THE ROMANIAN PRESS IN HABSBURG BUKOVINA

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Abstract

This article aims at a brief description of the main Romanian press landmarks in Bukovina (1775-1918). Starting from the first chronicle printed in Chernivtsi (1811), the first Bukovina newspaper edited by the brothers Gheorghe and Alexandru Hurmuzachi was published between 1848 and 1850. The late 19th century brings to the fore the press representatives of the various Romanian political factions in Bukovina, which dominated the public scene until the outbreak of the First World War.

Keywords

Bukovina, history of the press, Romanian, Habsburg.

In 1803, teacher Ioan Bilevici took the first steps for the establishment of a newspaper in Bukovina, submitting – through the vice-governor Hofrath Graf v. Sweeters – a request to the imperial court in this respect on June 16, followed by a second request filed on 26 December 1803. However, Bilevici was refused, being motivated, among other things, by the lack of a structure necessary for the censorship of such a Romanian “diary of intelligence”. The rejections of the two requests were also accompanied by the remark that “the publication of a newspaper is not compatible with Bilevici’s professional duties as a teacher”.[1]

Fifteen years passed until the second attempt to establish a newspaper. This time, the request came from Teodor Racoce, the translator for the Romanian language at the Government of Lviv. A native from the the village

[1] I. Caproșu, Ș.-M. Ceaușu, et. al., 1998, p. 563.

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of Carapciu in the northern Bukovina on the border with Galicia, Racoce had previously been employed at the district chancellery of Bukovina, which was based in Chernivtsi, and since the early 1816 he worked as a translator at the Government of Lviv. In his application no. 2474 of June 17, 1816, he requested permission to publish a newspaper in the "Moldavian language", which was to be "weekly printed", as well as a "journal for intellectuals".[2] By the authorization no. 8772 of February 25, 1817, Teodor Racoce received the requested approval and, therefore, first proceeded to print an advertisement for the newly issued newspaper (announcement dated March 8, 1817)[3]. However, for reasons not yet elucidated by the literature, no issue of the newspaper planned by Racoce was printed. His journalistic commitment and publishing activity will materialize in publishing a literary anthology of almost 200 pages. Published under the title "Chrestomatic românesc" ["Romanian Chrestomath"], the work was printed in 1820 by the printer Peter Eckhardt from Chernivtsi and, although it was initially planned as an annual journal, it ceased to be published. The anthology contains exclusively translations of literary texts, most of them from the Latin classics (Diodorus Siculus, Quintus Rufus, Plutarch, Diogenes Laertios, etc.), but also translations from the modern literatures, all the texts being interpreted by Racoce himself[4].

Only a few Romanian chronicles will be published until 1848 in the same Eckhardt printing house the only one in Bukovina. Edited by the teacher Vasile Țintilă under different titles such as *Calendariu pentru anul* [*The Chronicle of the Year*] ..., *Calendarul pentru casă* [*The Chronicle of Home*] or *Calendarul Bisericii Răsăritului* [*The Chronicle of the Eastern Church*], several editions were published between 1811 and 1824. After a break of fifteen years, it was resumed in 1841 under the title *Calendarul pentru Bucovina* [*The Chronicle of Bukovina*] or *Calendarul pentru Ducatul*

[2] T. Bălan, 1927, p. 351.
[3] I. Lupaș, 1916, p. 71.
[4] G. Răduică, N. Răduică, 1995, p. 68.

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Bucovinei [*The Chronicle of the Duchy of Bukovina*] and continued to be published for several decades.[5]

The Viennese events of the 1848 spring were to have an impact on Bukovina as well. The Romanian and German ruling elites, led by Anton Kral and Eudoxiu von Hurmuzachi, demanded the separation of the former Moldovan district from Galicia. The abolition of the Metternich system and the liberalization that took place offered the aspiring representatives of the educated bourgeoisie in Chernivtsi new possibilities of public expression: it didn't take a long time for a press to be set up since the publication of pamphlets in which, for the first time, everyone's political opinion was available to the public in printed copy. In the autumn of 1848, the Bukovina printer Ferdinand Eckhardt, as editor, and Gheorghe Hurmuzachi, as owner and editor, requested permission to publish a newspaper in Chernivtsi. Based on a report by Anton Kral, Anton Kunz and Alois Alth, it was proposed to the Ministry of Interior through the mayor of Chernivtsi to authorize the publication of a bilingual newspaper called *Bucovina* with its Romanian and German subtitles: *Gazetă românească pentru politică, religie și literatură* / respectiv *Romanische Zeitung für Politik, Kirche und Literatur* [*The Romanian Journal of Politics*, *Religion and literature*][6] respectively. The first issue printed on October 16, 1848 had four pages with the text on two columns both in Romanian and German respectively. From a financial point of view, the newspaper was supported by the Hurmuzachi family, who also imprinted a strong political character on the newspaper by supporting the separation of Bukovina from Galicia and calling for Bukovina to become an autonomous duchy of the Habsburg Crown. We must not forget that the eldest of the brothers, Eudoxiu Hurmuzachi, who had studied law at the University of Vienna, was the author of "Petiție pentru autonomia Bucovinei" ["Petition for the Autonomy of Bukovina"], signed by most Bukovinian personalities of

[5] V. I. Schipor, 2016, p. 55.
[6] T. Bălan, 1924, p. 4.

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different nationalities which caused a stir after it was handed over to the Emperor Ferdinand in June 1848.[7]

Almost all the articles in the newspaper were printed in both Romanian and German, the exception being the feuilleton column. Usually this space was reserved for the Romanian culture and literature, texts considered representative for the entire Romanian nation being published here. Under the title "Poezia populară a românilor" ["Romanians' Popular Poetry"] several relevant works for the Romanian culture, such as the ballads *Toma Alimoş* and *Mioriţa* were published for the first time. Apart from Gheorghe and Alexandru Hurmuzachi, who often signed their contributions as editors of the newspaper, Iraclie Porumbescu and Aron Pumnul can be identified among contributors, the latter being responsible for the Romanian literary section. Aron Pumnul's study *Neatârnarea limbii române în dezvoltarea sa şi în modul de a o scrie* [*The Independence of the Romanian language in its Development and Writing*] is given a great significance by the editors, who allow in the feuilleton column of a rather large typographic space in relation to the four pages of the newspaper. The study was published in several parts, over more than ten issues, and was continued by another one on the Romanian literature: *Fragmente din literatură românească* [*Fragments of the Romanian Literature*]. Besides *Toma Alimoş* (in no. 2 of January 13, 1850) and *Balada Mioarei* (in no. 11 of February 18, 1850), previously mentioned, other popular works such as *Mihu Copilul* (in no. 20 of March 22, 1850) or *Păunaşul Codrilor* (in no. 36 of October 28, 1849) were published for the first time in the feuilleton. Vasile Alecsandri, Andrei Mureşanu, Iraclie Prorumbescu (no. 10, 1850), D. Bolintineanu (no. 12, 13, 16 and 23/1849), Vasile Cârlova (no. 15 and 18 / 1849), Vasile Pogor (no. 20/1849) and others' writings were published in the same column. G. Sion published excerpts from his own work reunited under the title „Din manuscrisul *Panorama Moldovei*" ["On the Manuscript *Panorama Moldovei*"] in several issues in 1850.

[7] The text of the petition was reproduced together with the *Motivation of the Petition* and other 25 documents regarding the acquisition of the state of autonomous duchy of Bukovina in 1861 within the volume: Ceaușu / Lihaciu, 2021, pp. 107-109.

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Among the relevant articles that describe the political situation in Transylvania we mention *Epistola pastorală* [*The Pastoral Epistle*] and Andrei Şaguna's appeal to the patriarch (no. 10/1849); Avram Iancu's letter regarding his activities (no. 44/1850); the correspondence from Transylvania regarding the arrests of some Romanian priests (no. 37/1849), as well as the series published in 1849, along several issues, entitled *Din istoria românilor din Transilvania* [*On the History of the Romanians in Transylvania*]. Some short pauses in the newspaper's publication can be attributed to the political circumstances and censorship measures. Gheorghe Hurmuzachi reported extensively on the censorship process against the newspaper.[8] Almost two years after the publication of the first issue (October 1848), during which time the newspaper was published with several delays and breaks, the publication of the newspaper was finally stopped on (September 20, 1850). The reason could be to increase the national-Romanian character that the newspaper has acquired over time, a key role in this regard being played by various Romanian personalities from Transylvania and Moldova. In addition, there was also a negative response from the authorities to the application for authorization to operate its own printing house.[9]

Apart from *The Chronicle...* which was now uninterruptedly printed annually since 1841, no Romanian press product will be published until Bukovina achieved its full autonomy in 1861. Only in 1865 was the printing of a periodical publication initiated by the *Asociaţia pentru literatura şi cultura română din Bucovina* [*Association for Romanian Literature and Culture in Bukovina*]. Initially edited by A. Dimitroviță and carried on by I.G. Sbiera *Foaia Societăţii pentru literatura şi cultura română în Bucovina* has been published for five years, between 1865 and 1869. Thus, since January 1865, the first Bukovina journal is published in Chernivtsi. *Foaia Societăţii pentru literatura şi cultura română în Bucovina* is a monthly journal of literature, culture and folklore in which the literature itself occupies a leading place among its pages. Among the signatories of the literary texts we find Vasile Alecsandri, Iacob Negrruzzi, D. Petrino, Vasile Bumbac, Al.

[8] For example, see the extensive article dedicated into issue no. 20/1849 of the Bucovina newspaper.
[9] I. Lihaciu, 2012, pp. 169-175.

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Hurmuzachi, Vasile F. Pop, G. Tăutul, Gh. Sion, M. Rosetti or Dimitrie Bolintineanu. Legends and popular poems collected from all over Bukovina are also published. The journal also includes translations from K.E. Franzos and J.W. v. Goethe. At the same time, V. Alecsandri publishes from the manuscripts of Costache Negri and Alecu Russo.[10] There are also articles dealing with the field of church, documents about the history of Bukovina or folklore articles signed by Simion Florea Marian and Elena Niculiță Voronca. Among its pages we can find information on general politics, the journal also being published as a political newspaper, while the political chronicler of this era was Gheorghe Hurmuzachi.[11] Journals such as *Aurora Română* [*The Romanian Aurora*] (1881-1882, 1884) or the bimonthly *Amicul Poporului* [*The People's Friend*] (founded in 1878) can only be considered attempts to build a bridge to a new stage of initiatives to establish a permanent environment of the Romanian press in Bukovina.

There is no coincidence that this rise began immediately after the election of Silvestru Morariu-Andrievici as the Metropolitan of Bukovina and Dalmatia in 1880. This charismatic personality of the Orthodox Church considered that the privileged position of Romanians as a supposed "historical nation" in Bukovina was threatened by the imposition of the German language and culture under the influence of incipient centrifugal nationalisms in other provinces of the monarchy. The Romanian journal of the Orthodox Church *Candela* [*The Candle*], which Morariu-Andrievici founded in 1882, gradually became the center of an editorial enterprise attached to the metropolitan printing house that led to the printing and distribution of the Romanian spiritual and secular books. The activity of the center around the metropolitan was also linked to the rise of active political groups since the late 1870s. On behalf of an educated, germinating Romanian bourgeoisie, with clearly expressed national views, *Concordia* Association which served the Romanian national objectives and opposed the "old Romanian politicians" willing to compromise was founded in 1885. Its press or rather its "spokesperson" was the bimonthly *Revista Politică* [*The Political Journal*]

[10] I. Loghin, 1926, p. 130.
[11] Ibid.

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(1886-1891), published in Suceava (but printed by Eckhardt in Chernivtsi).[12] In order to be even more active in the political life, more persuasive in everyday life and to better pursue its political goals, the *Concordia* Association (led since 1895 by Zaharia Voronca), turned the journal into a daily newspaper, under the title *Gazeta Bucovinei* [*Bukovina Gazette*]. In fact, on the one hand, this sealed the establishment of the Romanian National Party and significantly shaped the national discourse of the Romanian groups and parties in their argument until 1918. Hiring experienced Romanian journalists from Transylvania (such as George Bogdan-Duică, Pompiliu Pipoș or Valeriu Braniște),[13] who outlined their militant discourse in their fight against the Hungarian centralism, was vital for the national rhetoric of the Romanian press in Bukovina.

The conflicts between the different factions of the Romanian national movement were also reflected in the diversity of the political press representatives. On the one hand, these conflicts were aroused by the different positions adopted towards the Austrian administration, but also towards the new political camp being formed, namely the Ukrainian nationalists. The split of the Romanian National Party by "Tinerii Români" ["The Romanian Youth"] led by Iancu Flondor and George Popovici in 1897 led to the cessation of publishing *Gazeta Bucovinei* [*Bukovina Gazette*], whose place was taken by *Patria* [*The Fatherland*] (1897-1900), edited by Valeriu Braniște.[14] In a radical tone, almost irredentist and launching into a direct confrontation with the government, the newspaper was subjected to retaliation from the administration, culminating in a printing ban. The more moderate Romanian conservatives issued their own publication, *Timpul* [*The Time*], while the rigid line of *Patria* [*The Fatherland*] was taken over by *Deșteptarea* [*The Awakening*], which has been published since 1892. The national-Romanian political scene seemed to become irrelevant when Aurel Onciul decided to get directly involved in the political life of Bukovina: in Brno, where he had been district governor for a time, he began publishing the

[12] I. V. Cocuz, 1989, p. 35.
[13] I. N. Oprea, 2004, p. 85.
[14] Ibid, p. 43.

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newspaper *Privitorul* [*The Viewer*] (1902-1903), which quickly became the "spokesman" for his alleged anti-oligarchic and anticlerical program, a popular program especially among the petty bourgeoisie and the peasants. Onciul's tactic to assert himself first in alliance with the representatives of the Ukrainians, Jews and liberal Germans against the main figures of the Romanian nationalists, especially Iancu Flondor, and then to legitimize his group of supporters as in fact the only defender of the Romanian interests in Bukovina[15] was expressed in the speeches of his daily *Voința poporului* [*The People's Will*] (1905-1908), the newspaper being (especially after 1906) also the witness of his oscillation towards the furious anti-Semitism of Lueger's Viennese-social-Christian inspiration. The opposing camp founded *Apărarea națională* [*The National Defense*] (1906-1908); after a brief reconciliation (1908-1909) within a common Romanian Christian Social Party, whose press representative was the newspaper *Românul* [*The Romanian*],[16] the two wings separated again, which led to a new journalistic controversy. The early 20th century was thus marked by incisive and belligerent mutual criticisms between Aurel Onciul's *Foaia poporului* [*People's Leaf*] (1909-1914) and *Patria* [*The Fatherland*] (1909-1910) and Iancu Flondor's *Viața nouă* [*The New Life*] (1912-1914). Despite the political divergences an offensive Romanian national activism, an ideal of national emancipation was developed in both camps, and their newsrooms respectively. Of the Romanian-language political newspapers in Bukovina, only *Lupta* [*The Struggle*] (1906-1910), a social-democratic monthly, advocated for constructive cooperation between nationalities.

The First World War sealed the end of the Habsburg Monarchy and brought the environment of the Romanian press in Bukovina into a new era. The first issue of *Glasul Bucovinei* [*The Voice of Bukovina*] newspaper is published on October 22. The leading committee headed by Ion Nistor and

[15] I. V. Cocuz, 1989, p. 63.
[16] Ibid, p. 61.

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Sextil Pușcariu expresses its intentions, and a month later it issues no.14 "Fulfilling A Golden Dream" of *Glasul Bucovinei* [*The Voice of Bukovina*].[17]

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