

Preface to the Series

The present volume is a component of a series that, when completed, will constitute a comprehensive survey of the many aspects of East Central European society. The publication of the series has been facilitated by the generous financial support of the Soros Foundation in New York.

The books in the series' volumes deal with the peoples whose homelands lie between the Germans to the West, the Russians to the East and North, and the Mediterranean and Adriatic Seas to the South. They constitute a particular civilization, one that is at once an integral part of Europe, yet substantially different from the West. The area is characterized by rich variety in language, religion, and government. The study of this complex subject demands a multi-disciplinary approach and, accordingly, our contributors represent several academic disciplines. They have been drawn from universities and other scholarly institutions in the United States, Western Europe, as well as East Central Europe. The author of the volume is an historian at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, Hungary, and at the present cultural attaché at the Hungarian Embassy in Bucharest, Romania.

The Editor-in-Chief, of course, takes full responsibility for ensuring the comprehensiveness, cohesion, internal balance, and scholarly quality of the series he has launched. I cheerfully accept this responsibility and intend this work to be neither a justification nor a condemnation of the policies, attitudes, and activities of any of the persons involved. At the same time, because the contributors represent so many different disciplines, interpretations, and schools of thought, our policy in this, as in past and future volumes, is to present their contributions without modification.

B.K.K.

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Foreword

Hungary's defeat in the War of Independence of 1848-49 marked the beginning of a radically new phase in Hungarian-Romanian relations, ushering in, as it did, two extraordinarily eventful decades of political interaction.

After 1849 it was not only Hungarian and Polish exiles who were busy soliciting support throughout Western Europe, but also Romanian emigrés from Wallachia and Moldavia. All of them were motivated by the same goal; to established independent nation-states of their own.

These were the years when Lajos Kossuth and his community of refugees tried again and again to set the stage for another attempt at Hungary's winning its independence by recommending their cause and their arms to whatever European power might be at odds with Austria. During these same years, Romanian emigrés and the official diplomatic representatives of Moldavia and Wallachia were busy paving the way for an independent Romanian state, and, after de facto union¹ was accomplished in 1859, worked to consolidate² for the United Danubian Principalities by winning for it the recognition of all the great powers.

History has yet to reconcile the conflicting, though in many ways analogous, interests that were behind all this activity. The legacy of the revolutions of 1848, the increasing prevalence of bourgeois ways and values in both society and the economy, and the intensification of national sentiments among the various peoples of the region all became new sources of conflict. The validity of the historical boundaries and of the traditional hierarchies was constantly being called into question. Some of the nations in this Habsburg-dominated part of eastern Europe

¹ Gh. Cristea, "Independența țării și ideea unității naționale a poporului român în obiectivul politicii externe a domnitorului Alexandru Ioan Cuza," *Revista de istorie* (1979), 52; this, in fact, is the drift of the entire study: 31-57.

² A. Stan, *Grupări și curente politice în România între unire și independență* (București, 1979), 139.

found themselves fighting to preserve the *status quo*, but most of them were struggling to change it. It was a volatile political situation, and Polish, Hungarian and Romanian emigrés all did their best to exploit it, and to join their cause to the great stirring reshaping the center of Europe, the German and Italian unification movements.

In the process of these diplomatic maneuverings, exiles and "official" politicians alike had to come to terms with how the nations saw one another, and to work out some basis on which they could cooperate to achieve both immediate and long-term goals. Self-examinations of this kind, however, inevitably necessitated their confronting the nature of the differences that loomed so large between them. In the final analysis, they found themselves not only having to take a close look at the other side, but also having to account for the historical role and interests of their own nation and class. In other words, as each side was forming his picture of the other, he was simultaneously defining his own identity. Because the sides were represented, for the most part, by historical figures who came to acquire heroic stature in the eyes of posterity, their impressions and attitudes had an impact beyond the realm of politics. They became constitutive elements of Romanian and Hungarian national consciousness.

This being the case, it is highly instructive to trace how Kossuth, the head of the Hungarian emigrés, initially sought the cooperation of the Romanian principalities' politicians largely because geographic and strategic considerations made this a necessary preliminary to any new military action in Hungary, ended up framing the proposal that was the most concrete summary of nineteenth-century Hungarian political thought: the "Kütahya Constitution." This proposal was, in effect, an attempt to reconcile one of the cornerstones of Hungarian liberal reformist thinking — the necessity of preserving historical Hungary's territorial integrity — with the expectations of Hungary's ever more politically aware minority nationalities by providing for social reforms and political democratization. When these provisions were found inadequate by those whom they were meant to placate, Kossuth — after much soul-searching and debate with his fellow emigrés — finally endorsed a plan for the possible federalization of historical Hungary, more exactly, of Transylvania and Hungary proper. His own version of the proposal was presented as part of a blueprint for the comprehensive reorganization of the Danube valley into a democratic federation of free and coequal peoples: the "Plan for a Danubian Confederation".

Still, logical and differentiated though it was, typologically, the plan was no more than a strategy for social modernization calculated to realize the Hungarian liberals' ideal of a fully enfranchised "historical" (as opposed to ethnic) "nation". Much as he agonized over the interpretations that would be put on his proposal, aware as he of the pressure on him both from within the country and abroad — from foreign diplomats and his fellow emigrés alike — to come up with an acceptable solution to the nationality conflicts that had rent the country in 1848-1849, Kossuth could not transcend this conceptual scheme.

Unfortunately, for a variety of complex historical reasons, it was a vision of the future that neither suited nor appealed to quite a few of the peoples of central and southeastern Europe. Just how far it did not, became evident in the course of the protracted and often frustrating negotiations between the various emigré groups, negotiations which were going on at a time when one of the major factors, the new and still fragile Romanian state, was undergoing a self-definition to its own: it was not as yet clear which of the ideological orientations theoretically possible — the Wallachian "bourgeois," the Transylvanian "intellectual" or the Moldavian "historical" nation concept — would come to predominate. More precisely, in what proportions the three would intermix to define Romanian national consciousness, not least of all in response to the "challenge" that Hungary posed.

For an understanding of this tripartite development as it defined the historical moment, we shall be concerned with — the decade and a half between 1849 and 1864 — it was imperative to give an overview of the forces that shaped these three societies. For, across from the Hungarians, with their clear-cut sense of national identity, there sat at the negotiating tables Wallachian, Transylvanian and Moldavian politicians, each with his own dynamic vision of the unitary Romanian national consciousness.

What was at stake in these negotiations was whether the attempts to overcome their differences would succeed in helping them unite in concerted action, or whether their hopes would prove illusory and the disappointment lead to conclusions about one another prejudicial for future relations.

The purpose of this study is to trace the history of these negotiations with the Romanian politicians of the Trans-Carpathian principalities from the excessive expectations that those involved attached to them in the 1850's, to the more sober attempts of 1862-64, always keeping in

mind that the story unfolded against the background of both sides' changing perceptions of their own possibilities, and that the outcome was by no means independent of these perceptions.

Introduction

From the Hungarian point of view, there could be no mooted the importance of cooperation between the Hungarian emigrés and the Romanians of the Principalities. Except for the Voivodina, Wallachia, and especially Moldavia¹ were the only territories through which the compact Hungarian populations of Transylvania, and of the Székelyföld, Csík, Háromszék and Udvarhelyszék counties in particular, could be reached with relative ease if one wanted to urge them to take up arms, or to ship to them the arms for the revolution. As contemporaries saw it, the Principalities were *the* place for all commencing "operations".

When Colonel József Makk and General Sándor Gál had tried to organize the resistance in 1851-52, they, too, had concentrated on the Székelyföld.² General Gál's military plans were based, in no small measure, on its being a wooded, mountainous region which could, however, be approached quite easily through Moldavia and Wallachia. Colonel Makk and his fellow conspirators had chosen Bucharest, the capital of Wallachia, as one major center of their operations. This had enabled them to establish contact with the Romanian resistance. General Gál considered of utmost importance to win over the Romanians, especially the Romanians of Transylvania,³ *to the Hungarian cause*. Access to Transylvania's Romanians, however, required at least the tacit good will of the Romanians across the Carpathians. Accordingly, a later plan of Gál's (of around 1860), in which he outlined alternate proposals for getting arms through Moldavia to "Máramaros" [sic] [Maramureș], called for giving the inhabitants "satisfactory concessions".⁴

The Hungarian emigrés, too, were well aware of something that every Transylvanian knew: for centuries, Székely families had looked to the principalities as a source of livelihood both as itinerant workers and as craftsmen and tradesmen.⁵ It was common enough to hear Hungarian spoken⁶ in Bucharest and in some of the other larger towns, especially Galați and Brăila. The more affluent boyars were likely to employ Székely maids, and some employers even learned Hungarian.⁷ Many of the emigrés knew of the Csángók⁸, the ethnic Hungarian group living in Moldavia, descendants of the Hungarians settled along the Szamos [Someș] river and in the Mezőség by kings of the Árpád and the Anjou houses. They also knew of Székelys who had

Moldavia in later centuries, especially after the clash with the Habsburg authorities at Mádéfalva (Siculeni) in 1764. A number of the Hungarian emigrés even thought that the Csángók might prove useful allies⁹ if it ever came to concrete action. And though the contemporary estimates of the number of ethnic Hungarians living in the principalities were often exaggerated,¹⁰ they did, in fact, form a relatively large group, not even counting the indigenous Roman Catholic Csángók of Moldavia — referred to by their Romanian neighbors simply as "papists."¹¹ This raised hopes that when the time came, they might be mobilized into an effective force.

From the point of view of the Hungarian emigrés, therefore, Hungarian-Romanian cooperation was above all, a geographic and strategic necessity whose recognition was basic to their plans for Hungary and Transylvania. As Kossuth himself put it in 1860: "/Karacsay/" can hardly be more cognizant than I myself of the extreme and imperative importance of Moldavia and Wallachia to us as a strategic zone".¹² The emigré General György Klapka, who for years was in charge of coordinating the various strands of Hungarian-Romanian cooperation, was no less categorical in 1859: "In the immediate future I shall be dealing solely with the question of Moldavia. It is this that I consider to be the basic and key issue of all our endeavors. Hungary's fate will be decided not along the Po River, but in the Szeret [Șiret] Valley."¹³ In fact, we might adduce no end of quotations to the same effect, expressing, (among others,) the very similar Polish evaluation of the matter.

The Danubian Principalities were, at the time, increasingly a focus of great power attention. The decline of the Ottoman Empire was ever more evident, as was the growing vigor of the Russian Empire. Moldavia and Wallachia were among the territories where Russia was determined to exploit the Porte's weakness. Austria, France, and, indirectly, Britain were all no less determined to prevent Russia's predominance in the region; thus, the Principalities became one locus of the clashing interests. Concurrently, their constitutional status — Ottoman suzerainty — became something of an open question.¹⁴ The Crimean War (1853-1856), waged to forestall Russian expansion in Central Asia and in the Balkans,¹⁵ ended in victory of the Western Powers, but the logic of the new balance of power required the establishment of a strong, viable buffer state.¹⁶ It also opened the door to French influence in the region. Louis Bonaparte Napoleon III's

commitment to promoting the expansion¹⁷ of French interests in eastern Europe, particularly in the Danubian Principalities, was the economic corollary of his political strategy. Its goal was to undermine Austria and Russia, the two conservative pillars of the *status quo* established in 1815. He wanted to frustrate the effectiveness of Austria's capital and of Russia's armies, and to secure another bridgehead in the region, as indeed he had worked to secure Serbia.¹⁸ The best way to do this appeared to be to encourage the unification of the two principalities. Thus, it was Napoleon III's own plans for the area that made the issue of their unification a permanent feature of European politics in these years, and it was because of these plans that at least between 1856 and 1866, Romanian political leader could count on France's support, wavering and self-serving though it was.

It is against this background that we must understand the union of Moldavia and Wallachia in 1859, the Romanian struggle for independence from Turkey, and the Romanians' French orientation¹⁹ in their commitment to the balance of power,²⁰ a stance much decried by the Hungarian emigrés. A propitious political constellation in itself, however, would never have resulted in the union of the two principalities. Romanian politics at the time were not merely a series of responses to external conditions. The union of Moldavia and Wallachia was seen as but the first step to the union of all the Romanian-speaking regions, and was a policy which evolved over years of ever-growing national consciousness. It was rooted in very real social and economic development, which, in the last few decades, had given rise to a generation of politicians capable of taking the nation's affairs in hand, and of linking it to Western European developments. These politicians played their parts on the political stage of Europe in the spirit of their own unique traditions and with their historical reflexes honed to enable them to exploit the possibilities for action that the European stage offered them. So highly equal were they to the task that initially, they won the esteem even of the Hungarian emigrés. Lajos Kossuth, for instance, expressed his sincere admiration for the Romanian politicians in having managed to elect Alexandru Ioan Cuza Prince of both Moldavia and Wallachia. "The feat they executed was as cunning as it was patriotic," he said, in reference to the fact that they had taken advantage of the loophole in the Treaty of Paris of 1858, which specified only that each principality was to hold elections for a hospodar separately, but did not address the issue of whether the same person could be elected by both. Continued Kossuth: "This is the spirit that is needed for people to become a nation, or, if they have lost their nationhood, to wrest it back."²¹

NOTES

1. Kossuth to M. Kiss, London, Jan. 29, 1861. In: Endre Kovács, *A Kossuth-emigráció és az európai szabadsághozzalmak* (Budapest, 1967), 384.

2. Dénes Károlyi, ed., *Székely vértanúk* (Bukarest, 1975), 5-65.

3. *Ibid.* 132-133. The military plan Gál finished drawing up on Nov. 16, 1851 together with General János Czetz and Lieutenant General Antal Vetter began with the following sentence: "The first thing we have to try is to reach a reconciliation with the Romanians." Dénes Károlyi, "Gál Sándor," in: *1848. Arcok, eszmék, tettek (Tanulmányok)* (Bukarest, 1974), 273.

4. Hungarian National Archives, R 295/10.

5. László Mikecs, *Csángók* (Budapest, n.d.) [1941] (2nd edition 1989), 110-142.

6. Sándor Ürmösy, *Az elbűdosott magyarok Oláhországban* (Kolozevár, 1844); József György Oberding, *Az óromániai magyarság* (Pécs, 1940); Mikecs, *op. cit.*, 142; Czelder to Klapka, Galați, Sept. 10, 1864. Hungarian National Archives, R 295, 8.d.22.t.

7. Mikecs, *op. cit.*, 142; Endre Veress, *Pictorul Barabás și Români* (București, 1930), 20; and Zoltán Banner, ed., *Barabás Miklós önéletrajza* (Cluj-Napoca, 1985), 66.

8. Cf. Elek P. Gegő, *A moldvai magyar telepekről* (Buda, 1838); Pál Péter Domokos, *A moldvai magyarság* (Budapest, 1987), first published in Csíkszereda, in 1931; Mikecs, *Csángók*; Siculus, *A moldvai magyarok őstelepülése, története és mai helyzete* (Pécs-Budapest, 1942); and N. Iorga, *Istoria românilor în chipuri și icoane* (Craiova, n.d. [1921]), 88. See also Kogălniceanu's parliamentary speeches of the years 1857-1859, which make clear the existence in Moldavia of an ethnic Hungarian population that was Roman Catholic in its religion, and "részos" (free) peasant (sharecropper) in respect to its social status (cf. the Romanian term "răzeș", meaning "small-holder," "free peasant," in *Dicționarul limbii române moderne* (București, 1958), 697. Most of them lived around Bacău (Bákó), Roman (Románvásár), and Iași (Jászvásár). Though considered "heretics," they enjoyed complete legal equality with the rest of the population and exercised ownership in the above regions, many of them rising to the rank of boyar. See: M. Kogălniceanu, *Discursuri parlamentare în epoca unirii* (București, 1959), Vladimir Gh. Diculescu, ed., 38-39, 70, 132-133. In 1859, Kogălniceanu put their numbers at 100,000 (*idem*, 133), an estimate which seems to be highly exaggerated. Costache Negri estimated this Hungarian population to number somewhere between fifty and sixty thousand at this time, and in 1861 the Central Statistical Directory of Moldavia listed 37,869 Hungarians, comprising 2.59% of the total population of 1,463,927. See: Lajos Demény, "A román progresszió és a csángó kérdés Moldva Ideiglenes Országgyűlése előtt 1857-ben," MS, 13 folios. Cf. Józsa Oroszhegyi, *Román élet* (Kolozevár, 1942), Sándor Bíró, ed., 100, and László Berzenczey's recollections of his escape: Hungarian National Archives, P 50 2.cs.2.t. For the latest research, see Kálmán Benda, ed., *Moldvai Csángó-Magyar Okmánytár, 1467-1706* (Budapest, 1989), I-II, Introduction, I, 9-51.

9. Kupa to Klapka, Geneva, July 26, 1864. Márton Czelder believed "they could surely count on at least five to six thousand men." Hungarian National Archives, R 295, 8.d.22.t.

10. Kogălniceanu (Prime Minister of Moldavia in 1860-61) put their numbers at 4,000 in Moldavia alone for 1860. See: M. Kogălniceanu, *Texte social-politice alese* (București, 1967), D. Berindei, L. Boicu, N. Ciachio, M. Jonescu, D. Simonescu, eds., 359. József Krivácsy, an artillery colonel in the 1848-49 war, estimated in 1859 that there were about 4,000 ethnic Hungarian men able to bear arms in Bucharest alone. See: Krivácsy to the Magyar Nemzeti Igazgatóság (Hungarian National Committee), 1862, Hungarian National Archives, R 112. However, in view of the circumstances that gave rise to Kogălniceanu's estimate — a highly controversial interpretation of his in 1855 — see M. Kogălniceanu, *Interpelațiunea privitoare la expulsaarea Românilor de peste Carpați adresată guvernelui* (București, 1886) — and in view of Krivácsy's unreliability, well known in emigré circles, we must treat both data with some reservation. Kossuth, for his part, relying on Klapka's on-the-scene reports, spoke of forty thousand Hungarians. See: Kossuth to M. Kiss, London, Jan. 29, 1861, *Hadtörténeti Közlemények*, nos. 1-2 (1958), 229.

11. Cf. *Dicționarul limbii române moderne*, 582, *Dicționar român-maghiar* (București, 1964), II, 183; *Mic dicționar enciclopedic* (București, 1972), 676; see also: Kogălniceanu, *op. cit.*, 38.

12. Kossuth to Pulszky, London, Dec. 14, 1860, Lajos Kossuth, *Irataim az emigrációiból* (Budapest, 1882), III, 221. (Hereafter: Kossuth, *Irataim...*) Cf. György Szabad, *Kossuth politikai pályája ismert és ismeretlen megnyilatkozásai tükrében* (Budapest, 1977), 179. A month and a half later, he elaborated on his views, and expressed his growing skepticism in view of the ambivalence of the Romanian stand in the autumn of 1860, and of the aborted plans for an arms delivery from Cavour: "We cannot set too great a store by the importance to us of the Danubian Principalities, particularly Moldavia. ...Moldavia is the only place whence we can expect a stout-hearted Hungarian population which is ready to take up arms right at the border — That's the only place where we can expect to find a Hungarian army of ten to fifteen thousand men ready made, an army around which the Hungarians of the Tiszántúl can rally." Kossuth to Miklós Nemeskéri Kiss, London, Jan. 29, 1861, Archives of the Institute for Military History, Nemeskéri Kiss család iratai, Kossuth levelek; családi gyűjtemény: 86.cs. 38.d.

13. Klapka to Teleki, Geneva, Feb. 28, 1859: in Tivadar Ács, *A genovai lázadás* (Budapest, 1958), 33, and Kovács, *op. cit.*, 334, note 52. See also Zoltán Szász, "A román-magyar összefogás kísérlete 1849 után," *Historia*, I, nos. 4 and 29.

14. Kovács, *op. cit.*, 318; Pierre Renouvin, *Histoire des relations internationales*, tome cinquième: *Le XIX^e siècle* (Paris, 1954), 297, 319-320. István Diószegi, *Klasszikus diplomácia — modern hatalmi politika* (Budapest, 1967), 166.

15. Kovács, *op. cit.*, 315; Diószegi, *op. cit.*, 163.

16. Kovács, *op. cit.*, 318; Stan, *Grupări și curente politice în România între unire și independență*, 140; Andrei Oțetea, "Însemnătatea istorică a Unirii," *Studii* no. 1 (1959), 31; Șt. Zeletin, *Burghezia română. Origina și rolul ei istoric* (București, n.d.), [1925], 43; L. Pătrășcanu, *Un veac de frământări sociale (1821-1907)*, 3rd ed. (București, 1969), 225. Cf. G. Herczegh, *Magyarország külpolitikája 896-1919* (Budapest, 1987), 281-283.

17. Kovács, *op. cit.*, 316-318, 321; Leonid Boicu, "Încercări franceze de pătrundere în economia Moldovei în epoca războiului Crimeii și a Unirii 1853-59," in *Studii privind Unirea Principatelor* (București, 1960), 197-198. Gyula Mérei, *Föderációs tervek Délkelet-Európában és a Habsburg-monarchia 1840-1918* (Budapest, 1975), 76.

18. Eugen Lovinescu, *Istoria civilizației române moderne* (București, 1972), 2nd ed., prefaced and edited by Z.[igh] Ornea, 177-178; Pătrășcanu, *op. cit.*, 225; Gáldi and Makkai, eds., *A románok története különös tekintettel az erdélyi románokra*. (Budapest, 1941), 235; Diószegi, *op. cit.*, 105-107. For notes 16-20, see also E. Kovács, "Az 1859. évi magyar-román egyezmény," *Századok*, nos. 1-6, (1963), 294-295. For an extraordinarily thorough account of the French diplomatic efforts to promote the unification of the two Romanian principalities and of Austria's countermeasures as these effected the matter of navigation on the Danube, see Emil Palotás, *A nemzetközi Duna-hajózás a Habsburg-monarchia diplomáciájában, 1856-1883* (Budapest, 1964).

19. Cf. P. Eliade, *De l'influence française sur l'esprit public en Roumanie. Les origines. Etude sur l'état de la société Roumaine à l'époque des régnes phanariotes*. (Paris 1898); A. D. Xenopol, *Istoria românilor din Dacia-Traiană. Epoca Fanarioșilor* (Iași, 1892), V, 664, 667-676; N. Jorga, *Histoire des relations entre la France et les Roumains* (Jassy, 1917); András Tóth, *Az erdélyi románság története* (Budapest, 1944), 65; Gáldi and Makkai, *op. cit.*, 183, 189-190, 235-237; I. Lupăș, *Istoria unirii românilor* (București, n.d.), 224; D. Popovici, *La littérature roumaine à l'époque des lumières* (București, 1945); Lovinescu, *op. cit.*, 96. For the latest on French-Romanian relations, see D. Berindei, "Legături și convergențe istorice româno-franceze," *Revista de istorie*, no. 3 (1979), 405-429.

20. For the antecedents of this 19th century "see-saw" policy, see Lejós Elekes, "Magyar-román államkapcsolatok a dunatáji magyar nagyhatalom korában," in Deér and Gáldi, *Magyarok és románok* (Budapest, 1944), II, 10-14, 21, 23-24; Tóth, *op. cit.*, 17; Șt. Andreescu, *Vlad Țepeș* (București, 1976); Paul Cornea, *Originile romantismului românesc* (București, 1972), 25-26.

21. Kossuth, *Irataim...*, I, 380. At the same time, he decries the fact that though Hungary and Romania have only each other to rely on, "They have got their eyes on Transylvania." *Ibid.*, 382.