# Romanian Theories of Central European Integration

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**ABSTRACT**

Central Europe, especially Eastern Europe, has always been the geographic convergence point of several Great Powers that exercised their influence on the region regardless of the wishes of smaller states or national/ethnical groups. At the mid-19th century, the political equation changed, and the desire for a new regional order was emerging at the ethnic group or small nation level. Their elites proposed projects and lobbied for several political constructions that would advantage their nations and help them define their new political development with some kind of autonomy/independence. The nation states and political turmoil in the second part of the century launched several integration and political construction projects designed to reshape the face of Eastern Europe following a more realistic representation system. During the 1848 revolution, many political and intellectual elites tried to consolidate new political construction projects for the Romanian principalities or minorities in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Central Europe became a place where the old order had reached its capabilities in managing and integrating the ethnic groups and nations in a satisfying way; imperial reflexes were no longer a solution for national inspirations. The Romanian principalities unification, the Ausglich, or the former Greek independence war, were just the tip of the iceberg of the need for political reshaping in Eastern Europe. In contrast, projects like the Danube Confederation were designed to secure autonomy and replace the old imperial approaches into a fragmented region. Mitteleurope and Eastern Europe became the central point of political debates, and the need for nations to secure their future became a significant issue on the political and cultural agenda. From the Romanian point of view, Popoviciu or Maiorescu's projects and ideas became the central point of the debate. This chapter is a chronicle of these efforts and ideas, the flow of intellectual work in the European space to reshape the Eastern European region according to the needs of small nations and ethnic groups.

**KEYWORDS**

federalization, Danube Confederation, Popovici, Ausglich, Mitteleuropa, Eastern Europe, national aspirations, Palacky, Densusianu

## Introduction

Romania, as it emerged after the 1859 union of the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, had the ambition to become the 'Belgium of the East.' The country was

modernized late, hence the obsession to reduce the gap separating it from Western as well as nearby Central Europe. Moreover, the proximity of Transylvania—a significant proportion of which was inhabited by the Romanian population, and which was part of the Habsburg Empire until the 1867 Compromise (*Ausgleich*) when it was placed under Budapest's tutelage—provided those in the Old Kingdom of Romania an even stronger pretext for comparison. Transylvania was undergoing a rapid process of modernization in every sector (from industrialization and infrastructure to all levels of the education system), while the extra-Carpathian area seemed to have barely emerged from the Middle Ages. The reforms initiated by Alexandru-Ioan Cuza were implemented with great difficulty, sometimes incompletely, thus failing to considerably improve the people's living standards. Although the great estates (as well as the mid-sized ones) conferred on Romania the title of 'Europe's granary,' from a social perspective, the country was in the grip of neo-serfdom[1] while state-building seemed to reflect Titu Maiorescu's 'forms without substance.'[2]

In other words, Romania as it was born in 1859 was predominantly a rural country. It was just embarking on the path of modernization,[3] having a great number of poor and uneducated people and a small intellectual elite that chose Western Europe as a source of ideological inspiration. Thus, it is not surprising that for young Romanians, every study trip abroad was an opportunity to feel astonished but also to reflect on the realities that dominated their country of origin. In 1889, while on his way to Western Europe, Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, a future Professor at the University of Bucharest and proponent of the theory of Romanianism,[4] shared the following view in a letter to his father:

We, Romanians, are so backward that whichever specialty I might choose, I will never be able to achieve anything of major importance [...] Iordache Golescu, even though he reflected on Romania's spiritual and material poverty, he was still a happy man because he believed that, through goodwill, the situation of Romanians could be improved. I do not believe this. I believe that we are destined to remain among the perpetually poor peoples. The wheel of fortune will never turn for us. Others, who opened their eyes to civilization before us, stole all our luck [...].[5]

The situation, however, did not improve significantly in the following period. At the turn of the century, there still was considerable talk in the Romanian cultural milieu

1 Dobrogeanu-Gherea, 1908, p. 498.
2 Maiorescu, 1868, pp. 301–307. On this theory, see Schifirneț, 2002, pp. 121–139.
3 In 1899, 81.2% of Romania's population (5,956,690) lived in rural areas, with only 18.8% in urban areas (16% in county seats, 2.8% in the other towns), with few regional disparities. Regarding education, 78% of the population was illiterate: 50.6% in urban areas, 84.5% in rural areas (Colescu, 1944, pp. 44–45, 109, 118).
4 Rădulescu-Motru, 1936.
5 Rădulescu-Motru, 1990, p. 40. On this aspect, see Nastasă, 2006.

of the superficial construction of the Romanian state and the mediocrity of many institutions, as they included few intellectuals, who were not among the ones with original ideas. However, there were also debates and a genuine desire to find solutions to improve the situation. For instance, the publication of Nicolae Iorga's three famous books *Opinions sincères* (1899), *Opinions pernicieuse* (1900), and *Cuvinte adevărate [True Words]* (1903),[6] which discuss customs, mentalities, institutions, and personalities, among others, was the result of this state of relative cultural backwardness. The books also represented a warning regarding the transplantation, through those superficially instructed abroad, of institutions that seemed at odds with the country's actual stage of development.

For this reason, Romanian intellectuals—few as there were by the time—did not put forward state building and reform projects able to really mobilize a society that was, as mentioned above, disharmonious in many of its segments. Another reason may have been that the cultural values were either borrowed, mainly from the West and without fitting local conditions, or so-called 'traditional,' taken from the highly-idealized rural world. In fact, the reality was that the Romanian peasants were terribly poor and uneducated, their tradition being dominated by the values of a backward Orthodox Church that promoted superstitions and occult practices to excess, without the slightest care for the social needs of the poor and destitute.

These realities marked the evolution of the manner of thinking of Romanian intellectuals who were primarily interested in reducing these disparities, but who also reflected on projects that could ensure the country's advancement and build a state could support development. In this context, as early as the beginning of the 19th century, Romanians realized that their association with the East through dependency on the Ottoman Empire hindered their access to the benefits of modernization. Napoleon's troops had circulated in this area, as well as in all Central and Eastern Europe, the ideas of the French and American Revolution. However, some elements of progress imported through other channels had appeared here as early as the eighteenth century. For instance, the Phanariot prince Constantin Mavrocordat took inspiration from the administrative reforms introduced during the short-lived Austrian occupation of Oltenia (1718–38)[7] and from the Enlightenment, mainly of French origin. His name is also associated with the most comprehensive government program (February 7, 1740), which promoted reforms in almost every sector and was published in the summer of 1942 under the title 'Constitution' in *Mercure de France*. Mavrocordat was mentioned as 'Prince des deux Valachies et de Moldavie.'[8]

Moreover, this was a period when Romanians broke their cultural ties with the Slavic world and increasingly became associated with the Balkans, a geographic area dominated primarily by the Greeks, although the territory was under Ottoman rule. We would interpret this distancing as a sign of modernity. In this context, the

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6  Iorga, 1899; Iorga, 1900; Iorga, 1903.
7  Papacostea, 1998.
8  Mercure de France, Paris, July 1742, pp. 1506–1525.

Romanians revived the old spirit of the Byzantium with its decisive influence over their culture, although sometimes this was intermediated by the South Slavs. In other words, the eighteenth century marked the integration of Moldavia and Wallachia—as 'borderlands' removed from the civilized world—into the Balkan-oriental world.[9] This happened mainly, but not exclusively, through the Phanariot rulers.[10] Gradually, however, due to the infusion of revolutionary ideas and the 'discovery' of Western Europe, Romanians started to perceive their belonging to the eastern part of the continent as the cause of their political and cultural backwardness. Thus, in the mid-nineteenth century historical context, the Romanians felt their association with the Balkans to be increasingly unpleasant.[11] Consequently, historians of this period included Romania in Southeastern Europe to highlight that it firmly belonged to the continent's civilization.[12]

Looking comparatively at the East and West, Romanians wanted to be culturally and ideologically attached to the latter through the indispensable link represented by Central Europe. Thus, not surprisingly, the Romanian society's evolution toward modernity was associated with several political and state models that would ensure security, self-assertion, economic and social progress, and so forth. Moreover, in the last quarter of the 19th century until the outbreak of the Great War, one can speak of a 'Transylvanian spirit' as a civilizing factor within the Romanian cultural milieux. In the interwar period, it actually became fashionable for certain well-known Romanian scholars to invent Transylvanian origins or relatives, as this meant an association with Central Europe and the Habsburg Empire. For instance, Mateiu I. Caragiale 'concocted' a birth certificate that indicated Tuşnad as his birthplace, even claiming that his mother was living in Vienna, while his estate was decorated with various Hungarian heraldic emblems and flags. Similarly, the literary critic George Călinescu claimed in a newspaper article that he was Transylvanian ('Eu sunt ardelean'/ I am a Transylvanian),[13] reflecting upon the many virtues of the people living on the other side of the Carpathians. Transylvanian ancestry had always been coveted by many intellectuals in the Old Kingdom of Romania, from those born in the heart of Moldavia (such as the poet Alexandru Vlahuţă) to those whose origins were lost in the mists of time, but who hoped or were certain to have the faintest connection with Transylvania as an area belonging to *Mitteleuropa*[14]— this Germanic-Habsburg matrix already assimilated into the 'West'—and as a source of civilization.

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9  Boia, 2001, p. 11. See also Teodorova, 1997.

10  See Pippidi, 1983. See also Papacostea-Danielopolu, 1979; Georgescu, 1980, pp. 87–290.

11  See also the concept of 'Balkanization' having a profoundly negative meaning.

12  In 1914, after the Balkan Wars, N. Iorga, together with the geographer Gh. Murgoci and the archaeologist V. Pârvan, founded an institute that for decades bore the name 'The Institute for South-east European Studies' and that still exists today (in 1963 it was merged with the Institute of Balkan Studies and Research founded in 1937).

13  Tribuna poporului, I, 31/1944, (15 Oct.), p. 1 and 3.

14  Nastasă, 2004, pp. 14–23.

In this context, one should point out the 'domination' that the *Weltsprachen* exercised over the extra-Carpathian area. Germany—along with France—served as a transmission belt for the high European spirituality.[15] Moreover, until the outbreak of the Great War, many Romanian students from the Monarchy and the Old Kingdom of Romania[16] viewed the Habsburg Empire as a very attractive destination. The latter was associated with the same German spirit that fascinated part of our intelligentsia, that is, the respect for order and discipline, rationalism, and thoroughness.

While around 1892/93 the Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga was more attracted to provincial Austria than to 'powdered and bureaucratized Vienna,'[17] a Romanian intellectual from Transylvania educated in the empire's capital found Viennese society in the years leading up to the Great War 'affable, friendly, hospitable and courteous toward all foreigners.' The latter were welcomed and 'provided with every comfort so as to gain these foreigners' admiration of Vienna and the Viennese.'[18] This image is closer to the real feelings of the Romanians and confirmed by a significant number of other travelers who visited the city, starting with Dinicu Golescu in the 1830s. He found everything 'exemplary'—the discipline of its citizens; functioning of public services; cleanliness, architecture, and urban planning; monuments; welfare and education systems; and so forth.[19]

## 1. Evolution over history

For many centuries, the great powers—from the Byzantine Empire, Holy Roman Empire, Venetian Republic, and Ottoman Empire to Russia in the nineteenth century—strove for hegemony over this area of the continent. Although the region included a significant number of Slavs, the ideology of Pan-Slavism never became prominent in the area. This does not mean, however, that Russia did not use this ideology to justify its expansionist ambitions, aiming to incorporate all Slavic peoples.[20] Furthermore, one should mention the constant tensions between Pan-Slavism and Pan-Germanism. Thus, it is not surprising that as early as 1843, Miklós Wesselényi proposed a constitutional and federal transformation of the Habsburg Empire and the creation of a German-French-English bloc to thwart Russian expansion.[21]

In these circumstances, fearing Pan-Slavism, the Romanian leaders of the 1848 Revolution proposed to the German National Assembly (*Nationalversammlung*) in Frankfurt am Main that all Romanian-inhabited territories should unite into a single autonomous state 'closely connected with Austria.' In other words, in the prevailing

15  Boia, 1985, pp. 51–69.
16  Bauer, 2005, pp. 106–116.
17  Iorga, 1984, p. 154.
18  Cosma, 1922, pp. 1–2.
19  Golescu, 1990, pp. 19–44. See also Ioncioaia, 1996, pp. 415–437.
20  Kohn, 1960.
21  Wesselényi, 1843, pp. 41–49.

revolutionary turmoil, Romanians distinguished themselves as staunch supporters of the Habsburgs. Additionally, the idea of federalization became increasingly tempting following the events leading to the 1871 unification of Germany that thus became not only 'federal' but also a destabilizing factor in Central Europe.

Pan-Slavism or Pan-Russianism as a form of political centralization was also unacceptable to the Romanians living outside the Carpathian Arch, considering certain historical experiences that could not be overlooked. Thus, in 1848, the Transylvanian Ioan Maiorescu, who had been living in Wallachia since 1836, became the diplomatic agent of the provisional government in Bucharest accredited to the government in Vienna and to the Frankfurt Assembly. On September 24, 1848, Maiorescu submitted to Baron Heinrich von Gagern, president of the Frankfurt Assembly, a memo in which he proposed unifying Bukovina, Moldavia, Wallachia, and Transylvania into a single kingdom ruled by an Austrian prince and under German suzerainty.[22] This was not an isolated case, given that in the same year, the Czech revolutionary František Palacký pointed out in a memo also sent to the Frankfurt Assembly that the state founded by the Habsburgs would be 'indispensable to the security of Europe and humanity. Honestly, if the Habsburg Empire did not exist, it should be invented in the interest of Europe, of humanity.'[23]

From then on, the sentence more accurately reflected the reality, given that the year 1848 highlighted more than ever not only the multinational structure of the Empire but also issues related to the coexistence of peoples, and confirmed the incompatibility between nationality and territoriality.[24] Basically, this explains why, since the early nineteenth century, relationships between these peoples were often contentious. We must consider the rhythms in which their national consciousness developed, rhythms that differed from one people to the other. In other words, to quote Bernard Michel's assertion, 'Central Europe's nations have never lived in the same century.'[25]

In this context, the idea of confederation or a dynastic union agitated the spirits of Romanian revolutionaries who, in the laboratories of the 'provisional government' in Bucharest, concocted a state-building project for Eastern Europe. This confederation of nationalities may have been, as Alexandru G. Golescu-Arăpilă wrote to Ştefan C. Golescu from Paris on September 18, 1848, that is, in the midst of the revolution, a response to 'Hungarian despotism': 'In spite of this, the issue is very simple: liberty for all, equality for all, this is the motto; federative unity, not Hungarian unity, this is the path ahead; a confederation of all nationalities in the East, this is the goal.'[26]

However, in the turmoil of that year, Nicolae Bălcescu, one of the leaders of the 1848 Revolution, subsequently advocated the idea of forging an alliance with the Hungarians. His proposal was supported by two other Romanian revolutionaries, Ioan

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22 Barbu,1988, p. 425.
23 Béhaur, 1991, p.106.
24 Pasteur, 1996, p. 9.
25 Michel, 1995, p. 261.
26 Fotino, 1939, p. 189.

Ghica and Cezar Bolliac, the latter having the reputation of a fervent pro-Hungarian. Around 1850, this time from exile, the major figures of the Romanian revolution proposed creating an eastern confederation—the United Danube States—that would unite Romanians, Hungarians, South Slavs, perhaps the Czechs, and even North Italians and Greeks. In addition, in the summer of the same year, Bălcescu met Giuseppe Mazzini in London to discuss this project conceived with the help of his countrymen I. Ghica, D. Brătianu, and Al. Golescu-Arăpilă, as well as several Hungarians, Poles, Czechs, and others. Although Lajos Kossuth, the former leader of the 1848 Hungarian Revolution, was less than enthusiastic about the project, his countrymen László Teleky and György Klapka showed interest in it. In this context, in June 1851 G. Mazzini addressed a manifesto to the Romanians, which they subsequently translated into Romanian and printed in the Cyrillic alphabet for distribution in Moldavia and Wallachia.[27] In autumn of the same year, D. Brătianu expressed his conviction that 'a great Danube Confederation' will be established.[28] However, about a year later, I. Ghica changed his mind and viewed the idea of a 'confederation of national republics' as a 'utopia.'[29]

Later, after 1859, when the Oriental question was still timely in the context of the Franco-Italian-Austrian War, the idea of a Danube Confederation was discussed again during the negotiations between Al. I. Cuza and G. Klapka, on the one hand, and Camillo Cavour and Jérôme Bonaparte, on the other. The idea that circulated at the time was that of a confederation made up of three Danube states—Hungary, Serbia and Moldo-Wallachia—and founded on a Hungarian-Romanian convention adopted in Italy on May 22, 1859, and signed by Vasile Alecsandri for the Romanian side.[30] Thus, an attempt was being made to take advantage of the situation in Europe, underlining the opportuneness of a confederation previously designed by G. Klapka, who had introduced the idea of a 'protective federalism' of the small 'non-German' states against the influence of Russian expansion.[31]

Therefore, the project of a 'Danube Confederation' reflected the spirit of the time. Lajos Kossuth also advocated such a construct between 1852 and 1856, taking inspiration from American federalism. In his vision, this future regional federal structure made up of Hungary, Croatia, Romania, and Serbia would solve the national question.[32]

In other words, the ever-increasingly circulated key term for the cohesion between these apparently minor states was the Danube, the river that crosses a significant part of the European continent from west to east and on whose course several metropolises (Vienna, Bratislava, and Budapest) of vital importance for several states developed. Paradoxically, Romania's capital, Bucharest, is not built on this river, but

27 For the text, see Marcu, 1930, pp. 44–50.
28 See Ciorănescu, 1954, pp. 193–212.
29 Georgescu-Tistu, 1935, p. 147.
30 Urechia, 1894, pp. 7–8; Kossuth, 1880, pp. 236–238; Bossy, 1931, p. 47.
31 Klapka, 1855, p. 177–178. For later, see Borsi-Kálmán, 1986, pp. 133–180.
32 Kossuth, 1898, pp. 9–12.

neither is it very far from it.[33] Nevertheless, the term remained,[34] becoming topical once more at the end of the Great War through Oszkár Jászi's project to transform Austria-Hungary into a 'United Danube States,' a powerful supranational construct and a buffer between Russia and Germany.[35] Besides, Jászi was greatly interested in the national question in the Empire. Thus, he passionately advocated the federalist path as opposed to the disintegration of the Habsburg colossus, promoted reconciliation, and supported Friedrich Naumann's vision for *Mitteleuropa* (1915) and especially the idea of a Danube Confederation.[36]

Seemingly following Jászi's logic, in 1952, not long after the end of the Second World War and in a completely different historical context, the exiled Romanian jurist and diplomat Vespasian V. Pella proposed creating a system of partially superimposed associations, a Danube Union made up of Austria, Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia, together with a Balkan Union made up of Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey, which would also include Romania and Yugoslavia. The same year, however, Pella's project was refuted by another exiled jurist and diplomat, G. A. Pordea. Aiming to elucidate in his book the consequences of applying federalist principles in Eastern Europe, Pordea pointed out that the countries in this area differ from the western countries in two major aspects: a complex ethnic structure and the activism of the national sentiment. Obviously, his analysis focused mainly on Romania and the consequences of federal relationships with other European states given that Transylvania included a significant Hungarian minority. Therefore, he argued that implementing a federal system would jeopardize the unity and national character of the Romanian state.[37]

Thus, for more than a century, the idea of a confederation in which the Danube played a unifying role—only apparently and mainly from a terminological perspective—was obsessively reiterated. Returning to the nineteenth century, with the notable exception of the revolutionary year 1848, Romanian intellectuals only started to be seriously interested in the idea of Central European integration after the 1867 Compromise. This event was the source of great disappointment among the Slavs and Romanians, perhaps also because at that time, the idea of a vast East-Danube empire under Hungarian hegemony also circulated.[38]

Obviously, in the above-mentioned countries, the issue of integration into Central Europe was also discussed and reflected upon before 1867; however, not in a systematized form and in conformity with the modern principles of the state as it was in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Compromise provided Romanian

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33 In the 1980s, Nicolae Ceaușescu ordered the construction of a canal that would connect Bucharest with the Danube and, implicitly, the Black Sea.
34 The concept of 'Donaumonarchie' (Danube Monarchy) for Habsburg rule also circulated in the 19th century (see Bled, 1989, pp. 9–10).
35 Jászi, 1918.
36 See Hanák, 1985; Litván, 2006.
37 Pordea, 1952, p. 176.
38 Marcu, 1936, p. 983.

intellectuals with the ideological support for designing and redesigning formulas of integration into a geographically defined political and state structure, but in an era of 'nationalities' and 'nationalisms,' which clearly complicated matters. In this context, given the diversity of the Habsburg Empire, federalism seemed a very attractive political project, although it also presented certain ambiguities and sometimes even aspects that jeopardized stability. Furthermore, different visions of federalism circulated: some imagining it as a constitutional construct in which authority was distributed between two or more layers of government, while others viewed it as a political system where power was divided between a center and regions.

At this point, the Romanian intellectuals in the Old Kingdom of Romania showed very little interest in formulas that envisioned their country's integration into a state structure that covered Central Europe.[39] In the years leading to the Great War, they were rather interested in the idea of a Balkan Federation, which we discuss below. In the second half of the 19th century, however, they were up to date with everything that happened in Central Europe. They were well-informed about and reflected on the analyses and theories of federalism and dynastic unions, elaborated by some thinkers in the region.

As regards the *Mitteleuropa* variant of the Habsburg Empire, it interested first and foremost the Transylvanian Romanian political leaders and intellectuals who were placed in an inferior position to the Hungarians after the 1867 Compromise. However, the Czechs also shared this ideal with the Romanians, especially given that Prague had once been the capital of the Holy German Empire. At that time, the optimal solution was Central-East European federalism based on the 'historical' and not 'national' criterion. In fact, most people in this area believed that the existence of the Habsburg Empire was the best guarantee of protection against German and Russian expansionism into Central Europe.

In truth, there were not really any viable alternatives to this idea of 'reforming' the Empire, given that, at that time, the advocates of federalism did not have the necessary support. In that context, the 1867 'dualism' was the result of a difficult decision, which then seemed like a 'realistic' and immediately achievable solution, even conforming to European interests. However, it was certainly the Compromise that later encouraged certain non-Hungarian and non-Austrian thinkers to come up with the project of a Central European Federation with Vienna as the capital. In other words, the ability to create a dualist state meant that it was also possible to go one step further toward a federal structure, in other words, an associative framework in which other nationalities could play a significant role and everything was individualized based on the national criterion. Therefore, there was an aspiration to transform the Empire from an autocratic state (*Zwangsmaschine*) into a multinational state (*Völkerstaat*).

Although the Compromise could have stimulated Romanians to rethink a potential state structure for Central Europe, the advanced proposals were timid, mostly unarticulated, and were rooted in their rivalry with the Hungarians. In this context, it

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39  For a geographical definition of Central Europe, see Kirschbaum, 2007, p. XIX.

is worth mentioning that in January 1868, a Romanian periodical suggestively called *Federațiunea* (The Federation) was first published in Budapest. Alexandru Roman was its editor-in-chief, and it appeared until 1876. As the name suggests, this periodical fervently supported the federalization of the Monarchy, the same as another Romanian gazette called *Tribuna* (The Tribune), which was otherwise perceived as pro-Habsburg.

In 1868, Nicolae Densușianu published in *Federațiunea* the serialized article entitled *Poporul român în federațiune* [*The Romanian Nation in a Federation*],[40] which, despite its prolixity and theoretical shortages, endeavors to establish the relationship between federalism and the national principle. For instance, while describing Romanians and Hungarians as 'neighboring peoples,' Densușianu maintains that only a 'federation' between these 'states and nations' 'will forever be the strongest guarantee for their future.'[41] Evidently, his arguments stem from the common history of the two nations, and their 'reconciliation' can only be achieved through a 'federation' that would also bring about 'a regeneration of the peoples under the House of Habsburg.'[42]

This period witnessed a growing number of projects on this subject.[43] At a public conference called *Sămănătorii de idei* and held on March 16. 1868, V. A. Urechia claimed: 'Hungarians and Bulgarians will be able to aspire to independence and to a future only if they draw culturally closer to the Romanians, only in union and in confederation with them.'[44] In 1871, while serving as Prime Minister, Count Karl Sigmund von Hohenwart attempted to introduce in Austria a federal system founded on historical rights and decisions taken in the empire's provinces, an idea founded on the principle of historical-political individuations. In fact, the project aimed at striking a deal with the Czechs, precisely to confer consistency to the Empire by establishing harmonious relations with the Slavs. Ultimately, however, the project could not be implemented, as von Hohenwart was forced to resign.[45] Even a polymath like Nikolai I. Danielevski, who was also Pan-Slav activist, elaborated as early as 1869 a project for federalization of Central and Southeast Europe under Russia's authority, which achieved wider dissemination only in 1871.[46]

In 1871, Hungarian Prime Minister Gyula Andrássy, who remained in office until November 14 that year and was subsequently appointed imperial minister of foreign affairs, proposed transforming the Ottoman Empire into a German-style confederation that would also include Romania. The Romanian prime minister, Lascăr Catargiu, agreed in theory to the proposal but demanded that Greece should not be included. Soon, however, the Romanian government abandoned the idea of turning the country

40  Densusianu, 1868, pp. 449–450, 454–455; 122, 123, pp. 481–482 and 487–488.
41  *Federațiunea*, I, 114/1868, p. 449.
42  Ibid. issue 122, p. 482; issue 123, p. 487.
43  See Mérei, 1965.
44  Urechia, 1878, pp. 226–227.
45  Buchsel, 1941.
46  Meneghello-Dincic, 1958, p. 309.

into a Romanian Bavaria within a Turkish Prussia, especially given that the Serbs were also reluctant about Andrássy's project.[47]

Even Archduke Rudolf, heir presumptive to the Austro-Hungarian crown, together with his entourage, supported the idea of federalism and the existence of a great Austrian state. The reorganization envisaged creating a supranational state, a Greater Austria, that would have included a Greater Serbia, Greater Romania, and Greater Poland, respecting at the same time the rights of the Hungarian nation. The Archduke's premature death in 1889, however, put an end to this project.[48]

## 2. Popovici's project

In this context, the first coherently articulated Romanian project on integration into Central Europe was elaborated by Aurel C. Popovici (1863–1917) in 1906. Born in Lugoj—a town in the region of Banat, which came under Hungarian rule after the 1867 Compromise—Popovici pursued his secondary studies in Brașov and Beiuș and then enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine in Vienna. However, due to his heavy involvement in the political struggle of the Romanians in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Popovici neglected his academic studies even after he moved to Graz, consequently never completing them.

As a matter of fact, in the second half of the 19th century, many Romanian students in Vienna remained captive in their ethnic 'community,' organized in a society called 'România Jună' [Young Romania]. Because of their nationalism, they were unable to enjoy and take advantage of the fabulous intellectual atmosphere of this metropolis at the turn of the century.[49] While Jews and Czechs, for instance, had greatly benefited from and even contributed to the Viennese cultural boom, Romanians seemed to refuse to come out of their shell, being preoccupied with trivial and culturally narrow-minded matters, such as nationalism. They were basically engrossed in ideology and politics, often getting into fights over these issues. Therefore, Romanians in Vienna showed discord even among themselves, being torn by fierce political passions.

This is the context in which Popovici became one of the signatories of the 1892 Memorandum, for which he was tried and sentenced to four years in prison. Without going into details, we should mention, however, that the Memorandum caused a serious rift not only between Romanians and Hungarians but also among Romanians, given that this document was not the product of a majority and not all signatories were viewed by their compatriots as representative of their nation. As a matter of fact, with few exceptions, some of the signatories became famous only through their association with the Memorandum. This was also why the emperor refused to meet the Romanian delegation in Vienna in May 1892. The Viennese authorities, politicians,

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47  Iorga, 1916, pp. 124–125.
48  Bled, 2006.
49  Schorske, 1980.

and press all distanced themselves from the signatories of the document. Not even the Romanian deputies in Bukovina showed any support for them.

After his trial in 1894, Popovici left Transylvania and went into exile in Bucharest. In 1912, he moved to Vienna, and after the outbreak of the Great War, he took refuge in Geneva where he died on February 9, 1917.[50] In the context of the political struggles within the Romanian community in the Empire, Popovici distinguished himself as an ardent supporter and promoter of Central European federalism as well as national-ism and anti-Semitism.[51] He actually started to argue in favor of federalism as early as 1894, but only with regard to Hungary, in his book *Chestiunea naționalităților și modurile soluționării sale în Transilvania și Ungaria*[52] [*The Nationality Question and the Ways to Solve It in Transylvania and Hungary*], nationalism thus becoming a political instrument.[53]

Apart from the radical Romanian nationalists, there were also others, such as C. Brediceanu, Vincențiu Babeș, and Al. Mocioni, who pleaded for harmonization of the Hungarian and Romanian objectives. In their view, Romanians should look for a solution in Budapest, not Vienna. There even circulated the political concept of 'Romanian-Hungarian Dualism,' elaborated by Babeș in 1891, which further infu-riated Romanian nationalists. In this context, Babeș, who acted as president of the Romanian National Party in Transylvania in 1891-92,[54] proposed Popovici as chief editor of the periodical *Luminătorul* in December 1891, but strong opposition put an end to this idea. For instance, Corneliu Diaconovici, while praising Popovici as a culti-vated individual, maintained that the publication should not be entrusted to someone who had received his education in 'cafes' and had 'his head in the clouds,' which could potentially cause problems.[55]

Although late compared to other 'federalist' contributions, Popovici's 1906 project seems to encapsulate the various reorganization plans of the Empire, systematizing at the same time all the previous ideological contributions in this respect. In this context, the book that would bring him renown, *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Groß-Österreich,*[56] follows the reasoning of František Palacký, whom he quotes generously and who had proposed as early as 1848 creating a federal Austria based on the national criterion and on equality among all ethnic communities and religious denominations. Essentially, at the turn of the century, federalization seemed the most viable solution for Central Europe, especially given that the 1867 Compromise had proven that a con-federate alliance was very much possible.[57] As a matter of fact, the Romanian Prime Minister D. A. Sturdza, in a discourse held in Iași on October 13, 1895, argued: 'the

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50  For further details, see Crișan, 2008.
51  Neumann, 2002, pp. 864–897.
52  Popovici, 1894.
53  On this aspect, see Tănăsescu, 2017, pp. 439–461.
54  Cipăianu, 2015.
55  Polverejan and Cordoș, 1973, pp. 187–188.
56  Popovici, 1906, p. 427.
57  See Leoncini, 2007, pp. 23–31.

Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, as it is made up, is a necessity of the utmost importance for the balance of power in Europe and for the security of our kingdom.'[58]

In his book, Popovici proposed reorganizing the Austro-Hungarian Empire based on the nationality principle. In his opinion, nationality was at that time the only criterion able to organize state formations.[59] Unlike other similar goals, such as securing peace and freedom of economic exchanges, Popovici's goal was the political self-assertion of the Romanian nation within the Empire. In fact, Romanians—who believed that they were prevented from politically asserting themselves—wanted first and foremost to become unshackled from the Hungarian 'oppressor.' Thus, Popovici positioned himself in opposition to the 'historical federalism' or aristocratic federalism to which emperor Franz Josef had intended to return through his Diploma of October 20, 1860, which marked the end of neo-absolutism and the beginning of constitutional government.[60] The same year, one of Popovici's compatriots, Vincențiu Babeș, also rejected federalism founded on the autonomy of historical provinces, arguing that it must be founded on national autonomy instead.

In short, Popovici's project envisioned transforming Austria into a federal state founded on national, not 'historical,' individualities. Essentially, he proposed creating fifteen autonomous territorial units of a federal parliament, a common army, customs union, and so forth. Furthermore, each territorial unit—headed by a governor appointed by the emperor—was supposed to coincide with national and linguistic boundaries and have its own official language, although German would be the Empire's official language, spoken by everybody. In other words, given that each nationality had its own aspirations (which many times did not coincide with those of other nationalities), Popovici proposed renouncing the invocation of history, abolishing Dualism, and creating Greater Austria based on the dynastic principle, military force, and national federalism.[61] As a result, the peoples of the Empire would remain attached to Austria due to the existence of a community of interests. In addition, Popovici's solution thus called into question the domination of Hungarians over the other nationalities in Transylvania.

Popovici's ethnic federalism, namely his federation of nations founded on national autonomy, was in opposition with the historical federalism supported by the Austro-Marxists Karl Renner and Otto Bauer and founded on 'personal autonomy' within the Empire. This meant that the nationalities were organized not based on territorial principles, but as an 'association' between individuals.[62] In other words, the Empire had to be preserved but by means of its transformation from a hegemonic structure of national and social submission into a federation of national and cultural groups. In this federation, the various ethnic groups were not subordinated to one another, but

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58  Maiorescu, 1915, pp. 9, 138.
59  Popovici, 2010, p. 313 [Chapter IV. *Federalism and the decline of the empires*].
60  Malfér, 2010, pp. 95–120.
61  Popovici, 1997, pp. 21–22.
62  Renner, 1906; Bauer, 1907.

coexisted within a pluralistic structure. Popovici's book thus 'contributed decisively' to neo-conservative theory.[63]

From another perspective, the United States of Austria was situated somewhere between Russian federalism and the German Confederation. Thus, the Austro-Hungarian Empire's federalism would have guaranteed the conservation of all its nationalities, from the Germans, Austrians, Hungarians, Czechs, Romanians, and Slovaks to Ruthenians, Saxons, and Szeklers. However, Popovici showed little interest in the small ethnic enclaves, such as the Szeklers, Saxons, Swabians, and so forth, as they were, in his opinion, meant to disappear with the development of big industry.

We will not make any critical observations on Popovici's conception of federalism at this point, given that he was not alone in the Empire in thinking this way. However, the models he invoked (The United States of America and Switzerland) had no relevance to his proposal, as both these federal states were political rather than national constructs. In contrast, although Popovici displays in his book a certain degree of verbal aggressiveness, prolixly supporting the firm authority of the state, but not decentralization, he demonstrates a firm grasp on the concepts of *Bundestaat* (federal state) and *Staatenbund* (confederation of states), considering the former the best option.

There have been several unsupported claims that the Austrian Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand was enthused by Popovici's project. It is true, however, that the prince had been a staunch supporter of the Empire's federal reorganization long before Popovici's book was published. Let us not forget that, as early as 1849, the Czech František Palacký had drawn up a federative program that attributed a major redemptive role to Austria. However, while Palacký perceived the Empire from the perspective of ethno-cultural groups as a state that respected national individualities, including citizens' rights, Franz Ferdinand envisaged a construction mainly founded on administrative criteria. It meant a sort of disintegration of the colossus that would have diminished civic participation in decision-making, even though it seemingly allowed for wide local autonomies. Another reason the Archduke supported this was because he hoped for a future mixture of nationalities and their ultimate assimilation, namely Germanization.[64] Popovici's project, on the other hand, aimed to protect Romanians against Magyarization, but not so that they could be Germanized.

There were too many who deluded themselves by attributing to Franz Ferdinand the title of great reformer of the Empire,[65] but he let everyone believe this. It was rather his alleged anti-Hungarian attitude that enthused Romanians and the Slavic nationalities, letting them all believe that he had in mind a federal Austria, that is, a 'Greater Austria,' and that he even shared the trialist, federal-trialist, or trialist-federal ideas. In fact, the Archduke was not anti-Hungarian, but wanted greater

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63  Nemoianu, 1989, pp. 31–42.
64  Skowronek, 2017.
65  See Bled, 2013.

equality among the nationalities of the Empire. Besides, he never embraced any of the projects aiming to reform the Monarchy, including Popovici's.

In addition, there have been claims that Popovici was 'close' to Franz Ferdinand, being a member of the so-called 'Belvedere Circle.' In fact, Popovici never joined this organization in which Romanians were noticeably underrepresented. Nonetheless, his book caught the attention of some who were in the Archduke's inner circle. Alexandru Vaida-Voevod was the first Romanian co-opted to the 'Belvedere Circle'—a sort of political cabinet of the Archduke.[66] He was later joined by five other compatriots. In any case, Romanians formed the smallest group of collaborators—which included, among others, the hierarchs Miron Cristea, Augustin Bunea, and Demetriu Radu, the Greek-Catholic Bishop of Oradea—compared to the other nationalities, such as the Poles, Hungarians, Croats, Serbs, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Albanians, and so forth, who were represented by prominent figures like Ottokar Czernin, Milan Hodza, Conrad von Hötzendorf, and József Kristóffy, as well as some minor ones.

In this context and given that all the various testimonies are second hand, Popovici's so-called 'audiences' with Franz Ferdinand are debatable. However, we know that in late February 1906, soon after his book was published, Popovici met with Vaida-Voevod and Teodor Mihali in Vienna where they were received in audience by Maximilian Beck, who at that time acted as the legal adviser of Franz Ferdinand and later as Prime Minister of Austria. After expounding upon the federalist project, they asked Beck to present it to the Archduke.[67] It appears that he was first received in audience by the Archduke in Vienna in February 1907.[68] The second audience—which included other proponents of the federalist idea, such as Vaida-Voevod, Iuliu Maniu, and others—occurred during the Archduke's visit to Sinaia in the summer of 1909[69] and caused an uproar in the Hungarian press.[70] A third and final audience, which included Vaida-Voevod and during which they discussed a potential Romanian-Hungarian 'reconciliation' proposed by Count Tisza,[71] took place on February 16, 1914. In the autumn of the same year, while in Vienna, Popovici allegedly told Bernfeld-Burnea that he was 'totally opposed to Romania's entry into Transylvania.'[72]

Without bringing any major theoretical contribution to the concept of federalism, Popovici's construct was supported by several Transylvanian Romanian political leaders such as I. Maniu, Al. Vaida-Voevod, and Vasile Goldiş—who would play major political roles in interwar Romania—as well as by hierarchs such as Teodor Mihali, Aug. Bunea, M. Cristea, and D. Radu.[73] Furthermore, a small group of federalist Transylvanian Romanians living in Vienna, among them Sterie Ciurcu and Lazăr Popovici,

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66  See Williamson Jr., 1974, pp. 417–434.
67  Maior, 1993, pp. 95–97.
68  Crişan, 2008, p. 223.
69  Mândruţ, 1994, p. 297.
70  Crişan, 2008, pp. 224–225.
71  Vaida-Voevod, 1995–1996, pp. 307–316.
72  Marghiloman, 1927, p. 353.
73  Mândruţ, 1994, p. 296.

also supported Popovici's thesis. The significance of the latter's endeavor resides in the context in which he wrote his book, that is, against the backdrop of the deepening political crisis between Vienna and Budapest, when even dualism was challenged, and of the intensification of Magyarization in Hungary, which prompted Romanian leaders in Transylvania to increase their activism. Consequently, the Romanian National Party almost doubled its representation in the Budapest Parliament from 8 seats in 1905 to 15 in 1906.

Vaida-Voevod, one of the most active deputies in the Budapest Parliament, publicly supported Popovici's federalist project, and both distinguished themselves by their virulent anti-Semitism. Therefore, it is not surprising that Vaida-Voevod supported Karl Lueger, president of the Austrian Social-Christian Party and participated in the latter's campaign for the mayor's office in Vienna. In this context, it should be noted that Popovici's book aroused great interest in Leuger's party, which, shortly after its congress in September 1905, proclaimed the necessity of federalization.[74] Therefore, given the way he elaborated his project and that his book was well received, especially in the social-Christian press, the *Wiener Reichspost*, Popovici 'became the theoretician of right-wing federalists.'[75]

Furthermore, Vaida-Voevod mentioned Popovici's federalist formula in many of the articles that he published in Austrian newspapers and magazines as well as in the Romanian paper *Lupta* [*The Struggle*], promoting and defending it whenever necessary. At the same time, he endeavored to gain the support of Franz Ferdinand, attributing acceptance of federalism to him. There were actually quite a few people in the Archduke's entourage, especially social-Christians, who defended Popovici's theses.

For instance, in December 1911, two other members of the 'Belvedere Circle,' the Romanian Iuliu Maniu and the Slovak Milan Hodža, submitted a memorandum to Archduke Franz Ferdinand. In the memorandum, they emphasized the need to transform the Monarchy into a great and inclusive area integrated from an economic and political perspective, thus going beyond the dualist structure. From their perspective, this was the only option under which the Empire would remain among the great powers.[76] Hodža, who was a moderate, would later promote the federal organization of Central Europe in a book he published in 1942, which discusses this issue from a historical and political perspective.[77]

In contrast, there were only a few mentions and short presentations of Popovici's book in Transylvania. The poet and politician Octavian Goga, for instance, took an anti-federalist stance, and V. Goldiş broke with Popovici's federalist theories in early 1907. In Romania, although the book's publication was financed by D. A. Sturdza's[78] government, few intellectuals and politicians showed any enthusiasm for it. The liberal politician Ion I. C. Brătianu, who had a somewhat cautious attitude, was

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74 Geehr, 1993.
75 Graur, 1935, p. 221.
76 Leoncini, 2007, p. 27.
77 Hodža, 1942. See also Mûdry-Šebik, 1968, pp. 1547–1554; Hiroshi, 2012, pp. 35–51.
78 Graur, 1935, p. 222.

not fully opposed to it, while the conservative Take Ionescu voiced his skepticism regarding resolution of the crisis that affected the Austro-Hungarian Empire, being convinced that someday it would disintegrate.

Although upon first reading, Constantin Stere appears to dismiss Popovici's book, which shows such great concern for 'our old Habsburg empire' where everybody is displeased and each 'nationality' formulates its own reform program without consideration for the others,[79] upon closer reading we notice that he takes the critique of this book—which a Viennese gazette called 'das grundlegende Werk' (fundamental work)—very seriously, describing it as 'loyal and moderate.'[80] The ideologue of 'Poporanism' (Populism) also believed that the Empire had to be reorganized to survive and become 'a centre for the crystallisation of the cultural and political life of all peoples living in the Danube Valley and the Balkans.' However, Stere disagreed with Popovici's opinion that the Empire was 'indispensable to Europe's life and healthy political evolution' because he—like Popovici—asked himself: 'Would a federal Austria be more viable if Russia became a constitutional state that would grant wide autonomy to its various nationalities?'[81]

Petru P. Carp and Titu Maiorescu expressed a favorable opinion of the overall approach of Popovici's book, as did Barbu Ştefănescu-Delavrancea and especially Nicolae Filipescu and Alexandru Marghiloman, together with their political partisans. The latter noted in his political journal that Filipescu agreed with Maiorescu's older project 'which dreamed of a Romania under the Crown of Austria.'[82] Additionally, Ottokar Czernin attributed a variant of trialism to Filipescu that envisioned Romania's union with Transylvania and, together with Austria, establishing a state that mirrored the relationship between Bavaria and the German Empire.[83] Not least, King Carol I of Romania also appreciated Popovici's book and used it to have a firmer grasp on the situation in Transylvania, especially on the relationships among Romanian politicians there.[84]

### 3. Popovici's legacy and the post-world war years

However, following the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, the federalism imagined by A. C. Popovici became obsolete. It was only within the political context of the late 1930s that his book seemed to regain its topicality, especially through the valorization of his nationalistic vision and, obviously, through the rediscovery of his 'project' on the United States of Austria. In addition, considering that the 1930s were marked by strong

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79  In *Viața Românească*, I, 1/1906, p. 171.
80  Ibid. no.2, p. 325.
81  Ibidem, p. 324.
82  Marghiloman, 1927, *Note politice, 1897–1924,* vol. I (1897–1915), p.87 (entry of November 22, 1911).
83  See Filipescu, 1925; Graur, 1935, p. 244.
84  Marghiloman, 1927, *Note politice, 1897–1924,* vol. I (1897–1915), p. 89.

anti-Semitism, there was also a reactivation of his aggressive anti-Semitic discourse, which he promoted during his exile in Romania, and which extolled the virtues of Christianity, mainly those of Orthodoxy.[85]

In Bukovina, Romanian activists generally held federalist or autonomist views. The federalist camp was headed by Alexandru Petrino and included other prominent figures such as Gheorghe Hurmuzachi, Ioan Mustață, and Gheorghe Flondor. For a short while, between April and December 1872, there was also a Society of National Autonomists (Societatea Autonomiștilor Naționali). Its mouthpiece was the paper *Der Patriot*, and its doctrine was known as the *Bukowinerthum* (Bukovinian Doctrine), which promoted establishing closer ties with Vienna.[86] Subsequently, from 1902 to 1903, first in Vienna and Brünn, and then in Chernivtsi, Aurel Onciul printed the gazette *Privitorul* [*The Observer*], which promoted, among other things, unifying Romania with Austria.[87]

In Bukovina, George Grigorovici—as leader of the Romanian Social Democratic Party in Austria and a twice-elected deputy in the Vienna Parliament (1907 and 1911)[88]—also presented a project to transform the dual Monarchy into a federal state based on the nationality principle rather than nationalism, which he rejected. Furthermore, Grigorovici also had in mind creating a Greater Romania, but from a federalist perspective.[89] Therefore, it is not a surprise that, in 1923 during the debates on Romania's Constitution, he submitted a project for the federal organization of the new state established shortly after the Great War.[90]

Although he never proposed a project for integration into or the (re)organization of Central Europe, we should also mention Eugen Ehrlich due to his complex and detailed analysis of the downfall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Together with Émile Durkheim and Max Weber, Ehrlich is considered one of the founders of the sociology of law. His book oeuvre—especially his book *Grundlegung der Soziologie des Rechts* (Leipzig, 1913)—is highly valued.[91] Born into a Jewish family in Chernivtsi in 1862, Ehrlich was invited to teach at the University of Vienna as a visiting professor; beginning in 1900, he became a tenured Professor at the University of Chernivtsi, where he also acted as a university Rector from 1906 to 1907. He was one of the most prominent representatives of the Austrian Free Law School. One of Ehrlich's most celebrated disciples was the 'spontaneist' Friedrich von Hayek, who was openly hostile to Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud; Hayek received the Nobel Prize in Economic Science in 1974 and promoted the concept of 'open society.'

After the union of Bukovina with Romania in 1918, Ehrlich wanted very much to stay at the now-Romanian university in Chernivtsi. To this end, he contacted not

85  See, for instance, Nandriș, 1937, p. 38.
86  Olaru, 2002.
87  See Iorga, 1922, p. 156.
88  Rusșindilar, 1998.
89  Brătuleanu, 2012, pp. 435–447.
90  Ciorănescu and Penelea-Filitti, 1996, pp. 65–69.
91  For further details, see Rehbinder, 1986.

only the Ministry of Education in Bucharest but also several prominent members of the Romanian academic milieu, especially N. Iorga and Dimitrie Gusti. The latter published several articles by Ehrlich in his journal *Arhiva pentru știință și reformă socială* [*The Archive for Science and Social Reform*]. One of the articles, *Sfârșitul unei mari împărății* [*The End of a Great Empire*],[92] deserves special mention due to its thorough analysis of the downfall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Without going into detail, Ehrlich perceived dualism as 'an unfortunate construct' and argued that the history of Austria is 'to a certain degree, the history of missed opportunities.' He further claimed that Austria's failure stemmed from an absolutism tempered by indifference: an empire suffocated by highly experienced, slow, and venal bureaucrats, more accurately depicted by Kafka than by Karl Kraus.[93] It is not fortuitous that Ehrlich rediscovered the dichotomy *Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaf* in an empire where many thinkers reflected on its reorganization, but with no redeeming results. Finally, Ehrlich reproached Hungary for maintaining a certain degree of cultural and linguistic isolation within the Dual Monarchy, that is, for her famous *délibáb*, which had not only literary but also political connotations. Regarding the latter connotations, William M. Johnston argued that 'readiness to see the world through rose-colored glasses induced Magyars to exaggerate their grandeur, while they ignored the misery of subject peoples.'[94]

Regarding the subject of this chapter—ideas of integration into a powerful Central European state—we should also mention Constantin Dumba's contribution. Born into an Aromanian family, Dumba was a great landowner in Romania and had an outstanding diplomatic career in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.[95] As a staunch supporter of Transylvanian Romanians, he was opposed to the trialist project drawn up by the Marxist theoretician Karl Kautsky in 1917.[96] The latter argued that, apart from the union between Austria and Hungary, a third state made up of Dalmatia, Bosnia, parts of Serbian-inhabited southern Hungary, and Croatia should be created within this federation. Dumba, who had been Ambassador to the Kingdom of Serbia between 1903 and 1905, argued that the constant state of conflict between Serbs and Hungarians would only weaken the Empire. In his view, the reorganization of the state should be carried out in such a way that it would temper the xenophobia of the various nationalities across the Empire, whose national movements demanded its disintegration and the creation of nation-states on its ruins. His opinions were also considered because he was the nephew of Nicolae Dumba, a very wealthy individual who lived in Vienna, and a friend of Emperor Franz Josef.

Relevant among the Central European integration projects is also the idea of a Balkan Federation; this circulated with greater intensity in the years leading up to the Great War and stemmed from the new political reality created in the region by

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92  Ehrlich, 1921, pp. 80–124.
93  See Le Rider, 2018.
94  Johnston, 1983, p. 347.
95  Dumba, 1932.
96  Kautsky, 1917.

Austria's annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the autumn of 1908.[97] This idea was actually older and closely connected with the aspirations for independence of the most important ethno-cultural groups living in the Ottoman Empire. However, it became topical again in the second half of 1908, also fueled by the Young Turk Revolution. This movement gave hope for the creation of a Balkan Federation that would also include a constitutional Turkey.

In this context, Cristian Rakovski, a left-wing ideologue Romanian citizen and a supporter of the Young Turk Revolution, promoted the idea of a Balkan Confederation that would include Turkey, Romania, Greece, Serbia, and Montenegro. Since it concerned areas that were ethnically not clearly delineated, Rakovski hoped that the peoples' nationalisms, which stemmed from their struggle for independence from the Turks, would relieve the obstacles. Although Bosnia-Herzegovina's annexation by the Austro-Hungarian Empire in October 1908 considerably diminished the enthusiasm, the idea would resurface on several occasions. For instance, in the summer of 1915, at a conference held in Bucharest, Rakovski insisted on the idea of a federation, maintaining that such an organizational form would serve as a guarantee against Russian expansionism and as a vehicle for the independent development and progress of Balkan countries.[98] Furthermore, his idea would be re-discussed on the eve of the Second World War when, following the 1938 *Anschluss*, it appeared logical that Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece, Albania, Turkey, and Romania 'create a Balkan Confederation with its capital city in Bucharest.'[99]

## 4. Conclusions

In conclusion, we find it challenging to define the term integration,[100] which we have only discussed as forming a new political and state system. We consider it only in that this political dimension could also suggest additional topics for analysis that have been unfortunately neglected by historiography. Furthermore, the few Romanian intellectuals who reflected on this issue kept bringing it into discussions of the link between integration and the dissolution of national authority in the Central European region, how traditional government structures could be replaced with new types of institutions and new forms of authority, and so forth.

We note, however, that the Great War put an end to the idea of Central European integration centered around Vienna through the disintegration of a construct that for centuries seemed to confer stability on the region and the creation of a 'Europe of nationalities' represented by the so-called 'nation-states' (although the victorious powers ultimately ignored the geographic distribution of East-European populations).

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97  See Perivolaropoulou, 1994, pp. 29–35.
98  Damianova, 1989, pp. 27–31.
99  Grofșorean, 1938, p. 76.
100  See Rosamond, 2000, pp. 12–14.

In fact, as became obvious two decades later, this planted the seeds of another world conflagration. Furthermore, as a paradox, the Second World War generated the firm project of European unification that succeeded the projects of Central European integration and aimed to ensure peace and block and eradicate any pretext for war.[101] The way the Treaty of Versailles attempted to solve Europe's problems, especially those of Central Europe, contributed to exacerbating interwar nationalisms, which ultimately led to the most tragic consequence of World War II: the Holocaust. These extreme nationalisms were quite different from the 19th century 'nationalisms' in that they incited racial hatred and caused the unimaginable horrors of the conflagration.

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101  Schwok, 2016.

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