THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL MINORITIES IN THE ECONOMICAL MODERNIZATION OF ROMANIA IN THE 19TH CENTURY

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ABSTRACT:
The 19th century is recognized by specialists as the “century of nations”, but also as the “century of nationalities”. Obviously, the Romanian nation had the most important part on the economical modernization of our country - aspect proved by the course of history and by the fountains that confirm this, but often its role was based on or was filled in the most direct possible way by the national minorities located on the territory of the three Romanian pricedoms, and since 1859, respectively 1878 – 1879, by the national minorities on the territory of Romania and Transylvania. The below research work is dedicated to their contribution to the formation and economical modernization of the Romanian state.

Keywords: national minorities, modernization, emigration

1. Preliminary study

Over time and especially in the nineteenth century, Romanian countries and then after the second half of this century - Romania represented a place for settlement and future establishment - because the process was long started – of many national minorities, much more than in other parts of Europe or the planet; over 20 minorities - presented on the data we've collected from various sources, lived and continued to live on romanian lands. This demonstrates the force of attraction, the availability and spiritual wealth of romanians and historical regions inhabited by them, and the availability of the administrations from the Romanian countries and then from Romania to accept and to receive, based on ancient traditions and then on the rules set out in the time legislation.

As stressed by PhD Associate Professor Levente Salat, from the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Babes - Bolyai University from Cluj - Napoca1, most historians, sociologists and lawyers have been busy so far in studying national minorities in Romania. Trying to document for this study, we did not find any work or article on the theme our study stated in the title2. Also, referring to the electronic archive of works, studies and research reports conducted by the Institute for Research on National Minorities, from Cluj Napoca, we found that there are no articles and references that would direct us to a study on the issue of minority contribution to the economic modernization of Romania between 1800 and 1914.

The reality is that their arrival in Romania, for some reason, mostly historical and obviously economical ones, minorities focused on peaceful coexistence, with the majority of the population – the Romanians. Their main outputs are not economical, but only cultural, literal and gastronomical, with the avowed aim of representing, away from “home” the nation they are a part of.

There are very few indications regarding economic activity for some representatives of national minorities in Romania. The only solution, we believe, for systematic research on the issue would be a time log analysis, a practice not at all easy or time consuming of library research.

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1 in his study, ”Regimul minorităţilor naţionale din România şi contextul internaţional al acestuia,” published in the paper Policies for national minorities in Romania. Legal and institutional issues in a comparative edited under its coordination by the Ethno cultural Diversity Resource Center, Cluj Napoca in 2008

2 We kindly ask all those who know articles, works or studies allowing the documentation, even fleeting or partial regarding the contribution to national minorities in Romania’s economic modernization in the nineteenth century, point out those for us via e-mail: dobrescu@acad.ro
2. Introduction

Romania, as the other modern European countries, drew throughout the nineteenth century - known as "the electricity century" - significant waves of immigrants, especially from neighboring countries that had not reached a momentum and economical development similar to those in Romania. The main towns in our country – the cities - then developed especially by building large avenues, means of transportation, heating systems and parks. The urban and rural areas were facing special social problems. Subsequently, efforts were initiated to implement a social security system. Starting with the second half of the nineteenth century there was a more intense pressure on workers to create trade unions. Entrepreneurs were interested as well in streamlining and modernizing production by better educated and healthier worker, which meant the intensification of production through workers and waiver of extensive forms. The representatives belonging to the national minorities have been at the forefront of those who mobilized the masses of workers to strike or offered employers and their representatives, ideas for overcoming the occurred crisis.

The Principle of the Nations, imposed since the nineteenth century, developed on one side under the sign of internationalism, of cosmopolitanism, but marked on the other side by the national mentality. During this period we have outlined several new languages and literatures, existing then just as dialects. The nineteenth century was a period of liberal national emancipation, both taking advantage of the modern media, of the emergence of political parties and of the citizens' manifestation initiatives in the form of associations and unions. The nineteenth century is known as "the awakening century of many nations to self-consciousness, but also the nationalities century". Let us analyze a part of the minorities, recognized by the Romanian state, their economic activity over this century, and where the sources allow us, until the outbreak of the First World War.

2. A part of the minorities recognized by the Romanian state

The Albanians

Between the seventeenth and nineteenth century, the Albanians are found in the Romanian Country as merchants and craftsmen, in trades such as silversmiths, gunsmiths, lawyers, bankers, grocers, furriers, dyers, bakers, innkeepers, confectioners, builders, chemists, engineers, doctors, military officers, teachers, drapers, wheelwrights, carpenters, etc. They were also the ones serving as for the selection of the famous mercenaries (known at the beginning as “Arbănaşi”), which were the guard troops for lords and boyars. The Golden Century of the Albanian community in Romania was the nineteenth century, the era in which Bucharest became an important center of support of national liberation movement and the revival of the Balkan people. The Albanians in Romania were present in the revolutionary movement of 1821, both in Tudor Vladimirescu's army and in the one led by the Greek prince Ipsilante. Albanian patriot and man of culture, Naum Panajot Veqilhaergi, from Braila, was the author of the first Albanian language primer published in 1844, and the Romanian princess, of Albanian origin, Elena Ghica (with the writer pen name Dora d’ Istria) published numerous articles to raise awareness in the public opinion of the time, the Albanian national cause. She produced the first monograph on the Albanians in our country under the title "Gli albanesi in Rumenia", published in Florence in 1873. After the Peace Congress of Berlin (1878), who refused to consider requests regarding the Albanian territorial autonomy, the Albanians in Romania built cultural societies in order to support the Albanian National Liberation Movement, known in history as the Riljindia Kombetare Shqiptare. By the late nineteenth century, the number of Albanians in Romania was of up to 30,000, most of them being located in cities such as Bucharest, Braila, Constanta, Ploiesti, Craiova, Calarasi, Iasi, Focsani, etc., as merchants, craftsmen, but also doctors, lawyers, architects, builders, and mercenaries (guards in service of various landowners).

In general, because of the jobs they have practiced Albanians settled in cities. Over time, they distinguished themselves as senior officials in various positions, working in Romanian and European culture. In addition to the examples already mentioned, we can remember the family of Vasile Lupu, Constantin Draco (secretary of Constantin Brancoveanu), Constantin Caraiani - advisor on the reorganization of schools during the leadership of Grigore Alexandru Ghica, Constantin Sakellarie - Prussian consul in Bucharest, Alexandru Ghica - great treasurer etc. At the end of the nineteenth century in Romania the revival of the Albanian national movement begins, strongly supported emotionally and financially by the Albanian community in Romania, which then numbered several thousand members, mostly settled in Bucharest, Constanta, Ploiesti, Pitesti, etc. Ahead of them were Nikolla Nacio, Michael

3 cited Baze conceptuale pentru o Casă a Istoriei Europene a work conceived by a group of nine European experts, Brussels, October 2008, p. 14
4 Prof. Vasile Bozga in the Foreword to the second edition of the Dictionary of economic history and history of economic thought, led by Emilian M. Dobrescu and Gabriela Bode, work in preparation for editing and printing.
5 regarding the recognition of the status of national minority, Romania has been and still is a European model in this regard. It would be good if our neighbors would do, at least as the Romanians do, forced by the vicissitudes of history to live outside of the actual Romanian boarders.
6 selective take-over from the site www.albanezii.html, visited on 18 October 2009, 17.00
Grameno and Asdreni (Aleks Stavre Drenova) - who composed the national anthem of Albania Poroimbuscu’s music - the song “Pe-al nostru steag e scris unire.” At the beginning of the twentieth century the first bilingual magazines were edited - in Albanian-Romanian and even trilingual - in Albanian-Romanian and French, in total about 30 in number, under various intellectual circles of the Albanian community.

Aromanians

Have a special situation – they cannot be considered a minority - confirmed also by the Romanian Academy release from 26 June 2009: “aromanians are an integral part of the Romanian people, their language is Romanian, and this characterization was given by all scientists Romanian and foreigners, since the Middle Ages. Aromanians came voluntarily to Romania in the XIX and XX century, precisely because they considered themselves Romanian, to have a homeland of their own. In countries south of the Danube, aromanians (and “meglenoromâni”) are autochthonous national minorities, but there are only speakers of Romanic languages, unlike other languages, all roman”.

Armenians

Most live in Bucharest and Constanta, being of Orthodox religion, and the rest in Transylvania, being Catholic confession, last arrived in Transylvania from the Ninth century, forming colonies of traders.

Bulgarians

On the present territory of Romania - in Banat, The Romanian Country and even Transylvania sat down during numerous times the Bulgarians. Catholic Bulgarians from the Banat area are the oldest ethnic community of this origin on the Romanian territory, being known as pavlicheni⁹.

Old Besenova and Vinica (Vinga) were the first settlements founded by the Bulgarian on the current Romanian territory in the eighteenth century and the third settlement of ethnic Bulgarians in Banat is Brestea, founded in 1842.

After a brief period in which they depended on "Serbian region" of the Habsburg Empire, pavlichenii from Banat came under Hungarian administration at the time of dualist Austro-Hungarian regime (1867). In the Habsburg era, the population of Banat was carefully reviewed by the imperial administration¹⁰. The Bulgarians were the third community, in order of size, after the Romanians (181.639) and the Serbs (78.780), with 8.683 people, out of a total of 317 928 inhabitants. The regulation regarding the Banat issue, between Bucharest and Belgrade at the end of World War I (1918), made the vast majority of Catholic Bulgarians to remain within the borders of the Romanian state, which took over most of the province. The heterogeneous population structure and the high degree of economic and cultural development of the region, the privileges that they had during the Habsburg era, the weaker pressure they were subjected to assimilate and the action of the Catholic Church favored the prosperity and preservation of small ethnic communities of the Banat Bulgarians. The Catholic Rite and the original culture, which also contains a written form, turned them into an ethnic group who manifested and still manifests a strong desire to preserve their identity.

In Romania there are also Orthodox Bulgarian, in Oltenia and Muntenia. Their fate remained strongly linked to that of the mother country, both for geographical and confessional. Bulgarian Orthodox ancestors migrated north of the Danube in the context of Ottoman wars from the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century.

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⁷ abroad they are also known as Macedonians, Macedo-Romanian, Romanian-Megleno
⁸ take-over adapted from www.arhiva_1.php.htm site, visited October 25, 2009 at 16.42
⁹ pavlichenii (or Paulicians) were members of an Eastern Christian communities that refuse the sacraments, who was deported from Mesopotamia in Thrace, in the ninth century by the Byzantines. In contact with slavic people already seated in the Balkan area resulted an ethno-religious group, of Slavic speaking heresy follower of Paulicians (from the Orthodox perspective). Finally they were converted to Catholicism by missionaries in the sixteenth century, while retaining the name of the sect as the name of the ethnic group. They settle in Banat, under a mass emigration of Kiprovet pavlicheni (Ciprovit) after defeating the anti ottoman uprising that began in 1688 in this city of the Vidin region (western Bulgaria). The ruled in the Romanian Country, Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688-1714) gives a very good welcome to the refugees, placing them in Craiova, Campulung Râmnic, Brădiceni and Targoviste. The Tatar invasion of 1690 compelled some of them to seek refuge in Brasov and Sibiu, where greeted with hostility by the Saxon Protestants (Lutherans). The conquer of Banat and Oltenia in 1718 by the Austrians represents an additional element of protection for the Bulgarian refugees. But the defeat of the Habsburgs in 1739 lead to the return of Oltenia in the Romanian Country and concentration part of Banat Bulgarians in Austria, while the rest sits in Transylvania, Deva, Sibiu and Vințu de Jos (Alba). Following negotiations held with the imperial authorities in Timisoara, Paulicians settle in 1738 on the site of ancient settlements Besenova Veche / Star Bisnov (today Dudești Vechi - Timiș), and in 1741 founded Vinga/Vinica (Arad). The settlement founded by Bulgarians originating from villages around the Danube town of Nikopol, receives the city status and the privileges of the Empress Maria Theresa in 1744.
¹⁰ Thus, in 1770, the entire population Count Clary census indicated that the whole historical Banat, being included and the part assigned to Yugoslavia in 1919. In 1774, a census carried out by the senior Jakob Ehrler, showed that the number was 220.000 Romanians, the Serbs and Croats – 100.000, 53.000 Germans, Hungarians and Bulgarians 24.000. During the interwar period of the last century many Bulgarian families moved from Vinga in the neighboring cities, Arad and Timisoara, their number in the countryside area began to decline. Population decline is even more pronounced with the communist regime in Romania. After collectivization when all the families had much land and were left without it, each sought to move to Arad or Timisoara where they found jobs. In the last decades of the twentieth century due to political and economic conditions existing in Romania, most of the families of all three Bulgarian villages settled in Timisoara.
The emigration occurred because they were interested in finding economic conditions and better living. According to official data, the Romanian Country had registered in 1838, 11,652 Bulgarian immigrant families, or about 100,000 people. Given neighborly relations and cultural-historical, the Romanian countries played a major role in the national liberation movement of the Bulgarians. Bulgaria's national heroes such as Vasil Levski, Hristo Botev, Georgi Rakovsky Liuben Karavelov long lived in Bucharest, Braila and in other parts, where they edited publications in Bulgarian and held in Romania, history, culture and Bulgarian science. The first Cyrillic primer in Bulgarian was published in 1824 in Transylvania in Brasov and in 1869 in Braila, the foundations being laid for the Bulgarian Literary Society, the soon-to-be Bulgarian Academy.

Cașinău (missing data)

Czechs
Most of them live in Caras-Severin, but we also meet smaller communities in Mehedinti, Timis, Arad and Hunedoara.

Czechs and Slovaks settled in Romania since the eighteenth century, especially in the mountainous regions of Banat and western Transylvania to exploit the mineral resources in these regions.

Croats
Were established in Caras Severin. I did not find mention of their contribution to the economical modernization of Romania in the nineteenth century.

Jews
Most were met in Bucharest. Smaller communities existed in Timis, Cluj, Iasi, Bihor. In Transylvania, their number has increased since the eighteenth century, initially adopting the German culture and then the Hungarian one.

In his work “Muzeul de istorie a evreilor din România, Șef Rabin dr. Moses Rosen”, Bucharest, Hasefer, 1978 states: “Contemporary documents reflecting different types of bonds of Romanian rulers with the Jews in Poland, Constantinople, and, of course, with those in the Romanian Country. A wide range of exhibits, arranged in chronological and thematic order reflect (...) dynamics and socio-professional diversity of the Hebrew people. Royal records attest the commercial and institutional relations between the Jews and the Romanians. For the involvement of Jews in economic life are significant, among other things: the exhibits regarding creating fairs and smaller towns, with the active participation of traders and Hebrew craftsmen and testimonies documenting the craftsmen and their guilds. Symbols of the guilds of Hebrew craftsmen, flags guilds and their books highlight the trades that were practiced and the religious and traditional character of these professional organizations. Among the exhibits on socio-economic life are also included the first financial Jews: Bercovitz the banker who in 1836 established in Bucharest the bank famous that bore his name, bankers Hillel and Leon Manoah - the latter being one of the older manufacturing wholesalers Romanian Country, Solomon Halfon , creator of “Bank Halfon” in 1829, and son Daniel Michel ( famous bankers in Iasi ) Marmorosh and Blank, the famous creators banks " Marmorosh -Blank & Co.", one of the largest and longest running, the museum illustrates also the contribution of Jews to the development of mechanized industry as in other economic sectors.

Known at the time, the favorable position of the ruler Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1859-1866) to the problem of “naturalization” of the Jews: “In 1864, the Romanian Israelites will have many rights to congratulate ... We have taken the measure of gradual emancipation. I whine all you two but I could not. You will have a gradual emancipation.”

The good intentions of Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza did not go through as he had wished. The 1866 Constitution through art. 7 sanctioned the stateless status of Romanian Jewry, stating that non-Christians cannot become Romanian citizens. As a result, the Jews became extremely contradictory: on the one hand were persecuted and banished, on the other hand some have enjoyed a certain social status and prestige, marks the beginning of their integration into the Romanian society. For example, a map of Bucharest, made by O. Papazoglou at the end of the nineteenth century, indicate the central streets and houses inhabited by the Hebrew synagogues and community offices. Some streets had names Hebrew: Street Synagogue, Spanish Street, Palestine Street, etc.

As Romanian interior minister I.C. Bratianu took “restrictive measures against Jews in Moldova, according to which they could not possess as property, no inns or taverns . This decision displeased both Hebrew community and the great landowners, who enjoy the intelligence and speculative spirit. Through the offers they made to the owners of lands, Jews became possessors of large amounts of rural goods and most taverns and inns.”

An important place in the spiritual, religious and secular life was played by the Romanian Jews from the Bucharest Choral Temple, built in the second half of the nineteenth century. A number of volunteers attended

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Hebrew War of Independence Romanian state in 1877-1878, the Hebrew population paying in general moral and material support, although Jews still did not have the right to Romanian citizenship. In 1881, Jews from Romania attended the coronation ceremony of King Charles I and Queen Elizabeth, which reveals that the Hebrew community has in Bucharest achieved, at the time, a high degree of economic and social development. Only such a community could afford making that occasion a luxurious float that also evoked the solemn coronation of the legendary King Solomon. The dipper was accompanied by representatives of the main Hebrew organizations in the country, who had come to wish the new king, long and glorious reign, which resemble the wise king of Israel in biblical times.

Late nineteenth century marks the Jewish-Romanian society, deeply divided in terms of socio-economic. Except for some wealthy ones, most Hebrew population suffered from chronic shortages and poverty.

**Germans**

The wider community are met in Timis, Sibiu, Satu-Mare, Caras-Severin, Brasov and Arad. Invited to settle in southern and eastern Transylvania by Hungarian kings in centuries XII and XIII, they have received political autonomy within Transylvania. They were promoters of urban life and crafts, being models for their cultural and administrative organization.

Since the eighteenth century, “şvabii” settled in Banat and Crișana, being of Catholic confession, unlike the Saxons of Transylvania who were and are Protestants. In the nineteenth century, the German minority in Romania was represented by the Saxons and “şvabii”. Most numerous are the Saxons, about whose exceptional contribution to configure and economic modernization of Romania speaks also the brochure: “Ce sînt şi ce vor saşii din Ardeal” with a foreword by N. Iorga, published by the National Council of Transylvania Saxon, Bucharest, Romanian Nation Culture Printing, 1919. How important was their contribution following quotes illustrate:

- “The Saxons are called a nation of citizens happy and peasants ... A nobility with class separatist tendencies there is not, so no large landowners from the “sași”, and a few large industrialists who can be counted on fingers. But we cannot speak of a rural proletariat. The Saxon people is presented, as a whole, which also means under the name of the middle class and can be divided into three classes by occupation: peasants, industrialists and merchants, officials and intellectuals. Their number in percent as: the first 80 percent, the second 15 to 16 percent, and the latter 4-5 percent”;

- “Saxon agronomy” another chapter in the work quoted, points out “unfavorable influence on the development of Saxon agronomy” of “civic obedience to the will of the individual,” which prevented any sense of organization and any prosperity... In recent decades what favored the merging of the development of Saxon agronomy divided the land restored over the centuries by inheritance in small bits together, which facilitated farming11, “then presented positive results from the grain production and viticulture, the result being the Saxon agronomical meeting (founded in 1845) as well as the cooperatives, as Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen’s system (whose foundations were laid in 1886) as the core system with mutual aid and universal service. The result was that “Transylvanian Romanians and Székelys have taken as a model Saxon peasant. Of course it will be for Romanian peasants from the kingdom an advices land. Competing with the more fertile land of Moldova, Muntenia will force the Saxon households to work more intensely, so that by it has to become a factor in the development of agriculture in Romania Mare”;

- The author of the previous quotes proves to be the same keen observer also when he describes “jobs, industry, trade and banks from the saxons.” Analysis gleaned from some very valid statements: “Until near the end of the nineteenth century the Saxon crafts products were unfolded throughout Transylvania and Hungarian Country, and dominated some markets in Romania. Old people in Romania will be remembering the so-called “brasovenii” that Brasov brings, as they were: cloths, boots, hats, ropes, etc. But the new times, with great industry developments that are made at the expense of small industrialists, has caused great damage to the Saxon craftsmanship as well... Many industrialists Saxons declared bankruptcy and only in the last days before the outbreak of World War I (WWI - Ed ) found good status by increasing the state of the peasants, a new outlet for their products. Many emigrated then even in Romania (...) and regained there a good name to the Saxon industry” ... From now, not only will lower industry feel a new impetus, but also and big industry, led by the Saxons will be a ground for good development. It is true that in the last decades a big part of the small industry came from the hands of Saxons into competitors hands of other nations, but others are trades such as locksmiths, carpenters, masons, bakers and bricklayers are close to many Saxon. (La) Cisnădie, near Sibiu, where for hundreds of years almost every house can hear the noise of the loom, which in part is driven, as in ancient times, all by hand, and most of curd with electric motor. Cisnadie drapers produce a thick cloth, which is used for clothes and peasant horse clothing. Higher weaving are collected in a union. A training school for

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12 * * *, Ce sînt şi ce vor saşii din Ardeal, cap. Situația socială a sașilor, Consiliul Național Săsesc din Transilvania, București, Tipografia Cultura Neamului Românesc, 1919, p. 22
13 Idem, Saxon Agronomy, p. 24
14 Ibidem, p. 28

**Ce știi și ce vor sașii din Ardeal**

* Ce sînt şi ce vor saşii din Ardeal, cap. Situația socială a sașilor, Consiliul Național Săsesc din Transilvania, București, Tipografia Cultura Neamului Românesc, 1919

**Saxon Agronomy:**

* Idem, Saxon Agronomy, p. 24

**Ibidem:**

* Ibidem, p. 28
preparing cloth serves industrial preparing ... Saxons struggled until now to raise the industries through vocational schools, chimney teachers, craftsmen specialized courses through placement offices learners through scholarships for foreign journeymen and craftsmen interest in free loans given top ... from the middle of the last century (XIX n.n.) there is in the Saxon cities a crafts meetings which aims to support the industry. They were held in last decade before the war, several craftsmen meetings have been made and in 1913 a large union was created. Saxon manufactory industry mainly deals with the manufacturing of cloth, leather and agricultural machinery. Even more iron factories were built, not only in Ardeal, but also in Romania, large bridges that can put together best works made by foreign companies. Besides this, also in the hands of Saxons we find large alcohol factories, breweries, mills steam sausage factory, a paper mill and one of earthenware. Very advanced are the Saxons printers. The biggest Saxon printing place is W. Kraft company from Sibiu, has for decades a publishing institute for books and prints Romanian literary content currently ( 1919 - Ed ) two Romanian newspapers«15» a short but memorable analysis is made, further for the trade credit and educational Saxon institutions.

- All these facts are due, as we learn in “Ce aşteaptă saşii de la noua lor patrie?”, their national individuality, cohesive unit of the German administration. Finally, the author concludes “The Saxon economic status was not favorable so far because of their geographic situation in the outer fringe, but from now on we will be able to see more their worthiness in different fields, especially on the agronomic being able to go as a good example before their citizens. But it will be necessary that the Rumanian State to assist the economic sectors cultivated by the Saxons through wise policy, especially regarding the delivery of raw material and freight transiting”.16

A clear evidence of the contribution to economic modernization Saxons in a particular part of Transylvania also is brought by the brochure: Reperes cultural–istorice ale civilizației multiculturale transilvane. Valea Hârtibaciului “, published by the National Museum Complex “ASTRA” in Sibiu, showing the results of research conducted in the 10 localities with a Saxon specific in the Hârtibaciului Valley ( Daia, New, Red, Vurpăr, Hosman, Marpod, Chirpăr, Nocrich, Altana and Merghindeal). This includes past gems gathered by the project team, systematized in the 52 pages of text and color images of exceptional quality, and a paper which reported localities investigated. The paper includes interesting pages of history, stories and legends unpublished, documentary and artistic photos and information about the values that define the identity of these communities. By publishing this booklet, and then putting it into scientific circulation, it has taken another step in the monographic research of Hârtibaciul Valley villages that are inhabited by old ethnic German population and the saving of some of the values of the Transylvanian heritage.

Greeks

Most of them live in Bucharest and in cities from the1 southern part of the country, such as Tulcea, Constanta, Braila and Galati. The Greek presence has been reported on the coast of Euxin Bay (Black Sea) with economic purposes - commercial and craft - since antiquity. Greek colonists settled in the Romanian Country and Moldova, in the eighteenth century and nineteenth century contributed to the cultural life in particular, being considered promoters of the spirit of modernity.

The Greeks that came in the Romanian Country were integrated into business and politics here, some of them occupying important dignities, even to get to be crowned a lord. The rise of the Greek in the hierarchy of principalities provoked hostility from traditional local nobility. Rows landowners in underdeveloped rural economy, accustomed to have a decisive say in the Principalities politics felt powerless because they were newcomers on the political scene and became very hostile to immigrants from Greece. This was not the only notable trend. In the upper strata of the Wallachian or Moldavian aristocracy, but not only, there have been many mixed marriages.

With the onset of Phanariot period in the early eighteenth century, Greek culture became dominant. This meant on the one hand, the neglect of the Romanian traditional institutions, and on the other - channeling energies towards gentlemen Phanariots struggle for emancipation of the Greeks under Ottoman rule, the political project of creating a Balkan union. To this should be added the presence of the omnipotent Greek clergy at all levels of the religious hierarchy, many monasteries became dedicated to similar institutions in Greece, after successive acts of donation of various rulers. The development of Greek nationalism opened the two principalities the possibility of a revolution, while on the east of the borders there was a new political and military power, the Orthodox Russian Empire.

The "Wallachian phase" of the war for Greek independence was consumed in the conflict between Tudor Vladimirescu, who started a riot against the Ottomans, initially favorable Greek revolutionaries Filiki ether Greek nationalist organization. Murder by Tudor Vladimirescu eters and increasing Romanian - Greek animosity was not favorable but for the Ottomans defeated Eteria. In 1822, “Inalta Poarta” put an end to the Principalities Phanariot

15 Idem, Meseriiile, industria, comerţul şi băncile la Saş, p. 29-32 (selective)
16 Ibidem, p. 50
rule. Meanwhile, many Greeks were completely assimilated to the Romanian population, many families initially considered Phanariot, contributing to the local culture enrichment. After the proclaiming of Greece’s independence, Romania has been a favorite destination for exiled Greeks, the country remains especially for those from lower social classes. Greeks could be found especially among entrepreneurs, merchants and sailors, both the Danube and the Black Sea, especially after the integration Dobrogea in Romania. Greek communities were generally prosperous and has maintained specific cultural institutions.18

Italians
No data was found.

Hungarians
They form the largest minority group in Romania, after the Gypsies. The vast majority of Hungarians live in Transylvania, in the Secuime area, Mures, Cluj, Bihor, Satu -Mare.

We could not find information about the contribution of the Hungarians to the economic prosperity brought to Transylvania, however, there are sources and commentary, reminiscent of their number in comparison with Romanians. Hungarian census from 1890, 1900 and 1910 provide information about religious structure and language of the population of Transylvania.

"Neo-absolutist era depicted in the statistical plan, a percentage of 62.5 percent in Romanians, 27.6 percent Hungarians and 9 percent Saxons of Transylvania's total population”20. Through the Austro-Hungarian dualism in Transylvania, “it has proceeded gradually to the establishment of a true system of systematic degradation of nationalities, the target inevitable decay of political, moral, economic non-Magyars. It was being accounted for, in particular, the cracking of the ethnic majority group from the researched historical and geographical region, for the period between 1867-1918, creating a corridor populated by settlers, ruining industry and commerce of Transylvania through the customs war that drove Romania in the 80s of the nineteenth century, facts which focused both, ethnic and economic strength weakening of the existing nationalities... The conflictual relationship on rural land was drawn out through colonial policy, with onset in 1870 ... A singular case of industry and finance: in 1899, the 72 Romanian banks had a capital of 15 to 20 percent of the total estimated on Transylvania”21. The percentage of Romanian and Hungarian population in Transylvania were following in the years: 1880 - 53.4 respectively 24.8 percent, 1890 - 52.1 respectively 26.1 percent, 1900 - 50.7 respectively 28.4 percent, 1910 - 53.8 respectively 31.6 percent. “The agricultural policy adopted towards Romanians and other non-Magyar was targeting in general:

a) to prevent the acquisition of properties by archaic legislation;
b) to take advantage of the possession of foreign ownership;
c) to reduce the nationalities in Transylvania the state agricultural proletariat to be more easily assimilated;
d) to disrupt the continuity of ethnic precisely by the colonization. The latter was enforced by law in 1894. The aim now was to abolition the non-Magyar states, setting up the Hungarian ones, instead of aiming to impoverishment of the agrarian economy and expanding the use of the official language nationalities... The government plays an important role in policy Magyarization”22.

Polish
Are mostly residing in Moldavia, in the county of Suceava, in the following localities: Cacica, Cernăuți, Caliceanca, Tereblecea, Solonețul Nou, Plera, Poiana Micului, Vicşani (Ruda), Pâltineasa and Moara (Bulai).

Russian Lipovans
Most of them live in Danubian communities, in the counties of judeţele Tulcea, Constanța, Brăila, Galați and Ialomița.

Ruthenian
Live along the border crossing point with Ukraine, as well as in Dobrogea and Banat.

18 on the website www.Istoria_grecilor_din_România.html, visited on the 25th of October 2009, 17:40

21 Idem, p. 149, 151
22 Ibidem, p. 151-152
Serbian

The most numerous communities can be found in the West of the country, in the counties of Timiș and Caraș-Severin.

Szekelys

The origin of the Szekelys is one of history’s uncleared problems. Until the 19th century it was considered that they were descendants of the Hunnish. Later on, there appeared two opinions within the historians branch. Some researchers support the idea that the Szekelys were Hungarian settled in order to protect the borders of the Kingdom, reason for which they were granted some privileges. The most strong argument in favour of this opinion is the linguistic argument: the Szekelys speak a dialect of the Hungarian language, the same dialect that is spoken in both the south and west of the former Hungarian Kingdom; there are no proves to support the idea that they might have spoken a different language. Others consider that the Szekelys are descendants of a Turkish population (khabari, bulgarian-æschylles and avars). The list of arguments include the name of the Szekelys, the specific group identity and the gentilic organization similar to the Turkish one, runic writing of Turkish origin etc. In any case, they had already been magyarized when they settled in Transylvania. It seems that the Szekelys had lived in the region that was going to be later on occupied by the Transylvanian Saxons, more precisely in the south of Transylvania and in the Tarnave region. When the Transylvanian Saxons were settled in those regions, in the second half of the 12th century, the Szekelys were relocated towards east in order to protect the borders. As a consideration for the military services, the Hungarian king granted them autonomy and other priviledges. Later on, they were organized in administrative – juridical units, named «seats», as the Saxons. The Szekelys were administered by a leader nominated by the King.

Slovakian

Are disseminated in communities from the west and north-west of the country, in the counties of Timiș, Arad and Bihor.

Tartars

Of Muslim religion, they live mostly in the county of Constanța. Nowadays we can speak about „Over a millennium of presence of the Turkish – Tartar population on Romania territory”, as mentioned by dr. Tasim Gemil.

Turkish people

The presence of the Turkish in Dobrogea is due to the fact that this territory was under Ottoman occupation for centuries, until the Peace Congress in Berlin in 1878.

“The indulgence manifested by Romania to the Turkish minority and the Tartar minority is special. The support given by the state and the possibilities offered to these minorities are, indeed, exemplar. When we speak about minorities nowadays, we discuss the Dobrogea model. And we are very happy with this. Actually, the Turkish and Tartar minorities are a common inheritance from ancient times.”

Romani people

According to the research conducted in 1837 by Mihail Kogălniceanu, one of the first known researches about the problem of the national minorities (by that time this sintagm had not yet been created), the gipsies native from India might have reached Moldavia in 1417, during the reign of Alexandru I of Moldavia. From this principedom, they eventually dissipated in the Romanian Country, Transylvania, Hungary, as well as in the rest of Europe. Other authors dated their coming to Romanian land even prior to 1300.

Further on we will adhere to the use of the nomination romani for the gipsies, in the presented sources. We consider, though, that this is not the name most suitable for this national minorities, but the one of gipsies – inculcated in history for more than seven years – minority with a special psychological and social structure, that might have been aggrieved by the authorities along the centuries, but that, itself, has not done anything more to get out of this situation, most of the times embarrassing, in which it was and still is. Only some representatives of the Romani people – those who were able to benefit the socialization – made themselves noticed within the population in

23 apud Cathy O’Grady, Zoltán Kántor and Daniela Tarnovschi, Minoritățile în Europa de sud-est. Maghiari din România, Center of Research and Information on Minorities in Europe – South – East Europe (CEDIME-SE), p. 4
24 In his work, presented at the conference „Identity dynamics and integration ways for the turkish and tartars in Romania”, organized by the Institute of Research of the Issues of the National Minorities, in Constanța, on the 16th of October 2009
25 Mădălin Necșuțu, Interviu cu ambasadorul Turciei la București, Omur Şolendil, in Curentul, 7th of November 2011, p. 4
26 The etymology of the term gipsy is the following: Germans call them zigeuner, Romanians - tigani, and Hungarians – cygany; all these words come from the Greek atiganoi, which means untouchable.
majority, having a personal contribution to the process of economical development from the respective times and
countries, including Romania.

“The gipsies are mentioned in our country in the 4th century, when there are made donations of gipsy slaves
from the ruler to the monasteries Tismana, in the Romanian Country and Bistrita, in Moldavia. Their statute was of
slaves – monastery slaves, ruler slaves or boyar slaves” 27, statute that was maintained official until the 19th century
and, unofficial, in the behavior of the Romanians and even of the gipsies, up until the second half of the 20th century.
The situation of the Romani people cannot be understood without a historical perspective of their condition of slaves,
that lasted until mid 20th century.

“A few instances in the history of the gipsies are worth mentioning. Firstly, the measures initiated by Mary
Theresa in the 18th century, and then by her son, Emperor Joseph the 2nd: the gipsies are obliged to settle down, and
are only allowed to leave the locality by a special authorization. They can no longer wear traditional clothing, and
using their mother language is sanctioned. The children must go to school and to church, and marriage between
gipsies is prohibited” 28. Whatever is left of these measures, who attempted to civilize whom, can be noticed
nowadays, when these types of initiatives seem to be emerging from a rather fictional History.

In 1837, the divan of the Romanian Country liberates the gipsies who belonged to the state, by colonizing
them in manorial villages. The gipsies receive plough lands and are now trated as free countrymen. A few years later,
in Moldavia, Prince Sturza follows the example of ruler Ghica of the Romanian Country and, in 1844, he carries
forth to the Commonwealth a project meant to abolish the gipsies who are members of the clergy and the ones who
profess in the cities. The project gets voted and, shortly after, Prince Bibescu also discharges the slaves from the
clergy in the Romanian Country. The only remaining servants are the ones belonging to the boyars. In 1848, the
revolution in the Romanian Country acquires the definitive abolition of slavery. But their freedom doesn’t last for
long – infiltrating in the Romanian Countries, the Russians and the Turks will restore the slavery. In February 1856,
ruler Barbu Ştirbei completes the release of the gipsies from the Romanian Country and takes the passage for
freeing the slaves who belonged to private persons. Alexandru Ioan Cuza, the first ruler of the Romanian
Principalities will strive to erase the last traces of slavery in 1859. “... the emancipation initiated in the 19th century
(...) is considered to be the first great social improvement of the modern era (dr. Viorel Achim, 1998). Paradoxically,
this has deteriorated the economic situation of the gipsies, stimulating their escape from the estates and the
emigration. A part of the gipsies chose to settle in cities, where they continued to practise craftsmanship, thus coming
into being the communities in the environs of the cities.

After the First World War, a part of the Romani population from the rural areas received estates, which
diminished the gap with the majority population. On the other hand, the economic development and the
industrialization have determined the gipsies to take marginal positions in the labour market and this deepens even
more the gap between the majority population and the gipsies.” 29

Commenting on this quotation we can not not ask a rhetorical question: are the gipsies not to be blamed at
all for all the histrical vicissitudes that have befallen them?

Ukrainians

Are to be found in a greater number in the Maramureş county, where they settled at the beginning of the
14th century. Their Presence in Bucovina is due to the politics f the Austrian Empire, who administered this territory.

A few landmarks

In the evolution of the national minorities from Romania the following activities were recorded, that have
represented and still constitute real reference points in the politics, history, science and culture of the respective
peoples, in their countries of origin:

- The first Bulgarian Cyrillic primer is edited in 1824, in Transylvania, at Braşov
- The first banks founded by the Jews, starting in 1836;
- The first agronomic regions – Saxon – founded in 1845, and the first cooperatives, organized
  by the system of Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen (whose foundations were laid in 1866), ssytem
  which functions upon the basic principle of mutual help and common use;
- In 1869, at Brăila, the foundations of the Bulgarian Literary Society the future Bulgarian
  Academy were laid;
- At the beginning of November 1912, the Albanian meeting in Bucharest declares the state
  independence f Albania, on the 28th of November 1912.

27 The text belongs to Mona Prisăcariu, referenced on the website www.theinvestor.ro/columnisti/mona-prisacariu, accessed on the 27th of
November 2009, 20:30 hrs.
28 Idem
29 Ibidem
3. Conclusion

Usually, the emigration of the respective national minorities in Romania has occurred because they were interested in finding better economic and life conditions in the places they emigrated to, outside their origin countries. The strives of the minorities, their habits, their traditions of lineage and blood have situated them where History places the valuable, on the place they deserve upon their labor and their contribution to the economic evolution of the Romanian people, who welcomed them and treats them according to the devotion to the place they occupy, the loyalty towards the country who received them and accepted them with an open mind, conditioning them unconfessed – or, sometimes, confessed through treaties, to defend and to honor the Romanian lands and all their inhabitants...

Their rites, both religious and cultural, containing the written version, have transformed the minorities in ethnic groups who have manifested and still manifest a strong desire to preserve their identity. The national minorities from Romania have contributed firstly to the economic and social development of the Romanian Principalities, and then to Romania’s. Their main concern was keeping the language and the ancient traditions, so a cultural pursuit.

The direct economic avocations – in their favor – and the indirect ones – in favor of Romania – were less in their attention. In the 19th century, and even in the last century, the national protectionism and the rule of “the dominating nationality” – applied in all states – were obstacles that impeded a greater contribution of the national minorities from everywhere, not only of the ones in Romania, to the economic efforts, common with the majoritary nationality.

In our country also there has been a process of natural assimilation of the minorities by the Romanian population, a process strongly natural, that was and still is not enforced through laws and behaviors of the majoritary population – as, unfortunately, happens in the neighboring lands inhabited by Romanians.

We consider that “a comparative research on the conditions offered by the legislation of the host country and the authorities who effectively apply this legislation to the national minorities, under aegis of the Academies of Science, would be more than welcomed. This research, that could be held under aegis of the European Program Cultura 2007 – 2013 could apply as an example of an international study around the issue of minorities in the Central and East-European areas.

The conclusions of this comparative analysis could serve to a better comprehension of the contribution of the national minorities to the states they belong to and to drawing better conclusions in regards to the attitude of the majoritary population towards the respective minorities.

The study could even refer to all the minorities within the European Union, under the title “A comparative outlook on the minorities in the states of the European Union” and it could establish an essential work of the House of European History.

Given the economic, social, political, historical, cultural and vicinity reports, the Romanian Principalities and then Romania have played an extremely important role in the positive impulse of the national liberation movements of the peoples in the neighboring countries, not randomly represented by strong personalities among the national minorities in Romania.

Without being subjective, but only by following the historical evolutions registered in the neighboring lands inhabited by Romanians and by the national representatives of the neighboring peoples to our country, it can be noticed, even by independent experts – who actually did so – that Romania was and continues to be an example of political wisdom, legislative, moral and ethnic availability, but also of spiritual readiness – which only a few researches of historians, sociologists, economists and ethnographers display- to offer the national minorities, at all times – at least from the 2nd millenium until now, at the beginning of the 3rd millenium since the birth of Jesus Christ – superior conditions for economic, social, political and cultural evolution which, in even fewer cases remembered in history, Romanians receive, as national minorities, from the neighboring countries.

The 18th of December was declared in 1998 by Government decision, the Day of National Minorities in Romania. It might be relevant to know how many of the 190 countries from the UNO celebrate such a day. On the occasion of the National Minorities’ Day in Romania there are cultural activities, symposiums, panels and other theme activities through which the ethnic diversity in our country is celebrated.

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30 On the 13th f February 2007, the ex-president of the European Parliament, Prof. Dr. Hans Gert Pöttering of German nationality, founded the project “House of European History”. Following a detailed discussion the Bureau of the European Parliament unanimously saluted this initiative and established a committee of experts that was assigned with elaborating a concept for the House of European History. During several working sessions organized in Brussels, a discussion paper was drafted, under the name: “Conceptual basis for a House of European History “, “Baze conceptuale pentru o Casă a Istoriei Europene” is a document adopted by consensus on the 15th of September 2008; the document was also translated and published in Romanian at Brussels in October 2008.
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