity." From his perspective, the Belgian considered that the significance of the emperor's visit was essentially to show the important role played by Romania "in the European concerto."



Francis Joseph spent the last day of his visit in Sinaia.<sup>46</sup> The diplomat's analysis includes the Romanian-Russian relations, emphasizing the possibility of a war in the Balkans. Finally, we believe that the Count of Lalaing had noted the position which Carol I wished to adopt with regard to the Slavic states, specifically a position of neutrality, so that Romania would not become a "buffer state" between the two empires. Additionally, the report also appreciates the charm of the Romanian monarch, particularly the intelligence Carol I showed in relation to politicians in the matter of stopping the manifestations in Bucharest.<sup>47</sup>

In conclusion, the visit made by the emperor of the Dual Empire triggered even stronger protests in Bucharest, as the liberals wanted the Hungarians to allow Transylvanian Romanians to exercise their rights in political and cultural matters. The last opinions expressed in the Belgian newspaper state that, someday, Romanian irredentism may become a force to be reckoned with. As advice, *Indépendance belge* urged Budapest to remember the events in Venice and contended that "history does not begin now, it has already repeated itself a few times."<sup>48</sup> After the great demonstration in October 1896, the former minister Nicolae Fleva, alongside Ion C. Grădișteanu, president of the League of the Nation, and Professor Mihai Vlădescu voted in parliament in favor of supporting the "Transylvanian brothers in their fight for their own nation."<sup>49</sup>

**O**F COURSE, there have been other investigations and debates on this issue of minorities in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, such as the Bloomington International Conference from April 1966, where all minorities along with Austro-Hungarian historians debated the causes of the dismemberment of the Old Empire from a political, economic, social, religious point of view. The author of the article presented the ideas and concepts that the researchers supported with more or less justified arguments, but which helped historiography to break free from certain principles and to answer questions clearly. Unfortunately, no Belgian historian was present at this conference<sup>50</sup> and therefore we consider that this study may complete certain points that have not been clearly presented or justified.



## Notes

1. Sorin Cristescu, "Vizita împăratului Franz Josef în România văzută de regele Carol I," in *Monarhia în România, o evaluare: Politică, memorie și patrimoniu*, edited by Liviu Brătescu and Ștefania Ciubotaru, foreword by Adrian-Silvan Ionescu (Iași: Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza," 2013), 53–54.
2. Antonie Plămădeală, *România din Transilvania sub teroarea regimului dualist austro-ungar (1867–1918): După documente, acte și corespondențe rămase de la Elie Miron Cristea* (Sibiu: n.p., 1986), 43.
3. Ștefan Pascu, ed., *România din Transilvania împotriva dualismului austro-ungar (1865–1900): Studii* (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1978), 7.

4. Pierre Van den Dungen, "La Professionnalisation des journalistes belge francophone au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 79, 2 (2001): 635–636. (These new principles also posed problems in the hierarchical structure of newspapers of different political orientations. We find some examples of conflicts in the newspaper *XX<sup>e</sup> siècle* between the editor in chief of the editorial staff, Fernand Neuray, and the owner of the newspaper Joseph d'Ursel.)
5. *Ibid.*, 643 (between 1895 and 1914 there were 16 international congresses).
6. Vlad Popovici, "Romanian Political Journals from Transylvania and Hungary and their Lawsuits (1867–1914)," *Anuarul Muzeului Literaturii Române Iași* 7 (2014): 97.
7. L. Katus, "A propos des travaux du groupe d'étude de l'histoire des nationalités et de quelques problèmes concernant l'étude de cette question," *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 7, 3/4 (1960): 400.
8. Sorin Mitu, "Civil Society and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Transylvania," *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai: Historia* (Cluj-Napoca) 61, 2 (2016): 16–25.
9. Adrian-Bogdan Ceobanu, "'Portrete' din interior: Corpul diplomatic de la Bucureşti în însemnările plenipotenţiarului francez Gustave de Coutouly," in *Diplomaţi, societate şi mondenităţi: Sfârşit de "Belle Epoque" în lumea românească*, edited by Claudiu-Lucian Topor, Alexandru Istrate, and Daniel Cain (Iaşi: Editura Universităţii "Alexandru Ioan Cuza," 2015), 322–332.
10. Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères de Belgique, Brussels (hereafter cited as AMAEB), coll. Correspondance politique Roumanie 1891–1894, vol. 9, Political report to "Monsieur le Comte" dated 18 December 1893, fols. 1–3. (Before the upcoming winter holidays, the political establishment in Romania had not yet succeeded in regulating the issue of Romanians in Transylvania. P. P. Carp himself wondered what Romania could do for the Bessarabian brothers. For this reason, politicians and Carol I had to adopt, for the time being, a position of neutrality in order to avoid potential conflicts.)
11. AMAEB, Correspondance politique Autriche-Hongrie 1892–1893, vol. 58, Annexe no. 2, dated 5 January 1892, fols. 1–2. (Belgian diplomat Werner van den Steen de Jehay, holding the temporary post, mentions that the politicians P. P. Carp and Alexandru Marghiloman, supporters of Austria-Hungary, were also present at this meeting. Meanwhile, I. C. Brătianu is characterized as a supporter of Russia, but with much more patriotic feelings towards his colleagues.)
12. AMAEB, Political report to "Monsieur le Comte" dated 1 December 1892, fols. 1–10. (According to this report, the Hungarians claimed that the Transylvanian Romanians wanted to unite with the Kingdom of Romania, thus promoting "Romanian irredentism, like Italian irredentism.")
13. Adriana Zaharia, "Regele Carol I şi mişcarea memorandistă din Transilvania," *Caiete de antropologie istorică* (Cluj-Napoca) 18, 1 (34) (2019): 76–77. (The Romanian students who presented this telegram to the Romanian king were: E. Antonescu, Corneliu Axente, A. Iliescu, E. Jiroveanu, D. Policrat, G. Paulian, and C. Vasiliu.)
14. AMAEB, Political report to "Monsieur le Comte" dated 24 December 1893, fols. 1–3 (the liberal Anastase Stolojan admitted he did not oppose the Triple Alliance, but did not agree that his country should be indifferent to the Slavic empire).
15. AMAEB, Political report to "Monsieur le Comte" dated 12 May 1894, fol. 1.
16. Nicolae Bărbuţă, "L'Opinion belge devant la lutte des Roumains de Transylvanie pour l'indépendance nationale et l'union avec la Roumanie (1867–1918) (I)," *Anuarul Insti-*

- tutului de Istorie "George Barițiu" (Cluj-Napoca) 57 (2018): 407. (On 3/15 May 1867, the Transylvania association was established in Bucharest, which supported the collaboration of Romanian Moldavian-Wallachian students with Romanian Transylvanian students.)
17. AMAEB, Political report to "Monsieur le Comte" dated 12 May 1894, fols. 2–3. (The Romanian National Party asked in the Memorandum for the following rights: autonomy of Transylvania, introduction of the Romanian language into circulation, appointment of Romanian office holders, equality for all before the law, maintaining the autonomy of churches and confessional schools and the introduction of the universal vote.)
  18. AMAEB, Political report to "Monsieur le Comte" dated 11 September 1894, fol. 2.
  19. Bărbuță, 413.
  20. *L'Indépendance belge*, 21 April 1894, 1.
  21. *L'Indépendance belge*, 4 May 1894, 1.
  22. Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bucharest, coll. Austro-Ungaria: România din Transilvania, 1894, vol. 185, fol. 76.
  23. *Journal de Bruxelles*, 9 May 1894, 1.
  24. Bărbuță, 408.
  25. AMAEB, Correspondance politique Autriche-Hongrie 1893–1894, vol. 59, Political report to "Monsieur le Comte" dated 25 September 1894, fol. 2.
  26. AMAEB, Political report to "Monsieur le Comte" dated 30 September 1894, fols. 1–6.
  27. Adriana Zaharia, "Procesul Memorandului, mitingurile de protest și prima zi a dezbaterilor," *Caiete de antropologie istorică* 19, 1 (36) (2020): 172.
  28. AMAEB, Correspondance politique Autriche-Hongrie 1893–1894, vol. 59, Political report to "Monsieur le Comte" dated 31 October 1894, fols. 1–2.
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### **Abstract**

#### Belgian Opinions Regarding the Issue of Transylvania at the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (1892–1896)

In the present text, we want to present some Belgian impressions regarding the situation of the Romanian Transylvanians at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Starting from the discussions of the Belgian diplomats with King Carol I, we want to answer the question how much the Moldavian-Wallachian Romanians were interested in the fate of the brothers from across the Carpathians using the Romanian-Belgian historiography and press.

### **Keywords**

Memorandum (1892), Belgian press, diplomacy, Cultural League