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# From the Enlightenment to Genocide: The Evolution and Devolution of Romanian Nationalism



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## Introduction

This article analyzes the history of Romanian nationalism's transformation from ethnic consciousness to exclusive nationalism and places the four phases of Romanian nationalism's evolution and devolution within the theories of nationalism put forth by Benedict Anderson and Ernest Gellner. Romanian nationalism developed over a period of two hundred years, beginning in the middle of the eighteenth century and culminating during World War II. It developed within four distinct phases: the birth of Romanian ethnic consciousness, the appearance of proto-nationalism, the era of patriotic nationalism, and finally, the period of exclusive nationalism. Each particular phase manifested within broad historical movements such as the Enlightenment, the Romantic Period, the Springtime of Nations, and the Age of Nationalism. This article highlights some of the key influences of those historical periods upon Romanian nationalism. By aligning several of the key features of both Anderson and Gellner's theories within the broad historical movements with Romanian nationalism's development, it becomes clear that Romanian nationalism developed along a distinct course.

This article will first define key concepts such as nationalism, nation, ethnicity and modernization. Secondly, it briefly describes several of the major tenets of both Anderson and Gellner's theories of nationalism. Thirdly, it briefly outlines the historical situation of each developmental phase of Romanian nationalism, including the Romanian-speaking region's political, economic and sociological character. An explanation of how the Romanian nation perceived both itself and other ethnic groups defines and clarifies the monikers assigned the four phases. By illuminating Romanian perceptions and behaviors towards other ethnic groups, the article traces the beginnings of Romanian xenophobia and intolerance that in the late nineteenth-century were inextricably intertwined with

Romanian conceptions of national identity and how this conception collided with the process of modernization in Romania and resulted in the Holocaust.

Both Anderson's *Imagined Communities* and Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism* provide excellent, if refutable, starting points for explaining how nationalism developed in Western European nations; indeed, Anderson's theory of imagined communities even includes nations in Asia, South America, North America and Western Europe. Their theories, however, do not adequately explain the phenomena of Eastern European nationalism, and specifically, Romanian nationalism. And lastly, Gellner does offer a set of nationalism typologies, but Romania does not fit within them.

I argue that Romanian nationalism's development falls largely outside of typologies and grand theories proposed by Benedict Anderson and Ernest Gellner. Instead of attempting to categorize nationalisms in broad typologies, or even grouping them into several categories, it is more useful to think of nationalisms developing in each nation differently, as each nation has its own complex history and unique set of cultural and political challenges to contend with. It is important to understand how nationalism develops because it has so often resulted in racism, xenophobia, exclusion and in the most extreme cases, genocide. In Romania's case, understanding how nationalism developed can facilitate preventing its recurrence. Contemporary Romanians can take steps to avoid exclusive nationalism as it becomes more prevalent during a time of economic uncertainty and as Romanian society struggles to come to terms with its past, particularly with the role that it played in both the Holocaust and the Porajmos during World War II.

## Theories and Principles of Nationalism

Whether it shows up in football matches between historic rivals such as Poland and

Russia,<sup>1</sup> on the streets of Budapest during a right-wing political demonstration,<sup>2</sup> in the United States as white supremacists register to officially lobby the American government,<sup>3</sup> or in Japan where right-wing nationalists threatened to kill a South Korean actress if she visited Japan,<sup>4</sup> nationalism and its corollary xenophobia still thrive. Romania is no exception, as evidenced by the sometimes popular Greater Romania Party (PRM). Led by Corneliu Vadim Tudor (known also for his effusive praise of the former Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu), the Greater Romania Party participated in the Romanian government for a brief period from 1993-1995. In 2000, Tudor placed second behind Ion Iliescu, who became president that same year.<sup>5</sup>

Countless other examples abound of nationalist parties on the rise across the Western Hemisphere. In Romania it seems that the xenophobia connected with the Iron Guard of interwar Romania and its role in the Holocaust have either been forgotten or sanitized and revised by Communist historians.<sup>6</sup> Further complicating the mix of xenophobia and nationalism in Romania is the legacy of the Treaty of Trianon after World War I and the Romanian memory of foreign domination for much of its history. For Romanian Hungarians it is not uncommon for them to still reference Hungarian territorial losses after the Great War and long for the days when Transylvania was still part of Hungary. Romanian Hungarians advocate strongly for their own institutions, such as universities, in which Hungarian is the primary language of instruction. In Targu Mures, Romania, a city whose population is roughly half Hungarian and half Romanian, fears of ethnic tensions are arising again due to the decision to allow the creation of one Hungarian section at the medical school

which alarmed the community.<sup>7</sup> It makes sense, then, to examine the historical roots of Romanian nationalism and remind our contemporaries of how murderous, nationalist ideologies emerge and potentially point a way towards reconciliation.

We can begin our investigation by asking several questions. What were the origins of Romanian nationalism? How did Romanian nationalism transform from ethnic consciousness to exclusive, racist nationalism? How do the major theorists of nationalism explain the rise of nationalism in Eastern European nations? How does Romanian nationalism fit within those theories? Why is it important to investigate the origins of nationalism in Romania in particular? What has been the impact of Romanian nationalism upon minorities within Romanian borders? What is the nature of Romanian nationalism? Is it xenophobic? Is it fueled by resentment, fear, or anxiety?

Several of Gellner's arguments for the rise of nationalism are inappropriate in Romania's case. The first problem is the vagueness with which he defines 'nationalism,' itself a movement that took place over the course of nearly two centuries. In Romania nationalism can be broken down into four phases. Secondly, industrialism was not necessarily a principle cause of nationalism in Romania because it developed unevenly in the Romanian-speaking regions and it developed quite late. The third point that is closely tied to the last is the fact that Romanian nationalism developed in the absence of industrialism. This raises the fourth problem that, according to Gellner, industrialization requires the creation of a homogeneous culture by the state which includes the promotion of mass literacy. Much like industrialization, mass literacy occurred unevenly throughout the regions and when it did, it was hardly at

the levels predicted by Gellner. The fact is literacy in Romania remained quite low until after World War II; nevertheless, Romanian nationalism took root. Further, the cultural homogeneity that the state is supposed to engender did not happen in Romania, especially during the interwar years when debates about the nature of Romanian identity and the extent that modernization should take were most intense with nationalist, xenophobic parties eventually taking over the reins of government in the years before World War II. And lastly, industrialization itself and its corollary, urbanization, became the object of fierce debate amongst the Peasantists, the Europeanists, and the eugenicists. The failures of industrialization and urbanization, or at least the perception of their failures, further fueled the racism inherent in Romanian nationalism and engendered ethnic scapegoating, especially vis-à-vis the Romanian Jewish population. These variables combined and transformed patriotic nationalism into genocidal nationalism.

Complicating Anderson's argument that print capitalism was the catalyst that spurred the emergence of nationalism is the fact that virtually no printing in the Romanian language was done in the eighteenth-century in the Romanian-speaking provinces, let alone print capitalism. Even during the nineteenth-century the level of printing was miniscule in comparison to other regions in Western Europe. Some of this was due to the extremely low level of literacy and the similar absence of intellectual elites to promote the idea of literacy through journals, newspapers and books. Also complicating the emergence of print capitalism and literacy in the Romanian speaking regions was the fact that Romania was not an independent nation until 1878. Permits to set up printing presses,

1. Colin Busby, "Euro 2012 Update: Nationalist Riots," *International Political Forum*, June 13, 2012, <http://internationalpoliticalforum.com/euro-2012-update-nationalist-riots/>.
2. Frank Bruni, "Bruni in Hungary: The Usual Scapegoats," *New York Times*, April 23, 2012, [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/24/opinion/bruni-in-hungary-the-usual-scapegoats.html?\\_r=1&ref=hungary](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/24/opinion/bruni-in-hungary-the-usual-scapegoats.html?_r=1&ref=hungary).
3. Nick Wing, "Paul Mullet, White Nationalist, Neo-Nazi Birther, Registers as Capitol Hill Lobbyist," *The Huffington Post*, June 18, 2012, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/18/paul-mullet-white-nationalist-neo-nazi-lobbyist\\_n\\_1607179.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/18/paul-mullet-white-nationalist-neo-nazi-lobbyist_n_1607179.html).
4. Yoo I Na, "Japanese Right-wing Nationalists Threaten if Kim Tae Hee Comes to Japan 'We'll Kill Her,'" *Soompi*, March 12, 2012, <http://www.soompi.com/2012/03/12/japanese-rightwing-nationalists-threaten-if-kim-tae-hee-comes-to-japan-well-kill-her/>.
5. Balkan Insight, "Key Political Parties in Romania," June 24, 2012, <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/who-is-who-political-parties-in-romania>.
6. Irina Livezeanu, "The Romanian Holocaust: Family Quarrels," *East European Politics and Societies*, 16 (2002): 936.
7. Michael Leidig, "Medical School in Hungarian Sparks Controversy, Fears Over Ethnic Divides" *The Romanian Times*, March 13, 2012, [http://romaniatimes.at/news/General\\_News/2012-03-13/20294/Medical\\_School\\_in\\_Hungarian\\_sparks\\_controversy\\_fears\\_over\\_ethnic\\_divides\\_](http://romaniatimes.at/news/General_News/2012-03-13/20294/Medical_School_in_Hungarian_sparks_controversy_fears_over_ethnic_divides_).

therefore, were almost always denied by the imperialist power (Transylvania was dominated by the Austrian Empire and ethnic Hungarians until after World War I) due to the fear that nationalist ideas would indeed awaken the Romanian population to revolution. Even if permission was granted, readership and subscription rates were so paltry that presses would quickly go out of business. Nevertheless, Romanian nationalism did find a niche first in the Transylvanian intellectual circles in the eighteenth-century and even more fervently by the secular elites of the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia in the middle of the nineteenth-century. In the Romanian speaking territories neither capitalism nor print existed on a large enough scale to promote the idea of an “imagined community” across a wide geographical area, but instead, print capitalism and literacy remained confined to a small community of elites and intellectuals.

Before analyzing the evolution and devolution of Romanian nationalism, it is necessary to define the terms that we will be dealing with. Gellner and Anderson’s proposals on the development of nationalism are considered ‘modernist.’ According to Anthony D. Smith, the modernists assert that “nationalism, the ideology and movement is both recent and novel; nations too, are recent and novel; (and) both are the products of ‘modernization’, the global movement of societies to ‘modernity.’”<sup>8</sup> Modernists attempt to track the creation of nation-states by following rates of “urbanization, social mobility, rising literacy rates, media exposure and voting patterns.”<sup>9</sup> Modernity implies reason, progress and rationality. Modernization is the process by which

values are structurally implemented. Modernization as characterized by Maria Bucur is recognizable by “the growth of state institutions meant to subordinate local practices to a unitary system; the development of modern political parties; the secularization of political and social authority; industrialization; the growth of cities; and the development of occupations tied to the new state institutions.”<sup>10</sup> In the Romanian case, modernization would not begin until near the end of the nineteenth-century with the unification of Moldavia and Wallachia as an independent nation<sup>11</sup> and gained speed with the formation of Greater Romania after World War I.

According to Adrian Hastings, ethnicity is “a group of people with a shared cultural identity and spoken language.”<sup>12</sup> Hastings’ succinct definition of ethnicity can be elaborated upon by using T.K. Oomen’s summary of an ethnicity’s attributes: “religion, sect, caste, region, language, descent, race, colour and culture.”<sup>13</sup> Nations are “cultural entities that tend to establish their own states”<sup>14</sup> and denote self-awareness or self-consciousness.<sup>15</sup> Nations may or may not have political autonomy, and if they do not have it officially, they invariably claim their right to it. They almost always have their own literature, which becomes a primary source of identification.<sup>16</sup>

Lastly, nationalism attempts to unify the political and national units. Modern nationalism “overrides all other public obligations, and in extreme cases (such as war) all other obligations whatsoever.”<sup>17</sup> It can also refer to a political movement that seeks sovereignty within a certain geographical territory on behalf of a nation and uses nationalist arguments to justify its claim. Nationalism often arises

due to a perceived threat to the existence of a particular ethnic group’s cultural traditions. As a result, protection of the nation is sought through the creation of a state. According to John Breuilly, nationalist claims are “built upon three basic assertions: 1) There exists a nation with an explicit and peculiar character. 2) The interests and values of this nation take priority over all other interests and values. 3) The nation must be as independent as possible. This usually requires at least the attainment of political sovereignty.”<sup>18</sup> Nationalism may also be broken down into typologies, which, for the purpose of this paper, will be done as I attempt to define the four stages of Romanian nationalism that I have identified.

Gellner does not attempt to date the beginning of modernization or the advent of industrialization, which is problematic for explaining the appearance of Romanian nationalism. For him, modernization merely implies that the rupture between agricultural societies and industrial societies has created a profound shift in human history. Depending upon the nation, this rupture may occur at various points in history, sometimes earlier, sometimes later. In the case of the United States and Great Britain, it occurs roughly in the middle of the eighteenth-century. Rationality becomes the rule, rather than a belief in superstition or sacred knowledge.<sup>19</sup> Formerly, the world was well-ordered and hierarchical. Religion provided a unified explanation of the cosmos and the social order. The switch to rationality, though, turns this divinely ordered world upside down by offering unlimited exploration and questioning. Risk and uncertainty are introduced, but so is the notion of progress.<sup>20</sup>

8. Anthony D. Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism* (New York: Rutledge, 2009), 6.

9. Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism*, 4.

10. Maria Bucur, *Eugenics and Modernization in Interwar Romania* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010) Kindle Edition.

11. Paul Blokker, “Modernity in Romania: Nineteenth Century Liberalism and its Discontents,” European University Institute, Florence. EUI Working Paper SPS No. 2003/2. <http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/335/sps2003-02.pdf?sequence=1>. (Accessed June 2012).

12. Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationhood* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 2.

13. Oomen, T. K., “State, Nation and Ethnic: The Processual Linkages,” in *Race, Ethnicity and Nation: International Perspectives on Social Conflict*, ed. Peter Ratcliffe (London: University College of London Press, 1994), 34.

14. Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationhood*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 33.

15. Hastings, *Nationhood*, 3.

16. *Ibid.*, 4.

17. *Ibid.*, 5.

18. John Breuilly, *Nationalism and State*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 3.

19. Ernest Gellner, *Plough Sword and Book: The Structure of Human History*. (London: Collins, 1988), 66.

20. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), 22.

Institutions that once controlled the economy, politics, religion and social roles are fractured. In an industrial society, the economy becomes an entity separate from politics, and religion is separated from politics; however, in Romania, the Orthodox Church played an essential role in propagating and supporting the extreme nationalist agenda during the interwar period. In Gellner's 'agro-literate societies,' the peasants were cut off from their aristocratic masters. This was not the case in Romania where the interests of the aristocracy held sway over those of the peasantry until after World War I, when the first meaningful attempt at land reform was initiated.

Rather than kinship, language and culture becomes the key feature of identity.<sup>21</sup> Formerly, there was no chance for nationalism to develop between the spheres because the social strata were so starkly delineated, meaning that there was virtually no meaningful communication between the strata.<sup>22</sup> Industrialism brings urbanization, which implies mobility, both literally and figuratively.<sup>23</sup> Mass, secular education, taught in the local vernacular, fuels identity formation. As industrialism forced rural inhabitants to the cities, the newcomers found themselves in conflict with local minorities who speak different languages and have different cultural practices. They competed for scarce resources and in time, the minorities are excluded from the majority ethnic group.<sup>24</sup> Eventually the ethnic majority "yearn(s) for incorporation into one of those cultural pools which already has, or looks as if it might acquire, a state of its own, with the subsequent promise of full cultural citizenship."<sup>25</sup> Resentment fueled the desire for nationhood and the birth of nationalism was born.<sup>26</sup> Nationalism, then, created nations.

Much like Gellner, Anderson describes a similar cultural rupture, occurring primarily in the eighteenth-century. In Anderson's view, the eighteenth-century experienced the "dusk of religious modes of thought."<sup>27</sup> With the diminishing of religiosity, or the sacred, the "classical communities conceived of themselves as cosmically central, through the medium of a sacred language linked to a super-terrestrial order of power."<sup>28</sup> Communities were legitimated through religion. A sacred language, such as Latin, was also a privileged language. Only members of the divinely sanctioned order (such as royalty, aristocracy, and the clergy) had access to it. With the advent of print capitalism and the publishing of books in local languages, or vernaculars, the sacred languages lost both their legitimacy and power. In Anderson's estimation, "The fall of Latin exemplified a larger process in which the sacred communities integrated by the old sacred languages were gradually fragmented, pluralized and territorialized."<sup>29</sup> The church no longer could monopolize truth, especially as Europeans were mounting explorations in the New World, which had the effect of broadening their cultural horizons and introducing them to new conceptions of human existence.<sup>30</sup>

With the disintegration of the sacred political order came the solidification of borders. Formerly, borders were porous, as the divinely sanctioned kingdom was centripetally ordered. Power emanated from the monarch, who acted as the center of this hierarchically ordered universe. Entities such as the Holy Roman Empire, which had relied upon Latin as the thread and glue that held the Catholic territories together through language and religion, gradually disintegrated as vernacular-

defined borders receded and solidified. Regional and provincial governments began using local languages to administer the royal court. By the mid-seventeenth-century, "the automatic legitimacy of sacral monarchy began its slow decline in Western Europe" and the rise of modern nations began.<sup>31</sup>

The final component of Anderson's conception of modernity that significantly influenced the way man regarded the world was his new conception of time. Medieval communities conceived time in terms of 'simultaneity.' According to Anderson, "The medieval Christian mind had no conception of history as an endless chain of cause and effect or of radical separations between past and present." In other words, the past and future were fused in "an instantaneous present."<sup>32</sup> History and cosmology were intertwined. Man's interconnectedness with the world and his origins in relation to the world were validated by the sacred texts. As reason supplanted the power of religion to give the universe meaning, conceptions of time also changed. Rather than relying on faith to understand the seeming incomprehensibility and arbitrariness of the universe, men now attempted to understand time as a series of cause and effect. History became a sphere apart from the religious understanding of the cosmos, inspiring man to view history both progressively and fatalistically. Religion no longer provided an adequate, comfortable explanation of man's place in the world, but at the same time, there was optimism that man could progressively alter his destiny.<sup>34</sup>

Proto-states and the nationalism they eventually engendered provided one means of understanding man's place on earth, though. With the shattering of

21. Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism*, 5

22. John A. Hall and I.C. Jarvic, *Transition to Modernity: Essays on Power, Wealth and Belief*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 122-124.

23. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 62.

24. Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism*, 5.

25. Gellner, *Plough Sword and Book*, 210.

26. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 129.

27. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London: Verso, 1983), 11.

28. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 13.

29. *Ibid.*, 19.

30. *Ibid.*, 16.

31. *Ibid.*, 21.

32. *Ibid.*, 23.

33. *Ibid.*, 24.

34. *Ibid.*, 12.

simultaneous conceptions of time, man's need to understand the continuity of his existence (birth, adulthood, death, the afterlife) was undercut. The state, with its manufactured roots of historical legitimacy, came to be seen as an organism that had existed for millennia and would continue to exist far into the future. By identifying with the nation, man imagined himself as connected to an entity that moved along calendrical time. His existence was "measured by clock and calendar."<sup>35</sup> According to Anderson, the print capitalism of the sixteenth-century allowed man to imagine himself as connected with others who spoke and read the same language and practiced the same cultural traditions. This connectedness was represented by the date printed on newspapers and broadsheets. When reading a dated publication, readers could imagine themselves connected to similar readers from far-away places. The reader may never meet his compatriots, but he was aware that they were reading the same publication, possibly at the same time, within a general geographical location.<sup>36</sup> Along with the advent of capitalism, increasing literacy propelled the creation of a middle class, an essential component of modern nations and the audience that would be most influential in subscribing to nationalist ideologies during the Age of Nationalism in the twentieth-century.<sup>37</sup>

### **Romanian Ethnic Consciousness and Its Historical Foundations**

The initial step in the development of Romanian nationalism can be viewed as one in which Romanian ethnic consciousness was first articulated in the work and advocacy of Ion Inochentie Klein during the middle of the eighteenth-

century in Transylvania. The next phase can be defined as 'proto-nationalism' in which elites created a community based on a common vernacular; in this case Romanian, located in a particular geographical area and "can be a sort of pilot project for the as yet non-existent larger intercommunicating community."<sup>38</sup> The Romanian proto-nationalists were first represented by the Uniate Orthodox members of the Transylvanian School in the late eighteenth century.<sup>39</sup>

The slow dissolution of the Ottoman Empire near the end of the seventeenth-century and its defeat at the hands of the Austrians in 1684 provided space for Romanians to advocate for both political legitimacy and to define Romanian identity. After the Ottoman's failed siege of Vienna, Transylvania fell under the domination of the Hapsburgs. Almost immediately the ideals of the Enlightenment began filtering into Transylvania via Romanian Uniate priests who, due to their new status as Hapsburg subjects, were granted the privilege to pursue university educations in both Transylvania and abroad.<sup>40</sup> Under the Ottomans, Romanians had virtually no access to even the most rudimentary education, let alone one from a university. This changed under the Austrians as a result of the union of the Romanian Orthodox church with the Roman Catholic Church, which was the religion of the Austrian court.<sup>41</sup>

Transylvania was ceded to Austria by the Ottomans in 1699 with the signing of the Treaty of Carlovitz. King Leopold immediately set to work consolidating and incorporating Transylvania into the Austrian realm. In some ways, Transylvania seemed a natural fit for Western integration, but "the physical and geographical features of the isolated, independent, and

eastward looking Province were unlike those found anywhere in Europe."<sup>42</sup> Transylvania's distance from Vienna and the devastation of the countryside due to continual foreign invasion and Ottoman oppression and Greek Phanariot exploitation led the Hapsburgs to conclude that the capacity for unrest, which could potentially spread to its other eastern holdings, particularly Serbia and Hungary, needed to be immediately addressed.<sup>43</sup> The first potentially destabilizing force that needed to be rectified was the virtual autonomy that the Three Nations<sup>44</sup> (the German Saxons, Hungarians and Szeklers) had enjoyed for centuries under the Hungarians and later, Ottoman rule. The Romanians, on the other hand, were not a recognized nation, but rather, were merely 'tolerated.' Romanian nobles had been largely absorbed into the Magyar aristocracy. Even though it did not enjoy official recognition and was itself in danger of obsolescence, the Orthodox Church had become the de facto representative of the Transylvanian Romanians simply because it was the only legitimate Romanian institution in Transylvania with some form of administrative structure, no matter how feeble it might have been. Further, Austrian Roman Catholics viewed the truce between the four 'received'<sup>45</sup> religions (Calvinists, Unitarians, Catholics, and Lutherans) and the Orthodox Church in Transylvania as heretical, thus adding a cultural element to political consolidation.<sup>46</sup> By using religion as a wedge, the Austrians hoped to resolve the inherent instability of Transylvania and quicken centralization.<sup>47</sup>

Of most consequence to the Romanian Transylvanian's conception of ethnic consciousness was Leopold's forced union of the Roman Catholic Church with that of the Romanian Orthodox.<sup>48</sup> Leopold

35. Ibid., 24.

36. Ibid., 36,37.

37. Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism*, 6

38. Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, (Cambridge University Press: New York, 1990), 59, 60.

39. Keith Hitchins, *Studies on Romanian National Consciousness*, (Pelham: Nagard, 2006), 29.

40. Keith Hitchins, *The Idea of Nation: The Romanians of Transylvania, 1691-1849*, (Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1988), 11.

41. Hitchins, *National Consciousness*, 7.

42. Paul Shore, *Jesuits and the Politics of Religious Pluralism in Eighteenth-Century Transylvania, 1693-1773*, (Ashgate: Hampshire, 2007), 42.

43. Shore, *Jesuits*, 39.

44. The Three Nations were the "received" or officially recognized nations of Transylvania. This recognized status dated back to the fifteenth century and had remained in place despite the fact that the Romanians occupied the majority of the Transylvanian population.

45. As official religions, the "received" religions were supported by the Transylvania government and were eligible for both financial and political support.

46. Shore, *Jesuits*, 4.

47. Ibid., 2, 3.

viewed the Uniate Church as a vehicle to achieve both political pacification and recatholicization of Transylvanian society. He had no intention of allowing the formation of an autonomous Uniate Church. The merging of the Romanian Orthodox Church with Roman Catholicism was enshrined in the Act of Union, which also served as the official end of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Transylvania. The Union had the effect of dividing Romanians into two religious groups. On the one hand, this had a divisive effect, but on the other, it caused Romanians to begin looking at themselves and asking questions about what it meant to be Romanian. Even though it was deprived of an administrative structure, it would, nevertheless, continue to subsist through sheer stubbornness and with support from neighboring Orthodox communities.<sup>49</sup>

As a final act of the Union, the rights previously granted to the Uniate clergy in 1692 (the same rights as Catholic priests, immunity from taxation, payment of the tithe and other burdens imposed by landlords) were reaffirmed by Austrian officials at Alba Iulia on September 5, 1700 and adopted by the Orthodox Metropolitans Teofil and Athanasie.<sup>50</sup> Romanian Uniate priests and those who converted to the Uniate Church believed that they had finally achieved the same equality and status shared by the four recognized confessions. It is doubtful as to whether the Monarchy ever intended to actually fully enforce the Uniate clergy's newly enshrined political rights, but Uniate membership, nevertheless, opened other doors of opportunity, especially in education and representation at the Austrian court.<sup>51</sup>

Ion Inochentie Klein, the Jesuit-educated and Uniate Bishop of Transylvania from 1729-1751, was

probably the most important Romanian figure in the first half of the eighteenth-century who contributed to the awakening of Romanian ethnic consciousness. Klein viewed the Uniate Church first as a vehicle to achieve political rights for the Romanian clergy, and second, as a means of attaining the same political equality of the Romanian nation with that of the Three Nations. His emphasis on the natural law and the "equality of rights between nations" sets him apart as the "path-finder of the Romanians' national struggle."<sup>52</sup> Thirty years after the Union of 1700, Uniate priests still had not been awarded the equality promised by the Second Leopoldine Diploma. Klein fought vigorously, both at the Court in Vienna and at the Transylvanian Diet in Cluj, for the realization of those rights. Klein interpreted the Second Diploma as conferring equality not only upon Uniate priests, but also upon all Romanians in Transylvania. He conceived of all Romanians as a distinct nation, a grouping superior to both the Roman Catholic Church and the Uniate Church that deserved to have an equal political status as the Three Nations. Klein was less concerned with the conversion of Romanians to the Uniate Church, than to an overall improvement in the social, economic and educational status of the peasantry and all Transylvanian Romanians in general.<sup>53</sup>

It was within this context of solidarity that Klein began to formulate the basis of Romanian historical legitimacy via relentless petitioning to the Transylvanian Diet and the Austrian Court.<sup>54</sup> As Klein resisted the Jesuit's attempts to subordinate the Uniate Church to their authority, he weaved the idea of Daco-Romanian continuity into his arguments for Romanian political equality. By claiming Daco-Roman descent, he essentially

argued that the Romanian nation had occupied Transylvania the longest, and therefore, deserved equality with the three received nations. He was the first to attempt to establish the nobility of the Romanians and their historical legitimacy as a people who belonged to Western Civilization; therefore, they deserved the same political rights of the Three Nations.<sup>55</sup> He was also the first to argue that Romanians deserved equal representation due to the fact that they represented a majority of the population in Transylvania, paid a majority of the taxes and contributed the most men to the military. Lastly, he argued that the Leopoldine Diplomas guaranteed public office for Romanians who had converted to the Uniate Church. None of his protestations, either to Vienna or Cluj, bore fruit.<sup>56</sup>

Klein was a product of the Orthodox countryside and shared a traditional worldview with Romanian-speakers that had changed little over the centuries. For Klein, to be Romanian was to be Romanian Orthodox. Romanian Orthodox was not strictly based on doctrine but was also intertwined with culture, a culture with which Klein was unreservedly and passionately aligned and dedicated to preserving.<sup>57</sup> Further, because Romanian Transylvanians were under the yoke of the Austrians, Hungarians and Saxons, there was little hatred directed towards "the Other," which would characterize Romanian nationalism in the late nineteenth-century.<sup>58</sup> Klein's association with the traditional, folk customs of Orthodox Romanians in Transylvania went far to create a sense of solidarity and ethnic consciousness.<sup>59</sup>

Through Klein's leadership and the educational opportunities made available through Jesuit institutions and other opportunities to study in foreign

48. Ibid., 48.

49. Hitchins, *National Consciousness*, 14.

50. Hitchins, *Romanian National Consciousness*, 10.

51. Ibid., 11.

52. Daniel Prodan, *Supplex Libellus Vallachorum, or The Political Struggle of the Romanians in Transylvania During the 18th Century*, (Bucharest: Publishing House of the Academy of the Socialist Republic of Romania, 1971), 419, 420.

53. Shore, *Jesuits*, 50.

54. Hitchins, *National Consciousness*, 11,12.

55. Ibid., 24.

56. Keith Hitchins, *The Idea of Nation: The Romanians of Transylvania, 1691-1849*, (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1988), 45-48.

57. Hitchins, *National Consciousness*, 12.

58. Radu Cinpoș, *Nationalism and Identity in Romania: A History of Extreme Politics from the Birth of the State to EU Accession*, (London: I.B. Publishers, 2010),42.

59. Hitchins, *National Consciousness*, 24.

universities, a tiny Romanian intellectual class developed. While it did not have the needed political weight to successfully defend its perceived rights that had been granted by the Act of Union, this small group, comprised primarily of Uniate Priests, did represent both the germ of discontent and the presence of ethnic consciousness, the precursor to full-blown nationalism.<sup>60</sup>

Discontent in the Transylvanian countryside added impetus to Klein's efforts to build the foundations of Romanian ethnic consciousness. In the middle of the eighteenth-century, foreign 'prophets' such as Sarai Visarion, a Serbian Orthodox Monk, preached across the Transylvania countryside against the Union and warned of souls being damned because Romanians had been unwittingly tricked by Uniate priests into believing that Uniate theology was no different than Orthodox doctrine. This provoked what Hitchins calls the 'village intellectuals' to petition the court in Vienna for equal representation and religious freedom for Romanians in Transylvania. Village intellectuals were largely reacting to what they viewed as a potentially apocalyptic event: the destruction of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Despite the flurry of political organization that was first manifested in mid-eighteenth-century Transylvania, it must be kept in mind that this was done outside of any irredentist desire for Romanian statehood, but rather, within the confines of Habsburg law. There was no social revolution, but theirs was the desire for religious freedom.<sup>61</sup>

Because Romanian ethnic consciousness eventually transformed into an exclusivist nationalism strongly associated with xenophobia in the late nineteenth-century, it is useful to consider at this point the way in which Romanians conceived of their Jewish neighbors. If anti-Semitism is a useful indicator of xenophobia in general as Sorin Mitu

contends,<sup>62</sup> we can begin with eighteenth-century Romanian conception of the Jews. For the most part, Jews were not the objects of exclusion during Ion Klein's tenure as Bishop of Transylvania, as much as they were the objects of aversion. Owing to still extant Medieval perceptions of Jews, Romanians thought of them in stereotypical, hateful terms. For example, racist terms such as the "Jew as Usurer" and 'Christ-killer' became common descriptions for Jewish people. The stereotype of the 'Wandering Jew' who was said to be doomed to wander the earth because he had ceased to do the will of God and had thus fallen out of His favor was also prevalent but would take on a more significant meaning in the middle of the nineteenth-century when Romanian anti-Semitism, and xenophobia in general, became more complex, pervasive, deep-seeded and Romanian-specific.<sup>63</sup>

### **The Transylvanian School and Proto-Nationalism**

The Orthodox Church continued to exist in a position of resistance for several more decades until Leopold's daughter, Empress Maria Theresa, was forced to admit the failure of the Austrian Uniate policy in 1759 and allowed the Orthodox to have their own metropolitan, albeit a Serbian one.<sup>64</sup> By this time, a small group of Transylvanian intellectuals, largely educated at the Jesuit-run *gymnasium* at Cluj, expanded upon the ideas of Ion Inochentie Klein and elevated the position of ethnic consciousness to one of proto-nationalism. This group of distinguished intellectuals, made up primarily of priests with a smattering of laymen and *boyars*, came to be known as "The Transylvanian School," and was led by Ion Inochentie Klein's nephew, Samuil Micu-Klein, who was also a Uniate Priest. Because many of them had been educated in Austrian or Western universities, they were highly receptive to the use of reason to solve

social problems and were unreservedly optimistic that the misery and poverty of all Romanian-speaking peoples could be alleviated through pragmatic measures. Focused less on philosophical problems, they meditated on the practical problems of Transylvania: the condition of the peasantry, education, and political autonomy.<sup>65</sup>

The Transylvanian School existed from roughly 1785-1815. Its most notable members, Samuil Micu-Klein, Gheorghe Șincai, Petru Maior and Ion Budai-Deleanu, were all preoccupied with expanding and refining the ideas of Romanian historical continuity begun by Ion Innohentic Klein. They believed that by illustrating the Romanians' fundamental Latinity, they would gain historical legitimacy, entrance into Western civilization, and would win access to civil and human rights.<sup>66</sup> Samuil Micu-Klein was the first to politicize the theory of Roman continuity. Written in 1791 "The History of the Romanians in Questions and Answers" during a period of political unrest across Europe, some historians surmise that this book aimed to upset and attack the legitimacy of the Three Nations.<sup>67</sup>

In contrast to Ion Innohentic Klein, who believed that the Romanian language was inadequate for legal and political expression and who preferred to use Latin, members of the Transylvanian School began exploring the etymological roots of the Romanian. To them, the Romanian language had become corrupted by Slavic, Hungarian and German words and had been further obscured by the Cyrillic alphabet. The Romanian language, he believed, had not developed as fully as other Western languages because of the continuous barbarian invasions and extensive periods of foreign domination. He and his colleagues believed that it was their duty to restore the language to its original Latin roots.<sup>68</sup> Underlying the restoration of the language was the

60. Vladimir Hanga, "The Legal Arguments of the Romanian Claims in the Supplex Libellus Valachorum," *L'Europe du Sud-Ost* 3, (1976):142

61. Hitchins, *National Consciousness*, 17-22.

62. Sorin Mitu, *National Identity of Romanians in Transylvania*, (Budapest: Central European Press, 2001),

63. Mitu, *National Identity*, 79-81.

64. Hitchins, *National Consciousness*, 17.

65. Hitchins, *Idea of Nation*, 94.

66. Larisa Firtat, "European Influence in the Discourse of Ion Budai-Deleanu," *Revista Transilvania* 12,(2010): 140-144.

67. Hitchins, *The Idea of Nation*, 114, 115.

recognition that the Romanian people had fallen far behind the rest of Western Europe. The Transylvania School thus represented the first attempts to rectify the backwardness of their countrymen and region.<sup>69</sup>

The role of Joseph II, the Austrian Monarch, was also a significant factor in creating space for Romanian intellectuals to conceive of themselves as a nation within Transylvania worthy of political legitimacy. Joseph II was interested in continuing the process of centralization in the Austrian provinces, using reason to create more efficient governing structures throughout the realm and in making the provinces more useful, efficient and just. He believed passionately in promoting education at all levels of society. After visiting Transylvania and engaging the Romanian population in 1773, 1783, and 1786, he became personally interested in the plight of the peasants who had been for centuries mired in poverty and ignorance. After Horea's peasant uprising in 1784, Joseph II's resolve to address the plight of the Romanian nation in Transylvania was hardened. Although he ruthlessly stamped out the rebellion, he did recognize that reforms needed to be implemented in the countryside if further uprisings were to be avoided. This resulted in the emancipation of the Transylvanian serfs in 1785.

As a direct result of Horea's uprising, Joseph II's commitment to education specifically addressed the goal of "raising the Romanian nation out of poverty and ignorance to a place of equality with the other nations of Transylvania."<sup>70</sup> While it was true that Joseph II's goal of providing an education for the impoverished minorities of Transylvania was a noble one, his policy was also pragmatic in the sense that he sought to use education to both pacify the region and to maximize the economic potential of the region.

The Orthodox Church was given the authority to open schools, procure dual-language books (German-Romanian) and ensure that enrollment opportunities were being maximized.<sup>71</sup> State support for the Orthodox schools became mandatory.

Joseph II implemented other reforms that seriously undermined the political structure of Transylvania that had been dominated for centuries by the Saxon and Hungarian nobilities. First, Joseph guaranteed the free practice of Orthodoxy and made illegal discrimination against its adherents. Romanian Orthodoxy thus was no longer a 'tolerated' religion but a 'received' one placed on equal footing with the four received religions of the three nations. Secondly, he abolished the old Hungarian and Saxon system of counties and replaced it with one that paid little heed to the ethnic makeup of the former regions. The result was that the new counties had a more natural ethnic and religious makeup. In effect, all four nationalities were placed on an equal political footing and were guaranteed equal representation before the Austrian court.<sup>72</sup> Unfortunately, resistance to the new cultural and political reforms from the Saxons and Hungarians was especially fierce and eventually led to Joseph repealing most of the reforms before his death in 1790. Nevertheless, his recognition of the Orthodox Church and his implementation of education reform strengthened the resolve and drive of the Romanian nation so seek political equality.

The most significant political document written by Romanians in the eighteenth-century came about as a direct result of Joseph II's reforms and his death. The *Supplex Libellus Vallachorum*<sup>73</sup> was written one year after his death as Romanians realized that the window of opportunity for gaining political equality in Transylvania was closing fast. His successor, Leopold II, feared that the

revolutionary spirit that was spreading like wildfire in France would overtake the Austrian realms. He moved quickly to rescind his predecessor's reforms. In this regard he was successful, but the *Supplex* revealed that Romanian thinking about their nation had become more complex. Even though the influence of Romanian Transylvanian elites would recede and give way to elites in Moldavia and Wallachia, the influence of the *Supplex* would be felt throughout the nineteenth-century.<sup>74</sup>

The *Supplex* essentially unifies the political program put forth by Ion Klein during his time as Bishop of the Uniata Church in Transylvania. The only difference is its superior organization and vastness.<sup>75</sup> The Enlightenment concepts and principles contained within it (natural law, social contract, the rights of man) illustrate well the extent of the penetration of Western ideas into thinking and writings of the isolated and marginalized Romanian elite class.<sup>76</sup> Implicit within it also is the Enlightenment's attitude towards history: "History is merely a depository of all the injustices that must never occur again...He (the *Aufklärer*) sees in the past only inferiority, backwardness. For him, the Middle Ages represent only darkness, ignorance, superstition, slavery and lack of useful culture."<sup>77</sup> A recurring theme among many Romanian scholars and aristocrats near the end of the nineteenth century was the awareness of the Romanian-speaking land's pervasive backwardness. The *Supplex* acknowledges this state as it describes the historical injustices perpetrated against the Romanian nation in Transylvania vis-à-vis its disenfranchisement and demotion from historical ally and partner of the Hungarian nation to subordinate, tolerated status without political or cultural rights.<sup>78</sup> The *Supplex* puts forth the argument that Romania is not demanding new rights, but rather, the "restitution of old ones."<sup>79</sup>

68. Hitchins, *National Consciousness*, 38.

69. Cîmpoș, *Nationalism and Identity*, 12.

70. Keith Hitchins, *A Nation Discovered: Romanian Intellectuals in Transylvania and the Idea of Nation, 1700/1848*, (Bucharest: The Romanian Foundation Cultural Publishing House, 1999), 109.

71. Hitchins, *A Nation Discovered*, 113.

72. *Ibid.*, 116-118.

73. In Latin, '*Supplex Libellus Vallachorum*' means "The Petition of the Romanians in Transylvania."

74. Prodan, *Supplex*, 8.

75. *Ibid.*, 420.

76. *Ibid.*, 455.

77. *Ibid.*, 435.

78. *Ibid.*, 433.

Only redress in the present can rectify the backwardness of Romanians and bring them into the enlightened epoch.

Unfortunately for the Romanian political cause, the Austrian Monarchy had grown increasingly alarmed at both the upheaval that was taking place in revolutionary France and at the awareness that similar conflict could easily extend to its realms. Joseph II's reforms were rescinded and the Romanian's political demands were ignored. The demands of the Romanian elites for political representation proportionate to their population and tax burden would fundamentally alter the power structure of Transylvania if recognized. Revolution would ensue. Romanian requests to install printing presses were rejected, the use of German as the administrative language was reinforced and the historic status of the Romanian political status as 'tolerated' was reconfirmed. At the turn of the nineteenth-century, the political activity of the Romanian clergy was suppressed until after World War I when Transylvania was incorporated into the new Romanian state. The onus of political activity pivoted to Moldavia and Wallachia, where the tone became more secular as the political struggle was picked up by intellectuals operating outside of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Noticeably absent from the first phase of Romanian nationalism's development in Transylvania was the exclusion of Jews or other non-ethnic elements. Members of the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Romanian nation had always viewed those who did not subscribe to their religious creeds or cultural traditions as outsiders; nevertheless, Jews, especially in Moldavia, were engaged in professions such as money-lending and tavern-keeping, professions that were traditionally not taken up by Romanians. The stance Romanians took towards Jews was what one historian labeled "hostilely tolerant," but Jews were not explicitly excluded from commerce

and were even essential as intermediaries.<sup>80</sup> As a politically disenfranchised people, Romanian-speakers in Transylvania focused their energies first on political emancipation from the Austrian and Hungarian aristocracy. Romanian anti-Semitism did not become more exclusive until the legislation of the Organic Law from 1835-1859 was implemented.<sup>81</sup>

After the failed Greek uprising in 1821 the Phanariot princes were expelled from Moldavia and Wallachia and replaced with Romanian born princes by the Ottoman Porte. Russia restrained herself from interfering too obviously in Romanian internal affairs, but nevertheless awaited the chance to supplant Ottoman rule. This chance came in the mid-1820's as Great Britain's foreign policy focused less on supporting the Romanian-speaking lands as a buffer region between the Austrian and Ottoman Empires.<sup>82</sup> By 1828 Turkish power was clearly on the decline and Turkey could no longer hold on to Moldavia and Wallachia.<sup>83</sup> Russia, the self-declared protector of its Orthodox brethren in Romania, attacked Turkey and forced it to concede its influence in its Romanian-speaking holdings. Count Kiselev was installed as overseer of the Principalities by Tsar Alexander and a constitution was quickly composed and imposed on the chaotic, downtrodden Principalities. While the initial years of Russian domination saw an increase in pillaging and murder in the Principalities, this exploitation was soon quelled by Kiselev, himself an *Aufklärer* who had high-minded principles about how the Principalities should be governed.<sup>84</sup> In the span of less than ten years, the Principalities had been freed of the extortionist Phanariot regime, witnessed the diminished control of the Ottomans (although the Ottomans nominally still held some influence in the Principalities, the Principalities were essentially under the subjugation of the Russians) and succumbed to the "protection" of its Orthodox Russian brothers.

Nearly twenty-five years before the Russian takeover of the Principalities, the idea of a politically unified Romanian territory had been discussed in the Russian diplomatic and intellectual circles. Various proposals were put forth and tabled, none of them conceived by ethnic Romanians, but all of them with the goal of eliminating the principalities and the potential for the political and cultural unification of a Romanian state.<sup>85</sup> In 1803 the Russian diplomat, Vasili Feodorovich Malinowski, was the first to put forth the idea of a united Romanian-speaking territory which would be dominated by varying degrees under either Austria or Russia. Malinowski was a well-known liberal in Russian elite circles and was also a passionate advocate of the natural rights of man and hence, nations. Since the inhabitants of Transylvania were primarily Romanian, Malinowski proposed that Austria cede Transylvania and unite with Moldavia and Wallachia to form the new 'Kingdom of the Dacians.' Despite the seemingly benign intentions of Russia vis-à-vis their Romanian Orthodox brothers, the goal of a unified Dacia seems to have been one of political and economic dominance, rather than support for national self-determination.<sup>86</sup>

By 1828 Russian policy in the Principalities seemed to be gaining purchase, even if it was somewhat ambivalent. On one hand, there had been previous talk of breaking apart the Principalities, but on the other hand, Kiselev, and to some degree his Ottoman co-administrators, imposed the *Réglement Organique* upon the Principalities. The *Réglement Organique* was a quasi-democratic regime in the sense that its members were elected, but those representatives were chosen solely from the *boyars*, or Romanian aristocratic class. The peasantry was excluded. The significance of the *Réglements* to this article is threefold. First, they eventually functioned as the basis for the unification of a semi-autonomous Moldavian and Wallachian government

79. Ibid., 420.

80. Ladislau Gyemant, "The Romanian Jewry: Historical Destiny, Tolerance, Integration, Marginalisation," *Journal for the Study of Religious Ideologies*, 3(2002), 85.

81. Fischer-Galati, Stephen, "The Legacy of Anti-Semitism," *In The Tragedy of Romanian Jewry*, ed. Randolph L. Braham, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 5.

82. R.W. Seton-Watson, *A History of the Roumanians: From Roman Times to the Completion of Unity*, (London: Archon Books, 1963), 202-205.

83. Moldavia and Wallachia will henceforth be referred to as "the Principalities."

84. Seton-Watson, *A History of the Roumanians*, 203-206.

85. Alex Drace Francis, *The Making of Modern Romanian Culture: Literature and the Development of National Identity*, (New York: Taurus Academic Studies, 2006), 23.

86. Francis, *Romanian Culture*, 24.

in 1859 and became the vehicle by which political autonomy was reached. Second, for the first time in Romanian history, they created space for a Romanian opposition party to form, which was primarily dissatisfied with the Romanian status of Russian protectorate and administrator. This opposition was mostly composed of boyars who had been educated in the West and returned to Romania with revolutionary and Enlightenment ideals that guided them in their quest for Romanian independence. Lastly, for the first time legislation was enacted that expressly forbid Jews from owning land and gaining Romanian citizenship.<sup>87</sup> It would seem then, that if Russia had planned on using the *Règlements* as a tool to exert influence upon the Principalities, this plan had unwittingly unleashed a patriotic, nationalist fervor that would only accelerate over the course of the next one hundred years.

With Romanian patriots in Transylvania effectively silenced by the rise of the Magyars in that region, the nationalist intelligentsia in the Principalities capably took up the cause for Romanian sovereignty. This was partly accomplished by a marked rise in literacy in the boyar<sup>88</sup> class and also by the introduction of new printing presses, which was a direct result of Romanian elites going abroad to receive educations firmly rooted in Enlightenment rationalism. This meant that the next phase of Romanian nationalism, what I call patriotic nationalism, had turned secular as it had freed intellectuals from what Adrian Marino calls “medieval mystical contemplation, of devout, spiritual exercises,” and the new mindset instead becomes “profane and moral” with a more secular “social destination.”<sup>89</sup> Liberal ideology adopted from the French and German interpretations dominated Romanian political thought during this

period, as it insisted on every nation’s right to national self-determination. The means for nations to rid themselves of foreign oppression was through revolutionary upheaval. And lastly, with its insistence that every nation is unique (having its own language, history and culture), Romanticism played a key role in providing the vocabulary and direction for Romanian patriots in their quest for autonomy.<sup>90</sup>

According to Gellner, nationalism does not arise until the appearance of industrialization; however, when considering the rise of Romanian nationalism during the middle of the nineteenth-century in the Principalities, it is important to note that industrialization was still a long way off. The Romanian economy at this time was essentially mercantilist. The Romanian region of the Danubian basin became the breadbasket and cattle producer for the imperialist regimes in Vienna, Constantinople and St. Petersburg. A significant portion of the merchant class was of foreign origin and had little reason to invest in the infrastructure that would facilitate the efficient transportation of Romania agricultural products and provide incentives to Romanian peasants to produce more. Further, because of the Principalities long tradition of political instability and arbitrary system of taxation, there was little appetite to invest in long-term transportation projects such as bridges and highways.<sup>91</sup> Nevertheless, there was still often a grain or cereal surplus that could not be sold abroad for lack of efficient transportation. Whiskey was often produced as a means of realizing some profit on the grain surplus, which in turn lead to overproduction of liquor in general, leading one diarist to lament that the lack of efficient roads actually lead Romanians to a state of dissipation.<sup>92</sup> Serious investment in infrastructure would not occur until the 1860’s<sup>93</sup> and without

adequate infrastructure, there was little reason to invest in the kind of heavy industry that had been introduced in Great Britain and the United States nearly one hundred years earlier. Romanian nationalism, though, was clearly evident, despite Gellner’s insistence that industrialism come first.

Also salient to this period was the rise of literacy and publishing, both of which Anderson claimed would need to be in place in order for a nation to be “imagined.” Due to the scarcity of statistics concerning the Romanian-speaking regions during this period in virtually every demographic category, it is nearly impossible to form a completely accurate assessment of literacy and readership in the region; however, drawing on circumstantial documentation, the historian can safely surmise that Romanians were one of the least literate peoples in Europe in the nineteenth-century. One observer during this period claimed that Romanian literacy was at 8%, while another believed that even this number was too high. One work of official propaganda dating from the beginning of the twentieth-century placed Romanian illiteracy at 87%, or roughly the same levels found in some regions of sixteenth-century Western Europe; therefore, it is safe to assume that literacy levels were much lower seventy-five years earlier.<sup>94</sup>

Despite these extremely low levels of literacy, prominent members of the intelligentsia and Romanian political elite still believed in the essential importance of fostering Romanian national consciousness through newspapers and magazines. Most notably was Gheorghe Asachi of Moldavia, editor of *Albina românească* (The Romanian Bee, 1829-1847), who described literature as “the practical method of cultivating the nation.”<sup>95</sup> Asachi’s counterpart in Wallachia, Ion Heliade Rădulescu, published *Curiel rumânesc* (The Romanian

87. Seton-Watson, *History of the Roumanians*, 209-214.

88. The term “*Boyar*” refers to the Romanian nobility.

89. Adrian Marino, “The Romanian Enlightenment: Ideas about Theatre, Poetry, Literature, Books, Publishing Houses, Reading,” in *Enlightenment and Romanian Society*, ed. Teodor Pompiliu, (Cluj-Napoca, Romania: Editura Dacia Cluj-Napoca, 1980), 28.

90. Paul Blokker. “Modernity in Romania: Nineteenth Century Liberalism and its Discontents.” European University Institute, Florence. EUI Working Paper SPS No. 2003/2.

91. Drace-Francis, *Romanian Culture*, 20, 21.

92. Charles Boner, *Transylvania: Its Products and Its People*, (London: Longman, Greens, Reader and Dyer, 1865), 183.

93. Radu R. Florescu, “Social Classes and Revolutionary Ferment in Nineteenth Century Bucharest,” in *Romania Between East and West: Historical Essays in Memory of Constantin G. Giurescu*, eds. Stephen Fischer-Galati, Radu R. Florescu, and George R. Ursul, (Denver: Eastern European Monographs, 1982), 164.

94. Drace-Francis, *Romanian Culture*, 41.

95. Gheorghe Asachi, “Opere: 1820-1863,” in *The Making of Modern Romanian Culture: Literacy and Development of National Identity*, ed. Alex Drace-Francis (New York: Taurus, 2006), 40.

Courier, 1929-1848) and likewise proposed that “without national books, without a national literature, neither the *patrie*, nor patriotism, nor even nationality can exist.”<sup>96</sup> Râdalescu’s notation of the importance of literature in informing nationality comports well with Adrian Hastings’s same supposition written nearly 160 years later that a nation is primarily identified by the literature that it produces.<sup>97</sup>

Both Asachi and Râdalescu’s publishing ventures came as a result of their awareness of the backwardness of the Romanian-speaking lands and from a desire to promote Romanian national consciousness. Virtually every foreigner travelling through the Romanian-speaking lands lamented the backwardness of the region and Romanian intellectuals were painfully aware of the derision expressed in magazines as far away as London.<sup>98</sup> The publishers Asachi and Râdalescu who eventually became political leaders, were part of the Romanian Enlightenment tradition. One principal of the Romanian Enlightenment was that “literature must be directly and immediately useful to society” and whose “mission was to instruct and to criticize, to ‘enlighten’ in all aspects the consciousness of the Roumanians.”<sup>99</sup> Pragmatism, then, was also one of the most prominent features of Romanian Enlightenment thought: if an idea did not have a useful application, then it was of no import. In a sense, literary Enlightenment fostered “national and social ideals (that) exceed in intensity and extent any other aim.”<sup>100</sup> By the time of the great European revolutions of 1848, countless privileged Romanian sons had travelled abroad and received excellent educations in Berlin, Paris, Rome and Vienna. They returned to their backward land full of patriotic fervor and the vocabulary to express it. They were eager to contribute to the awakening of their nation. They adopted the

Enlightenment aims of “progress, truth, justice, morality.” The basis of their disgust lay at the feet of their fellow boyars who had aligned themselves with the Imperial Russian regime and used the *Règlements* as a means for personal enrichment rather than in service of the national goal of political sovereignty. They eventually formed, for the first time in Romanian history, an opposition party.

Before moving on to one of the most critical phases of Romanian history (the revolution of 1848), it is important to describe the Romanian perception of the Jews in the Romanian-speaking regions. Anti-Semitism throughout Eastern Europe was commonplace, but each region or nation subscribed to its own version and was characterized differently. Romanian anti-Semitism can be traced to two sources. First, according to Andrei Oisteanu, “Orthodoxy does not contain ‘*der Geist der Kapitalismus*’” and he goes on to quote Daniel Birbu who notes, “In the eyes of Orthodoxy, the sole legitimate occupation is one that takes caution before trespassing the boundaries of natural economics. Roughly, it is only the peasant’s work that is acceptable to Orthodoxy.”<sup>101</sup> Because local ordinances and customs often forbade him from owning land or property, Jews, then, often performed the role of intermediary, merchant, banker, tavern-keeper, and all roles traditionally seen as *verboden* by the practitioners of Orthodoxy; however, these services provided by these occupations are often seen as essential, even if immoral. Lastly, the traditional Jewish occupations came to be seen as shameful, even as trade was considered to be a form of robbery.<sup>102</sup>

Sorin Mitu complicates and adds further depth to origins of Romanian anti-Semitism in the nineteenth-century with his assertion that Romanians feared that they, too, would be relegated to “wandering

the Earth,” forever cursed to a nationless state of existence if they did not awaken to the God-given opportunity that lay before them, namely the opportunity to shrug off the imperial slavery imposed upon them by the Austrians, Greeks, Magyars, Ottomans and Russians. This fear is grounded in the medieval myth of the “Wandering Jew,” punished by God for the role they played in crucifying Christ, and forever doomed to “roam around the world like strangers.”<sup>103</sup> The Enlightenment had provided Romanians with the intellectual tools to fight their imperial oppressors and if they did not, they risked being driven off their ancestral land, just as the Jews had been driven from Palestine. By the middle of the nineteenth-century, Jews had become the objects of shame and revulsion, as well as object lessons for what the Romanians could expect if they did not seize the opportunity to realize nationhood.<sup>104</sup>

Nevertheless, Jews had been “hostilely tolerated” for centuries, and during the first few decades of the nineteenth-century, they seemed to be making some progress in obtaining civil rights and were even assimilating to some extent in some areas of the Romanian-speaking lands.<sup>105</sup> Even as the *Règlements* had banned Jews from owning property in the countryside and reinforced their exclusion from the political process, they did, however, express a small measure of tolerance, as they allowed Jewish children to attend Romanian public schools. After the union of the Principalities in 1859, though, as Jews from Galicia and the southern Russian provinces began settling in Moldavia, anti-Semitic rhetoric took on a new, more hateful, more paranoid and xenophobic character.<sup>106</sup>

### Modernization and Anti-Semitism

Even though the political goals of the 1848 Romanian revolutionaries had not been realized, the momentum for

96. Ion Heliade Râdalescu, “Opere,” in *The Making of Modern Romanian Culture: Literacy and Development of National Identity*, ed. Alex Drace-Francis (New York: Taurus, 2006), 41.

97. Adrian Hastings, *Construction of Nationhood*, 5.

98. Drace-Francis, *Romanian Culture*, 42, 43.

99. Marino, “*Romanian Enlightenment*,” 21.

100. *Ibid.*, 24.

101. Andrei Oisteanu, *Inventing the Jew: Anti-Semitic Stereotypes in Romanian and Other Central-East European Cultures*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 142

102. Oisteanu., *Inventing the Jew*, 139.

103. Mitu, *National Identity*, 80.

104. *Ibid.*, 81.

105. Fischer-Galati, “Romanian Anti-Semitism,” 4.

106. *Ibid.*, 4,5.

emancipation from Russian domination increased. As a result, anti-Russian feeling also increased. Russia's defeat in the Crimean War at the hands of the British, French and Ottomans in 1856, paved the way for the union of Moldavia and Wallachia and the United Principalities were born in 1859. Many viewed this as a first stepping stone to the creation of a Greater Romania.<sup>107</sup> Still widely influential, liberals of "The Generation of 1848," advocated Jewish emancipation, while their conservative compatriots, fearful of the contaminating effect of "foreigners" on the Romanian modernization project, rejected this demand outright. It has been estimated that nearly half of the urban population in the United Principalities by this time was Jewish. Moldavia was also experiencing a massive influx of Jews emigrating from the East due to increasing harsh treatment by the Poles, Russians, and Ukrainians. The massive immigration of Jews into the United Principalities caused a marked rise in anti-Semitism in a region already steeped in xenophobia.<sup>108</sup>

The process of modernization in the United Principalities rapidly gained momentum after 1866 with the adoption of the new constitution, which can essentially be viewed as the blueprint for creating the future Romanian nation-state. The constitutional debate was concentrated into two competing views, the liberal and the conservative. Inherent in the liberal and conservative debate was the question of how to mobilize a backward region steeped in corruption, authoritarianism, and patriarchalism and that lacked capitalist and democratic traditions. Drawn up using the Belgian constitution of 1831 as a liberal reference point, the Romanian constitution set in place a highly centralized parliamentary democracy with the foreign monarch<sup>109</sup> as its head. The beginnings of mass politics were evident, even though only two parties were represented. Representation was based on landownership, which had the

effect of alienating most of Romanian society from the national project.<sup>110</sup>

Further alienating society was the new government's uneven handling of the newly rationalized economy, which supported industrialist ventures through subsidies and tariffs, while at the same time ignoring the overwhelmingly agricultural sector of the economy. The commodification of land, an essential component of breaking apart the feudal system and power of the boyars in the countryside, was hardly discussed. The refusal to address the medieval nature of Romanian society led one intellectual to declare that the new government was essentially one of "forms without substance."<sup>111</sup> The new Romania had adopted many of the liberal governing and market structures of the West, but it had failed to reorder Romanian society in a way that reflected the new institutions. The failure of the new government to address the plight of the peasants and agriculturally based economy would set up a narrative of marginalization and discontent in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The refusal to rectify the disparate aristocratic living standards with the economic despair of the peasants would be one of the primary causes of the rise of fascism in the 1920's.<sup>112</sup> And lastly, while Jews would essentially be excluded from the political process, their presence was tolerated in the commercial market, as the skills and services that they offered were seen as essential to the prospects of the nascent Romanian economy.<sup>113</sup>

Questions of how to pursue social justice were pursued, with liberals advocating the enfranchisement of the peasants and non-Christian ethnicities, such as the Jews, and with the conservatives representing the boyar interests, who fought tenaciously against the inclusion of "foreign" ethnicities and land reform. Elites on both sides of the debate about the future of the Romanian state, however, defined the rights of individuals

in terms of the state, meaning that the collective became more important than the individual. Constitutional reform in this sense, then, differed from that of its Western counterparts (who were also pursuing legal and historical redefinitions of the state after 1848). Combined with the latent, and ever more vehement, anti-Semitism in the Romanian-speaking regions, and the declaration of the primacy of the collective rather than individual rights, Romanian nationalism took a more exclusivist turn.<sup>114</sup>

The Transylvanian School attempted to define the geographical legitimacy of the Romanian national by elucidating the descent of the Romanians from the Daco-Romans. By doing so, they were locating Romanians on an "island of Latinity in a Slav sea," which called attention to the fact that Romanians had been subjected to foreign rule and oppression for centuries, hence the need to create a Romanian state that would protect them from future foreign invasion. The Romanian's historical experience with foreign domination played a key role in forming a nation based on the primacy of collectivism and exclusivity.<sup>115</sup> As subsequently noted, mass Jewish immigration from the east caused an uptick in Romanian anti-Semitism. Further adding fuel to the fire and occupying a place out of proportion to the challenges facing the infant Romanian parliament was the naturalization debate, which focused on defining who belonged to the Romanian state and who was excluded from it.

After the *Ausgleich* (Compromise) of 1867, the Hungarian aristocracy took control of Transylvanian governmental affairs. Transylvania was subjected to relentless Magyarization and while Transylvanian Romanians resisted total assimilation into the Hungarian kingdom, advocacy for political autonomy was essentially repressed until after World War I, when Transylvania was awarded to Romania with the Treaty of Triannon.

107. *Ibid.*, 6,7.

108. *Ibid.*, 7.

109. Carol I of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen was the ruler of Romania from 1881-1914.

110. Blokker, "Modernity in Romania," 7.

111. *Ibid.*, 10.

112. *Ibid.*, 10.

113. *Ibid.*, 8, 9.

114. *Ibid.*, 6,7.

115. *Ibid.*, 11.

Romanian anti-Semitism, though, flourished in Transylvania especially in the urban centers where Romanians found themselves in competition with the Jewish population. Anti-Semitism combined with economic tension created the conditions for Romanian nationalism to become more intensely inflamed, just as Gellner predicted it would. Adding fuel to the fire was the fact that Transylvanian Jews tended to have completely assimilated into the Hungarian section of society and spoke Hungarian. Because Romanian nationalist leaders had long been associated with intellectuals of the Uniate and Orthodox churches, the religious traditions of the Jews offered one more means of differentiating the Romanian, rural, Orthodox identity with that of the Jewish urban identity.<sup>116</sup>

In 1864 a revised Civil Code was issued which contained within it legislation that would permit, in theory, the naturalization of ethnic minorities. In practice, though, most, and especially Jews, found it nearly impossible to acquire citizenship unless they could summon the necessary funds to pay for it. Most Jews, however, viewed this as a step in the right direction. The constitution of 1866 made Romanian intentions regarding naturalization even more clear, although not in the manner the Jews and other minorities had hoped for, as Article 7 stated “Only foreigners of Christian rites may obtain naturalization.”<sup>117</sup> At the Congress of Berlin of 1878 at which Romania’s fate regarding its declaration of independence would be decided by the more powerful Western powers, the failure of the Civil Code of 1864 and the inclusion of Article 7 in the Constitution of 1866 would reinforce the suspicion that Romania was not serious, indeed, could not be serious due to the pervasive and entrenched nature of anti-Semitism in the Principalities, about granting equal rights to all nationalities, regardless of religious denomination, to those living within the Principalities. Indeed, by 1878, Romanian leaders had been declaring that Romania

did not have a native population of Jews. To Romanian leaders the Jews within its borders had only recently emigrated from Poland, Russia and Ukraine, and, therefore, did not qualify for Romanian citizenship.<sup>118</sup> Romania leaders instead tried to characterize the exclusion of Jews from civil society as a national imperative, for, if Jews were to be granted full citizenship, the ethnic stock of Romania would be jeopardized. This argument was really an extreme version of Romantic nationalism’s insistence on the uniqueness of every state and its inherent right to self-determination.<sup>119</sup>

While the Great Powers’ (France, Great Britain, the Ottoman Empire, Prussia, Russia) decisions at the Congress of Berlin resulted in the formation of a new Romanian state, in the opinion of Romanian leaders and those who were educated and interested enough to follow the debate, sovereignty had come with unacceptable costs. First, the intense lobbying of Western Jews<sup>120</sup> on behalf of the Jewish brethren in Romania for the cause of equal rights and citizenship reinforced the belief that Jews were hostile to the national goals of Romania. Due to the positions they often held as bankers and tavern keepers, many Romanian elites who had come to associate the Romanian peasantry with the essence of “Romanianess” were alarmed that the Jews were attempting to destroy the purity of the rural population. Secondly, Jews were seen as agents of the West who were actively trying to undermine the goals of creating an ethnically and culturally homogenous Romanian state. Romanian leaders and elites resented what they perceived to be Jewish and foreign intervention in Romanian internal affairs. Third, and also somewhat ambivalently, the Jewish occupation, and in some cases monopolization of urban business activity, was both envied and resented. This led to the inconsistent position that many anti-Semitic Romanian leaders took vis-à-vis

Jewish tolerance within Romanian borders. On one hand, their business prowess was admired and deemed necessary for the creation of a strong Romania, but on the other, the competition they represented caused resentment on the part of those who wanted to see the Romanian economy grow and become strong due to Romanian business and economic savvy.

### Exclusive Nationalism

In the later decades of the nineteenth-century Romanian intellectuals irrevocably split into two primary ideological camps, both of which had divergent views concerning how the future Romania should be constructed. The liberal vision of Romania was based upon Western concepts of modernization: the implementation of a market economy, the centralization of power in a unified nation-state, the adoption of a modern, liberal constitution, and the founding of a parliamentary democracy (even though most Romanians were excluded from participating as they did not own land). The liberal vision was essentially “enlightened” in its outlook as it is firmly based on the faith they placed in progress and the importance of the rationalization of society. Acutely conscious of Romania’s backwardness in comparison to the West, liberals thought of the Romanian nation as a “liberating force, aimed against feudal society and foreign domination . . . and as composed of native Romanians.”<sup>121</sup> As such, they sought to adopt economic, political and cultural structures based upon those found in the West, especially in France.

The Europeanist view, as the liberal view was often called, came under heavy criticism by those representing its traditional, conservative counterpart because they were seen as too “emulative” and did not consider the unique character of Romanian society. One prominent Romanian critique labeled the wholesale

116. Fischer-Galati, *Anti-Semitism*, 8.

117. William O. Oldson, *A Providential Anti-Semitism: Nationalism and Polity in Nineteenth-Century Romania*, (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1991) 38, 39.

118. Fischer-Galati, “Anti-Semitism,” 8,9.

119. Blokker, “Modernity in Romania,” 6,7.

120. Bismarck’s personal banker, Bleichröder, was Jewish and played a huge role in exerting pressure on Romania to enact legislation that would protect Romanian Jew’s political rights.

121. *Ibid.*, 8,9.

adoption of Western liberal cultural, economic and political structures “forms without substance.” Traditionalists viewed the rapid modernization of Romania as harmful. Modernization needed to be slowed down so as to avoid destroying “the pure values of the peasantry” and “in order to preserve essential Romanian traditions.”<sup>122</sup> Also running counter to liberal conceptions of how the Romanian economy should be industrialized, and thus modernized, was the conservative contention that the agrarian economy should receive primacy over the urban, industrial economy. Many conservative leaders worried about the negative aspects of modernization (especially its corollaries, industrialization and capitalism) upon the peasantry.<sup>123</sup>

One aspect of the debate over Romanian national identity that both parties did agree upon was that the Romanian state should be independent, collectivist (the idea that state interests trump individual interests) and exclusionary. Related to the exclusionary character of the state was the anti-Semitic rhetoric associated with all parts of the ideological spectrum. From the long-held, Medieval anti-Semitism typical of many European nations, from the arrival of Eastern Jews to Moldavia and Wallachia and their accompanying foreign culture, to the perceived influence of foreign Jews in Romanian internal affairs, and now to the perceived outsized influence of Jewish lease-holders and entrepreneurs in the Romanian countryside, Romanian anti-Semitism became more virulent in direct correlation with each stage of Romanian nationalism’s development. Jews had long been excluded from Romanian political affairs but had, nevertheless, successfully navigated the Romanian economy and provided essential services to Romanian society. The Jewish industrialists and capitalists, however, also became

associated with the negative consequences of industrialization, urbanization, exploitation and the deterioration of traditional values in the peasantry who moved to the cities.

Unfortunately, by the time of the Great Peasant Uprising of 1907, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and the promotion of Christian Orthodox values were inextricably linked with Romanian populism and “Romanianess.” Expounded by urban intellectuals and circulated by the “village intellectuals,” anti-Semitic rhetoric masked the real economic problems of the Romanian countryside, namely, that the issue of land reform had been ignored. Ironically, or perhaps cynically, the conservatives placed the peasant on a pedestal as a representation of true “Romanianess” even as they pointedly ignored the fact that it was the conservative economic policy of promoting an agricultural policy without addressing the issue of land reform that left the rural citizenry without the means to provide for itself. Conservatives often either represented the interests of large landowners or were landowners themselves and had no interest in destroying their own economic livelihoods. Instead, conservatives deflected attention to their economic interests by inflaming anti-Semitism and xenophobia to an already fevered pitch.<sup>124</sup>

With the Treaty of Trianon the Romanian dream of a Greater Romania was realized. The addition of Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transylvania, though, engendered a set of challenges that heightened the already exclusivist nature of Romanian nationalism. Even as conservative critiques of liberal efforts to modernize Romania based on Western cultural, economic and political structures firmly took root amongst Romanian society at large, both sides of the political spectrum found themselves faced with the task of how

to integrate the new minority populations that came along with newly acquired territories.<sup>125</sup> Integration of powerful, well-educated urban minorities was one of the primary challenges after the Great War and the fervency with which cultural policies were implemented to replace them, or at least diminish their influence, was fueled by intense nationalism, which in turn was fueled by the process of modernization itself: the centralization of government, bureaucratization (and especially that of the Ministry of Education), the spread of mass politics (divergent ideologies, a plethora of political parties, the enfranchisement of male peasants), and the availability of government jobs.<sup>126</sup>

Both before and after the Great War, Romania remained essentially rural; however, after the war, the newly acquired cities were overwhelmingly populated with Saxon-Germans, Hungarians, Slavs and Jews.<sup>127</sup> Romanian leaders quickly realized the irredentist threat inherent in the new regions, populated as they were with powerful ethnic elites who were intent on maintaining their centuries old ruling privileges. According to Irina Livezeanu, these new, “large minorities were more urban, more schooled, and more modern than the Romanians.”<sup>128</sup> The old debate concerning the integration of minorities into Romanian society and the guarantee of civic rights and equality took on even greater importance as similar conditions were imposed on the interwar Romanian leadership by Western leaders inspired by Wilsonianism idealism and embedded in the Treaty of Trianon. Romanian resentment seethed at yet one more perceived imposition on Romanian sovereignty. This time around Romanians were forced not only to recognize the equality of the smaller groups of ethnic minorities such as the Jews and Armenians, but now they were forced to recognize the equality and political legitimacy of the

122. Ibid., 10.

123. Ibid., 11.

124. Fischer-Galati, “*Romanian Anti-Semitism*,” 10, 11.

125. Fischer-Galati, “*Anti-Semitism*,” 12.

126. This is important because many Romanian youth fervently wished to complete a university education that would provide security and reasonable wages. Most of the university youth came from the impoverished countryside, so when a university education, and by extension, the dream of a government job, proved to be illusive, nationalism, anti-Semitism, and resentment were inflamed.

127. According to statistics provided by Irina Livezeanu from the Romanian Central Institute of Statistics, in 1930 Romania was 79.8% rural. After World War I, nearly 30% of Romania’s population was non-Romanian (Magyar, German-Saxon, Slavic, Jewish, Gypsy, etc.). Perhaps most tellingly, Romanians constituted a mere 58.6% of the urban population. Even more starkly, the Romanian urban population in the newly acquired territories (Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Transylvania) did not exceed 35%.

128. Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building and Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 7.

same powerful minorities (German-Saxons and Hungarians, primarily) who in the past refused to recognize similar Romanian demands and who now represented a potential threat to the unity of Greater Romania.<sup>129</sup>

Romanian leaders attempted to displace the new minority elites by rapidly expanding educational opportunities both at the secondary and the university level to Romanians.<sup>130</sup> Educational policy was facilitated by the centralization of authority in Bucharest, the capital of Romania, and dictated to each region the means by which consolidation should be achieved. Virtually all cultural policy was micro-managed from the capital, including even which textbooks should be used in the classroom. Massive bureaucracies were constructed to manage the cultural production of “Romanianness” through government publications, secondary schools, the universities and the national theatres. Most Romanian university students came from the countryside and dreamt of obtaining a degree that would provide access to what they believed were secured, cushy careers with the rapidly expanding Romanian bureaucracy.<sup>131</sup> They were sorely disappointed, however, upon arriving in the city and realizing that there was neither housing, nor room in the classroom. Further, when housing was available, it was not affordable. Classrooms often lacked scientific equipment, heat, and sometimes even professors.<sup>132</sup> Romanian students believed that Jewish students occupied positions at the university that should have been reserved for Romanians. Anti-Semitism in the disillusioned student body, already indirectly encouraged by official national curricula that fostered a state-sponsored interpretation of Romanian identity, quickly ignited.<sup>133</sup>

Ironically, the massive influx of highly educated university graduates served as a further catalyst for the appearance of fascism, as the student movement of 1922 came to challenge not only the

liberal and conservative interpretations of “Romanianness,” but also challenged their teachers and nationalist mentors, thus introducing not only an ideological, but also a generational divide within the ever-expanding intelligentsia.<sup>134</sup> It is in the interwar period that we finally see, many decades after the first appearance of Romanian nationalism, a concerted, Gellnerian state attempt to create a homogenous culture through elementary and secondary schools and the universities that can be used as a framework for rural Romanians to supplant and combat the cultural dominance of minority elites in the newly acquired cities.<sup>135</sup> The interethnic conflict and competition in the cities often intensified and exacerbated nationalist tendencies, just as Gellner predicted, although, once again, this happened long after the first appearance of Romanian nationalism.

By the early 1920’s, many Romanian educational leaders believed that the cultural revolution in education had reached crisis proportions. The number of students with university diplomas far outnumbered the number of positions available in the workforce. Not only was the quality of the diploma questioned, but so also was the emphasis that universities had placed on educating students for careers in law and government service. Many educational leaders felt that students would better be able to pragmatically serve Romania by studying agriculture, biology, and chemistry, subjects that would have a more profound impact upon Romanian modernization. Instead, the universities produced students who upon graduation had little chance of employment, which lead to even more widespread dissatisfaction and disillusionment. Some feared that the Romanian villages had suffered most by the Ministry of Education’s determination to educate its best and brightest. The brain drain from the countryside to the city was viewed as detrimental to the modernization of the

villages. These same students who had left their villages for the city and the promise of education turned to Codreanu’s Iron Guard where they found an outlet for their frustration that manifested in hatred and violence towards ‘foreign’ ethnic minorities who they believed had robbed them of their careers and dreams.<sup>136</sup>

The student movement of 1922 marked the beginning of Romania’s modernization crisis, particularly the crisis that occurred in the bureaucratization of education which was itself a manifestation of the centralization of power in Bucharest and its attendant focus on creating a Romanian elite to supplant powerful ethnic minorities in the newly acquired regions. Romanian intellectuals’ concerns about the number of students receiving diplomas and the intense competition for jobs that the number of newly graduated students that this competition engendered proved to be prophetic. By 1922 student frustration reached a fever pitch. Students accused the government of selling out to the Western powers. As a result of the Treaty of Trianon after the Great War, the Western victors (primarily France and Great Britain), had forced the Romanian leadership to adopt legislation that guaranteed equality and citizenship to its Jewish population. Long-held Romanian resentment towards foreign interference in Romania’s internal affairs was reawakened and erupted into levels of outrage and fury not before experienced. Students stormed through city streets, harassing Jews and other minorities. They physically attacked Jews and destroyed Jewish shops and homes. The founder of Romania’s most powerful fascist party, the Legion of the Archangel Michael (later to become the Iron Guard that for a short time before World War II governed Romania), Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, went so far as to murder a Jewish man. He was tried, but not convicted, even though all evidence pointed to his clear guilt. Indeed, he did not even attempt to hide his

129. Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politic*, 212.

130. *Ibid.*, 235.

131. *Ibid.*, 242.

132. *Ibid.*, 237, 238.

133. *Ibid.*, 239.

134. *Ibid.*, 8.

135. *Ibid.*, 262.

136. *Ibid.*, 242, 243.

guilt as he was well aware that a majority of Romania supported his evil deed. The trial of Codreanu added both to his personal prestige and heightened student participation in his Legionnaire movement.

Not only did Romanian exclusive nationalism and fascism come about as a result of the intense nation-building project directed from Bucharest, but the violence perpetrated against minorities during the interwar period, and especially against Jews, largely reflected Romanian society's fears of socialism and Bolshevism penetrating Romania. Jewish migration from Russia, Galicia, and the Ukraine fueled this fear, as they were thought to be Bolshevism's ideological carriers. The Romanian fear of Bolshevism also reflected the Romanian desire to create a nation with strictly Romanian characteristics, a concept somewhere between Western liberalism and Eastern paternalism. 'Jewish Bolshevism' was perceived as a threat to this goal and the disillusioned student population displayed the most exaggerated form of this fear. It is in the student movements of 1922 that Romanian nationalism transformed into fascism and that led directly to Romania's participation in the Holocaust of World War II.<sup>137</sup>

### Conclusion

The origin of Romanian nationalism can be placed firmly in the first half of the eighteenth-century and more specifically within the writings and activism of the Uniate Priest Ion Innocentie Klein. Combined with peasant revolts in the countryside, Klein's activism served to foster Romanian ethnic consciousness, the precursor to full-blown nationalism. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries, the Transylvanian school made strides towards creating a coherent Romanian history, Latinizing and 'Romanianizing' the language, writing the first Romanian grammars, and expounding the first Romanian national myths. The School's supreme achievement, however, was the writing and presentation of the *Supplex Libellus Vallachorum* to the Austrian Court and

Transylvanian Diet. This document represented the culmination of Romanian educational and political ambitions and the influence of Enlightenment and Romantic thought on the political struggle for Romanian equality vis-à-vis the Three Nations in Transylvania. By the middle of the nineteenth-century, Romanian national ambitions dominated elite and intellectual thought, which resulted in the first truly modern conceptions of nationalism. Previously, Romanian nationalists had as their goal equality within the imperial governing structures within which they found themselves, but by 1848, the quest for nationhood took on a full-blown urgency to achieve nationhood, eventually culminating in the founding of the first sovereign, autonomous Romanian state in 1878. This era is one defined by patriotic nationalism. The culmination of Romanian nationalism was defined by an intensification of nationalist rhetoric defined primarily by its exclusive nature and the debate about the course of modernization that Romania should embark upon. As the pace of modernization sped up, manifested primarily by quickening urbanization, industrialization, centralization and bureaucratization, many Romanians were disillusioned by the character of modernization and eventually blamed its failures on urban ethnic minorities, especially the Jews.

As Romanian ethnic consciousness transformed to exclusive nationalism, Romanian conceptions of minorities also changed. In the eighteenth century, there was an extreme version of the Jewish minority, but their presence was tolerated due to the recognition that they provided essential economic services in the Romanian-speaking regions. As the revolutionaries of 1848 adopted more liberal social policies, so too did they adopt a more liberal stance towards Jewish naturalization laws. With the establishment of the United Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia in 1859, the Jewish population was hopeful that they would no longer be merely tolerated, but accepted fully into political and social life. This was not to be, however, as massive Jewish

migration from the East in the 1860's engendered fear that 'foreigners' were dramatically changing the ethnic make-up of the region and placing at risk the goal of a future homogenous Romanian state. This fear combined with Romanian resentment towards foreign intervention in Romania's internal affairs in the late 1870's. Anti-Semitic attitudes intensified. In both 1878 and 1919, Western powers advocated strongly on behalf of Jews in Romania and pressured Romania to adopt liberal naturalization policies and laws that guaranteed their equal treatment vis-à-vis Romanians. Again, anti-Semitism ratcheted up yet another notch. In the interwar years, Romanian university students reacted against the perception that Jews were unfairly eating up educational resources that by right belonged to ethnic Romanians. This resentment combined with the fear of socialism and Bolshevism, both of which were supposedly being imported from Russia and propagated by Jews who wished to undermine the fledgling Romanian state. By the end of the 1920's, Romanian nationalism had devolved into exclusivity and defined Romania as a nation for certain Romanians only.

During the interwar years exclusive nationalism dominated the Romanian national discourse and defined the meaning of Romanianness. Even though a wide range of ideological positions were expounded in the media, the one commonality that they all shared was their anti-Semitism and xenophobia. Even the majority of moderates and liberals subscribed to some form of racism, however cloaked their utterances in reasonableness may have been. Xenophobia, racism, anti-Semitism and exclusive nationalism were strongly influenced by two primary factors. First, the Treaty of Trianon created a significantly enlarged Romania with urban areas dominated primarily by powerful ethnic minorities. Irredentist fears inspired Romanian elites to displace these minorities by rapidly educating Romanians and sending them off to the newly acquired territories to take over the cultural institutions run by the Saxons and Hungarians. This new group of Romanian elites had been inculcated in

137. Ibid., 246-248.

both secondary schools and the universities with a strong sense of Romanian national identity that was underwritten by a subscription to the Romanian nationalist ideology and its corollaries, xenophobia and anti-Semitism.

The second factor that heightened racism and nationalism in Romania during the interwar period was the perception that Romanian modernization had gone awry. As peasants flocked to the city to find employment, they found that it was not the paradise or land of opportunity that they believed it was. As industrialization had hardly taken off, there were very few jobs. The cities were filthy and often lacked basic sanitation structures. The deeply religious country folk collided with what they believed was the decadent lifestyles of the city dwellers. Even though much of the destitution found in the city was due to effects of the Great War on Romanian society in general and the severe economic malaise of the first years after the war, many who moved to the cities associated the filth, loose morals, and competition with foreigners, most notably the Jews, who were supposedly transplanting the decadent lifestyle of the West into 'pure' Romania in an attempt to destroy it. The failures of industrialization and urbanization, then, were associated with anti-Semitism and xenophobia.

Modernization also failed by succeeding. The tight coordination of cultural policy by the central authorities in Bucharest fervently promoted education during the first two decades of the twentieth-century. Even though many schools often lacked basic supplies such as books and benches, Romanian literacy in these first two decades sharply increased. But the Education of Ministry's major success was to be found in the number of university students it successfully enrolled and sponsored. The push to provide Romanians with a university education was inspired both by the realization of the backwardness of the Romanian rural population in comparison to the Western nations, but also, as noted above, by the goal of creating a class of ethnic Romanian elites to displace the powerful and more educated ethnic minorities in the newly acquired territories. The irony of the Ministry's success, though, lies in the

fact that it was too successful. By educating so many so quickly, it created a large population of well-educated students who had virtually no prospect of ever utilizing its education due to a lack of opportunity in the job market. Competition for scarce jobs and resentment towards ethnic minorities for competing for those jobs created the conditions for scapegoating, which inevitably fell upon the usual target, the Jews. The student uprisings of 1922 resulted in violent protest directed towards the Jewish population and culminated in the formation of Codreanu's Legion of the Archangel Michael, a fascist organization that quickly gained in popularity and eventually came to power in the late 1930's.

In *Nations and Nationalism* Gellner wrote that in order for nationalism to occur, a nation must experience the split from agricultural, medieval society to one defined by industrialization. In the Romanian case, however, nationalism made its appearance more than a century before industrialization made its appearance in Romania. While Gellner does not make distinctions between patriotic and exclusive nationalism as I have done, even if the brand of nationalism that Gellner was writing about was defined as exclusive (which made its appearance in the later half of the nineteenth-century in Romania), Romania would not embark on massive industrialization until after World War II. Similarly, urbanization, the corollary of industrialization, did not occur on a massive scale until after World War II, and even by the 1960's, more than 40% of the Romanian population still lived in the countryside. Gellner insists that the homogenization of culture required by an industrial society relies upon wide scale literacy, which also functions to support industry. In Romania, however, the push for literacy was due first to the recognition of the backwardness of the Romanian people in relation to its Western neighbors. The Romanians also had as their goal the desire to displace the powerful ethnic minority elites in the newly-acquired cities. The goal of creating a homogenous culture that aligned with the goals of industry seemed to have been rarely discussed; indeed, if they had been, the crisis of modernity in education might not have occurred, as more students would have been directed to vocational schools rather

than academically focused universities.

In *Imagined Communities* Anderson posits the theory that nationalism's origins can be found in the sixteenth-century with the advent of print-capitalism. As the sacred languages used by the royal courts and church lose their primacy, people who can afford to buy books begin reading in their local vernaculars and publishers are more than happy to satisfy their demands. An expanding literate, urban middle-class largely fuels the publishing boom. As dated newspapers are published, people become more aware of their ethnic brethren who might be located in the neighboring town or who might be located several hundred kilometers away. Either way they become aware of one another and realize that they share the same culture and language. A sense of 'imagined community' is thus created through a common language propagated through books and newspapers. Eventually, ethnic awareness fosters a more concrete idea of nation, which in turn spurs the movement for nationhood.

Anderson's theory does not fit the Romanian case, however, for several reasons. The first reason is that Romania's rural inhabitants remained cut off from the rest of the Romanian-speaking regions. Even by the interwar period many Romanians in the countryside lived an essentially medieval existence. Romania remained primarily rural until well in to the 1960's. Even at the turn of the twentieth-century it is estimated that only ten percent of the Romanian population was literate. Capitalism did not reach Romania until after the founding of the first Romanian state in the late 1870's and a middle class did not begin to form to any significant degree until the first decade of the twentieth century (and when it did begin to grow during the late interwar years, its development was nipped in the bud after the communist takeover in 1947). All of Anderson's ingredients for the nationalist recipe, then, are missing in Romania. Romanian nationalism seems to have been promoted by and subscribed to by a relatively small number of elites in academia, business, government and perhaps by the petite bourgeoisie and other groups who were literate such as priests and teachers. The exact mechanisms by which nationalist ideology filtered down to

the masses is not clear to me and, indeed, an investigation into how ideas in general flow from cultural elites to the uneducated, working poor would be a fascinating topic to take on. Indeed, the lack of clarity of just how this process works in Anderson's theory of imagined communities appears to be one of this book's shortcomings.

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