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**REGIONALISM AFTER THE ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM  
OF 14th AUGUST 1938. HOW ROMANIAN AUTHORITIES AND  
ELITES CELEBRATED THE YEAR 1918 IN SUCEAVA REGION\*\***

On 10th February 1938 King Carol II of Romania carried out a coup and established a personal regime commonly known as the “Royal Dictatorship”. One action he had planned beforehand and which he put into practice on 14th August 1938 was a reform of the territorial administration. A major aim of the reform was to erase the boundaries of the historical regions of Romania and to put an end to regionalisms. Bukovina was merged with the Bessarabian Hotin county and the pre-1918 Romanian Dorohoi county into a super-county called Suceava Region. Transylvania was split into two parts: Northern Transylvania, including Maramureş and Crişana, became Someş Region, and Southern Transylvania, without Hunedoara, Braşov and Trei Scaune counties, was named Mureş Region. The administrative reform however proved counterproductive. Local elites continued professing their Bukovinian or Transylvanian regionalism under the new labels.<sup>1</sup>

In one sense the Romanian State itself was responsible for this failure. The above-mentioned historical provinces of Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transylvania had been under Russian, Austrian and Hungarian rule until 1917/1918. In order to justify their merger with the Old Kingdom (Moldavia, Wallachia and Dobrogea) not only from an historical and ethnic perspective, but also in the spirit of the wilsonian principle of self-determination, postwar Romania, which faced Hungarian and Soviet territorial claims, strongly relied on the foundation myth<sup>2</sup> of the unions of Bessarabia (9th April 1918), Bukovina (28th November 1918) and, most of all, Transylvania (1st December 1918) with the Old Kingdom. The myth basically proclaimed that the regions had freely decided, by and through their duly authorised representatives, to unite with the existing Romanian State. While it was true that most of the ethnic Romanians actively involved had supported the unions, the fact that representatives of minority groups had refused them and that military occupation had preceded them in Bessarabia and Bukovina was generally played down.

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<sup>1</sup> Philippe Henri Blasen, *Suceava Region, Upper Land, Greater Bukovina or Just Bukovina? Carol II's Administrative Reform in North-Eastern Romania (1938-1940)*, in *AIIX*, tomul LII, Supliment, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Here the word “myth” refers to a story with a specific function, which might or might not be fictional.

According to Romanian historian of religions Mircea Eliade a myth needs a cyclical rite to keep it alive and to allow it to fulfil its function.<sup>3</sup> This theory works for the Romanian foundation myth which was rekindled every year by celebrations, not only in the regions concerned, but in the entire country. Special anniversaries were given an even greater importance. The year 1938 marked the twentieth anniversary of the three unions, but the administrative reform officially erased Bukovina and Transylvania from the map before the respective celebrations were due.

It is not known whether the Romanian authorities were aware that they had to make a choice between enforcing the administrative reform and performing the annual rite. If they did, the reason why they eventually chose the latter was without doubt the Czechoslovakian crisis. The German expansion had given rise to Hungarian claims which continued even after the first Vienna Award of 2nd November 1938<sup>4</sup> and which made it crucial to further justify the merger of Transylvania with Greater Romania.

Several Romanian authorities issued orders for the celebration of 1st December 1918 in late November 1938. The cabinet of the prime minister ordered that “union day” (*ziua Unirii*) be celebrated in the whole country. All denominations were to hold special religious services. The priest or minister had to give “an appropriate speech” (*o cuvântare potrivită*) about the importance of the day. The Ministry of National Education was to issue specific instructions for the cultural and artistic programme in which cultural associations such as the League for the Cultural Unity of all Romanians and Astra had to take part. Civil servants were given leave. Speeches were supposed to praise the “act of union” (*actul Unirii*) and to “emphatically” (*hotărât*) insist on the full conservation of national heritage (i.e. *the territory of Greater Romania*), but stopping short of any negative or offensive allusion to another State. The regional governors forwarded this order to the county prefects, and the county prefects to the lower-ranking authorities as well as the local religious communities.<sup>5</sup>

On 22nd November 1938 the Ministry of National Education reminded the school inspectorates how the Assembly in Alba Iulia had decided the union of Transylvania, the Banat, Crişana and Maramureş with their Motherland 20 years earlier and how the Romanian army took action and turned this decision into reality. It concluded: “This is why the day of 1st December remains a holiday of the entire Romanian nation, a holiday which must be celebrated with special pomp this year.”<sup>6</sup> Therefore the ministry ordered the school inspectorates to take care that: 1) the national youth organisation Sentinels (*Straja Țării*) performed a ceremonial on the morning of 1st December and its commander spoke about the importance of the day; 2) pupils and teachers attended the

<sup>3</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Le Mythe de l'éternel retour, archétypes et répétition*, Paris, Gallimard, 1949.

<sup>4</sup> *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik 1918-1945*, Serie D, Band IV, Imprimerie Nationale, Baden-Baden, 1951, p. 132 (doc. 118): the German minister in Budapest to the German Foreign Office, 15.11.1938; p. 135 (doc. 122): the head of the political section of the German legation in Budapest, 18.11.1938; p. 138 (doc. 127): the head of the political section of the German legation in Prague, 19.11.1938; etc.

<sup>5</sup> SJAN Botoşani, Prefectura judeţului Dorohoi, 123/1938, 171: Suceava Region to Dorohoi county, 25.11.1938 (see also handwritten note); SJAN Suceava, Prefectura judeţului Suceava, 46/1938, 1: Suceava Region to Rădăuţi county, 25.11.1938 (see also handwritten note, dated 27.11.1938); 2: Rădăuţi county to Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic and Lutheran parishes and Jewish community, 28.11.1938; 3: Rădăuţi county to districts (plase), 28.11.1938 (see also handwritten note, dated 28.11.1938).

<sup>6</sup> SJAN Suceava, Inspectoratul şcolar al judeţului Baia (209), 2/1938, 90: Ministry of National Education to school inspectorate of Baia county, 22.11.1938; SJAN Suceava, Inspectoratul şcolar al judeţului Rădăuţi (238), 3/1938: Ministry of National Education to school inspectorate of Rădăuţi county, 22.11.1938: “Iată de ce ziua de 1 Decembrie rămâne o zi de sărbătoare a întregii suflări româneşti, care în anul acesta va trebui comemorată cu un deosebit fast.”

Te Deum at the local church; 3) the schools “wholeheartedly” (*cu toată însuflețirea*) and “actually” (*în chip efectiv*) helped organise and joined the events of the Royal Cultural Foundation “Prince Carol”, Astra or Cultural League; 4) the schools organised some other celebrations under the authority of a school director in places where these societies did not exist.<sup>7</sup> The school inspectorates forwarded this order to the schools.<sup>8</sup> On 28th November 1938 the Ministry of National Education requested the school directors to take advantage of the celebration of 1st December to ask their pupils for a small contribution of at least 1 leu to the monument that was to be erected on Freedom Field in Blaj, Transylvania. As the anniversary of the revolutionary assembly of 15th May 1848 had passed, the ministry resorted to the common teleological perspective that this event had foreshadowed 1st December 1918.<sup>9</sup> Finally the Ministry of Justice ordered all trials to be postponed. The courts forwarded this order to the prefects, asking them to instruct the heads of district (*pretori*) and mayors to tell the locals not to go to the courts on that day.<sup>10</sup>

The county prefects also issued the detailed programmes for the celebrations in the county centres. In Suceava the prefect scheduled a religious service at 10:30 a.m. at St. John’s Monastery, the Roman Catholic and Armenian Orthodox churches and the synagogue, and invited the local military and civil authorities to participate.<sup>11</sup> Attending the service was mandatory for the county’s civil servants.<sup>12</sup> In Dorohoi a religious service was scheduled at 11 a.m. at the local “cathedral”. All the local civil servants had to attend. A celebration was planned at 4 p.m. at the theatre of the boys’ high school. First the president of the local Cultural Centre was to give a speech. Then the local choir would sing, and the pupils of the high schools recite poetry and dance. The celebration was to end with an “allegorical scene” (*tablou alegoric*) of the union.<sup>13</sup> The programme issued by Rădăuți county is the most detailed among those of Suceava Region kept at the National Archives of Romania. A religious service was scheduled at 11 a.m. at (the Orthodox) Bogdan Vodă’s Church. All civil and military authorities had to attend. The other denominations had to hold services at the same time. A celebration organised by the Society for Culture was to take place at 3:30 p.m. at the German House. First a mixed choir and the pupils from the boys’ and the girls’ high schools was to sing the National Anthem. Then the president of the Society for Culture would make an opening statement and Professor Valerian Torouțiu speak about the importance of 1st December 1918. The choir would sing *România* by V. Stătescu and *Pe al nostru steag* [On our flag] by (Bukovinian composer) Ciprian Porumbescu. Thereafter schoolgirl R. Kisslinger from Rădăuți Girls’ High School (interestingly not a Romanian ethnic as required by the regional governor on another occasion)<sup>14</sup> was to recite the “patriotic poem” (*poezie patriotică*)

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>8</sup> SJAN Suceava, Inspectoratul școlar al județului Baia (209), 2/1938, 90 (handwritten note): school inspectorate of Baia county to schools, 23.11.1938; SJAN Suceava, Inspectoratul școlar al județului Rădăuți (238), 2/1938, 141: school inspectorate of Suceava Region to secondary schools, 25.11.1938.

<sup>9</sup> SJAN Suceava, Inspectoratul școlar al județului Rădăuți (238), 2/1938, 144: Ministry of National Education to schools, received 28.11.1938. See e.g. Orest Tafrali, *Istoria Românilor pentru clasa VIII-a secundară de băieți și fete*, București, 1935, p. 380.

<sup>10</sup> SJAN Suceava, Prefectura județului Rădăuți, 46/1938, 7: Rădăuți court to Rădăuți county, 29.11.1938.

<sup>11</sup> SJAN Suceava, Prefectura județului Suceava, 21/1938, 37: Suceava county to authorities of or based in the county seat, 30.11.1938.

<sup>12</sup> SJAN Suceava, Prefectura județului Suceava, 21/1938, 40: Suceava county to authorities of or based in the county seat, 30.11.1938.

<sup>13</sup> SJAN Botoșani, Prefectura județului Dorohoi, 123/1938, 176: Dorohoi county, draft, not dated.

<sup>14</sup> SJAN Suceava, Inspectoratul școlar al județului Rădăuți (238), 2/1938, 176: school inspectorate of Suceava Region, circular order, 13.12.1938.

*Ardealul* [Transylvania]. Finally a church choir would perform *Du-te, dor* [Leave me, longing] by C. Filip, *Ana Lugojeana* by Ion Vidu and, again, the National Anthem.<sup>15</sup>

There is no proof of any ministry having issued an order for the celebration of 28th November, the day of the union of Bukovina with Romania. There is no proof either that the governor of Suceava Region or a prefect of a Bukovinian county did so. It seems that Suceava Region only organised a reception for the people who had taken part in the unions of Bukovina and Bessarabia with Romania. This reception was due at the governor's palace in the evening of 1st December 1938.<sup>16</sup> While the national authorities may have regarded the union of Bukovina with Romania as an event of lesser importance than the union of Transylvania, regional governor Gheorghe Alexianu (1897-1946) possibly neglected its celebration because he tried to enforce the administrative reform which he had helped design.<sup>17</sup>

Instead a committee headed by Rector Ion I. Nistor (1876-1962) of Cernăuți University<sup>18</sup> organised the celebration of the union of Bukovina with Romania on 28th November 1938.<sup>19</sup> Nistor had been a member of the General Congress of Bukovina that had voted for the union<sup>20</sup> and one of the two delegates who had presented the resolution of uniting Bukovina with Romania to King Ferdinand.<sup>21</sup> On the one hand he had a clear personal interest to celebrate the anniversary, wishing to remind the people of the role he had played therein. On the other hand he had fought cosmopolite "Bukovinism"<sup>22</sup> and the idea of an autonomous Bukovina since 1918, boldly advocating Romanianisation and centralisation. When he and the president of the General Congress Iancu Flondor were appointed ministers without portfolio (for Bukovina) on 18th/31st December 1918 he supported the centralist policy of the Brătianu ministry, causing Flondor to step down on 14th April 1919.<sup>23</sup> Because of his political stance it is possible that Nistor also faced a dilemma over whether to celebrate the union of Bukovina or not.

According to the report published by the newspaper "Glasul Bucovinei" [The Voice of Bukovina], Nistor's mouthpiece since 1918,<sup>24</sup> the celebration organised by

<sup>15</sup> SJAN Suceava, Prefectura județului Rădăuți, 46/1938, 4-5: Rădăuți county to authorities of or based in the county seat, religious communities and associations, not dated.

<sup>16</sup> *Vereinigungsfeier im Tinet Suceava*, in "Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung", no. 10040, 27.11.1938, p. 5; *Sărbătorirea Unirii în Tinetul Suceava. Comunicatul Rezidenței Tinetului*, in "Glasul Bucovinei", no. 5489, 28.11.1938, p. 17.

<sup>17</sup> Philippe Henri Blasen, *op. cit.*, p. 280.

<sup>18</sup> *Anuarul Universității Regele Carol al II-lea din Cernăuți pe anul de studii 1938-1939*, Cernăuți, Institutul de Arte Grafice "Glasul Bucovinei", 1939. For biographical information, cf. 134; Stelian Neagoe, *Ion Nistor, un istoric pentru eternitatea românilor de pretutindeni*, in Ion Nistor, *Istoria Basarabiei*, București, Humanitas, 1991; Paul E. Michelson, *Ion I. Nistor in Romanian Politics, Scholarship, and Culture. 1919-1933*, in CC, no. 1, 2011.

<sup>19</sup> *Douăzeci de ani dela Unirea Bucovinei*, in "Glasul Bucovinei", no. 5491, 30.11.1938, p. 2-3.

<sup>20</sup> *Der Kongreß beschließt die Vereinigung der Bukowina mit Rumänien*, in "Allgemeine Zeitung – Tagblatt. Gemeinsame Ausgabe", no. 403, 28.11.1918, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> *Die diplomatische Delegation der Bukowinaer Regierung*, in "Allgemeine Zeitung – Tagblatt. Gemeinsame Ausgabe", no. 420, 19.12.1938, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Ion I. Nistor, *Amintiri răzlețe din timpul Unirii*, in "Glasul Bucovinei", 1938, p. 285-286; *Homo bucovinensis*; Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania. Regionalism, Nation Building & Ethnic Struggle 1918-1930*, Ithaca/London, Cornell University Press, 1995, p. 59-60.

<sup>23</sup> *Die Gesetze über die Vereinigung der Bukowina mit Rumänien*, in "Allgemeine Zeitung – Tagblatt. Gemeinsame Ausgabe", no. 430, 3.01.1939, p. 1; *Demission des delegierten Ministers Dr. Iancu Flondor*, *ibidem*, no. 515, 15.04.1919, p. 1; *Der Kurs der neuen Regierung*, *ibidem*, no. 518, 18.04.1919, p. 1; *MOF*, no. 4, 18.04.1919, p. 179 (no. 600 bis); Mariana Hausleitner, *Die Rumänisierung der Bukowina. Die Durchsetzung des nationalstaatlichen Anspruchs Grossrumäniens 1918-1944*, München, R. Oldenbourg, 2001.

<sup>24</sup> *Zur neuen Orientierung*, in "Allgemeine Zeitung – Tagblatt. Gemeinsame Ausgabe", no. 416, 14.12.1919, p. 3.

Nistor's Committee started at 12 p.m. at the local cathedral, with a memorial service for the deceased members of the (Romanian) National Council and the General Congress of 1918. Surviving members were invited to a dinner party at 8 p.m. at the Women's Council. The place had been decorated with pictures of King Ferdinand, Queen Maria, King Carol II, heir to the throne Mihai, Metropolitan Vladimir Repta, Iancu Flondor, Dionisie Bejan, Nicolae Iorga (who was not part of the royal family, nor a Bukovinian) and Ion I. Nistor; one painting of the General Congress by Maria Seleschi and another one called "Architects of the Union" (*Făuritorii Unirii*) were also on display. The guests mentioned by "Glasul Bucovinei" were all ethnic Romanians. Nistor chaired the feast. He gave a speech praising King Carol II, who had just returned from an important diplomatic journey (to Great Britain, France and Germany) and proposed sending him a telegram. Suceava Region was represented by its secretary general Emanoil Cercavschi (although regional governor Alexianu probably was in town as well),<sup>25</sup> who spoke in pompous language about the union, ranting against the Austrian Empire.<sup>26</sup> Cercavschi's speech, which was published in "Glasul Bucovinei" and partly reprinted a year later in a semi-official publication of Suceava Region,<sup>27</sup> did not mention the administrative reform, as if he had forgotten that he was representing Suceava Region and not Bukovina.

Already in 1928 Nistor had brought out two anniversary publications dedicated to the union of Bukovina with Romania: *Unirea Bucovinei. 28 Noembrie 1918. Studiu și documente* [The union of Bukovina. 28th November 1918. Studies and documents] and *Zece ani dela unire* [Ten years after the union]. He published two similar books in 1938: *Amintiri răzlețe din timpul Unirii* [Miscellaneous memories from the time of the union] and *Bucovina sub dominațiunea românească. La 20 de ani dela Unire* [Bucovina under Romanian Rule. 20 years after the union]. When reporting on the celebration of 28th November 1938 "Glasul Bucovinei" advertised *Amintiri răzlețe*, and Nistor used the introduction of the latter to call attention to the books published in 1928, to *Bucovina sub dominațiunea românească. La 20 de ani dela Unire* and *Basarabia sub dominațiunea românească. La 20 ani dela Unire* [Bessarabia under Romanian Rule. 20 years after the union].<sup>28</sup>

*Amintiri răzlețe* was a 511-page collection of texts by surviving and deceased members of the (Romanian) National Council and the General Congress of 1918, as well as by Nicolae Iorga. It additionally contained pictures of the royal family, of the authors, a facsimile and several documents. However, no texts by the Poles or the Germans who had voted for the union in the General Congress<sup>29</sup> had been included and the book was constructed for self-promotion. The first document was an undated answer by King Ferdinand to "Prof. Ion I. Nistor, president of the Bukovinian refugees".<sup>30</sup> Moreover, while nearly every author had only one text in the collection, Nistor had ten.

<sup>25</sup> Alexianu closed down the Jewish House on that day, officially for technical reasons, in reality because he wanted to intimidate its owners: "Monitorul Ținutului Suceava", no. 9, 7.12.1938, p. 212 (no. 5914, 28.11.1938). This subject will be dealt with in a separate study.

<sup>26</sup> *Douăzeci de ani dela Unirea Bucovinei*, in "Glasul Bucovinei", no. 5491, 30.11.1938, p. 2-3.

<sup>27</sup> *S'au sărbătorit 20 de ani dela Unirea Bucovinei. Emoționanta cuvântare a d-lui Em. Cercavschi, Secretar General al Ținutului Suceava*, in *Un an de nouă Constituție în Ținutul Suceava. Sub glorioasa domnie a M. S. Regelui Carol II*, Cernăuți, Mitropolitul Silvestru, 1939.

<sup>28</sup> Ion I. Nistor, *Amintiri...*, p. III.

<sup>29</sup> *Der Kongreß beschließt die Vereinigung der Bukowina mit Rumänien*, in "Allgemeine Zeitung – Tagblatt. Gemeinsame Ausgabe", no. 403, 28.11.1918, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> *Răspunsul Regelui Ferdinand I către d-l prof. Ion I. Nistor, președintele refugiaților bucovineni*, in Ion I. Nistor, *Amintiri...*, p. 9.

According to the introduction Nistor had “timely” (*din vreme*) called on the authors, i.e. possibly before the administrative reform. In the introduction, post-dated 28th November 1938, Nistor did not mention the reform, but possibly hinted at it, expressing his “burning desire of an increasingly closer union of the Romanian lands, for the greater good and the prosperity of our nation”.<sup>31</sup>

Nistor’s other anniversary publication, *Bucovina sub dominațiunea românească*, was a 67-page popular history of Bukovina with 46 illustrations. It was based on the presentation of Bukovina (and Bessarabia, hence the book *Basarabia sub dominațiunea românească*) which Nistor had written for the International Exhibition in Paris in 1937.<sup>32</sup> It contained the usual mix of partly absurd attacks on the Austrian Empire,<sup>33</sup> nationalistic self-praise and obsequious monarchism. Self-promotion was more subtle. Nistor was absent from the text, but he had his portrait on page 46 and could be clearly recognised next to the king in the pictures on pages 54 and 55. Moreover, page 54 showed the students’ hostel “Ion I. Nistor”.

The introduction was dated “Annunciation, 1938” (*Buna-Vestire, 1938*), i.e. 25th March 1938, before the administrative reform. Indeed, the book did not mention the administrative reform. The last major event recorded was the change of Constitution in February 1938.<sup>34</sup>

A third anniversary publication was the work of a person in Nistor’s entourage, Ilie Corfus, at the time his assistant at the department of history.<sup>35</sup> In the introduction to *Amintiri răzlețe* Nistor thanked Corfus for helping publish the book and called attention to the latter’s article *Unirea Bucovinei* [The union of Bukovina], presenting it as an offprint from “Junimea literară” [Literary Junimea],<sup>36</sup> a journal he directed. It is not clear when exactly this article was written. The offprint is dated 1938, without mention of the day or the month, and the article appeared in the 1938 issue of “Junimea literară”.<sup>37</sup> A shortened version was printed in “Glasul Bucovinei” on 28th November 1938,<sup>38</sup> which is the terminus ante quem.

Corfus’ 13-page poetised text (literary historian Mircea A. Diaconu detected an Iconar style)<sup>39</sup> was written as a justification of the union of Bukovina with Romania, using once again the usual teleological perspective based on historical and ethnic arguments. It additionally served as yet another promotion of Nistor. Any mention of the administrative reform is absent from it, which might indicate that it was produced at an earlier stage. Instead it contains openly regionalist passages, e.g.:

<sup>31</sup> Ion I. Nistor, *Amintiri...*, p. III: “Dorința fierbinte ca unirea țărilor române să devină din ce în ce mai strânsă pentru binele și prosperitatea neamului nostru”.

<sup>32</sup> Idem, *Bucovina sub dominațiunea românească. La 20 de ani dela Unire*, in “Glasul Bucovinei”, Cernăuți, 1938, p. 3; I. Nistor, *La Bessarabie et la Bucovine*, Bucarest, Imprimeria Națională, 1937.

<sup>33</sup> For instance, after mentioning the Metropolitan Residence “in Moorish-Byzantine style” (*în stil mauro-bizantin*) “with its beautiful marble room” (*cu frumoasa sală de marmoră*) on page 16-17, Nistor inconsequently stated on page 18-19 that: “A hundred and fifty years of Austrian rule did not leave any lasting creation in Bukovina. All monuments of art conserved in Bukovina originated from the spirit of the native Romanian population.” (*O sută cincizeci de ani de stăpânire austriacă n’a lăsat în Bucovina creațiuni durabile. Tot ce s’a păstrat în Bucovina ca monument de artă a izvorât din spiritul populației băștinașe românești.*)

<sup>34</sup> Ion I. Nistor, *Bucovina...*, p. 38; p. 46; the Constitution had been published on 27th February 1938: *MOF*, no. 48, 27.02.1938.

<sup>35</sup> *Anuarul Universității...*, p. 112.

<sup>36</sup> Ion I. Nistor, *Amintiri...*, p. III.

<sup>37</sup> Ilie Corfus, *Unirea Bucovinei*, in “Junimea literară”, nos. 1-12, 1938, p. 25-35.

<sup>38</sup> Idem, *Gânduri pentru Unire*, in “Glasul Bucovinei”, no. 5489, 28.11.1938, p. 9.

<sup>39</sup> Mircea A. Diaconu, *Bucovina și complexul provinciei*, in “Analele Bucovinei”, no. 1, 1998, p. 39.

Bukovina in the year 1938 is not just any region rounding off the Kingdom of Romania. She is a national pantheon where our voivodes and their heirs in battle, the Bukovinian heroes who fell in the world war, rest. She is the guardian of our historical monuments, of the same pure and honest spirit as that of the boyar counsellors, lovers of conversation and writers of wise chronicles. But beside that, for the Romanian entity (sic!) of everywhere, Bukovina is a state of national, ethical and moral consciousness, a tendency of permanent ascent to the sky of a steadily greater and more flourishing Romania.<sup>40</sup>

In conclusion the administrative reform of 14th August 1938, meant to erase the historical boundaries of Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transylvania, did not prevent the official celebration of 1st December 1918 in order to rekindle the foundation myth of Greater Romania. Instead, there is no proof of an official celebration of 28th November 1918 on either national, regional or county level. This might have resulted from the lesser importance which the Romanian State gave the event and from the will of the regional governor to enforce the reform. The celebration of 28th November 1918 seems to have been left to rector Ion I. Nistor of Cernăuți University, who probably performed the rite out of personal interest. He contributed all the more to perpetuating Bukovina with his anniversary publications, which he had finished or at least prepared before the administrative reform cleared the region from the map. Because of Nistor's centralist stance, it is unlikely that this was his intention. However, Nistor must have been conscious that he helped promote regionalism by endorsing Corfus' article.

The celebration of the unions of 1918 in Suceava Region shows the inconsistency of the Romanian State which depended so much on its foundation myth or which acted so mechanically that it did not refrain from performing a rite which prevented the very enforcement of the administrative reform. It also uncovers the contradictions of the elites which should have helped build the new regime. The doings of the Romanian authorities and elites are best illustrated by an order of the school inspectorate of Suceava Region: schools had to purchase the new administrative map of Romania or to draw the new boundaries on the existing one.<sup>41</sup> In other words, schools did not need remove the old administrative map, as long as they superimposed the boundaries of the new regions over those of the historical provinces. Because they did not enforce the administrative reform properly, the Romanian authorities and elites produced a palimpsest.

Finally the 20th anniversary of the unions of Bukovina and Transylvania with Romania sheds some light on the status of the ethnic minorities under the new regime, which had created a General Commissariat for Minorities on 4th August 1938.<sup>42</sup> On the one hand, they had to hold religious services on 1st December 1938. On the other hand, the Poles and the Germans who had voted for the union of Bukovina with Romania were absent from Nistor's *Amintiri răzlețe* and were not remembered by either Nistor or Cercavschî during the dinner party on 28th November 1938, to which they perhaps had

<sup>40</sup> Ilie Corfus, *Unirea Bucovinei. Cuvinte pe marginea aniversării a două decenii dela Unire*, in "Glasul Bucovinei", Cernăuți, 1938, p. 12-13: "Bucovina anului 1938 nu e o regiune oarecare de umplutură în regatul României. Ea este panteonul național, unde se odihnesc voievozii noștri și urmașii lor în bătălii, eroii bucovineni, căzuți în războiul mondial. Ea este păstrătoarea monumentelor istorice, păstrătoarea aceluia suflet curat și cinstit, ca și sufletul sfinților boeri de odinioară, cinstitori de vorbă bună și alcătuitori de înțelepte cronici. Dar nu numai atât, Bucovina este pentru entitatea românească de pretutindeni o stare de conștiință națională, etică și morală, o tendință de înălțare permanentă, spre cerul unei României tot mai tari și mai înfloritoare."

<sup>41</sup> SJAN Suceava, Inspectoratul școlar al județului Rădăuți (238), 2/1938, p. 148: school inspectorate of Suceava Region to secondary schools and county school inspectorates, 20.11.1938.

<sup>42</sup> *MOF*, no. 178, 4.08.1938, p. 3588 (no. 2761). This subject will be dealt with in a separate study.

not been even invited. In *Bucovina sub dominațiunea românească*, Nistor also left out the role played by the Germans during the General Congress and stressed instead that they, along the Ukrainians, had been established as colonists by the Austrian rule (which was true in the case of the Germans),<sup>43</sup> “while the Romanian peasant was persecuted and subdued and forced to emigrate to the free Kingdom (of Romania, PHB) or even to America”<sup>44</sup> (which was greatly exaggerated),<sup>45</sup> consciously creating a divide between Bukovinian Germans and Romanians.

REGIONALISM AFTER THE ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM OF 14th AUGUST 1938.  
HOW ROMANIAN AUTHORITIES AND ELITES CELEBRATED THE YEAR 1918  
IN SUCEAVA REGION  
(Summary)

*Keywords:* Bukovina, unions of Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transylvania with Romania, Suceava Region, Administrative Law of 14th August 1938, Ion I. Nistor.

The article argues that during the interwar period the Romanian State relied on the foundation myth of the unions of Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transylvania with Romania in 1918 and that this myth had to be rekindled every year by a ritual celebration. The paper discusses the paradox that consisted in performing this rite after the boundaries of the historical provinces were officially erased in August 1938. Furthermore, it shows how Ion I. Nistor, a Bukovinian Romanian who was a staunch centralist, contributed to regionalism by celebrating the union of Bukovina with Romania and publishing on Bukovina in 1938. Finally, the article reveals how minorities which had voted for the union of Bukovina with Romania in 1918 were absent from Nistor’s celebration and publications.

<sup>43</sup> Johann Polek, *Die Deutschen*, in *Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild. Bukowina*, Wien, k. k. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1899.

<sup>44</sup> Ion I. Nistor, *Bucovina...*, p. 17: “Pe moșiile bisericii bucovinene, Austria a înființat colonii străine, și anume germane și ucrainiene, în vreme ce țaranul român era urmărit și asuprit și silit să emigreze în Regatul liber sau chiar în America.”

<sup>45</sup> For instance, according to historian Ștefan Purici, there had been immigration waves from Moldova between 1782 and 1803, which had been encouraged by the Habsburg authorities. This immigration decreased at the beginning of the 19th century and nearly stopped in 1829, when military service was introduced in Bukovina. At the same time, Romanian immigrants came from Transylvania directly or via Moldova; those who came via Moldova also were given privileges: Ștefan Purici, *Colonizări și imigrări în Bucovina între anii 1775 și 1848*, in “Analele Bucovinei”, no. 2, 1995, p. 362-365.