
The struggle of the Austro-Hungarian romanians for national unification on the eve of and during world war I*

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General survey

From the outset, we confess that the topic proposed here is daringly formulated. It is our opinion that the problem of the Romanian national movement within the complex of the dualist conglomerate is much more complicated than the above-mentioned title suggests. The argument we develop below can be situated within the framework and the letter of an acknowledged subjectivism regarding the durability of historical truth. We take into consideration, as well, the antagonisms which arose along with the passing of time and which are relevant particularly for the interval we have delineated here.

Within former, as well as within today's Bukovina, Transylvania, and Banat, have co-existed, and continue to persist, dual relations between specific communities marked by particular sensibilities and ways of thinking, in the context of an accepted multi-ethnic and multi-confessional phenomenon occurring in our geographical-historical space of research. As a consequence, the political has most always manifested itself in an opposing way, because the structure of these conceptions was diametrically opposed to the legitimate laws. The difference between some and others, generically defined within the bracket of the notion of alterity, was and continues to be determined by the common attitude to the environment in which, in fact, they had to coexist. We cannot omit the argument that the Romanian nation, territorially fragmented, evolved constantly in a state of inferiority, exactly because of unfavorable historical circumstances.

The present hermeneutical attempt meant to debate and correct certain ideas/theses connected to issues, clichés, preconceptions inherited and not seriously re-examined, must be necessarily correlated to the past and present historiographical optics of Central and South-Eastern Europe. Particularly because of the fact that the historical thinking present in Romania, Serbia, Ukraine, for example, is still marked by a minimum of interpretative "ballast" which refers to common themes and has immediate reverberations onto the domain of bilateral or multilateral rapports of the area investigated critically.

In the age of the nationalities, the modern roots of the dialogue between "Romanians and the Others" can be found in the failures of the 1848 revolution in Bukovina, Transylvania, and Banat, in the fact that full, mutual equality and the right to self-determination were rejected, especially in the situation of the "forced union" of Transylvania and Hungary. The founding of the dualist system in 1867 resulted in two evident courses of action: a) the relation of the majority population with the dominant political class (Austrian and Hungarian); b) the rapport now exercised in the mental collective, both in the horizontal and vertical directions. We can speak, therefore, about a double impact and reception, which provoked unexpected reactions and led to the development of a conflictual phenomenon in space and time.

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The generally-propagated notion of magyarization/germanization determined and maintained frontiers between Austrians/Hungarians and the nationalities (Romanians, Serbs, Slovaks, Ukrainians etc.). Although the Austro-Hungarian Empire was composed of an amalgam of peoples, distinguished through language, culture, aspirations, customs, dress, the respective nations were gradually integrated and ordered into a strict hierarchy of the so-called unitary system. As a consequence and in complete opposition to this given, Romanians, as the Germans or Slavs, for example, reorganized politically according to the ethnic criterion, creating parties with a genuine national character. The support given to the other peoples of the Empire was, therefore, reciprocal, and with a conscious affirmation of self-identity, in complete contradiction with the principle of the dominant nation. The polarization of this conflictual dialogue was aggravated in the last decades of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century, in such a way that the outbreak of the first armed conflagration meant both the effort of applying the principle enunciated by Romanians everywhere, as well as the tendency of the imperial and regal authority to block the process through all possible methods. The moral confrontation was transposed naturally through a diplomatic-military plan, only after Romania entered the action on the side of the Entente.

Romania's foreign politics during the decades preceding World War I was characterized by the impossibility to maintain, under any circumstances, the alliance with the Central Powers – the defensive treaty from 1883 was renewed in 1913 – because of the precarious situation of the Romanians living in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Transylvania and Bukovina were outlying areas of the Empire, from the economic, social, political and cultural point of view. If in Cisleithania, the Austrian state preserved super national characteristics, as in Bukovina, in Transylvania, the Hungarian state exacerbated the national approach in its relations with the nationalities, which represented more than half of the population, especially in historical Transylvania (Banat, Partium, Maramures).

The economic gaps between the two provinces had a special impact on the Romanian national movements at the beginning of the 20th C. and during World War I. The middle class became stronger, due to the banks and associations net, and by purchasing farming land. Characteristically, the area was represented by the social gaps which had a strong influence at national level, as well as by the socio-economic inferiority which was perceived as a result of ethnic inequality. In Transylvania, defending ethnic identity meant replying to the state's attempts to apply the concept of the unitary Hungarian nation at the cultural level. Education worsened because of the anti-Romanian policy of the leaders and contributed thus to the deepening of the inequalities in general education. The increase of the Magyarization or Germanization process in secondary school was an important means in the development of intellectuals. At the religious level, the existence of Romanians in Transylvania and Bukovina has a politico-national dimension through the gradual assimilation of a confessional discourse with distinct messages, as proof of the interference between confession and politics in the community approach.

Consequently, up to 1914 Romania's foreign politics developed at the same time as the deterioration of the national interest, because of the contradictions with the intentions of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The joint attempts of Berlin, Vienna and Budapest for concessions for the Transylvanian Romanians were useless. Similarly, Germany and Austria-Hungary repeated their intervention at the Royal Court in Bucharest, in order to keep the alliance or, at least the neutrality of Romania in the case of an armed conflict in the area.

The general European context between 1910-1914, marked by the aggression of the Empires in the vicinity of Romania and the great continental powers, helped assure and maintain national unity as a unique chance of preserving the state – in the view of Bucharest politicians. The inner context against the alliance with the Central Powers, considerably improved national solidarity supported by permanent inter-human and associative contacts between cultural-political leaders and societies from Transylvania, Bukovina and Romania. The external influence, characterized by the consequences of the "Balkan Wars" (1912-1913), led to the worsening of the Bucharest leaders' attitudes toward the idea of the gradual release from the Triple Alliance and rapprochement to the Entente, with the hope of defending the rights of the Romanians in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the fulfillment of the national aspiration to a unitary state. Romania's close relations with France and Russia proved the reserve to the exacerbation of the tension with the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the respect for the economic and military power of Germany. This duplicity implied minimum risks through the position to France and Russia, without expressing the intention of breaking off with the Monarchy and Germany. From a moral point of view, Romania's participation to a possible armed conflict on the side of the Central Powers seemed impossible. Berlin and Vienna's diplomatic pressure in Bucharest were inefficient, as the Romanian officials appealed to strict neutrality warrants and the general national interest was in contradiction with the political target of the

Central Powers. Romania's geo-strategical position was however essential, especially in the pre-war period, as the Entente seemed willing to support it in re-gaining the two historical provinces (Transylvania and Bukovina).

Romania's Neutrality (1914-1916) and State of War (1916-1918)

The breaking of World War I found Romanian society in a deep, general confusion state. The neutrality gradually imposed both in and out of the country, as in the case of Italy – had been conceived as a temporary expectancy, armed solution, out of material and moral reasons, until the possible participation to the conflict, on the Entente's side, in the hope of a future state unity. The implicitly adopted and expressed formula was positively / negatively fined by the political class, divided into contradictory attitudes, by the public opinion marked by common interests (personal sympathies, traditional relations, objective / subjective reasons, different considerations between pro-Germans / pro-Entente, the Entente's diplomatic campaign (France's warrants and Russia's propositions for Romania's territorial integrity and acknowledgement of its rights over some territories belonging to the Monarchy) or the Central Powers' (liberal regime for the Transylvanian Romanians and the retrocession of a part from Bucovina). The different diplomatic transactions meant to imply Romania in the war, were affected by the changes within the Royal House (October, 1914), by Italy's example (May, 1915) and by the political and military conventions between Romania and the Entente (August, 1914), providing the warrant of the territorial integrity and the right of the Romanians from the Empire, to self-determination (as, for instance to mark the border with Bukovina on the river Prut and include the town of Chernovtsy into the cessioned area).

The Entente's diplomatic-military triumph, Romania's interest in the war, had been confirmed by the provisions of the convention signed in Bucharest (August, 1916), followed by the Romanian army's intervention in Transylvania, a deplorable failure, in the Autumn of the same year. The development of the events also included some important facts in and out of the country, directly influencing the Romanian national movement in the Monarchy, as well as the idea of self-determination: the occupation of a great part of Romania by the Central Powers and the general withdrawal in Moldavia (December, 1916), the material and military support granted by France to the official refugees in Jassy, the confrontations with the invading forces on the front from Mărăști – Mărășești – Oituz (Summer of 1917), the impact of the Russian revolution (February/March and November 1917), the armistice with the Central Powers, from Focșani (December 1917, validating Romania's complete, external isolation), the peace between the Central Powers and Ukraine from Brest-Litovsk (February 1918, where the cession of Bukovina was discussed), the convention with the Central Powers in Bucharest (May, 1918, implying the complex economic exploitation of the country, including also the legal provisions concerning Bukovina), the state of war declared again by Romania (November, 1918, having an important military, political and moral impact), the armistice between the Entente and Germany, from Compiègne (November, 1918), the military agreement signed by Hungary in Belgrade (November, 1918, establishing the line of demarcation in Transylvania). All these represented defining stages in the diplomatic political evolution of the Romanian state and the concretization of the Romanians' from Transylvania and Bukovina approach.

The Romanians from Bukovina

During the period before World War I, the Romanians from Bukovina were a stable and relatively major population (34%, 1/3 out of the total number, in 1910), disadvantaged by the inner politics of Austria and the Dukedom. Their general development was a good one, in spite of the local rulers who belonged to the Austro-German minority. However, there still were some local and temporal characteristics: a) the lack of strong institutions and personal identity, influencing the socio-economic and cultural-political area, affecting the paradigm of interferences between the elite and mass-leaders, adversity "versus" fidelity in inter and extra relations, or state paternalism "versus" intense oppression; b) the great number of agriculturists, in opposition to that of craftsmen, tradesmen and bankers, with weak economic power; c) the middle class, the urban population and the intellectuals in a minimum quantitative and unitary structure; d) the political institutions' activity lacking cohesion and intensity because of the divided political elite, in adversary parties, confused in imposing a unique sense (Austria, Romania, Ukraine); e) the place and role of the Orthodox Church, gradually estranged through "Rutenization". The internal factor was predominant because of the disputes within the intellectual elite, increasing thus the anti-national objectives of the official politics. The external factor was due to the Austro-Russian rivalry, and was represented by the aggravation of inter-ethnic conflicts in an area inhabited by 12 nationalities, expressing 10 confessions. The attempts of the authorities to impose a new type of "homo bucovinensis", by attracting local

personalities (advantages, dignities, titles in the local and imperial administration) wouldn't affect and annihilate the expression of the identity spirit, especially among the Transylvanian Romanians from the country side.

Therefore, it is no by chance, that in the Summer of 1914, the Romanians from Bukovina were divided and weakened from the national and political point of view. With a limited capacity in military administration on the scene of operations, three times conquered by the Russian troops (1914-1916). Their modest "partinic" activity was due to their loyalty to Austria, especially from the part of the civilians enlisted and the urban population, the Romanian politicians "adapted and malleable", under the circumstances, as for the majority of the intellectuals, still sensitive to the repressive measures against school teachers, priests and peasants, considered altogether "irredentists". The general attitude against Romania and the unification of the state still remained constant, even in Transylvania. In time, the imperial administration recruited by force Romanians from behind the front lines; they had to suffer coercive actions (arrests, concentration camps under such accusations as espionage and treason), forced labour, requisitions and hard work for the army. Successive waves of persecutions came over those suspected of unloyalty, the direct consequence being they took refuge to Romania, as volunteers in the Romanian army and the national propaganda became more intense in the summer of 1916.

The Romanians from Transylvania

The development of the Romanian national movement in Transylvania had different forms and stages, during the first two decades of the 20th c, within the general context of the time. Hungary's internal politics was dominated up to 1914, by the attempt to solve "the national question" and the attitude to Austria, with a view of a double expression: either admitting the coexistence statute in a coalition, or accepting the total separation. The dualist system crisis was aggravated by the heir Prince Franz Ferdinand's attempt to impose the federalist concept. This attitude influenced the negotiations between the leaders of the Romanian National Party from Transylvania and the leaders from Budapest, for a "compromise" concerning the improvement of the Romanians' situation (universal suffrage, economic and cultural rights). On the whole, up to the breaking of the war, the Hungarian authorities were dominated by the fear for the minorities, especially the Romanians, because of their demographic share, their increased economic, cultural and educational power. The Romanian elite from Transylvania, of laic substance and modest rural origin, tried to get out of anonymity on grounds of the meritocratic principle, with the support of the intellectuality (priests, school teachers, clerks), at the same time with the practice of the bourgeois crafts, efficiently and pragmatically developed. Its incapacity to take part to the local political life, as representative of the distinct ethnic community, as well as the difficulties of its own cultural-spiritual life (the diminished place and role of the Orthodox and Greek-Catholic Church) and the constant pressure of the official administration, diminished its activity at different levels, up to 1914.

The loyalty expressed by the Transylvania Romanians, as a useful political manoeuvre mass, for "the good Emperor" had already implied the proper reaction of the Romanian National Party's leadership, divided strategic-tactically in the dispute between centralism-feudalism, through a momentary "compromise", which totally excluded the idea of a possible separation with dualist Hungary. This way of action was proved both by the Central Powers which insisted on Romania's neutrality (1914-1916), then later they tried to gain Bucharest as a partner – Germany's lucid position – and by the generally diminished fidelity and the significantly altered attitude in the summer of 1916, at the same time with the aggravation of inter-ethnic relations, as a result of a "special" treatment for the Romanians, in 1917. The collective local spirit was now characterized by the perception of the minimum "separation" within the Monarchy, their attitude being later on gradually diminished according to the military and diplomatic events.

The right consequence was the reaction of the majority population from Transylvania to the enlisting orders in the summer of 1914, due to a complex of causes: 1) accepting the destiny within the limit of the traditional duty to Vienna; 2) the respect mixed with the fear for authority (hardship, persecutions, repressions); 3) the impossibility to accept a defeat of the Monarchy; 4) the influence of the R.N.P. leaders (those from the area, tempered their opinions, while the refugees and the leaders of the national Church (Greek-Orthodox and Greek-Catholic) through their "loyalty" declarations for the Budapest and the Romanians' to enlist; 5) the Romanian Royalty's example with a view to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy at war, in spite of the minimum encouragements (the admission of the deserters and of the Romanian refugees from Transylvania); 6) the Emperor's appeal and mobilization orders concerning the state of war, in the mother tongue, the permission to use their own cockade and national anthem, and the national flag within the native areal; 7) the impression abroad, that The Empire will support diplomatically Romania in regaining Basarabia.

The diminishing of the Romanian national movement up to a general apathy between 1914-1916 was caused by "the exceptional measures" concerning the civil rights (the county administration), the censorship and terror (martial law and courts), the press and national parties' prohibition (the Romanian National Party was forbidden since August 1914) coercitive measures concerning private and collective rights (the arrest of instigators and conspirators, forced residence, labour camps, the "capital punishment"), the increased number of loans and requisitions, restrictions on the land etc. The forms of the national persecution affected the resistance, the economy of the local education, which were also discriminated by "the cultural area" (1917-1918) at Transylvania's border with Romania, in the idea of a whole cultural and spiritual de-nationalization of the majority population.

The immediate consequences and the defeat of the Central Powers, created an absolute lack of confidence among the Romanians from Transylvania, especially those fighting in the war, to the military power of the Monarchy, which had a multiple impact: a) The Entente's resistance and the horrors of the war led to a gradual discouragement and a deep comprehension of the sacrifice in the name of a foreign ideal; b) the privations, diseases and starvation during the war, interfered with the injustice and persecutions of the families left at home; c) Romania's armed offensive in August-September 1916 contributed to the resuscitation of "the national question" and the need of a change in the attitude of the Imperial officials to the Romanian soldiers from Transylvania, by sending them to military units at a distance from their native places. The resistance against central and local authorities between 1914-1916, but especially after 1916 had concrete forms: 1) "the reservists" refused to enlist; 2) "non-violent" insubordination acts and non-combat, desertation from the units going to the front; 3) accepting volunteer "captivity" in Italy and Russia, because of privations and discrimination; 4) increased partisans' actions in Transylvania in the autumn of 1916; 5) the massive refuge to Romania and incorporation in the army on the alignments from Moldavia, in the summer of 1917. The officers belonging to the Romanian elite from Transylvania promoted openly the "irredentist" cause and had significantly influenced the soldiers from dispersed regiments on the East and West front.

Volunteerism and Propaganda in Romania and Abroad

Romania represented between 1914-1918 the main source of the national energies, protest actions against the lack of reaction from the officials about the participation or no-participation to the armed conflict, and especially against the treatment of the Romanians from Transylvania and Bukovina. The associations and institutions on identical pragmatic-tactic criteria, were either inside the country and gathered outstanding personalities of the political, cultural and scientific life, or were represented by refugees in Bucharest and Jassy ("The National Action", "The National Committee of the emigrant Romanians from the subjected countries or the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy", "The League for the National Unity of Romanians"), organizing meetings of solidarity, or fighting through the press, for the national cause. In March 1915, in Bucharest, took place the "Congress of the Romanians from abroad" while "The General Association of the Romanian Students" from Bucharest expressed its support for the Romanian resistance movement from all over. "The Romanian Students' Congress" from Galatz (August 1915) expressed its own viewpoint on the national ideal. In the autumn of 1916, as in January, April, June, 1917 concrete actions were undertaken to support volunteer enlist for the refugees from Transylvania and Bukovina.

Similar actions took place in other states belonging to the Entente, preceded by that in Italy, in 1915, when the Romanian soldiers from the military camp accused their joining the Italian army to free the native territories. These actions reached the highest point by the organization of "The Romanian Legion" (April, 1918) in Cittaducale, validated by "The Congress of the oppressed peoples from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy" in Rome, by the declaration concerning the right to self-determination and Romania's active participation to the war, in the autumn of 1918. "The Action Committee of the Romanians from Transylvania, Banat and Bukovina" (June, 1918) residing in Rome, organized conferences and other manifestations supporting the national rights and contributing to the information of the public opinion about the Romanians' attempt.

The phenomenon of volunteerism was certainly influenced by the number of 120,000 Romanian prisoners in Russia, out of which 40,000 enlisted the Tsarist or the Romanian army; in December 1916 a special camp was organized in Darnitza (Kiev). The leader-officers of the camp wrote a "manifest-petition" (April, 1917) to call up the Romanian soldiers from the labour camps between the Urals and Vladivostok, to fight against Austro-Hungary and Germany, for the national, unitary state.

The temporary difficulties because of the diplomatic-military developments, and Romania's failure in the peace agreements between 1916-1918 influenced the Romanian prisoners from Serbia, who expressed their wish

to join the French army, in their public appeal from April 1916. The local and foreign personalities (especially from Romania), and the Romanian intellectuals in Paris, supported this decision by different means, associations etc. (April, 1918: "The National Committee of the Romanians from Transylvania and Banat"; October, 1918: "The National Council of the Romanian Unity"); periodicals (January, 1918: "La Roumanie"; May, 1918: "La Transylvanie"), fighting for the collaboration among the Romanian emigrants in the West.

The conference of the Entente's representatives from Versailles (June, 1918) entirely changed its view concerning the minorities in the Austro-Hungary Monarchy, so that the French government issued a decree for the organization of "The Romanian Legion" (October, 1918) to be sent to the front.

The public opinion in Great Britain also changed its attitude towards the cause of the Romanians from the Empire. "The Anglo-Romanian Society" founded in the summer of 1917 was meant to influence and inform the public opinion about Romania's position in the war and the option of the oppressed nationality from Transylvania and Bukovina for auto-determination.

The military attempts in the summer of 1917, to gather the Romanian recruits in the American camp at Jonungston were preceded by propaganda actions, brochures, articles, interviews, meetings with local or foreign personalities (Romania, Transylvania, Bukovina), temporarily tempered by the U.S.A.'s declaration as "associate" with the Entente (December, 1917). The obstacle was removed by the "14 Wilsonian points" (January, 1918), providing the status of the Monarchy and the autonomy of its peoples, but especially by the Lansing "memorandum" (June, 1918) on the U.S.A.'s politics towards the nationalities of the Empire, the necessity of dividing the Monarchy and creating the national states. Consequently, the Romanian emigration in America underwent some institutional changes. "The Romanian Social League" created in Washington (July, 1918) promoted the national question and the national ideal, "The Congress of the oppressed peoples from the Habsburg Monarchy", New York, (September 1918), adopted a general motion on the division of the Empire and the creation of new states in Central and South-East Europe.

1918 in Bukovina and Transylvania

In the autumn of World War's I last year, the Romanian national movement from Bukovina and Transylvania was not a homogenous one, gathering different generations of intellectual and moral sources. The political "European" attitude of the local and national elite in the two distinct areas of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy developed according to the collective perception and the autonomy within the Empire / Romania, or the union with the native land, at war again.

Within the context of the diplomatic-political and military events in October-November 1918: the manifest of the Emperor Charles I on reorganizing Austro-Hungary into a federation of six independent states (October, Transylvania to Hungary, North Bukovina to Ukraine); the declaration of the independence of Austria and Hungary (November), the armistice between the Entente and Germany from Compiègne (November) and that with Hungary in Belgrade (November), the R.N.P. from Transylvania and the national political groups from Bukovina, together with their representatives in Budapest and Vienna Parliaments expressed openly their support for self determination. The Wilsonian principles were now to be found in the resolutions of meetings and conferences of all the oppressed peoples in the Monarchy, which suggested either new independent states, or the union of some nations into a unique state.

Worth mentioning in this respect, are the actions of the Romanian political leaders from Bukovina, who founded a "Romanian National Council" (October) and refused to include the native area within west Ukraine, by invalidating the ethnic, historical principle: as the local administration was about disintegration and national councils came into being, the idea that the self determination declaration and unconditioned union should be voted by agreement, so as it later on happened within "Finis Austriae et requiescat in pace" formula and the union with the Romanian Kingdom (November, 28). The new tendency became obvious in Transylvania by the "self determination" declaration, of the N.R.P's Executive Committee, which was publicly stated in Budapest (October), by the cooperation between the National Romanian Party and the Social Democratic Party constituting "The Central National Romanian Council" (October) and its own "Military Council" (November) and also local national guards. All these were connected with the "National Committee of the Romanians from Transylvania" and the "Military Romanian Senate" from Vienna, in withdrawing the Swiss canton-type autonomy suggested by the Hungarians during the negotiations from Arad (November) in favour of full independence, the manifest "To the peoples of the world" (November) and the "national assembly" summons (November) in Alba Iulia, December 1st, 1918, which decided the union of Transylvania with Romania.

Conclusions

The interior and external context favourable or not to Romania throughout 1914-1916-1918 decisively influenced the winding evolution of the Romanian national movement in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The existence of the local political groups from Bukovina and Transylvania was due to some specific characteristics and to the "divide et impera" policy of the imperial / royal authorities. The lack of strategic-tactic and pragmatic cohesion of the institutions had objective and subjective causes, which were gradually removed in the autumn of 1918, at the same time with the dissolution of the Monarchy and the amplitude of the national spirit, by the end of the war in Central and South-East Europe. The increasing or decreasing tendency for the ideal of state unity was caused by Romania's diplomatic-political position during the events of the four years of war and by the Entente's political verdict and the U.S.A.'s implication in the armed conflict on the continent.

The Romanian action of Bukovina and Transylvania in 1918 was not at all the work of an enthusiastic minority under the effect of circumstances or some foreign political-diplomatic plans, but the expression of the autochthonous experience and wisdom, manifested by a recovery act for a historical injustice, by affirming the right over the arbitrary, in its profoundly democratic basis. The Romania created now had undergone three successive stages (Kishinev, March 27; Chernovtsy, November 28, Alba Iulia, December 1st) by means of representative assemblies and according to the historical and ethnic rights. The Union had also combined two connected stages in the European political structure, at the end of World War I: a) the proclamation of the peoples' will for independent and unitary states; b) their acknowledgement and confirmation by the Conference and Peace Treaty of Paris. 1918 meant for the Central and South-Eastern Europe, the most important political reset of the modern epoch and the first one to give priority to the new self-determination principle, on the idea of social and political justice, as well as on legitimate, plebiscitary character, fully agreed. The dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the creation of new national states in the historical-geographic area under discussion, means the beginning of democratization for the re-born, re-united autochthonous societies, as well as of the increasing civic attitude and mutual help during the interwar period.

It is already a well-known truism that the debacle aggravated globally at the borders of 1918/1919 had as a consequence decisive mutual implications in the central and south-eastern continental area, regarding possible common future realizations or predicted separations marked also by an aggressive distancing. This conflictual state was thus perpetuated into the interwar years but manifested itself in different directions and took entirely different dimensions, affecting especially the delicate and unstable minorities issues.

The experience of the first armed conflict constituted a collective shock for a Europe whose demographic, economic, social, and mental characteristics were affected. The Paris agreements for a new territorial configuration of the continent based on the principle of the national right to self-determination, generated unanimous approvals, but also virulent condemnation. Therefore, the states formed as a result of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy's disintegration, built through collective will in the context of the final stage of the war, considered that the treaties signed in the French capital confirmed an existing reality. Many contemporary commentators argued that the general capitalist evolution of the "successor states" of the Central and South-Eastern zone, could undergo a backlash in comparison to the beginning of the twentieth century. Those who felt nostalgic, relied on the fact that a Europe divided through new ethnic frontiers clearly obscured tactical, strategic, and economic realities, due especially to the fact that the principle of the right of a people to self-determination fascinated excessively only those communities with a low cultural-spiritual level. As a consequence, certain lines of net demarcation of the ethnic groups and languages used in Central and South-Eastern Europe were practically annulled, especially since the old politics of exchange of populations and geographic zones would have had the advantage of a pragmatic spirit, in contrast with the ambiguous and inefficient spirit of the peace imposed globally between 1918 and 1920.

Focalizing the critical observations regarding the "forced dissociation" of the Dual Monarchy, the fact of the proposed equalization was considered deplorable, whose effect was a premeditated implosion causing a wave of economic shock felt as a cataclysm, extensively. The variant destroyed previously is exemplified through having the advantage of representing a shared customs zone, of natural commercial markets, which were blocked or dilapidated after 1918 and obstructing thus the maintenance of the balance between the industrial and agrarian sectors.

The political philosophy of President Woodrow Wilson pretended to be democratic and equalitarian, in essence, the "right" to or the "theory" of plebiscite pointing exactly, from the juridical point of view, to the self-

determination capacity of the oppressed nations. The synthesis between the national principles and those internationalist/pacifist now validated its efficiency. The new world organized on national bases conserved, thus, a climate of collaboration amended by the expression of the “sacred egoism” toward the dispositions commonly adopted concerning the legalization of collective security.

Even if the great powers forged themselves, out of the “**League of Nations**” an organism they could easily use for the purposes of their own diplomacy, with nationalist aspects that led, naturally, to the germination of later dissensions, the relative capacity to **essentialize** this international forum had, favored multiple easings of tension and the strengthening of a democratic “paradox” (deliberations “vs.” unanimities, the combination of logical idealism and opportunist realism, the rule of state sovereignty identified with that of vote unanimity), accepted in form and content by a universal consciousness. Democracy thus gradually enthroned, not at all perfect, but continuously perfectible, assured momentarily the triumph of the law of force, despite a series of divergences or unlimited pride, with nationalisms understood legalistically as immediate reactions to internationalisms and other neighboring nationalisms within this historical-geographic area.

In a final contingent conclusion, we hypothesize that, during the third interwar decade, the doses of self-pride manifested nationally, resembled the exacerbated interest of individuals preoccupied only by the validation of their self-interests.

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**Lupta românilor din Austro-Ungaria, pentru unitate națională,
în ajunul și în timpul primului război mondial**
(Rezumat)

Autorul creionează situația generală a mișcării naționale române din Monarhia austro-ungară în intervalul premergător înfăpturii unificării naționale din 1918. Segmentul de debut include preliminarii de sorginte diversă cu privire la stadiul evolutiv al naționalității române pe durata primului război mondial. Analiza este sumarizată pe două arii istorico-geografice (Bucovina și Transilvania) și punctează modalități de militantism exersate de mișcarea națională română în două faze distincte (neutralitate și starea belică). Demersul propriu de autonomizare și valorizare în ansamblu este schițat în variantele de voluntariat și propagandă efectuate în țară și străinătate. Momentul 1918 este concis inserat în desfășurarea factuală din cele provincii locuite majoritar de elemental autohton. Finalul elaboratului dezvăluie opinii referitoare la statuarea efortului de totală independență certificate în 1920.