

## Romanian Theorists of Central European Integration

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### ABSTRACT

In the following chapter, we examine the map of intellectuals who attempted to solve the issues faced by their society by creating a theoretical framework for the political transformation of their country and region. By the second half on the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it had become clear that the Empire needed political and administrative reforms as well as a new approach toward the representation of minorities and different regions. Many young Transylvanian people undertook legal studies after 1849 as a reaction to the increasingly liberal attitudes of the provincial elite. In fact, among the most sought-after professions in the era were those of lawyers and notaries, a clear indication of a modernising society. In addition, attending an ‘academy’ or a law school constituted a somewhat convenient path that did not require a specific intellectual vocation but necessitated a university degree, which brought with it a social status and opened prospects for advancement. Moreover, these graduates were increasingly in demand to defend new types of interests, from the legal and economic affairs of various state or private institutions to those of individuals. Alexandru Petrino, Aurel C. Popovici, Ion Maiorescu, Constantin Isopescu-Grecul, and Nicolae Densusianu became pivotal figures in the debate and intellectual efforts related to the issue of federalisation or the reorganisation of the Empire and the distribution of political power based on a more equal principle. This fight was one of the most important movements of Romanian intellectuals and political leaders at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### KEYWORDS

reform, federalisation, Habsburg Empire, Austro-Hungary, rights, Maiorescu, Popovici, Isopescu-Grecul, Densusianu, Petrino.

## Introduction

As early as the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Romanians began to acknowledge that their association with the East through their relationship of dependency on the Ottoman Empire hindered their access to the benefits of modernisation. Like other peoples of Central and Eastern Europe, they had also discovered additional virtues of the State after contemplating the effects of Napoleon’s troops and the French and American Revolutions on this part of the continent. Additionally, some elements of

Nastasă-Kovács, L. (2023) ‘Romanian Theorists of Central European Integration’ in Gedeon, M. (ed.) *Great Theorists of Central European Integration*. Miskolc-Budapest: Central European Academic Publishing. pp. 131–174. [https://doi.org/10.54171/2023.mg.gtocei\\_4](https://doi.org/10.54171/2023.mg.gtocei_4)

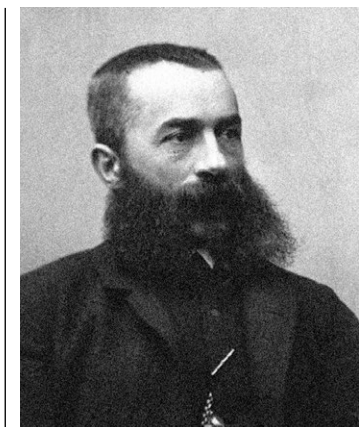
progress, imported through other channels, appeared in this area as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

From a comparative perspective of the East and the West, Romanians wanted to be culturally and ideologically attached to the latter via the indispensable link represented by Central Europe. Thus, it is not surprising that Romanian society's evolution toward modernity was associated with several political and state models that would ensure security, self-assertion, and economic and social progress. In this context, the idea of confederation or dynastic union agitated the spirits of Romanians.

The issue of integration into Central Europe had been discussed before 1867, though not in a systematised form or in conformity with the modern principles of the state like in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Compromise provided Romanian intellectuals with ideological support for designing and redesigning formulas of integration into a geographically defined political and state structure, but this took place 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 aspects that could even jeopardise stability. Furthermore, different visions on federalism circulated, some imagining it as a constitutional construct in which authority was distributed between two or more layers of government, while others as a political system in which power was divided between the centre and regions.

It should also be mentioned that 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. In the years leading up to the Great War, they were rather more interested in the idea of a Balkan Federation. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> 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 of the region's thinkers. This period witnessed a growing number of projects on this subject. Among the Romanians proposing reform models on integration into Central Europe were Ion Măiorescu, Nicolae Densuşianu, Alexandru Petrinu, Aurel C. Popovici, and C. Isopescu-Grecul.

## 1. Alexandru Petrino (1824–1899)<sup>1</sup>



A descendant of one of the wealthiest families in Bukovina, Alexandru Petrino was born on 18 May 1824 in Văscăuți/Wasskoutz, a town situated between Chernivtsi and Vijnita (today in Ukraine), on the border with Galicia (Eastern Europe). His father, Apostolo Ioan Petrino, was of Macedonian-Romanian origin and had first settled in Iași with one of his brothers. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, he moved to Bukovina, where he was granted Austrian citizenship in 1809, gradually acquiring numerous land properties. In fact, due to his attachment to Vienna and the wealth he had acquired, Apostolo Petrini was ennobled in 1836, receiving the

rank of Baron of the Habsburg Empire, while during the time he was in Moldova he had received the rank of ‘spătar’, which held military responsibilities.

His son from his second marriage (with Angelica), Alexandru, attended the gymnasium and ‘Philosophy’ courses in Chernivtsi, followed by studies at the Faculty of Law in Vienna, which he abandoned after his father’s death (on 28 December 1836) to take over the family’s business. Not long after, it seems that Alexandru Petrino moved to Paris to complete his legal studies, only returning to Bukovina in 1847. He showed great skill in managing his landed properties, becoming one of the richest landowners in Bukovina and carrying out important activities for the cultural, religious, and economic support of the region. At the same time, alongside his brother Petru, he inherited several landed properties in Bessarabia, as well as real estate in Vienna. Incidentally, Alexandru’s brother was the father of one of the poets who was appreciated in the salons of Chernivtsi in the 1860s, and later also in Iași.

After the promulgation of the 1860 October Diploma by Emperor Franz Joseph, which was a kind of Constitution that put an end to neo-absolutism in the Habsburg Empire, Alexandru Petrino shared the reform projects initiated in this document. The author of the document, Agenor Gołuchowski (who was originally from Galicia), was also Minister of the Interior and continued the ideas of the Czech František Palacky, supporter of federalist principles in the form of Austro-Slavism. Such support from Petrino was natural, as Gołuchowski’s measures aimed – among

1 Alexandru Petrino, Romanian politician, Czihak, A.F. in: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Inventarnummer Pf 100.469:C(1), public domain, source of the picture: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Alexander\\_von\\_Petrino#/media/File:Alexander\\_von\\_Petrino\\_\(1824%E2%80%931899\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Alexander_von_Petrino#/media/File:Alexander_von_Petrino_(1824%E2%80%931899).jpg).

other things – at obtaining support for the Monarchy from the local aristocracy, especially in the eastern regions of the Empire. The actions had as a programme the concept of federalism, but based on large national territories that could oppose centralism.

However, while Transylvania was gaining a wide autonomy due to the end of the military regime established after the defeat of the 1848 Revolution, the Diploma stipulated that Bukovina would be included in Galicia, which displeased some of the Bukovinian political activists. The reason was that the Slavs were becoming the majority, thus ending the status of the province which, by the Constitution of 4 March 1849 had become a hereditary province of the imperial crown, with the status of duchy, separated from Galicia.

In this context, Alexandru Petrino was thus familiar with the ideas contained in the 1860 October Diploma, while his noble rank meant that as early as April 1860, he became a member of the enlarged Imperial Council (*Verstärkte Reichsrat*) in Vienna – a consultative body during the transition to the constitutional regime the spiritus rector of which was Agenor Gołuchowski, who was also a confidant and adviser of Emperor Franz Joseph. The Romanian bishop Andrei Șaguna was co-opted to represent the Romanians from Transylvania and Andrei Mocioni to represent those from Banat and Crișana in this council. From this position, Petrino strongly expressed himself in favour of reforming the Empire on federalist principles, then actively involved himself in the political life of Austria, all the more so since the emperor had to make concessions to the old conservative nobility through the Patent of 26 February 1861, a document with constitutional value, drafted by Anton von Schmerling, Gołuchowski's successor at the Ministry of the Interior.

Based on the mentioned document, the Monarchy was reorganised on a federal basis, with the provinces now having Diets (*Landtag*), genuine local parliaments, with the right to enact laws. In this context, Bukovina became an autonomous province of the Imperial Crown, with its own flag and coat of arms, with a government and Diet that would operate in Chernivtsi, the latter being made up of thirty members, from which the emperor appointed a president, with the title of *Landeshauptmann* (Captain of the Land). At the same time, political parties were created in the region essentially as extensions of the political orientations of the Vienna parliament: the 'Federalist' group, which fought the Constitution of February 1861, advocating for the provisions of the Diploma of October 1860; and the 'Constitution' party, supporter of the February 1861 Patent, each of which contained quite a few orientations and factions.

In this context, in Bukovina, Alexandru Petrino was the leader of the 'Federalist' or 'Autonomist' movement. This group also included Gheorghe Hurmuzaki (brother of Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki, leader of the 'Centralist' group, attached to the Constitution Party in Vienna), Ioan Mustață, Gh. Flondor, Iacob Miculi, and Cristof Iakubovici, all of whom had noble titles. Another member was Samuil Morariu, who would become the metropolitan of Bukovina and Dalmatia in 1880

under the name of Silvestru Morariu Andrievici. Morariu was a fervent supporter of federalism and became a member of the upper chamber of the Austrian Parliament. The influence of the federalist leader was so great in Bukovina that his political group was also called 'Petrino's Party'. It was considered conservative and nationalist and therefore acting as a 'Romanian party' because its members were concerned with promoting the Romanian language, the Orthodox Church, Romanian schools, the placement of as many Romanian officials as possible in local public administrations.

In other words, Alexandru Petrino's political programme aimed to preserve the ethnic and cultural character of Bukovina within a federal Austria, with a broad provincial autonomy. For this reason, he maintained especially close ties with the Polish and Czech federalists. Being at the same time a member of the new Bukovina nobility, he supported the fastest and most efficient modernisation of the region's infrastructure (the Chernivtsi-Lemberg railway can be credited to his efforts), contributing to the legislation regarding the economic development of Bukovina, while at the same time speaking out firmly against the idea of a centralised empire, criticising some provisions of the Compromise of 1867, then getting involved in the debates regarding military service (being appointed rapporteur for this bill). He always supported these ideas in his capacity as a deputy in the local Diet, where he was elected several times, but especially in the Vienna Parliament, although its work was suspended between 1865 and 1867. In this context, many of his speeches in the Vienna legislative forum included genuine calls for an efficient organisation on a federative basis, especially targeting issues related to the administrative-bureaucratic side of the state, infrastructure projects, as well as the aspects of broadening the electoral base in the provinces of the empire.

If immediately after 1861, the 'federalists' had a majority in the legislative chamber of Bukovina, in the elections of February 1867, the ratio changed in favour of the 'constitutionalists'. In the 1870 elections, the 'federalists' again obtained a majority mainly due to Alexandru Petrino, who – in his capacity as the elected representative of Bukovina in the Vienna Parliament (elected in the Suceava constituency) – had managed to coalesce the Czech, Polish, Italian deputies (those from Trieste, Istria, and Gorizia), and Germans in the form of an opposition bloc to the government of Leopold Hasner von Artha, generating a current of opinion that was also favourable to the federalists in the provincial Diets. In this context, Petrino spoke against any 'special' deal in favour of any nation of the Empire, because in this way, the idea of reconciliation and a federalisation on equal grounds would disappear. As it goes without saying, these statements primarily concerned the Austro-Hungarian compromise of February 1867, resulting in the dual Monarchy in which the government in Pest was on an equal footing with that in Vienna. Petrino's success in creating a significant coalition in the Vienna parliament was also due to the fact that he was a good orator and had significant diplomatic tact in the relationship with his political partners. He received no lack of criticism, especially on the

topic of the concept of the nation. In fact, a part of the press ridiculed him on this topic, the 'Neue Freie Presse' even calling him a 'political condottiere' due to the uncertainty of his ethnic affiliation.

On 12 April 1870, Alfred Potocki became the head of the government, as well as the Minister of Defense. He was of Polish origin and he had previously held the portfolio of the Ministry of Agriculture (1867–1870). His great support of federalism had brought him very close to Alexandru Petrino. In fact, they were also friends, and in this context, Petrino was commissioned in May 1870 to take over the Ministry of Agriculture, thus becoming the only Romanian to reach such a high position within the Habsburg Empire. He did not remain the head of this department for long, the Czechs and Germans did not fully support the Potocki government, and Petrino's interest in the prosperity of Bukovina was not shared by the cabinet in Vienna, the central press unleashing a fierce press campaign against him (especially from the Viennese newspaper 'Neue Freie Presse'), which is why he was replaced in October 1870. Moreover, Alfred Potocki did not stay in power for long either. As his federalist project was not shared by the Czechs in the Viennese Parliament, he resigned on 6 February 1871.

Later, the appointment of Adolf Auersperg as the head of government in Vienna on 25 November 1871 led to the dissolution of the Diet in Bukovina (which was dominated by federalists), as well as those in Bohemia, Upper Austria, Kraina, Moravia, and Vorarlberg, also promulgating an important electoral reform. In these circumstances, Alexandru Petrino tried to revive his federalist group, establishing a Society of National Autonomists in April 1872, with a press organ, 'Der Patriot', a weekly newspaper, published in German, the official language of the state. The periodical was focused on political and economic information and in opposition to 'Czernowitzer Zeitung', which supported centralist tendencies. 'Der Patriot' existed only for a few months (April–December 1872), promoting the ideas of federalism in a period less favourable to it. We should mention here the remarkable contributions of I.G. Sbiera, Gheorghe, and Alexandru Hurmuzachi, the group of which Alexandru Petrino was the leader. Further, although the Society of National Autonomists was mostly made up of the large-land-owning elite, its political programme was moderate and was aimed at maintaining the autonomy of Bukovina and the Orthodox Church. It spoke out against the centralising tendencies of Vienna, supporting the extension of the right to vote on other social categories, ensuring public education, freedom of the press, and the material and spiritual progress of all nationalities in the empire.

In 1875, Alexandru Petrino gave up his political activism in the federalist group of the Parliament in Vienna, dealing only with the administration of his own affairs and the representation of his political group in the Diet of Bukovina until his death in 1899.<sup>2</sup>

2 See: Bălan, 1929b; Bălan, 1946; Turczynski, 1993; Ceaușu, 2000; Cocuz, 2003; Luceac, 2007; Ceaușu, 2010; Drahta, 2014; Ceaușu and Lihaciu, 2021; Höbelt, 2022.

## 2. Aurel C. Popovici (1863–1917)

Born on 4/16 October 1863 in Lugoj, a town in Banat that was brought under Hungarian authority by the act of 1867 after enjoying autonomy in direct relation to Vienna, Aurel C. Popovici was the son of a middle-class craftsman. He spent his childhood in a multicultural urban environment, speaking German, Romanian, and Hungarian. He went to primary school at a Romanian, Greek-Orthodox confessional school, and completed the first part of his high school studies at the local Hungarian-language high school. Although over time he developed a veritable cult for learning foreign languages (speaking at least six languages fluently by adulthood), he seemed to have struggled in the first two classes of Hungarian high school, opting to continue the next three years at the Romanian Gymnasium in Braşov in order to take the baccalaureate exams at the Greek-Catholic High School in Beiuş, in 1884.

Like other Romanians in Transylvania, Popovici became a student at the Faculty of Medicine in Vienna where he became involved in the ‘Young Romania’ (‘România Jună’) Society. He showed a special interest in politics and in 1886, he made his journalistic debut in several issues of the Oradea magazine ‘Familia’, dealing with *Forme și fond în cultură*<sup>3</sup> [*Forms and Content in Culture*]. Increasingly involved in the political struggles of the Romanians in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Popovici neglected his university studies, marrying the Austrian Maria Ana Polt from Vienna in 1888 in the Greek Orthodox rite.<sup>4</sup> Now with his own family, but also in the absence of school successes, Popovici headed to a provincial university in Graz, where the demands seemed to be lower, but even here he failed to keep up with his medical studies, which he would never complete.

In fact, many of the young Romanians studying in Vienna in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and until the First World War remained captive in their ethnic ‘community’ (organised in a student society, ‘România Jună’) and became adherents to nationalism, which prevented them from taking advantage of the fabulous intellectual atmosphere of the metropolis since the turn of the century.<sup>5</sup> While the Jews or the Czechs, for example, won enormously, even contributing to the Viennese cultural explosion, the Romanians stayed in their shell, grinding and preoccupied with small matters and without a cultural horizon, such as nationalism, absorbed in the background by ideology and politics, always fighting over this cause. Thus, even among themselves, the Romanians from Vienna and Budapest showed differences, political passion, clashes, and conflicts.

In this context, Popovici was strongly involved in the elaboration of all kinds of polemical documents regarding the national issue in the framework of disputes between Romanian and Hungarian students materialised through memoirs,

3 Popovici, 1886.

4 Crişan, 2008, pp. 25–26.

5 Schorske, 1980.

answers, and replies, especially during the year 1891. This was the period in which he frequently circulated between Graz, Vienna, and Budapest in order to organise the Romanian students in relation to the political direction of action concerning Hungarians. All kinds of solutions and concepts were circulated, of which Vicentiu Babeş's proposal to achieve a 'Romanian-Hungarian dualism' stirred spirits even more, especially since he was the leader of the Romanian National Party in Transylvania (1891–1892).<sup>6</sup>

In fact, apart from the radical nationalist Romanians, there were also others – such as C. Brediceanu, Vincentiu Babeş, Al. Mocioni – who advocated for a reconciliation of Hungarian and Romanian objectives even in the context of the *Ausgleich* achieved in 1867. That is, according to the latter, the solution of the Romanians had to be sought in Budapest, not in Vienna. In this context, Vincentiu Babeş wanted in December 1891 to name Popovici as an editor-in-chief of the periodical 'Luminătorul', but the intervention of several compatriots made him give up the idea. For example, Corneliu Diaconovici speaks in good terms about Popovici's culture, adding however that the publication should not be entrusted to someone who 'did his [education] in cafes', considering him a bit exalted and 'airy-fairy'. According to Diaconovici, Popovici could have brought trouble to the people from 'Luminătorul'.<sup>7</sup>

At the same time, between 5–8 October 1891, Popovici took part in a delegation of Romanians invited to Prague for an industrial exhibition. This moment was significant because many of the Czech intellectuals aspired either to the autonomy of the provinces of the Habsburg Empire or to rebirth as an independent state, like Hungary, in the formula of the 'Kingdom of Saint Wenceslaus'. This presented a good opportunity for Popovici to discuss with the representatives of the 'Czech youth' grouping formulas for the reorganisation of Central Europe, especially from the perspective of federalism.

Moreover, together with other young Romanians, Popovici had already engaged in drafting a *Reply* to a Hungarian students' memorandum. He was the coordinator of this document of just over 150 pages in which arguments were presented from a historical perspective for a judicious solution to the problem of nationalities, taking into account the idea of a liberal federation as an alternative to the Magyarisation policy.<sup>8</sup> In fact, federalisation was presented as a viable alternative to dualism, in opposition to earlier centralism, by individualising the nations of Austria-Hungary, and it was proposed that this process could begin with the eastern part of the empire. The reply was also translated into French, German, Italian and English in order to increase the impact of the Romanians' ideas and vision on the governments and public opinion in Western Europe. At the same time, Popovici also contributed

6 Cipăianu, 1980.

7 Polverejan and Cordoş, 1973, pp. 187–188.

8 The title of the document *Chestiunea română în Transilvania și Ungaria. Replica junimii academice române din Transilvania și Ungaria la „Răspunsul” dat de junimea academică maghiară ‘Memoriului’ studenților universitari din România*, first edition Sibiu, Institutul Tipografic, 1892, p. 152.; second edition in Bucharest, Tip. Carl Göbl, 1892, p. 155.



to the final version of the Memorandum elaborated under the auspices of the Romanian National Party in 1892 and intended for the emperor in Vienna, by which – in summary – he requested the annulment of the act of the Austro-Hungarian union, resorting to a reorganisation of the Habsburg Empire on federal principles.

Subsequently, as he was among the signatories of this document from 1892, but especially of the aforementioned *Reply*, Popovici and others were put on trial by the Hungarian authorities (held in Cluj, on 30 August 1893), in which the jurors found him guilty of several counts. He was sentenced to four years in prison. The following year, other members of the Romanian National Committee were also brought before the court in Cluj (between 25 April and 7 May 1894) in a trial that resulted in convictions for fourteen of the accused. Thus, the Memorandum created a significant fault not only between Romanians and Hungarians, but even among Romanians, because it was not the product of the majority. The signatories were not considered by all their compatriots to be representatives of their nation. Moreover, with few exceptions, some adherents to the document became famous only through their association with the Memorandum. This was also the reason the Romanian delegation in Vienna in May 1892 was not received by the emperor. The authorities, the press, and politicians there distanced themselves from the Romanians. Moreover, the Romanian deputies from Bucovina did not make any gesture of adhesion with the authors of the Memorandum.

This explains why, following the trial in the summer of 1893, Popovici left Transylvania in order to avoid prison in a kind of exile in Bucharest. A veritable colony of Romanian intellectuals from Transylvania had settled in the Romanian capital for a better financial situation but for some also as a place to continue their anti-Hungarian activism, as in the case of Eugen Brode, Ioan Slavici, and Popovici. Moreover, after only a few months, Popovici published two works of a mostly theoretical nature on the subject of nationality,<sup>9</sup> in which Hungary's federalisation project took an increasingly consistent shape, opposed to the pan-Magyarism that irritated all the ethno-cultural groups in the Carpathian Basin. In other words, in this formula, Budapest could become an important factor of order in Eastern Europe.

Thus, in the context of the political struggles even between the Romanians studying within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Popovici became a fervent follower and promoter of the Central European federalist ideology, but also of nationalism and anti-Semitism. Moreover, his texts from 1894, which invoked the direction of federalism, but only at the level of Hungary, also promoted nationalism as a political instrument.<sup>10</sup>

Although Popovici had settled in the Romanian capital, he continued to retain his Austro-Hungarian citizenship, working as a journalist in Bucharest and for a while as a substitute teacher at various schools there, and in 1900–1901 at the Romanian High School from Bitolia (Macedonia). Moreover, Popovici was also

9 Popovici, 1894a, pp. 45; idem, 1894b, p. 52.

10 Tănăsescu, 2017, pp. 439–461.

an acclaimed author of German-language textbooks (alone or in co-authorship), many of which were used until the 20s. At the same time, he remained attentive to what was happening in the Habsburg Empire, getting involved in the movement of Romanians not only from Transylvania, speaking out in the ‘crisis’ of the ‘Tribuna’ magazine (in the spring of 1896), on the Congress of Nationalities (from 10 August 1895, held in Budapest), participating in the project of the impressive *Enciclopedia română* [Romanian Encyclopedia] elaborated by Corneliu Diaconovici between 1895–1904, appearing in three volumes (on which Popovici collaborated with political texts, especially regarding federalism and nationalism), taking a stance towards the Millennium celebrations, conducting polemics on the national question, and speaking out against socialist and anarchist movements.

Although it was late compared to other ‘federalist’ contributions, Popovici’s 1906 project comes as if to put order in the various variants of reorganisation of the Habsburg Empire, at the same time ideologically systematising the previous contributions. On the other hand, his model of federal structure also had correspondences in other geographical spaces, such as the United States of America, Brazil and Mexico, so it seemed viable for this part of Europe as well. In this context, the work that would bring him fame at the time, *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Groß-Österreich*<sup>11</sup>, also follows the line already drawn by František Palacký – extensively quoted by Popovici –, who had spoken since 1848 for a Federal Austria on a national basis, with the equality of all ethnicities and confessions. Basically, federalisation was for the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the next the viable solution for Central Europe, all the more so since the *Ausgleich* had already marked the possibility of a confederal alliance<sup>12</sup>. Incidentally, in a speech held in Iasi on 13 October 1895, the Romanian Prime Minister D. A. Sturdza stated that ‘*the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, as it is constituted, is a necessity of the first order for the European balance, as well as for the safety of our kingdom*’.<sup>13</sup>

Through his work in this context, Popovici proposed the reorganisation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire based on the principle of nationality. At the time, he perceived nationality as the only criterion capable of organising state formations. Unlike other goals of this kind, such as ensuring peace and freedom of economic exchange, Popovici’s project aimed at affirming the Romanian nation from a political perspective within the Habsburg multinational empire. In fact, the Romanians – considering themselves obstructed from asserting themselves – primarily wanted to be freed from the Hungarian ‘oppressor’. In this way, Popovici strongly opposed ‘historical federalism’ (nobility), to which Franz Joseph had sought to return through the Diploma of 20 October 1860, which marked the end of neo-absolutism and the beginning of a constitutional government.<sup>14</sup> In fact, since 1860, another of

11 Popovici, 1906, p. 427. A good Romanian version appeared posthumously in Pandrea’s translation: 1997.

12 See Leoncini, 2007, pp. 23–31.

13 Apud Maiorescu, 1915, pp. 9, 138.

14 Malfér, 2010, pp. 95–120.

Popovici's compatriots, *Vincentiu Babeş*, had expressed himself firmly against federalism on the basis of the autonomy of the historical provinces, which had to be replaced by the criterion of autonomy on a national basis.

Popovici's project aimed to transform Austria into a federal state based on national rather than 'historical' individualities by establishing fifteen autonomous national territories (thus respecting ethnic borders), a federal parliament, a common army, and a customs unit. It is significant that in the configuration of the fifteen territorial formations, he proposed that national and linguistic requirements had to be respected, each having a governor appointed by the emperor, benefiting from a national legislation, with their own language. However, German would be the language of the empire and must be known by all. Thus, Popovici proposed giving up the invocation of history, the abrogation of dualism, the realisation of Greater Austria on the dynastic principle, military force, and national federalism.<sup>15</sup> In these circumstances, the peoples of the empire would remain attached to Austria due to a community of interests between them. This solution called into question Hungarian dominance over other peoples of Transleithania. In fact, the federal model Popovici proposed mainly aimed at diminishing the importance of Hungary in the context of the *Ausgleich*, and the failure of his project is perhaps less due to the assassination of Franz Ferdinand than to the Hungarians' influence in the Court of Vienna.

Popovici's ethnic federalism based on national autonomy was opposed to the historical federalism that the Austro-Marxists Karl Renner and Otto Bauer supported. The latter was based on 'personal autonomy' within the Empire; nations would organise themselves not on territorial principles, but as 'associations' between individuals.<sup>16</sup> In other words, the Empire was supposed to be preserved, but by transforming it from a hegemonic structure of national and social subjugation into a federation of national and cultural groups, in which the various ethnicities were not subjugated to one another, but coexisted in a pluralistic structure. In this way, Popovici made a 'decisive contribution' to neoconservative theory.<sup>17</sup>

From another perspective, the United States of Austria would also have been situated between Russian federalism and the German confederation. Under these circumstances, the federalism of the Habsburg Empire would have guaranteed the preservation of all the nations in this space, from the Germans, Austrians, Hungarians, Czechs, Romanians, and Slovaks to the Ruthenians, Saxons, and Szeklers. However, Popovici presented little concern with the disappearance of small ethnic enclaves (such as the Szeklers, the Saxons, or the Swabians) due to the development of large industry.

Critical observations of the manner in which Popovici conceived federalism are not presented here, and his conception was not unique within the Empire. However, the models he invoked (the United States of America and Switzerland) had nothing

15 Cf. Popovici, 1997, pp. 21–22.

16 Renner, 1906; Bauer, 1907.

17 Cf. Nemoianu, 1989, pp. 31–42.

to do with his proposal: both exemplified federal states that were political and not national constructions. Although Popovici used a certain verbal aggressiveness, supporting the firm authority of the state at the same time as decentralisation, he presented a good understanding of *Bundesstaat* (federal state) and *Staatenbund* (confederation of states), considering the former to be the best option.

Some have argued that the crown prince of the Habsburg Empire, Franz Ferdinand, might have been enthusiastic about Popovici's project, without having any direct testimony to this effect. It is true, however, that the prince seemed to be a convinced follower of the reorganisation of the Empire on federalist grounds, even long before the appearance of Popovici's work. We should not forget, however, that as early as 1849, the Czech František Palacký had formulated a federal programme that attributed Austria a saviour role. Still, while Palacký saw the Empire from the perspective of ethno-cultural groups as a state that respected national individualities, and therefore also citizens' rights, Franz Ferdinand wanted a construction based mainly on administrative criteria – a kind of extermination of the colossus that would have diminished civic participation in decision-making, even if it apparently preserved local autonomy. This is also because the archduke hoped that German would become the state language.<sup>18</sup> By contrast, Popovici wanted to protect Romanians against Magyarisation, but did not want to Germanise them.

Many attributed the great ideas of reforming the Empire to Franz Ferdinand.<sup>19</sup> Anti-Magyarism particularly excited the Romanian and Slavic populations, who hoped that the archduke would support a federal 'Greater Austria' and even share trialist, federalist-trialist, or trialist-federalist ideas. However, the archduke was not anti-Hungarian, but wanted to obtain a balanced resettlement of the Empire among all nationalities. In fact, he did not adopt any of the reform plans of the Monarchy, let alone that of Popovici.

Popovici was not part of the so-called 'Belvedere Circle', the members of which were close to Franz Ferdinand.<sup>20</sup> Although Romanians were poorly represented in the group, Popovici's book attracted the attention of those who gravitated around the archduke, such as Al Vaida-Voevod and five other Romanians. They formed the smallest group of collaborators (which included the hierarchs Miron Cristea and Augustin Bunea, as well as the united bishop from Oradea, Demetriu Radu) compared to other national presences (such as Poles, Hungarians, Croats, Serbs, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Albanians), with personalities like Ottokar Czernin, Milan Hodža, Conrad von Hötzendorf, and József Kristóffy and several other minor figures.

In this context, the so-called 'audiences' to which Popovici was received by Franz Ferdinand are questionable, as the various testimonies are indirect. However, we know that as soon as Popovici's volume was printed at the end of February 1906, he met in Vienna with Vaida-Voevod and Teodor Mihali, all of whom were received in

18 Skowronek, 2017.

19 See Bled, 2013.

20 See Williamson Jr., 1974, pp. 417–434.

audience by Maximilian Beck, at that time the archduke's legal adviser, and later even the prime minister of Austria, to whom they presented the federalist project, asking him to present it to Franz Ferdinand.<sup>21</sup> It seems that he was nevertheless received in audience by the archduke in February 1907, in Vienna, and then on the occasion of Franz Ferdinand's visit to Sinaia in the summer of 1909, together with followers of the federalist idea (Vaida-Voevod, Iuliu Maniu, and others)<sup>22</sup>, a meeting that generated a genuine press scandal in Hungary.<sup>23</sup> A last meeting with the archduke took place on 16 February 1914, when Popovici was received alongside Vaida-Voevod in relation to a possible Romanian-Hungarian 'reconciliation' proposed by Count István Tisza. In the autumn of that year, while he was in Vienna, Popovici had declared to Bernfeld Burnea that he was 'absolutely against the entry of Romania in Transylvania'.<sup>24</sup>

Without having made any important theoretical contributions to the idea of the federalist project, Popovici's project was supported by several Transylvanian Romanian political leaders, especially Iuliu Maniu, Al Vaida-Voevod, and Vasile Goldiș – personalities who in the interwar period played important political roles in Romania – as well as priests, such as Teodor Mihali, Augustin Bunea, Miron Cristea, and D. Radu.<sup>25</sup> Other Romanians who had settled in Vienna, such as Sterie Ciurcu and Lazăr Popovici, also supported Popovici's thesis, the Transylvanian federalist group being numerically reduced. The significance of Popovici's approach resides in the context of the elaboration of his book against the backdrop of the deepening political crisis between Vienna and Budapest, even putting dualism into question, while in Hungary the Magyarisation process took on new values. In this context, the Romanian political leaders from Transylvania gave the measure of a pronounced activism. Thus, following the elections of 1905 and 1906, the Romanian National Party had eight deputies, and respectively fifteen in the Budapest Parliament.

Moreover, it should be noted that like Popovici, Vaida-Voevod – one of the most active deputies in the Parliament of Budapest – showed an attachment to his countryman's federalist project, just as both asserted themselves as virulent anti-Semites, xenophobes, and racists. It is not by chance that Popovici's work aroused interest among the Christian Social Party and its president, Karl Lueger, who in mid-September 1905 had just proclaimed the need for federalisation.<sup>26</sup> Thus, Popovici '*became the theoretician of the right-wing Austrian federalists*'<sup>27</sup> and his work enjoyed a good reception in the capital of the empire, especially from social-Christian press outlets like 'Wiener Reichspost'.

21 Cf. Maior, 1993, pp. 95–97.

22 Mândruț, 1994, p. 297.

23 Crișan, 2008, pp. 224–225.

24 Marghiloman, 1927, p. 353.

25 Cf. Mândruț, 1994, p. 296; Crișan, 2008, pp.151–152.

26 Geehr, 1993.

27 Graur, 1935, p. 221.

In Transylvania, by contrast, the few references to Popovici's book are relatively dry and general. In fact, Octavian Goga expressed himself as a convinced anti-federalist, and Vasile Goldiș categorically distanced himself from Popovici's federalist theories in 1907. In Romania, although Popovici's work appeared with the financial support of the government led by D.A. Sturdza,<sup>28</sup> few members of the intellectual and political circles were enthusiastic about the work. I. I. C. Brătianu was not opposed to Popovici's book, though Take Ionescu showed scepticism regarding the solution to the crisis experienced by the Austro-Hungarian Empire and was convinced that it would fall apart anyway.

Although Constantin Stere initially seemed to take a somewhat ironic tone toward Popovici's work, characterising it as merely concerned with 'our old Habsburg empire' with which no one was satisfied,<sup>29</sup> upon a closer reading, he seriously discusses the book that a Viennese newspaper qualifies as 'Das grundlegende Werk' (fundamental work) and considers it 'loyal and moderate'.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the 'poporist' ideologue shared the idea of reorganising the Empire as a solution to its salvation, to become '*a center of crystallization of cultural and political life for all the peoples of the Danube valley and the Balkans*'.<sup>31</sup> However, Stere reproached Popovici for the idea that the Habsburg Empire is '*indispensable for the life and healthy political evolution of Europe*' because – like Popovici – he wonders if federal Austria would still be viable in the context in which Russia would become a constitutional state that would grant wide autonomy to various nationalities.<sup>32</sup>

P. P. Carp and Titu Maiorescu declared themselves in favour of the book, as did Barbu Ștefănescu-Delavrancea, N. Filipescu, and Al. Marghiloman, with their political partisans. The latter notes in his political diary underscore the fact that N. Filipescu shared the older project of Ion Maiorescu, '*who had dreamed of Romania under the Austrian sceptre*'.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, Ottokar Czernin attributed a variant of trialism to Filipescu, in which Romania would unite with Transylvania and form a new state with Austria in a structure similar to the relationship between Bavaria and the German Empire.<sup>34</sup> As goes without saying, King Carol I kindly appreciated Popovici's book, using it to understand the realities of Transylvania, especially the relations between the Romanian politicians there.<sup>35</sup>

After the publication of *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Groß-Österreich*, Popovici engaged in many editorial activities, especially in the magazine 'Sămănătorul', from which the historian Nicolae Iorga had made a tribune of nationalism. Later, many of these texts were collected in a volume with the suggestive title *Naționalism*

28 Cf. Ibid. p. 222.

29 Stere, 1906a, p. 171.

30 Stere, 1906b, p. 325.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid. p. 324.

33 Marghiloman, 1897–1915, p. 87 (note of 22 November 1911).

34 See Filipescu, 1914–1916, foreword by Cantacuzino, 1925; Cf. Graur, 1935, p. 244.

35 Marghiloman, 1897–1915, p. 89.

*sau democrație [Nationalism or democracy]*, published in 1910.<sup>36</sup> In fact, the book brought together almost everything that was most important from the author's political thought. This volume, which had the subtitle *O critică a civilizației moderne, [A critique of modern civilization]*, was designed with a second part dedicated to the national Renaissance, which was never completed or – according to some testimonies – merely lost.<sup>37</sup>

At the end of 1910 and throughout the following year, Popovici became involved in various polemics with his compatriots from Transylvania on the subject of the political orientation of the 'Tribuna' newspaper. His attacks especially targeted Octavian Goga, a sort of emblem of the young generation of Romanians from Hungary at that time.<sup>38</sup> During this period, he also made the decision to move to Vienna at the suggestion of his friend and disciple Vaida-Voevod, where he resumed his political activism, published press articles, and gave lectures. Moreover, in the autumn of 1913, he was among the founders of the 'Gross-Österreich' Society led by Schverer Waldheim, which promoted federalist ideas.

At the outbreak of the First World War, Popovici left for Switzerland and eventually settled in Geneva. As Romania remained neutral, he and Vaida-Voevod travelled to Berlin in an attempt to influence Germany's foreign policy in favour of the government in Bucharest. Romania's decision to enter the war on the side of the Entente then put Popovici in an ungrateful situation vis-à-vis Vienna and Berlin. Even under these circumstances, on the eve of the end of the First World War, Popovici sought to revive the idea of federalism, even proposing the solution of a coup to the emperor as a way to defeat the Hungarian opposition and to realise the oldest project of the United States of Great Austria. His work appeared posthumously,<sup>39</sup> since he died on 9 February 1917 in Geneva, where he was buried.

However, with the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Peace of Versailles, the federalism Popovici envisaged seemed obsolete. Only in the circumstances of the end of the interwar period does his work seem to be relevant, especially by capitalising on his nationalist vision and invoking his 'project' concerning the United States of Austria. Still, the 30s of the last century were marked by strong anti-Semitism, and Popovici's older speech – from the period when he had settled in Romania – was aggressively anti-Jewish, extolling the virtues of Christianity and Orthodoxy in particular.<sup>40</sup> In this context, over which the revisionism preceding the Second World War was superimposed, the first Romanian translation of his famous work from 1906, *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Groß-Österreich*, by Petre Pandrea,<sup>41</sup> was published.

36 Popovici, 1910.

37 Cf. Mehedinți, 1937, p. 5.

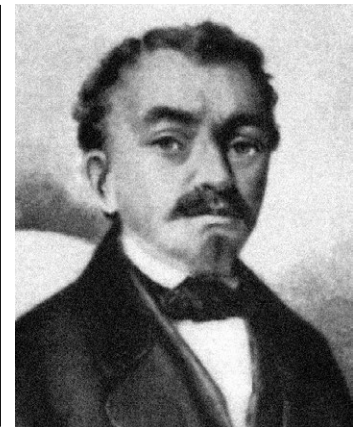
38 Popovici, 2006, p. 280.

39 Popovici, 1918, p. 244.

40 See, for instance Nandriș, 1937, p. 38.

41 Popovici, 1939, p. 328.

### 3. Ion Maiorescu (1811–1864)<sup>42</sup>



Representative of the second generation of activist scholars of the Transylvanian School (*Școala Ardeleană*) in Transylvania, Ion Maiorescu is a well-known figure in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Romanian historiography. He is particularly remembered for his activity as an organiser of national education.<sup>43</sup> He was a convinced pro-Austrian, which placed him in conflict with other Romanians, who took issue with his pan-Germanism. In addition, his figure was shadowed by that of his son, Titu Maiorescu,<sup>44</sup> one of the great spirits of modern Romania who became prime minister during the Second Balkan War and presided over the Bucharest Peace (1913). Ion Maiorescu

was deeply attached to German culture – its discipline and rigor, its conservatism, and the Bismarckian political system, which he considered to be the only model that would serve the interests of Romanian society, accusing the French model of too much superficiality and revolutionary spirit. This set him apart in a society that had been deeply attached to francophone culture since the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and whose intellectual elite had been predominantly formed in the Hexagon.<sup>45</sup>

Born in a village in Transylvania, in Bucurdea (German: Botschard, Bothard; Hungarian: Búzásbocsárd) at the beginning of 1811, Maiorescu's initial family name was Trifu. The son of a peasant, but with ancestry through his mother from another great representative of the Transylvanian Romanian Enlightenment, Petru Maior (1756–1821), Ion Trifu was destined for an ecclesiastical career. He followed his secondary studies in Blaj, which was the spiritual centre of the Greek-Catholicism of Transylvanian Romanians and went on to study at the Seminary in Pest, where he was ordained as a priest. With the support of Bishop Ioan Lemeny, he travelled to Vienna as a scholarship student, where he studied theology, history, and philology and was deeply influenced by his exposure to German Enlightenment.

He returned to Transylvania to an ecclesiastical and didactic career in line with his training. With the support of his protector Ioan Lemeny, who was a follower of

42 Ion Maiorescu, Romanian linguist, Constantin Lecca – Paul Rezeanu: Constantin Lecca, Editura Arcade, 2005, public domain, source of the picture: [https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ioan\\_Maiorescu#/media/F%C3%A1jl:Constantin\\_Lecca\\_-\\_Ioan\\_Maiorescu.jpg](https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ioan_Maiorescu#/media/F%C3%A1jl:Constantin_Lecca_-_Ioan_Maiorescu.jpg).

43 The only monograph, with the historical marks of the time of its publication belongs to Stoica, 1967, p. 163.

44 Ornea, 1997.

45 Cf. Nastasă, 2006. See also idem, 2007, pp. 275–288.



the Hungarian revolutionary movement. However, Maiorescu gave up the idea of dedicating his life to the priesthood in 1836. The young student who had recently returned from Vienna stayed in the house of his friend, Ioan Popasu, in Braşov over the summer, where he met and married Popasu's sister, Maria. It seems that the Popasu family was of Aromanian origin and had come to Braşov from Râmnicu Vâlcea, an old urban centre in Wallachia. Their denomination was Greek-Orthodox, and Ioan Popasu later became bishop of Caransebeş.

Ion Trifu settled in Wallachia in 1836 and changed his surname to Maiorescu, with direct reference to his maternal lineage through Petru Maior. He initially received a teaching position in Cerneţi (in Oltenia), which was the beginning of an important reforming teaching career.<sup>46</sup> Only fifteen years had passed since the revolutionary movement of Tudor Vladimirescu, which had put an end to the Phanariote era in which the few schools that existed were taught in Greek. The French language had been privileged from the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, especially at the level of the cultural-political elite.

However, the establishment of a network of national schools taught in Romanian was proposed starting in 1821, though timidly at first. It is not by chance that a Transylvanian – Gh. Lazăr – is considered the founder of education in the Romanian language. Since 1818, many Transylvanian scholars moved to Wallachia, spreading the trend of Latinism promoted by the Transylvanian School under the auspices of the Church United with Rome (Greek Catholicism). In this context, Maiorescu was appointed principal and inspector of the Central School in Craiova, an important urban centre of Oltenia, a region that had been under the administration of the Habsburg Empire (1718–1739) for almost two decades. Unfortunately, the teaching staff were mediocre, and Maiorescu did not hesitate to present this situation to his friend from Transylvania, George Bariţiu, who was teacher at a high school in Braşov and founder of 'Gazeta de Transilvania'. When Bariţiu published Maiorescu's letter from Craiova, the scandal was enormous.<sup>47</sup>

In this context, Maiorescu came into conflict with most of the Wallachian French-speaking 'education' establishment, such as Ion Heliade-Rădulescu. More unfortunate, though, was his conflict with Florian Aaron, a Transylvanian who had also settled in Wallachia initially as a teacher in Craiova and now at the 'Sfântu Sava' School in Bucharest. Aaron was one of the main promoters of the ideas of the Transylvanian School. Beyond his reproaches related to the poor training of the Wallachian teachers, Maiorescu tried to impose another model of education, advocating for the assimilation of the German language and culture in an environment in which French was dominant.<sup>48</sup> Thus, he provided his son Titu Maiorescu with a

46 Suci, 1927, pp. 251–252, 272–273, 313–315, 336–337.

47 For I. Maiorescu's activity and cultural environment in Craiova before 1848 see Florescu, 1992, pp. 7–48.

48 Stoica, 1965, pp. 79–90.

German education, which later had a serious impact on the evolution of Romanian society until the beginning of the First World War.<sup>49</sup>

Although this episode seems to have turned him into an outcast among his guildmates and in the city at large, the voivode Alexandru Ghica showed him much appreciation. However, Maiorescu's desire to reform the educational system was not to everyone's liking, so in 1842, he was removed from his position.

He then returned to Transylvania and his wife's relatives in Braşov for a short time until he moved to Moldova in the same year, where his contribution to the reorganisation of education had a greater impact.<sup>50</sup> In Moldova, he succeeded in preventing the introduction of the French language as the main vehicle of teaching in higher education. However, as a promoter and defender of the Latinity of the Romanian language, Maiorescu was accused of Catholic proselytising in Iaşi, in a country deeply dominated by Orthodoxy.

In the meantime, prince Gh. Bibescu, who appreciated Maiorescu's pedagogical and educational organising skills, arrived in Wallachia. Thus, he recalled the latter to his side, entrusting him with the direction of the gymnasium in Craiova, and in August 1843 he was even received by ruler Bibescu in Bucharest, who gave him all the confidence in terms of the organisation and development of education, especially from the position of school inspector for the whole of Oltenia. From now on, he develops a rich scholarly activity in the field of historiography and linguistics, his writings being dominated by Latinist excesses. However, enjoying the esteem of the ruler Gh. Bibescu, Maiorescu<sup>51</sup> will be granted a noble rank, namely that of 'serdar'<sup>52</sup>.

Also, during this period, a close friendship was formed between Maiorescu and Gh. Magheru, thus joining the group of revolutionaries from Wallachia. This is how Maiorescu will have an active presence at Islaz, on the occasion of the reading of the proclamation of 9/21 June 1848, a true programme of political and social reform of the country. Moreover, Gh. Bibescu's trust in Maiorescu being known, the latter was tasked to communicate the content of the Proclamation to the ruler, two days later recognising the provisional revolutionary government, so that the prince immediately abdicated and sought refuge in Braşov.

To support the cause of the Revolution, the Bucharest government decided to send three diplomatic agents abroad to plead with the French, German and Ottoman authorities. Thus, Ion Ghica went to Constantinople at the beginning of June, Maiorescu to Frankfurt am Main, and Nicolae Bălcescu had to go to Paris, accompanied by A. Ubcini, so that A.G. finally arrived in the capital of France. In

49 Nastasă, 1999.

50 Cristian, 1977, pp. 311-324.

51 Maiorescu had been received by him at the beginning of April 1848, Bibescu knowing about the revolutionary disturbances that were being prepared, but without taking measures to stop them. Cf. Bodea, 1982, p. 411.

52 Cf. Bibescu, 1894, p. 577 (on 24 October 1846).

fact, only the latter and Maiorescu were the only ones empowered by the government as plenipotentiary ministers.

In fact, Maiorescu had been accredited on 22 July 1848 with broad prerogatives to the government and the German Parliament in Frankfurt, the power of attorney specifying that he had the capacity of agent *'beside the honorable German Diet, being authorized to treat and make commitments in his name and the country's'*.<sup>53</sup>

Among the multiple actions of the provisional government in Bucharest, the danger of the defeat of the revolution requires actions of collaboration with the Habsburg Empire, in the context in which the invasion of Wallachia by the tsarist troops was increasingly foreshadowed, in order to restore the old political arrangements. That is why, before being accredited in Frankfurt am Main, Maiorescu is also considered the most suitable to get in touch with the Austrian authorities in Transylvania, but also with the compatriots there, but not in the context of any pan-Romanian action<sup>54</sup>. Maiorescu's intervention aimed primarily at a possible unit of action, as self-protection against counter-revolutionary actions.

Being in Sibiu since 10 July 1848, with a special authorisation from the provisional government in Bucharest, Maiorescu met with the presidium of the Austrian General Command in the locality, to probe the manner in which the authorities in Vienna would react in the event of a Russian invasion in Wallachia<sup>55</sup>. He could not be given an answer immediately, only about three days before receiving the letter of accreditation for Frankfurt (around 19 July), Maiorescu being informed by Alois von Pfersmann – the deputy of the general commander of Transylvania, Anton Puchner – about the answer coming from the capital of the Habsburg Empire, that it was not going to get involved militarily, but only to protest if its interests would be affected by the Russians in Wallachia<sup>56</sup>. Probably from now on – and together with A.G. Golescu, who had also been with Maiorescu in Sibiu for a while – the idea of a confederation of 'Austrian nations' crystallised, thus counterbalancing the Hungarians, portrayed day by day as 'enemies' of the Romanians, although there was no shortage of negotiations between the two peoples for a joint action against the Habsburgs<sup>57</sup>.

With this answer, Maiorescu heads for Braşov for a few days, to then go to Frankfurt am Main. Passing through Pest, he lingered here for four days, not without being the victim of an incident, reported by the Romanian Transylvanian press. Arriving in the Hungarian capital on 14 August 1848, it seems that Maiorescu was denounced to the police authorities by two compatriots (Emanuil Gojdu and I. Popovici) as a spy and the carrier of a secret correspondence for Vienna. In this context, he is detained and subjected to a search, but also to an interrogation in the presence of the Minister of the Interior, Szemere Bertalan, although he was not

53 Ion Maiorescu's accreditation letter in Brătianu, 1902, pp. 671–672.

54 Cf. Dragomir, 1946, p. 318.

55 Balog, Cosma and Varga, 2016, p. 345. See also Bănescu and Mihăilescu, 1912, pp. 166–168.

56 Balog, Cosma and Varga, 2016, p. 388.

57 Greffner, 1976, pp. 149–163.

arrested, based on the credentials for Frankfurt. Not only Maiorescu, but all Romanians in transit through Pest, went through such situations, for easy to understand reasons. In fact, nothing compromising was found on him, in fact, he even met with Kossuth Lajos, who asked him to intervene with the Romanian government to send an accredited diplomatic agent to Pest citing the need for close collaboration between Romanians and Hungarians. We also find the episode related in Szemere's correspondence:

Arresting him, I ordered his papers to be taken, but I found nothing suspicious in them. He presents Golescu as a fanatic, whom the Romanian government removed for that very reason. [...] Because he was sent by the Romanian government to Frankfurt and in order not to cause trouble between the two governments, when apart from the Romanians all our neighbors are our enemies, [...] he was finally allowed to leave<sup>58</sup>.

Not incidentally, after Maiorescu's meeting with Kossuth mediated by Szemere, the latter declared in the Parliament of Pest, on 26 August 1848, that the destiny of the two peoples was to ally in order to preserve their national being.<sup>59</sup> In fact, the future prime minister of Hungary, Szemere Bertalan, was one of the fiercest supporters of a Romanian-Hungarian alliance.<sup>60</sup> Negotiations in this direction continued even after the defeat of both revolutions, from Bucharest and Pest-Buda.

Once he was set free, a banquet was organised for Maiorescu on the eve of his departure for Frankfurt.<sup>61</sup> However, Maiorescu's blunder at Pest was full of significance: on the one hand, because the Hungarians, through their Minister of the Interior, would not allow those from Muntenia to agitate the Romanians from Transylvania; on the other hand, the finding that not being able to establish a common line of the revolution against the Austrians, the Romanians will think – mainly through Maiorescu – of another formula, by excluding the Hungarians and creating a kingdom with an Austrian prince and under the suzerainty of Germany, as will be seen below.

Arriving in Frankfurt am Main on 23 August 1848, he became the active promoter of a campaign to support Wallachia in the face of inherent Ottoman and Russian intervention. Moreover, on his way to Paris, Ștefan Golescu told his mother (from Frankfurt, on 27 October 1848) that 'by a happy accident' he had met his cousin, Alexandru G. Golescu and Maiorescu. He stated that they were '*filled with dignity and with their heads held high; a day will come when Romania will be grateful to them*'.<sup>62</sup> The reasons are easy to determine, and more details can be found in the memoirs of Ion Ghica, who was also a revolutionary who had been sent like

58 Deák, 1942, p. 190.

59 Cf. Tóth, 1966, p. 276.

60 See Szüts, 1941, p. 69.

61 Cf. Gazeta de Transilvania, 1848, nr. 73 from 6 September (st.v.).

62 Nestorescu-Bălcești, 1977–1978, p. 193.

Maiorescu to Constantinople in 1848. Later, he would be Prime Minister of Romania over several terms. In fact, Ghica reproduced several letters, reports, and memos addressed by A.G. Golescu and Maiorescu to the governments by which they were accredited.

The two memos addressed by Maiorescu to the ‘German ministry’ in Frankfurt am Main, mainly to Baron Heinrich von Gagern, the president of the National Assembly (Nationalversammlung), are obviously relevant to the present volume. The first was dated 17/29 September 1848 and presents a history of the Romanian Principalities in relation to Turkey, but especially to Russia, which wants to become from a ‘protecting power’ to a ‘dominating’ one. All of Europe knows that the latter wants territorial expansion, especially at the expense of the Ottoman Empire, reminding, however, that Germany also has interests in the Lower Danube. In this context, it would be desirable for the Romanian Principalities to have a ‘*state relationship with Austria under the prince of this house and under the protection of the German Empire*’, and ‘*the high central power [Vienna] [...] could easily find the way that unites German interests with those of the Principalities*’<sup>63</sup>. In fact, around the same time, František Palacký emphasised in a memorandum addressed to the Frankfurt Parliament that the state structure created by the Habsburgs would be ‘*indispensable to the security of Europe and humanity. Honestly, if the Austrian Empire had not existed, it would have had to be invented in the very interest of Europe, of humanity*’<sup>64</sup>.

The second memorandum addressed by Maiorescu to the German Ministry, dated 4/16 November 1848, addressed the issue of pan-Slavism, which was no longer a ‘chimera’ but was made possible through confederated states or an alliance of all Slavs. Developing this theme, the signatory of the document drew attention to the danger of pan-Slavism and offered a solution to remove this danger. Further, he reproached the Frankfurt Parliament for neglecting its interests in South-eastern Europe, just as Austria was inexplicably passive in matters in the region. In this context, Maiorescu showed the ‘High Minister’ from Frankfurt the means by which the east of Europe could become an area of interest for Germany, and for all the countries on the Danube. These arguments were valid: from the east of Prussia to the Black Sea there were two well-defined peoples – the Hungarians and the Romanians – who were separate from the Slavic peoples. In addition, there were strong German communities, especially in Transylvania. Even if there were temporary misunderstandings between Romanians and Hungarians, these two peoples would over time be an obstacle to pan-Slavism, because both nations were ‘*the vanguard of civilized peoples in Eastern Europe*’.<sup>65</sup>

Therefore, the project of a Hungary allied with Romania and both attached to Germany ‘through a state connection’ – as Maiorescu had previously proposed, on 17/29 September – ‘would remove the danger of pan-Slavism’, the east of Europe

63 Ghica, 1889, p. 131 (all Memoriu, pp. 120–131).

64 Apud Béhour, 1991, p. 106.

65 Ghica, 1889, p. 140.

coming under the influence of Germany. Moreover, *'it is a general belief of all enlightened and wise Romanians and Hungarians' that 'they without Germany are too stupid against pan-Slavism'*, suggesting at the same time the start of 'negotiations' with Turkey for the *'redemption of the [Romanian] Principalities and for the union place in a state, under a prince from the house of Austria and under the protection of Germany'*<sup>66</sup>. Also in September 1848, in line with the views of Maiorescu and A.G. Golescu, the 'elected representatives' from Blaj also expressed themselves, in a memorandum addressed to the Vienna Parliament, for 'a fraternal federation' within Austria, together with 'our brothers from the Danube Principalities'<sup>67</sup>. Later – on 13/25 February 1849 – the Greek Orthodox, led by their bishop Andrei Șaguna, submitted an eight-point Memorandum to the emperor to support 'the union of all Romanians from the states of Austria' in a federative framework<sup>68</sup>.

On 10/22 December, after the revolution in Wallachia had already been repressed and the revolutionaries were in exile, Maiorescu wrote from Vienna to his friend General Gh. Magheru in Trieste to inform him about his activity in Frankfurt and the confederation project, on which no decisions had yet been made. This was also because Germany was seeking to appease Turkey regarding its desire for expansion at the expense of Russia, citing at the same time the Constitution drawn up by the Frankfurt Parliament, which established as a principle that

no country which is not German, i.e., whose people is not German, will never be able to incorporate itself with any German state. The German principles which today rule over non-German countries will henceforth stand towards these countries only in a relationship of personal union.<sup>69</sup>

This did not mean that Germany was not sensitive to the Romanian problem; the Frankfurt Parliament had already discussed the subject five times before Maiorescu left for Vienna, with the last intervention on the Principality on 3 November 1848. At the same time, Germany also addressed the British government concerning the Danube issue, aiming for the two countries to have the same attitude of support for the Principalities. Only Vienna was passive on this issue, until – Maiorescu was told – the Romanians would reconcile with the Hungarians.<sup>70</sup>

However, it must be emphasised that all of Maiorescu's aforementioned actions were somewhat confidential. This explains why, at the time, the press did not report the details of the discussions on the side of the two Romanian Memoirs Maiorescu presented to the Frankfurt Parliament. Writing from Paris to Ion Ghica, who was

66 Ibid. pp. 142–143 (second document, full text, p. 132–145, 171). Din documentele Parlamentului de la Frankfurt asupra Principatelor Danubiene, pp. 145–152.

67 Bodea, 1982, p. 911.

68 Ibid. pp. 960–962.

69 See: Ghica, 1889, p. 160.

70 Ibid. pp. 159–168.

in Constantinople, on 17 December 1848, A.G. Golescu showed that it was not desirable to discuss a union of the Romanian principalities with Austria:

What Maiorescu did is a secret thing, and if it is discovered we can uncover an agent; even he and I had worked without taking instructions from anyone, because we saw that this was the only way we would attract Germany's sympathies and attention to us.<sup>71</sup>

In addition, Maiorescu and A.G. Golescu hoped to attract Austria's sympathy and that of Romanians from Transylvania and Bucovina. At the same time, the Romanian representative at the Frankfurt Parliament pressed for the organisation of a conference in which both France and England would participate, in which the situation of the Principalities on the Danube would be discussed<sup>72</sup>.

Moreover, the settlement of a solution regarding the form of confederation proposed by Maiorescu was associated in Frankfurt am Main with the Italian question. In other words, if Austria loses Italy, then it will be compensated with the Romanian Principalities, then the Ottoman Empire will be rewarded, and in the new territories the Constitution of Austria will be imposed, which only provided for a parliamentary chamber and unbiased vote, being led by a prince or king from the family of Austria<sup>73</sup>.

Meanwhile, the tsarist troops were in Moldova, while the Turks – in a first stage – accepted the state of affairs in Wallachia, by recognising the provisional government, but led by a 'royal lieutenant' made up of three people approved by Constantinople (Cristian Tell, Nicolae Golescu and Ion Heliade Rădulescu), as being moderate. This governing body was also aware of Maiorescu's actions in Frankfurt am Main, praising 'our brother' for his initiatives, 'which deserve all the gratitude of the Romanians'<sup>74</sup>. However, the pressure of the Russians on the sultan determined the entry of Ottoman troops into Bucharest in the middle of September 1848 and the end of the revolutionary atmosphere, the leaders until now going into exile.

The revolution in Bucharest being suppressed, Maiorescu loses the capacity of 'plenipotentiary of the Danubian Principalities', in this context heading to Vienna, where he was 'well received', but not being regarded as a diplomat of Wallachia, but only as a 'Romanian Transylvanian', as he tells Nicolae Bălcescu on 7 February 1849. However, he had with him letters of recommendation from Anton Schmerling to Prince Felix von Schwarzenberg and Karl Ludwig von Bruck, which gave him greater credibility.<sup>75</sup> In a continuation of his efforts in Frankfurt, Maiorescu presented to the Viennese authorities another Memorandum with the theme

71 Ibid. pp. 85–86.

72 Ibid. pp. 85–86, 91.

73 Ibid. p. 643. For context see Delureanu, 1993, pp. 965–998.

74 Ghica, 1889, pp. 633–634.

75 Cf. Delureanu, 1993, pp. 988–989.

‘Romanians from the states of Austria’ and the confederation solution.<sup>76</sup> Along the same line, Bălcescu’s actions were recorded in 1850–1851, in exile until the end of his days.<sup>77</sup>

Settled in the capital of the Habsburg Empire, Maiorescu became an official in the Ministry of Justice and was included in a commission aimed at creating a Romanian legal terminology. Here, he collaborated with two of his compatriots, August Treboniu Laurian and Aaron Florian. The latter took great care to present Maiorescu to Romanians not only as a follower of pan-Germanism, but also as a propagandist of Greek-Catholicism, which put him in conflict with the Greek-Orthodox Metropolitan bishop Andrei Șaguna. Intrigues were the order of the day between the two confessions of the Romanians, also targeting their important people, especially those ‘united’ with Rome (the Greek-Catholics) having to face all kinds of plots against them. In such a context, Maiorescu will be retired in the spring of 1856, although he would have liked to stay in Vienna further, his son taking the courses of the Therezian Academy here.

Maiorescu’s oldest protector, Prince Barbu Știrbei, had been reinstated as ruler of Wallachia after the defeat of the Revolution, and with the outbreak of the Crimean War, he had found shelter in Vienna for almost a year (from October 1853), where the two probably they also met. Returning to Bucharest in the fall of 1854, Barbu Știrbei intended to continue the reforms already started, especially in the development of the school network and education, and Maiorescu accepted his offer to return to Wallachia.

However, he did not immediately settle in Bucharest, but made a documentary trip to the Istrian Peninsula (then part of the Habsburg Empire). Although he recorded interesting observations that his son, Titu Maiorescu,<sup>78</sup> later published, it remains unclear why he travelled here to the Peninsula and in what context. The trip may have been made within the framework of the Austrian confederation project, especially since after returning to Bucharest in 1858, the caimacam Al. Ghica no longer offered him the position he was offered under Barbu Știrbei.

One event occurred after another: on 24 January 1859, the double election of Ion Alexandru Cuza as ruler of Moldova and Wallachia took place, and on 22 April Maiorescu was appointed president of the Public Guardianship (‘Obșteasca Epitropie’), a state institution that dealt with the organisation and development of school education, and on 14 October, he became director of the Schools Guardians. From this new position, he entered into conflict with his known rival I. Heliade-Rădulescu (who wanted a monopoly on school textbooks), as well as with some teachers, many of whom were Romanians from Transylvania in Wallachia, of the Greek-Orthodox denomination. In this context, he resigned in the summer of 1861, travelling again to Istria only on scholarly concerns.

76 Ghica, 1889, p. 173.

77 Berindei, 1985, pp. 71–84; Mendella, 2014, pp. 134–143.

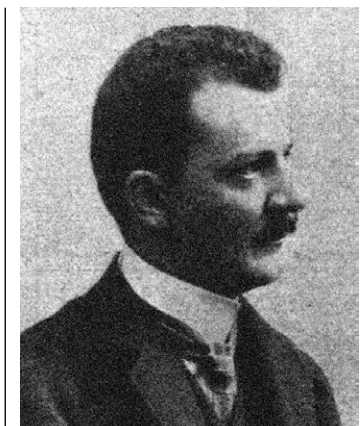
78 Maiorescu, 1874. (Second Edition, published by Maiorescu, 1900.).



Back in Bucharest, a cluster of illnesses (pulmonary emphysema, diabetes and an older liver disease) kept him in bed for more time. Maiorescu died on 24 August/5 September 1864, as soon as he is appointed a professor at the Faculty of Letters in Bucharest, recently established by law.

Even if the federalisation project proposed by Maiorescu failed at the time, also because the Frankfurt Parliament was dissolved by the king of Prussia, his ideas were heard by many politicians of the time. Moreover, in the complex geo-political context of Central and Eastern Europe, the proposal of federalisation will from now on become a career, over time being taken over and sometimes rethought by two other Transylvanians, Aurel Popovici and Al. Vaida-Voevod.

#### 4. Constantin Isopescu-Grecul (1871–1938)<sup>79</sup>



A lawyer and politician from Bukovina, Constantin Isopescu was born on 2 February 1871 in Chernivtsi, where his father Dimitrie was a teacher at the local pedagogical high school and an inspector of Romanian schools and representative of this province in the Vienna Parliament. The family was loyal to the Habsburg emperor, Constantin's maternal grandfather – Gideon Ritter von Grecul – being an archimandrite, with important administrative positions in the region, while his paternal grandfather had remained an orthodox priest. As Dimitrie Isopescu had five children, Constantin was adopted by his maternal uncle, who had no

descendants, thus adding to his original family name the patronymic of Grecul.<sup>80</sup>

Isopescu followed his secondary studies in Chernivtsi, where he also became a student at the Faculty of Law of the 'Franz Joseph' University, which had been founded in 1872. In this period, he wrote his first press articles, especially of a literary nature. Once he obtained his doctorate, in 1897, C. Isopescu-Grecul entered politics, as a member of the Romanian National Party from Bukovina, collaborating with most of the Romanian press in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but also in the Kingdom of Romania. For the latter he used the pseudonym 'A Romanian from Bukovina'. As early as 1893, he became a magistrate, in the position of imperial prosecutor, and from 1905 he also embraced a university career in Chernivtsi,

79 Constantin Isopescu-Grecul, Austro-Hungarian-born Romanian jurist, politician, and journalist, unknown photographer, in: Wiener Bilder, 12. Juni 1907, p. 8, public domain, source of the picture: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantin\\_Isopescu-Grecul#/media/File:Isopescul-Grecul\\_Konstantin.png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantin_Isopescu-Grecul#/media/File:Isopescul-Grecul_Konstantin.png).

80 Bejinariu, 2013.

going through all the hierarchical steps: assistant, private lecturer in 1906<sup>81</sup>, and from 1909 he became full professor of Criminal Law and Criminal procedure.

Following the parliamentary elections of 14 May 1907, C. Isopescu-Grecul became a member of the Imperial Council (*Reichsrat*), as a representative of Bukovina, a position he would keep – in various guises – until the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy, at the end of 1918. Always manifesting himself as a loyal citizen of the Empire, Isopescu-Grecul came into conflict with the nationalist ideology promoted within the Romanian National Party in Bukovina, being excluded from this political formation, a context in which he created his own Independent Party, together with Teofil Simionovici and Nicu Flondor, becoming the leader of this parliamentary group. His loyalist vision brought him close to two other influential Bukovina politicians, Aurel Onciul and Alexandru Hurmuzaki, also members of the Imperial Council and convinced pro-Austrians<sup>82</sup>, with whom he would collaborate from 1909 in the ‘Latin Union’ parliamentary group, to which several deputies also joined Italians loyal to the Monarchy.

As a legal specialist, C. Isopescu-Grecul was involved in the development of a new military criminal code, in 1911 becoming an adviser to the emperor, and two years later being ennobled. In the context of the outbreak of the first Balkan war, he was sent on a diplomatic mission to Bucharest by the Austrian Foreign Minister, Leopold Berchtold, on his behalf promoting the idea of establishing an independent Albanian state, with an important representation of the Aromanians. The project had become somewhat topical, in the context in which the idea of a Balkan federation circulated in this region<sup>83</sup>, as a result of the existing realities in the region, especially after Austria had annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina, in the fall of 1908.

The project was however much older and closely related to the aspiration of obtaining independence by the most important ethno-cultural groups in the region in relation to the Ottoman Empire. For example, Cristian Racovski – a Romanian citizen and left-wing ideologue – had developed the idea of a Balkan Confederation, which would unite Turkey, Romania, Greece, Serbia, and Montenegro, thus counterbalancing the expansionist tendencies of the Austro-Hungarian and Tsarist Empires in this area.

Since it is a question of spaces that are not clearly determined from an ethnic point of view, Racovski hoped that the nationalisms of the peoples, resulting from the struggle for independence against the Turks, would mitigate the obstacles. Although the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in October 1908 by the Habsburg Empire had considerably diminished the enthusiasm, the idea would be revived several times, so that in the summer of 1915, during a conference in Bucharest, Racovski imperatively returned to the idea of a federation.<sup>84</sup>

81 Isopescu-Grecul, 1906.

82 Olaru, 1997; Gafița, 2009.

83 Perivolaropoulou, 1994; Mitu and Mitu, 2008.

84 Damianova, 1989.

The outbreak of the First World War led to a multitude of projects for the reorganisation of Central and Eastern Europe in political terms, from aiming at local autonomies, especially on the ethnic basis, to the aspiration for state independence of some peoples within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Ever since the time when the Central Powers seemed to dominate the situation in the war, various projects were circulated regarding the fate of the peoples of the Danube Monarchy. For example, on 30 May 1917, the Czechs demanded the transformation of the Empire into a confederation of free peoples; the Poles wanted independence; the Slovenians, Croats, and Serbs aspired to a state of their own; and the Ukrainians wanted Galicia, the issue of this region being the order of the day. Moreover, since December 1916, a project was being prepared to regulate the autonomy of Galicia, even if it seemed premature, especially because it provided for the exclusion of Bucovina. That is why the proclamation of the autonomy of Galicia without Bukovina caused unrest among the Romanian representatives of this region, the president of the Viennese council of ministers receiving – on 28 November 1916 – Teofil Simionovici (the head of the ‘Romanian club’) and the deputy C. Isopescu Grecul, assuring them that in return for loyalty, Bukovina would acquire a good position in the empire<sup>85</sup>.

Moreover, in this context, the belligerents showed a special interest in Bukovina, an autonomous province of the Crown of the Empire (*Kronland*), which since 1861 also had its own Diet, in which the most important ethno-cultural groups were represented, without any ethnic majority<sup>86</sup>. Although Ukrainians seemed to have a slightly larger share, they were poorly represented at the elite level. For Russia, the geostrategic position of Bukovina mattered more than the presence of the Slavic element, although the latter was supported by Moscow everywhere in Austria.<sup>87</sup> The government in Bucharest was not indifferent to the fate of this region either, although the Romanians had somewhat lost their political primacy in Bukovina, especially in favour of the Ruthenians and the Jews, to whom the Germans and the Poles were added. The Ukrainians had their own intentions, to attach at least a part of Bucovina to Galicia, in order to establish a province with wide autonomy within the Habsburg Empire. It was also a project supported by Vienna itself, which wanted a Greater Ukraine in the east as a counterweight to Russia’s interest in supporting the creation of a Greater Serbia.<sup>88</sup>

In the context of these plans, C. Isopescu-Grecul made a statement in the parliament in the capital of the Empire, in the session of 22 July 1918, expressing

85 „Bulletin périodique de la presse austro-hongroise de la langue allemande” (du 28 novembre au 7 décembre), Paris, no. 20, 18 décembre 1916, p. 5. („Periodic bulletin of the Austro-Hungarian press of the German language” (from November 28 to December 7), Paris, no. 20, December 18, 1916, p. 5.)

86 In 1910 in Bukovina, based on language there were 38,4% Ukrainians, 34,4% Romanians, 21,2% Germans, including Jews; 4,5% Poles; 1,3% Hungarians (Cf. *Die Ergebnisse der Volks- und Viehzählung vom 31. Dezember 1910 im Herzogtume Bukowina*). On this province see: Scharr, 2010.

87 Varta, 2008.

88 See Varta, 1993, pp. 37–39; Ungureanu, 2003.

his anxiety and that of the Germans in Bukovina towards the project of annexing Bukovina to Austrian Ukraine. On this occasion, he also reminds the fact that the Bukovinians have proven their loyalty to the crown and that the Romanians and Germans should not be sacrificed for the sake of the Slavs, thus encouraging pan-Slavism. That is why Isopescu-Grecul advocates the autonomy of a Romanian-German Bucovina, with the capital at Chernivtsi and the northern border along the Prut River, within a federal Austria.<sup>89</sup>

In these circumstances, C. Isopescu-Grecul became extremely active in finding convenient solutions for the Romanian residents of Bukovina. It manifests itself more and more sharply against local nationalisms, it takes a stance regarding the actions of other ethnic groups in the empire to acquire some autonomy in their own name, without a reorganisation of Austria-Hungary for the benefit of all. Moreover, he met with the head of the cabinet in Vienna, Ernest von Koerber, discussing the matter, and assuring him of the province's loyalty to the emperor.

However, the progress of the war was not at all favourable to the Triple Alliance, the summer and autumn of 1918 heralding its end, with unsuspected consequences for Austria-Hungary. Already the 14 points formulated by Woodrow Wilson on 8 January 1918, as the foundation of a post-war Europe, had generated among the Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, and Slavs in southern Austria aspirations that were not aimed at the reorganisation of the Empire, but at independence. In fact, the collapse of the Bulgarian front caused the situation of Austria-Hungary to become extremely fragile from September 1918, a context in which C. Isopescu-Grecul and other leaders of the national parties in the Empire were summoned on 18 September by Prime Minister Maximilian Hussarek von Heinlein to discuss the project of a future 'federal self-government'.

However, the proclamation of Karl I of Habsburg, *To my faithful Austrian people*, issued on 3/16 October 1918, promised a reorganisation of the empire on federative principles, '*in which each people would form its own state community, within its territory*'.<sup>90</sup> A federation made up of six independent states (Austrian, Hungarian, Czech, Yugoslav, Polish, and Ukrainian) was conceived, with Transylvania remaining within Hungary alongside a part of the Banat, with the other part returning to Yugoslavia. However, Bukovina was not mentioned in the document, which only stated that the inhabitants of the region would decide the form with which they would enter the federation.

In this context, on the very second day after the publication of the proclamation, C. Isopescu-Grecul was summoned to an audience by Emperor Karl, together with the other heads of the parliamentary groups<sup>91</sup>, so that at noon he could ask in the Viennese parliament – with the consent of others five Romanian deputies from this forum – the proclamation of autonomy for the four million Romanians

89 Calafeteanu and Moisuc, 1995, pp. 360–362.

90 „Glasul Bucovinei”, Cernăuți, I, 1918, nr. 1, 22 October, p. 5.

91 Isopescu-Grecul, 1938, p. 180.

in Austria and Hungary, as part of a federal monarchy, of a reorganised Austria.<sup>92</sup> In fact, Isopescu-Grecul was closely supported by Aurel Onciul, who stated that Austria is the salvation for Romanians, advocating that all countrymen (including the Kingdom of Romania) become part of the Habsburg Monarchy. Moreover, Aurel Onciul, together with Alexandru Hurmuzachi and Gh. Sârbu, at some point also conveyed the idea of uniting Bucovina with Galicia under the tutelage of Vienna.<sup>93</sup>

At the same time, as a reaction to the aforementioned Proclamation, Romanians from Vienna established a Romanian National Council in Austria, on 4/17 October, with C. Isopescu-Grecul being elected president. He even obtained an audience with the emperor (his last meeting with him), on 5/18 October, informing him that the Romanian deputies in Vienna refuse to keep Transylvania within Hungary, not even agreeing with the inclusion of Bucovina in Ukraine<sup>94</sup>. In fact, he developed the ideas now exposed to Karl I on 22 October, during the debates in the Vienna parliament on the imperial manifesto, in the form of an interpellation signed by Romanians and Czechs. On this occasion, Isopescu-Grecul requested for Romanians from Bukovina and Hungary the right to constitute their own state within the new Austrian federation. However, the decision had to be taken quickly, because otherwise the Entente promised other formulas for the reorganisation of Central and Eastern Europe<sup>95</sup>. In this meeting another Romanian deputy, George Grigorovici, with socialist views, stated that the best solution for consolidating and ensuring peace in this region would be the union of the Kingdom of Romania and the provinces inhabited by Romanians with Austria in one federal state.<sup>96</sup> Their ideas were also supported by another important Bucovinian politician, Aurel Onciul, whose creed was always the reorganisation of the Empire on federal principles, in agreement with the aspirations of the Ukrainians.

The next day, all of the Romanian deputies left for Bukovina, leaving only C. Isopescu-Grecul and Teofil Simionovici in Vienna. Meanwhile, things were rushing in Chernivtsi, so the two also headed for Kraków on 25 October, but had to turn back due to fighting between Poles and Ukrainians at Przemysl in Galicia.<sup>97</sup> As the events of the war were unfolding rapidly and not to the benefit of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in the last session of the parliament in Vienna, on 28 October 1918, only these two Romanian deputies from Bukovina, convinced loyalists and followers of federalism, participated.

On 3 November 1918, Austria-Hungary signed the armistice with the Entente, and on 11 November, Germany also admitted defeat. On the same day, Karl I renounced the throne, the state thus proclaiming a republic. In this context, the Ukrainians aspired to the division of Bukovina on ethnic criteria, also taking

92 Bălan, 1929, p. 84.

93 Gafița, 2008, p. 265.

94 Isopescu-Grecul, 1938, pp. 176–184; Țugui, 2014, p. 61.

95 Isopescu-Grecul's speech was published in „Morgenblatt” from 27 October 1918.

96 Bălan, 1918. For his federalist project: Brătuleanu, 2012.

97 Isopescu-Grecul, 1918, p. 183.

advantage of the fact that since the end of October, they had controlled Chernivtsi from an administrative and somewhat also from a military point of view. However, in circumstances sufficiently presented by the historiography of the period, the Romanian army entered Chernivtsi on 9 November and the Ukrainians left the city. Thus, three days later, the government of Bukovina was established, headed by Iancu Flondor. On 28 November 1918, the General Congress of Bukovina proclaimed the union of the region with Romania.

In the new political and military context, C. Isopescu-Grecul embraced the decision to unite Bukovina with Romania and was appointed by King Ferdinand I as his diplomatic representative (with the title of ‘commissioner’) in Vienna to solve the problems related to Bukovina and Transylvania. At the same time, he was also entrusted with the position of Romanian ambassador to Czechoslovakia, with whose government he had established ties since the end of November 1918. In these circumstances, Isopescu-Grecul had meetings with representatives of the Hungarian government led by István Friedrich, in a period when the Romanian army was on the territory of Hungary. In the summer and autumn of 1919, the Romanian diplomat firmly advocated for the establishment of good Romanian-Hungarian relations, declaring several times the fact that ‘*the peoples of the Lower and Middle Danube form an economic whole*’, being desirable a Romanian-Hungarian Federation. For the moment, Isopescu-Grecul advocated for ‘a customs union that could be achieved’ between the two countries, and then an alliance, the closest possible<sup>98</sup>. In fact, he was giving voice to an older aspiration regarding the reorganisation of this part of Europe, and if the project of a federal Austria was no longer current, he would have pronounced either for a Romanian-Yugoslav dynastic union or for a Romanian-Hungarian federation. In fact, C. Isopescu-Grecul was a supporter of the Kingdom of Hungary starting in the fall of 1919.

Returned from diplomatic missions in Vienna and Prague, C. Isopescu-Grecul worked as a jurist at the Ministry of Agriculture and Royal Domains (1920–1921) in Bucharest, at the same time getting involved in wood business on an industrial scale, which ensured him an exceptional financial situation. He also became a Professor at the Faculty of Law of the University of Chernivtsi, and its rector between 1930–1933, teaching Criminal Law as the main subject, but substituting in certain periods for the chair of Political and National Economy or Civil Law<sup>99</sup>.

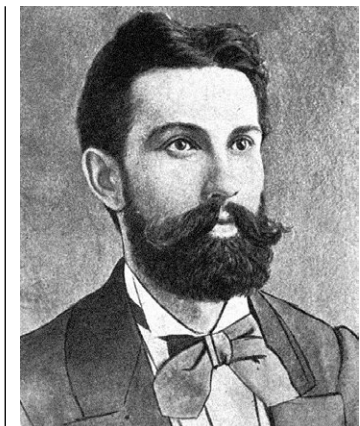
From a political point of view, Isopescu-Grecul was active from 1928 in the National Peasant Party, led by his old friend Iuliu Maniu, with whom he had collaborated in Vienna a decade before. From this position, he was a deputy and then a senator in the Romanian Parliament. He was among those who took a stand against the anti-Semitism promoted in the interwar period by the extremist parties.

98 Cf. „Le Temps”, no. 21237 from 31 August 1919, p. 1.

99 Arh.St.București, *Ministerul Instrucțiunii Publice*, dos. 529/1934, f. 14–15; dos.520/1935, f.8-9 ș.a.; For his academic activity at Cernăuți see: Tarangul, 2016.

He passed away on 29 March 1938, in Chernivtsi. Though he was perceived by his contemporaries as a controversial figure, he was even recognised by his political enemies as a ‘bureaucrat’ trained in the Austrian spirit.

## 5. Nicolae Densușianu (1846–1911)<sup>100</sup>



Born on 18 April 1846 in Transylvania (in Densuș, Hunedoara county), Nicolae Densușianu was one of the four sons of the Greek-Catholic priest Vizantie Pop. Of these, two followed their father’s career (Beniamin and George) and the other two became important names of Romanian culture from the turn of the nineteenth–twentieth centuries.<sup>101</sup> Like his older brother Aron (b 1837), Nicolae attended secondary school in Blaj, where he adopted the surname Densușianu, based on his birthplace, to become individualised among the numerous students named Pop.

In fact, many of the intellectuals in Transylvanian Romanian society were enrolled in this school, as Blaj was the headquarters of the Romanian-United (Greek-Catholic) episcopate and a location for the flourishing of Romanian culture and civilisation. Following in Aron’s footsteps, Nicolae studied law at the Law Academy (‘Rechtsakademie’) in Sibiu starting in fall 1865.

Many young Transylvanian people opted for legal studies after 1849 as a reaction to the increasingly liberal attitudes of the provincial elite. In fact, the career of a lawyer or notary became one of the most sought-after professions in the era, a specific aspect of modernising societies. In addition, attending an ‘academy’ or a law school constituted a somewhat convenient path, which did not require some specific intellectual vocation, but it meant a university degree, which confirmed a social status and opened prospects for advancement. Moreover, these graduates were increasingly in demand to defend new types of interests, from the legal and economic affairs of various state or private institutions to those of individuals, being a clientele profession. Not by chance, the ever-increasing influx of young people to legal studies in old Hungary was perceived by contemporaries as a ‘degree malady’<sup>102</sup>.

100 Nicolae Densușianu, Romanian ethnologist and collector, in: unknown author, Nicolae Densușianu (1846–1911), public domain, source of the picture: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolae\\_Densu%C8%99ianu#/media/File:NicolaeDensușianu.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolae_Densu%C8%99ianu#/media/File:NicolaeDensușianu.jpg).

101 Antonescu, 1974; Lazăr, 1995–1997.

102 Apáthy, 1912, p. 25.

As a law school student, Nicolae Densușianu had remarkably good results<sup>103</sup>, which led to tuition exemption, and more so as his father had died in 1857. In this context, he arrived in Bucharest in the summer of 1867 to apply for a scholarship at the recently founded Academic Society (soon to become the Romanian Academy). The application was successful and the scholarship granted for the academic year 1867–68 helped him to complete his studies, graduating on 20 July 1869.

As the focus of this text is to discuss Nicolae Densușianu as a theorist of an integration formula in Central Europe, we will have to dwell more on his period as a student of the Law Academy in Sibiu, because now we are witnessing a special interest in this direction, particularly with his publishing in 1868 a long and consistent study on *The Romanian People within a Federation [Poporul roman în federațiune]*<sup>104</sup>.

Nicolae Densușianu's student years actually coincide with a genuinely liberal era in the history of Transylvania after the revolution of 1848/1849. The horizon of political activism opened up for the Romanians here, obviously stimulated by the fact that the Transylvanian Diet held its meetings in Sibiu between 1863–1865, and there – among other things – adopted laws regarding the equality of rights of the three nations, Romanian, Hungarian and German. It is also the reason why a good part of the Hungarian deputies boycotted the works of the Diet. They wanted the adoption of a Nationalities Law that would proclaim the unitary and indivisible character of the Hungarian political nation. In these circumstances, the Court in Vienna would dissolve the Diet of Sibiu, annulling all its decisions, and in February 1867 they reached a compromise (*Ausgleich*) with the Hungarians, thus giving birth to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy<sup>105</sup>.

In this new formation they still functioned almost like two distinct states, sharing only foreign policy, an army, and economic life, and the Emperor of Vienna also becoming King of Hungary. In this way, the autonomy of almost half a century of Transylvania disappeared when it was declared part of Hungary, including populations of other nationalities in these circumstances. The non-Hungarians were not only disappointed by the attitude in Vienna, they were especially dissatisfied with their inclusion in the reborn Hungarian kingdom in this manner. This was exacerbated by the preparation of laws regarding the union and nationalities in the Parliament of Pest.<sup>106</sup> These laws were adopted at the end of 1868, generating reactions particularly from the Romanians and Serbians.

In this context, Romanians like Aron Densușianu began adopting the passive strategy of non-participation in official Hungarian political life. This would be the *grosso modo* context in which two periodicals, 'Federațiunea' and 'Albina', were published in Pest, functioning as means of expressing of the Romanians in the Diet of Pest, but also of Romanians from western Transylvania. It was not by chance,

103 Cf. Istrati, 1913, p. VIII.

104 Densușianu, 1868.

105 Evans, 2006; Deák, 2008.

106 See Gidó, Horváth and Pál, 2010.



then, that the abovementioned study by Nicolae Densusianu was published in the periodical with the suggestive title 'Federațiunea' (*The Federation*) from 15 January 1868 to 12 March 1876, with Alexandru Roman as owner and main editor. Roman was a former Professor of Romanian language and literature at the University of Pest, and from 1865 occupied a deputy seat in the Parliament of the capital of Hungary<sup>107</sup>. In fact, it was a periodical intended to convey ideas and counter-projects to the recently concluded *Ausgleich*, with many virulently anti-Hungarian articles, which led to many press lawsuits against it<sup>108</sup>.

In fact, the article-programme of the newspaper, signed by Alexandru Roman, set as its goal the defence of Romanians' rights against 'injustice and absolutism' which took a constitutional form, at the same time wanting the publication to be a guide in the use of the Romanian language, which is in – a process of consolidation, without 'Germanisms, Hungarianisms and barbarisms'<sup>109</sup>, thus promoting the pro-Latin programme of the Transylvanian School movement (in Romanian Școala Ardeleană).

In this context, the article signed by the very young Nicolae Densusianu (at the age of 22 years old), entitled *Poporul român în federațiune* [*The Romanian People within a Federation*], appears quite verbose today, having been written in a Romanian language that was still unconsolidated, especially in terms of spelling. The focus is on establishing a connection between the concept of federalism and the national principle. As it goes without saying, the focus was on the Hungarians and their status in the new state resulting from the 1867 Compromise, while the Romanians were excluded as a people in the percentages in the governing act. This is the reason why, speaking – for instance – about Romanians and Hungarians, as 'neighbouring peoples', Densusianu claimed that only a 'federation' between these 'states and nations' 'will always represent the strongest guarantee for their future'.<sup>110</sup>

From this perspective, Densusianu appealed to history, presenting the oldest Romanian-Hungarian-Polish ties and alliances, with the resulting benefits for these peoples. Insisting more on Romanian-Hungarian relations, the author denied the idea of the existence in the Middle Ages of vassal relations between Wallachia and Hungary, the old treaties between the two countries being in fact forms of 'federation'.<sup>111</sup>

Although he invoked all kinds of medieval and modern historical sources in support of his assertions, Romanian historiography was almost non-existent at that time, but was especially poor in terms of working with a corpus of documents. In addition, Nicolae Densusianu's training was not only incomplete, but

107 On this topic see Neamțu, 1995.

108 Neamțu, 1978.

109 'Federațiunea'. Jurnal politic, literar, comercial și economic, Pesta, I, 1868, nr. 1 (Wednesday, 3/15 January), p. 1.

110 Densusianu, 1868, p. 449.

111 Ibid. p. 450.

also unrealistic, as was later proven in his historiographical production discussed below.

Divided into segments published in four newspaper issues, Nicolae Densușianu's text was designed as it progressed, which is why it sometimes lacked coherence. However, the author feels the need to dismantle some prejudices of Hungarians regarding Romanians, especially in the matter of 'trust'.

Appealing to history again, the author seeks to prove the fact that the Romanians did not show 'perfidy and violation of friendship with their neighbours', keeping their 'covenants', which were, however, violated by the kings of Poland and Hungary,<sup>112</sup> based on the examples convenient to the demonstration.

However, history also provides arguments according to which one can speak in Transylvania of the existence of a 'Romanian-Hungarian federation', '*a federation based on the principle of national sovereignty*'. The problems with the Romanians started when '*Hungary, which was built on a federative basis, enters an absolutist feudal state*', the dualist pact meaning a '*violation of the national treaties concluded both with Hungary and with the Habsburg house*'.<sup>113</sup>

Therefore, the best political system to 'ensure the freedom of the nations under the Habsburg scepter' would be '*a constitution removed from the federative consensus*', which would bring other peoples together on a footing of full equality, withdrawing Hungary's prerogatives over Transylvania<sup>114</sup>.

Referring to a previous project of a 'Danube Confederation', promoted by the Hungarian revolutionaries from 1848/49 and shared up to a point by the Romanians, Nicolae Densușianu shows the limits and causes of its failure, because in fact the benefits would also return to the leaders of Pest. Because of this, the Hungarians did not obtain the adhesion of the other nations. Further, the project of the Austro-Hungarian 'compromise' created the framework for 'civil struggles between nations', which '*only through a federative consensus can be united under one and the same Habsburg house*'. Concluding as it were, a 'reconciliation' of Romanians with Hungarians could only be done through a federation.<sup>115</sup>

Although the context in 1867 could have been a stimulating framework for Romanians to rethink a possible state formula for Central Europe, the proposals were not strong enough and not at all articulated within the 'Federațiunea' newspaper. Only Nicolae Densușianu's text – cited above – was outstanding, through dimensions and historical arguments, but focused on the perspective of rivalry with the Hungarians. On the other hand, the misunderstandings between Romanian politicians in Transylvania ('activists' and 'passivists') and confessional dissensions (Greek-Catholics vs. Greek-Orthodox) prevented the formulation of some projects

112 Ibid. nr. 115 (Saturday, 3/15 August), p. 455.

113 Ibid. nr. 122 (Tuesday, 20 August /1 September), p. 481.

114 Ibid. p. 482.

115 Ibid. nr. 123 (Thursday, 22 August /3 September), pp. 487–488.

with a chance of being realised together with the Hungarians, which would have generated stability for the Central European space.

However, we must note that although Nicolae Densușianu's text approached the idea of a federation at least conceptually, as a solution for the organisation of a part of Central Europe, the theoretical foundations of such a state-type union remained for this author only at an undeveloped stage. Even so, over time, Romanian historiography almost did not mention this feeble contribution, which nevertheless offered solutions for coexistence between the important nations of the region, Densușianu becoming known especially for his largely fanciful historiographical constructions which today are unusable. In fact, in the very year of the publication of the study mentioned above, Nicolae Densușianu also published his first study of comparative mythology, with reference to Romanians, in the magazine 'Familia', to which he had started to collaborate with poems since 1866.

This is why his later bio-bibliography was devoid of any reference to the subject of federalisation, leaving only his passion for history to speak about Romanian-Hungarian-Austrian-Polish relations. In 1869, he graduated from the Faculty of Law in Sibiu and became a notary in Făgăraș, where his brother Aron Densușianu was a lawyer, later also taking the necessary exams for the same profession. Thus, Nicolae Densușianu was recognised as a lawyer on 23 October 1873 in Târgu Mureș.<sup>116</sup> In the same year, Aron Densușianu – who was also a member of the Făgăraș municipal council – was investigated and sent to court for disturbing the public peace at the Royal Court in Târgu Mureș and held in preventive detention for a month (21 October – 20 November 1873), a process that had a rich echo in the press, ending only in 1878. In fact, in the context of his imprisonment, part of the Romanian press in Transylvania – the newspapers 'Federațiunea', 'Albina' and 'Gazeta Transilvaniei' – published a famous letter, 'Sofia, mother of the Densușianu men'.

After a short legal activity at Tabula Regia in Târgu Mureș, Nicolae Densușianu together with his brother will open a legal practice in Brașov at the end of 1873. From now Aron also carried out a rich cultural activity, editing, among other things, the newspaper 'Orientul Latin', which appeared from February 1874 to the end of September 1875, and to which Nicolae also collaborated<sup>117</sup>.

Nicolae Densușianu moved to Bucharest in April 1877 and received Romanian citizenship in less than a year. His degrees were recognised and he consequently became a member of the Ilfov county lawyer's bar. Aron Densușianu crossed the mountains in 1881, settling in Iași in Moldova, where he became a Professor of Latin literature at the University.

In the very year of settling in Romania, Nicolae Densușianu published together with Frédéric Damé an ethnographic work, *L'element latin en Orient. Les Roumains du Sud*<sup>118</sup>, with the obvious aim of contributing to an impressive image of the new

116 Istrati, 1913, p. XII.

117 Antonescu, 2010.

118 Densușianu and Damé, 1878.

modern Romanian state. Although founded in 1859, the history of Romania is older, with Latin-speaking people spread over a good part of the Balkans and able to constitute a barrier between East (Ottoman Empire) and the civilised West.

At the same time, the Romanian Academy entrusted him with the mission of researching the archives and libraries in Hungary in 1878–1879. He spent fifteen months finding and collecting documents related to Romanian history, a mission completed with an extremely detailed Report.<sup>119</sup> The period in which he studied the archives in Transylvania, discovering an impressive number of documents related to the 1784 Horea's Uprising, was later captured in the *Memoirs* of Francisc Hossu Longin, in whose house in Deva Densușianu resided for a long time<sup>120</sup>.

In these circumstances, Nicolae Densușianu was elected a corresponding member of the Romanian Academy on 15/27 April 1880, in order to replace Ioan Bianu in the position of archivist-librarian of this institution. The position was offered from the fall of that year until 1884. The latter, a decade younger than Densușianu, was also a Greek-Catholic from Transylvania and had also undertaken secondary education in Blaj. He also later settled in Bucharest, where he was entrusted with the management of the Academy's Library in 1884, later leaving for specialisation at universities in Western Europe, to later become a professor at the University of Bucharest.

At the intervention of Ion Brătianu (the leader of the Liberal Party), Nicolae Densușianu was appointed on 10 March 1884 as a translator at the General Headquarters of the Army<sup>121</sup> and later became its librarian and head of office. It was a rather comfortable position that allowed him to work until the end of his life on several historiographical projects that were much appreciated in the period, although his volumes did not use the methodological rigors specific to the period. However, his works related to Horea's Uprising in Transylvania and Hungary were appreciated (*Revoluțiunea lui Horea în Transilvania și Ungaria*<sup>122</sup>), then awarded by the Romanian Academy. He also published *Monumente pentru istoria Țării Făgărașului*,<sup>123</sup> [Monuments for the history of the County of Făgăraș], a collection of documents. In 1887, he began publishing a corpus of documents regarding the history of the Romanians, made up of six volumes totalling almost five thousand printed pages, in the famous series initiated by Eudoxiu Hurmuzachi.

Naturally, he also dealt with military history,<sup>124</sup> but above all, he left to posterity an impressive volume entitled *Dacia preistorică* [*Prehistoric Dacia*]. Although he had begun writing the volume as early as 1885, it was published two years after his

119 Densușianu, 1880.

120 Longin, 1975.

121 Istrati, 1913, p. XX.

122 Densușianu, 1884; Teodor, 1984.

123 Densușianu, 1885.

124 Densușianu, 1912; a manuscript of his was also published posthumously about *Istoria militară a poporului român*, ed. I. Oprișan, București, Edit. Saeculum I.O., 2018, 463 p.

death,<sup>125</sup> which occurred on 24 March 1911. At the same time, in addition to several studies published in specialised periodicals, Nicolae Densușianu had the ‘Rumänien’ column in ‘Jahresberichte der Geschichtswissenschaft’, where he published between 1885–1904 reports on Romanian historiographical activity.<sup>126</sup>

Therefore, Nicolae Densușianu’s documentary discoveries from the research period in Old Hungary (1878–1879) were the basis of several of his works. At the same time, the discovery of the original act of the ‘union’ of the Orthodox Church with Rome later generated a media polemic between him and the scholar-priests from Blaj on this topic.

125 Densușianu, 1913.

126 Iancu, 2011.

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