«A sanguine bunch». Regional identification in Habsburg Bukovina, 1774-1919
van Drunen, H.F.

Citation for published version (APA):

General rights
It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations
If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: http://uba.uva.nl/en/contact, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.
2 Key Institutions of Habsburg Bukovina – Landtag and Franz Joseph University

2.1 Landtag: Bukovinian Political Representation in Czernowitz and Vienna

Once Bukovina had obtained its status of autonomous crownland, it was entitled to have its own regional diet (Landtag). A committee of local landowners, presided by Bishop Hacman, was appointed to design the new crownland’s constitution and electoral law. The new body was to consist of forty-eight deputies and was to represent the entire population by dividing deputies into three groups: rural communities and small landowners were to deliver sixteen deputies, large landowners equally sixteen, while the bourgeoisie was entitled to bring in six intellectuals and ten representatives of commerce and industry. There was a price tag attached to the right to vote: those in rural communities were to pay two guilders in order to participate, those from Czernowitz four guilders and in order to vote with the large landowners, at least twenty-five guilders had to be brought on. The Bukovinian Diet was to elect a president, a vice-president and an executive council (Landesausschuss). The Diet was declared competent in matters regarding local culture, public buildings erected using provincial funds, charitable establishments, assessing provincial budget revenues, profits resulting from provincial possessions and contributions from residents as well as the settlement of ordinary and extraordinary expenditures of the crownland. Moreover, the Diet was responsible for municipal, church and school affairs, for public transport, for the housing and board of military troops, ‘and for all those provisions which, were to be assigned by imperial law to provincial autonomy in the future’.

However, the neoabsolutist forces declared the newly-written crownland constitution - together with the other new and liberal crownland constitutions - null and void by Imperial Patent on 31 December 1851. The new arrangement entered into force as late as 26 February 1861, when the Imperial Constitution was finally accepted. In the end, the number of diet seats was to be thirty: ten for the large land owners, seven for the cities and the chamber of commerce, twelve for the curia of rural communities and small landowners and one fixed - the so-called ‘virilst’- seat for the Orthodox Metropolitan. Every rural community had to elect one ‘elector’ for each 500 voters, who then voted for a diet deputy on their behalf. The diet president was also the president of the Executive Council. The diet elected council members - one for each curia plus one extra - from their midst. Similarly, it elected the Bukovinian deputies for the Austrian Parliament from its own ranks, which logically resulted in a Romanian-speaking majority.5 The Galician Gubernium had tried to maintain at least a slice of its previous influence by claiming seats for the Catholic and Uniate bishops from Lemberg at the expense of the large-landowner curia, but had failed to see its wish granted.6

The same year, the diet convened for the first time chaired by its president, Bishop Hacman.7 Throughout the existence of the diet, its president was always a member of the Romanian

---

5 Ceasu 2004, p. 165.
6 Ibid., pp. 74-105.
7 Kapri 1975, p. 102.
Major local issues under discussion were the improvement of the state of agriculture with financial means and the closely connected matter of developing a decent infrastructure. Draft legislation was discussed in plenary sessions and after all modifications had been added, projects were voted upon. Once draft laws had obtained an absolute majority, they were forwarded to the governor, who mediated between the diet and Vienna. After the Minister of Internal Affairs had approved the concept, it was to be signed by the Emperor. As such, the Emperor himself decided on Bukovinian legislative projects. Protocols of diet sessions were published annually in Czernowitz, while newly-approved laws were published in the provincial law gazette (Gesetz- und Verordnungs-Blatt für das Herzogthum Bukowina) which appeared in German, Romanian and Ruthenian.

The languages used in the diet mirrored both the complexity of Bukovinian society as well as its practical approach in sensitive matters. Next to German, of which the leading strata of the crownland had an excellent command and which Governor Von Göetz characterised in 1896 as ‘a perfectly neutral medium of communication’, Romanian and Ruthenian were equally admitted as customary languages of debate. This was primarily important in the early years of autonomy to enable illiterate Romanian and Ruthenian-speaking peasants to address the house. The executive committee communicated in German, but used Romanian and Ruthenian when corresponding with small-town municipalities or political parties. In 1869, language policy was debated once more when Romanian nationalists demanded that the protocols of diet sessions not only be published in German, but in Romanian as well. The issue was intensely discussed by ‘autonomist-federalists’ in favour and ‘constitutionalist-centralists’ against. Eventually, a compromise stipulated that protocols only were to contain a Romanian version in case the intervention in question had originally been in that language. A similar provision was made for the use of Ruthenian, although some Ukrainian sources later claimed that Ruthenian only received this status well after it had been granted to Romanian. The debate on the official diet languages obviously had a distinctly symbolical value, since the use of German was a matter of course for Bukovinian intellectuals and it surely enhanced the effectiveness of diet practices to have discussions without the interference of translations.

The electoral laws of Bukovina with its curiae - contrary to those regarding the Imperial Parliament in Vienna - did not serve to assure a majority for the German-speaking bourgeoisie. Instead, they aimed at reflecting Bukovinian society in all its linguistic and religious diversity. Nevertheless, it proved to be the perfect platform for nationalist politicians.

---

9 Ceaușu 2004, pp. 151-152.
10 Ciuciura 1982, pp. 94-95.
as pioneering Romanian nationalists were the first to reap the benefits of the available opportunities.\textsuperscript{14} From the start, Romanian speakers were well-represented in the diet. They dominated Bukovinian nobility which in turn formed the majority of diet deputies.\textsuperscript{15} While Romanian nationalist sources preferred to see the preponderance of those aristocratic diet members as the logical result of national dominance,\textsuperscript{16} it was actually a reflection of the socio-economic conditions of the time: the continuous influence of the nobility in Habsburg Bukovina was a direct consequence of its rural-pre-industrial character. Some noble families such as the Hurmuzakis, Wassilkos, Flondors and Stârceas became true political dynasties. Aristocrats not only entered the diet through the large-landowner curia, but also through those of the cities, the chamber of commerce and the rural communities. From the second half of the nineteenth century, they also found their way to bourgeois circles. A similar development was seen with seats initially occupied by peasant deputies: their number diminished once smaller landowners, small-town intellectuals and government officials grew in number and claimed diet representation. This trend had been encouraged by the Diet itself: by 1864, influenced by the liberal ideals of enlarging the social basis of the electorate, the electoral law accepted not only those who paid to come to the ballot box, but also admitted individuals ‘who had earned their merits in society’. This way, both Christian and Jewish men of the cloth from rural areas as well as reserve officers, physicians, graduates from Austrian universities, school directors, professors and honorary citizens were invited to participate in local politics. When the Franz Joseph University was established in 1875, a second ‘virilist’ seat was reserved for its rector, bringing the total number of diet seats to thirty-one. From this moment onwards, diet regulations would remain unchanged until the important reform of 1910 known as the Compromise (\textit{Ausgleich}).\textsuperscript{17}

The diet was able to produce useful pieces of legislation like the provincial and municipal electoral laws, the communal law and the education law. It also had the task of supervising the administration committee of the Orthodox Church Fund.\textsuperscript{18} The most striking initiative with respect to the development of specific crownland identity may well have been the law on the establishment of the university.\textsuperscript{19} It had also been the diet which succeeded in convincing the authorities of the need for a combined Imperial visit to Bukovina once it had been decided that Franz Joseph would visit neighbouring Galicia in 1880.

\textit{Coalition Politics}

In 1888, Constantin Tomasciuc, who was a deputy in both the Imperial parliament and the Bukovinian Diet, argued that the political contradictions in the diet were not so much of a national nature, but shaped along the traditional lines of right and left: the right wing was composed of fifteen large landowners, the Metropolitan, a member of the urban curia and a

\textsuperscript{14} Turczynski 1993, pp. 143-144.
\textsuperscript{15} Hurmuzaki, Eudoxius von, \textit{Fragmente zur Geschichte der Rumänen, Vol. 1}, Sicecu & Teclu, Bucharest 1878, p. vi.
\textsuperscript{16} Iacobescu 1993, p. 124.
\textsuperscript{17} Ceaușu 2004, pp. 105-134
\textsuperscript{18} Şafran 1939, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{19} Wagner 1979, p. 56.
member of the rural one. A middle faction had been formed by five civil servants, while a left wing consisted of two urban curia members; the two deputies from the chamber of commerce, one from the rural curia plus - most of the time - the university rector. Tomasciuc criticised the right wing for not openly declaring itself a landowner party, as similar parties in other Austrian crownlands had done. By hiding behind the shield of general conservatism, he claimed, the faction could gain even more votes and benefit from those ‘inexperienced enthusiasts’ who attributed a national character to it.\(^{20}\) However, those enthusiasts quickly acquired the necessary experience to turn Bukovinian local politics into a battle of conflicting national interests. When a Romanian-German-Armeno-Polish majority took over from a German-Polish-Ruthenian coalition in 1903, Bukowinaer Journal rejoiced:

> Today we are ready to create out of our own free will an even more than amicable agreement between the three most prominent nationalities of Bukovina without any recourse to force. The expectation is fully justified that this amicable agreement will be of long duration and untroubled existence. There is no collision of interests between these three parties. The Romanians, who were always friendly disposed towards the Germans, do not fear Germanisation, although today the German language is prevalent in all offices and many German civil servants are deployed here. They readily acknowledge the cultural importance of the German language as a language of mediation, and know very well that the Germans do not intend to Germanise, that is to denationalise the Romanians. Romanians and Germans have opposite interests, so misunderstandings and frictions will be quite impossible since the Romanians are not aiming for a Romanisation of Bukovina. They want the unhampered cultural development of their co-nationals, but not at the expense of the other nationalities.\(^{21}\)

However, the ‘long duration and untroubled existence’ of such coalitions was debatable in Bukovina. As Aurel Onciul’s newspaper Privitorul had stated in 1902:

> In the short interval of just one decade from the four parties in the diet, namely the Romanians, Ruthenians, Armenians and Germans, all mathematical combinations possible with four elements were formed in the following alliances: Romanians-Ruthenians, Romanians-Armenians, Romanians-Germans, Ruthenians-Armenians, Ruthenians-Germans, Armenians-Germans, Romanians-Ruthenians-Armenians, Romanians-Armenians-Germans and Ruthenians-Armenians-Germans. From the mathematical point of view the Bukovinian Diet works systematically, processing all possible combinations; however, from the political point of view the game is childish and shows a complete lack of seriousness. For it is impossible for it to change this radically every year that it requires yet another regrouping of the afore-mentioned national parties.\(^{22}\)

As such, Bukovina did not just have ‘national parties’: here, nationalities often were political parties. The exceptional number of ‘nationalities’ in Bukovina had the additional value of putting the ‘matter of life and death’ discourse - which ever so often dominated in regions where only two national movements competed with each other - into the perspective of everyday political bickering. Not only were the different factions in Bukovina left little choice but to cooperate; they were also well aware of the relativity of national demands and the limited


\(^{21}\) Der neue Kurs, Bukowinaer Journal, 113, 22.06.1903, p. 1.

\(^{22}\) Vrânceanu, A., Dieta Bucovinei, Privitorul, 7, 01.08.1902, p. 2.
prospects of success. When *Bukowinaer Rundschau* took on the anti-Semitic German nationalists for freezing out the Jews, it recommended to the Bukovinian Jews ‘to become a party’ (*Die Juden des Landes sollen Partei werden*).\(^{23}\) *Rundschau* suggested a similar approach for large landowners of Armenian descent. They had fruitfully cooperated with Romanian-speaking large landowners until the latter ‘remembered that in the land a Romanian nation existed which they could turn into their cat’s-paw in order to do better’. The newspaper advised the ‘Armenians’, who all were landowners and had no popular power base, to ‘either join the Jewish large landowners in order to hit the Romanians on the head or [to] revive a seemingly dead nation on offer in the land in order to affiliate themselves as allies’ if they did not want to ‘sink into the political underworld’.\(^{24}\) By 1912, when Russian agitation and its Old-Ruthenian supporters opposed the newly-branded Ukrainians, *Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung* zoomed in on the murky nationalist foundations of both sides as well as on their different views of loyalty towards Austria and gave the article the title ‘Nation or Party?’\(^{25}\) The same notion had even entered Bukovina-themed fiction in the description by Michael Sawka of a conversation between a group of Bukovinian university students in Vienna in his 1905 novel:

“Today one of us has denied his narrow homeland”, he replied dully. “You were here in the café. The auditor asked Antoniewski if he is also a Bukovinian. Do you know what the man responded? “I am a Pole!” Was he asked about his nationality? Have you answered: I am a German? Or Hercules: a Ruthenian? Or the archaeologist: a Romanian? First the land and then the party - that’s how we’ve always done it!”\(^{26}\)

And indeed, as is the case with parties, the observation made by *Privitorul* on ever-changing coalitions made sense in the Bukovinian political arena. In 1902, *Bukowinaer Journal* applauded the coalition between Romanian, German and Polish nationalists for showing ‘what a nice agreement one can reach if one does not have the desire to win advantages for themselves at the expense of other nationalities, if one wants to express oneself nationally, without narrowing the conditions of existence of another nation or by trying to undermine it at the same time’. Ruthenians however were declared to remain the Romanians’ hereditary enemies.\(^{27}\)

A split occurred in 1891 between the different national factions and the Romanian nationalists,\(^{28}\) when the conflict between the latter and Governor Pace erupted over the Church Congress and the underlying question of the position of Romanian and Ruthenian

\(^{23}\) *Deutsche und Juden*, *Bukowinaer Rundschau*, 21.02.1897, p. 1.
\(^{24}\) *Die Großgrundbesitzer - II*, *Bukowinaer Rundschau*, 01.02.1897, p. 1.
\(^{28}\) Sociologist Dumitru Drăghicescu, who worked for the Romanian post-World War territorial lobby from Paris, claimed that Bukovinian Diet elections had continuously been influenced by the administrative authorities and this way supported and favoured ‘the German-Jewish-Ruthenian coalition’ against the Romanians. Drăghicesco, Dumitru, *Les problèmes nationaux de l’Autriche-Hongrie. Les Roumains (Transylvanie, Bucovine, Banat)*, Éditions Bossard, Paris 1918, p. 200.
speakers within the Orthodox church of Bukovina. Pace and the Romanian nationalists had already been at odds since Pace had attempted to acknowledge the increasing influence of Ruthenian nationalists by granting the Kotzmann, Zastava and Czernowitz districts to Ruthenian candidates at the 1890 elections. When the Romanian nationalists asked for his dismissal, the liberal (Jewish), Armeno-Polish and Ruthenian factions gathered behind the governor. Since their political isolation united the different Romanian nationalist groups, their clout was strong enough to make new elections necessary. The Romanian campaign centered on the alleged threat against the Orthodox Church and the Romanian nation by Governor Pace and all competing political groups in the crownland. The resulting electoral victory for the Romanian nationalists meant the end of Pace’s position as governor.

The Freethinking Alliance

Bukovina’s tradition of aristocratic dominance in the political sphere took a blow when the early 1900s saw a shift towards a new generation of politicians focusing on social reforms and modernisation. Like in Austria at large as well as beyond, this agenda was pushed mainly by the social-democratic movement. Although a social-democratic party was also established in Bukovina in the 1890s, it never developed into a force to be reckoned with because of the pre-industrial character of the crownland and was mainly supported by a small number of German-language workers from the western part of the Monarchy. It tried to broaden its base by attacking the powerful position of large landowners in Bukovina. Although the social-democrats in Austria had started out as a supra-national movement, the daily realities of political life in the Empire soon forced them to allow party sections segregated by nationality. This way, the Bukovinian social democrats soon split into German, Jewish, Romanian and Ruthenian sections, each with their own periodical.

More important than the social-democrat movement was the divide of the ‘young’ and the ‘old’ in the different national factions of Bukovinian politics. The Leader of the ‘Young-Romanian’ democrats was Aurel Onciul, who first presented his agenda of social reforms together with Florea Lupu in the Democratic Rural Party (Partidul Țăranesc Democrat) in 1900. In their periodical Voința Poporului they demanded lease of land owned by the Church Fund to small farmers and a reform of the Municipal Code. On top of that, they promoted electoral reforms in order to limit the power of the large landowners. Onciul soon expanded his ambitions in an effort to unite the Romanian-speaking peasantry and bourgeoisie in Bukovina with his bi-monthly political journal Privitorul, initially published in Brünn (Brno) where he held the position of bank manager. He was initially backed by teachers and Czernowitz university students but quickly gained support among Bukovinian peasants. In 1902, Onciul founded the political association ‘Unirea’ from which his Romanian Democratic

29 Ceaușu 2004, p. 137.
30 Ibid., pp. 305-320.
32 Hausleitner 2001, p. 57.
Party would evolve. With an increasingly literate rural population, Onciul attracted a large audience with his program which first of all focused on social and electoral reforms and only then on national claims. A central element in his program was the establishment of a regional state bank (Landesbank) which was to enable peasants to take out honest loans. Furthermore, influenced by the ideas of inter-ethnic tolerance - published in Raoul Chébard’s book in 1894 and readily supported by the Imperial government - Onciul stated his willingness to cooperate with the other Bukovinian national groups. He was definitely a novelty in his days when he acknowledged equal rights for both Romanian and Ruthenian Bukovinians, recognizing both ethnicities as the ‘historical inhabitants’ of the territory.\textsuperscript{33} In general, Onciul’s party acknowledged the right of each nationality to pursue its proper rights and wishes.\textsuperscript{34} The principle of nationalities deciding their own fates (Selbstbestimmungsrecht) lay at the core of his electoral reform ambitions.\textsuperscript{35} Naturally, respecting the rights of his ‘rival nations’ also had practical aspects: in order to gather enough political capital as well as a majority for his electoral reform plans, Onciul was badly in need of fellow combatants outside of the Romanian nationalist realm who would enable him to break the staunch opposition against his plans from the side of the boyars.\textsuperscript{36}

Some Ruthenian circles had noticed the initiatives by Onciul and Lupu with impatience and envy. They regarded Romanian nationalist teachers, who formed the core of the new movement, as ‘more progressive’ than their Ruthenian colleagues.\textsuperscript{37} The balance was quickly restored when Onciul found an ally in Mykola Vasylko, who had been at odds with the conservative Ruthenian nationalists for some time.\textsuperscript{38} Within the Bukovinian Diet, the ever-controversial Vasylko raised eyebrows when he interfered with the way diet members of other national factions stood up for their respective constituencies. Czernowitzer Tagblatt, already fully conditioned in reasoning along the lines of national registers, wondered why Vasylko bothered to criticise German or Romanian colleagues instead of leaving this to their German and Romanian voters.\textsuperscript{39} In any case, Vasylko’s ability to distinguish himself as a cross-national politician, combined with his cordial cooperation with Benno Straucher from the recently formed Jewish nationalist party, made him a crucial partner in a future collaboration between Bukovina’s competing national parties. Arthur Skedl, who led the German liberals primarily rooted in the urban regions, also realised the benefits of a closer cooperation: the rise of anti-Semitism in German nationalist circles and the subsequent split between German and Jewish nationalists threatened to marginalise his constituency and the German language as a whole.\textsuperscript{40} Together with the progressive Armeno-Polish Stefan Stefanowicz, Onciul, Vasylko, Skedl and Straucher found each other in their shared ambition to reform and

\begin{footnotes}
\item[34] Hitchins 1973, p. 617.
\item[35] Onciul 1999, p. 35.
\item[36] Nistor 1991, p. 322.
\item[37] Русини і Румуні на Вуковинї, Пріятель, 08.02.1903, p. 3.
\item[38] Політична ситуація на Буковинї в виборчій реформі (Пільмо її села), Радна Рада, 17.11.1906, pp. 1-3.
\item[39] Deplazirte Rivalität, Czernowitzter Tagblatt, 17.05.1903, p. 1.
\item[40] Um was es geht, Bukowinaer Post, 10.07.1904, pp. 1-2.
\end{footnotes}
democratise the Bukovinian electoral system. Each national group retained the right to pursue its specific national goals, however,41 while the clear state loyalty and Austria-mindedness of Onciul’s Democratic Party was a stable starting-point for negotiations on cooperation.42 In view of different ‘national priorities’, audacious visions of a united democratic party were quickly dismissed. Instead, an association was formed, consisting of national clubs. Every question regarded ‘national’ by those clubs was to be treated as such.43

The so-called ‘Freethinking Alliance’ (Freisinniger Verband)44 directly opposed the conservative forces within each nationalist group, the Romanian National Party of Iancu Flondor, the Old-Ruthenians and the Christian nationalists,45 who took every opportunity to accuse the Alliance’s members of ‘betraying their own nationalities’. Onciul was said to put Bukovinian interests first and Romanian interests second.46 The figureheads of the Alliance used every opportunity to refute such allegations, like Vasylko during a 1903 diet session:

> What is our organisation, gentlemen? Do you think that Dr. Aurel Onciul [...] is a fiber less Romanian than any of you? Do you think that [Ruthenian] Mr Stotsky and Mr Pihuia, these two sons of farmers, have given up even a bit of their national program only for Onciul’s sake, that they feel even a bit less national? Do you think that Dr. Benno Straucher would tolerate even the slightest insult or the slightest bad thought against the Jews, in order to have the honour to be part of our association? Nothing, gentlemen, have we given up, but we connected on the basis of liberalism (Freisinn).47

They were not afraid to lash back at their opponents with a well-aimed tu quoque, as Onciul proved in Voința poporului:

> The peasant needs are not national; they are neither Ruthenian nor Moldavian. Needs are needs and you combat them together with whomever you can. This is how the sly boyars do it. They would cozy up to the devil if this would help them to keep the stove burning. Here is some proof. Why have Romanian deputies joined Ruthenian deputy Tyminsky? Maybe this was national treason, too! Why have Romanian deputies joined Polish boyar deputies: Abrahamowicz, Bogdanowicz, Bohosiewicz and Wiesolowsky? Is this not national treason? Yes, everything boyars do is always national, popular and Orthodox. Only when the farmers’ deputies use boyar slyness for peasant benefit, then the boyar gang and their minions yell: “To arms! Nation, church and people perish!” It is not true, you scoundrels. It is not the nation, the church or the people that perish, but only the boyars’ dealings and kickbacks. It is high time that all rural deputies who have a heart for the peasants stick together to defeat the

---

41 Onciul 1999, p. 38.
42 Turczynski 1993, p. 204.
44 While in Ruthenian/Ukrainian the name of the Alliance (Вільнодумний союз), corresponds with the German, in Romanian, *Freisinniger Verband* is often translated as tovăraște țărinească, ‘Rural Alliance’.
45 Turczynski 1993, p. 204.
46 Olaru 1995, p. 278.
47 Wagner 1979, p. 51.
It was not only Onciul and his Freethinking Alliance which jeopardised the comfortable power position enjoyed by the local aristocratic conservatives. On 3 April 1903, Prince Conrad Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst was appointed Governor of Bukovina. Apart from the local excitement that such a high-ranking nobleman had been sent to faraway, little-known Bukovina, Hohenlohe brought with him the reputation of being a ‘red prince’ and was, unlike his predecessors, inclined to take reforms seriously. Instead of discreetly supporting the conservative elements, the new governor sought close cooperation with the Freethinking Alliance - ordered to do so by his superiors in Vienna, as Bukovinian newspaper editor Philipp Menczel later claimed Hohenlohe had confessed to him. In Viennese circles, it was said, the argumentation went as follows:

*If three or even four nations come together in a single alliance, mutually respecting each other’s national rights, why should the government [do] not support such an endeavour? An attempt might as well be made, and Bukovina is exactly the appropriate province for it.*

Hohenlohe’s successor Regner von Bleyleben maintained in his memoirs how Hohenlohe had ‘simply allowed Onciul and Vasylko to break up the longstanding conservative majority in contrast to his predecessors, who had influenced all elections’. Progressive newspapers like *Bukowinaer Post* praised both the Freethinking Alliance and the new governor and a year after Hohenlohe had assumed his position, the *Post* lamented that ‘the land still made no attempt to make good use of him’. However, Hohenlohe’s energy was said to see through the complacent attitude of the incumbent deputies, who readily paid lip service to reform ideas but were not in a hurry to implement them. The *Post* even insisted that ‘the national question’ had not been raised in the diet anymore once Hohenlohe had assumed office.

By June 1904, discussions in the diet between conservatives and democrats about legislative projects regarding electoral reforms and land redistribution had come to a complete stalemate. The diet was dissolved by imperial decree and new elections were called for July. Just like in the rest of Austria, the main theme of the 1904 elections in Bukovina was the election reform. The two blocks formalised their previously informal alliances and so the Freethinking Alliance officially participated in the race: ‘Young-Romanians’ and ‘Young-Ruthenians’ promised to campaign together and to divide the twelve seats available for the rural curia between them. The bitter election battle between ‘democrats’ and ‘conservatives’ focused on loyalty to the state and on irredentism. The ‘democrats’ readily adopted this theme since one

---

48 *Clubul deputaţilor țărăneşti în dieta țerii*, Voinţa Poporului, 24, 10.11.1903, p. 20.
50 Menczel 1932, pp. 65-68.
53 *Wach’ auf Bukowina!* Bukowinaer Post, 03.04.1904, p. 1.
54 *Pfingsten 1904*, Bukowinaer Post, 22.05.1904, pp.1-2.
of the prominent at the conservative side, Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki, was the principal organiser of the controversial Stephen the Great commemoration of the Romanian nationalists that same year. The elections ended in victory for the Alliance. The Romanian National Party had not managed to obtain any of the seats and was disbanded soon after. The Freethinking Alliance got a majority of votes in both the rural and the urban curiae as well as from the chamber of commerce and entered the Bukovinian Diet with seventeen of the thirty-one available seats. The Young-Ruthenian victory over their Russophile/Old-Ruthenian opponents had even been more convincing than Onciul’s over the conservatives in the Romanian nationalist camp. For the seats obtained from the chamber of commerce, the Alliance had to thank the liberal German and Jewish nationalist votes.\(^{55}\)

The wind of change brought about by the progressive governor and the victory of the reform-minded new coalition lifted the spirits in Bukovina, urging columnist Conrad Pekelmann to exclaim his ‘delight to be Bukovinian, with such a diet’.\(^{56}\) Notwithstanding its aura of bourgeois reformists, however, the new diet members were large landowners just like the conservatives they had been eager to replace.\(^{57}\) The appointment of Romanian nationalist George Wassilko as diet president and Ruthenian Stepan Smal’-Stotsky as his deputy served to reflect the dominance of the two major nationalist factions in the crownland.\(^{58}\)

Once the Alliance had obtained its diet majority, it started to work on the realisation of its program: the establishment of a regional state bank, the recovery of the land’s finances, a municipal code and electoral reform and a pay rise for teachers. With its seventeen diet seats, the Alliance lacked the two-third majority necessary to amend the provincial constitutional law and was thus forced to negotiate a compromise with the conservative diet minority. This resulted in the creation of a fourth ‘general’ curia consisting of all male citizens over twenty-four residing in Bukovina for at least a year. The total number of delegates was enlarged from thirty-one to fifty-five. The project was a rush job - even Onciul underscored that the draft was only a step towards the ultimate goal of a general and equal electoral law - and was supported neither by Straucher nor by the social-democratic delegate and the deputies from the chamber of commerce. Meanwhile, the political attention in Austria and Bukovina had shifted to the issue of the introduction of general, direct and secret suffrage in the Imperial Parliament. Especially Straucher, Vasyisko and Skedl insisted that such new rules should not only apply to the Imperial Parliament but to Austria’s regional diets as well. Straucher also used the opportunity to campaign for the recognition of a Jewish nationality.\(^{59}\)

The Alliance had started to split primary schools, teacher-training colleges as well as the school inspectorate into German, Romanian and Ruthenian divisions. Nationalists from all three directions had reasons to be satisfied with the results of the negotiations: Ruthenian lobbyists obtained a Ruthenian-language Gymnasium for the first time; their Romanian adversaries celebrated the promotion of Romanian-language parallel classes at the Czernowitz

\(^{55}\) Ceaușu 2004, pp. 352-358.
\(^{56}\) Corbea-Hoisie 2003, p. 120.
\(^{58}\) Ceaușu 2004, p. 363.
\(^{59}\) Leslie 1991, pp. 120-122.
Gymnasium into a full-fledged Romanian-language Gymnasium while a second Romanian-language Gymnasium was established in Kimpolung. German colonists could now send their offspring to a German-language Gymnasium in Gurahumora.\textsuperscript{60}\textit{Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung} praised the new system, since pupils were expected to receive a better and swifter education now that they did not have to spend their hours in class with classmates who spoke a different mother tongue.\textsuperscript{61} Indeed, illiteracy in Bukovina dropped from 79.47\% in 1890 to 53.8\% in 1910. Still, the crownland remained one of the least literate provinces of the Monarchy.\textsuperscript{62}

In spite of the energetic way political milestones were reached, the Freethinking Alliance was a fragile construction. The days surrounding the election victory had been euphoric. \textit{Voința Poporului} reported how not only six hundred of his own followers had carried Onciul on their shoulders to a train taking him to Brünn (Brno), but that for the occasion, Vasylko had ordered a folk ensemble from Focșani (Romania) to play the revolutionary song ‘Awaken thee, Romanian!’ (\textit{Deșteaptă-te Române!}) upon Onciul’s departure.\textsuperscript{63} Soon, however, personal envy and competition prevailed. As Aurel Onciul’s memoirs reveal, the leading personalities in the Alliance tended to clash. Onciul claimed that Vasylko’s bossy attitude was accepted by his fellow-Ruthenians, but not by Onciul’s Romanians. Especially between Lupu and Vasylko the chemistry was said to be bad. According to Onciul, Vasylko tried to take his position as the Alliance’s leader, which Onciul insisted he would have accepted only if Vasylko’s personality had been less divisive and if Onciul’s Romanian fellowmen had allowed such a shift. Furthermore, Onciul felt frozen out by Vasylko’s and Straucher’s personal friendship and maintained to have persevered in order not to jeopardise his ultimate political goals. Smal’-Stotsky was reportedly only capable of seeing matters from the viewpoint of a Ruthenian peasant and as such even tried to block roads repairs in the capital and pay rises for teachers, municipal secretaries and physicians.\textsuperscript{64} Onciul himself was perceived as a successful initiator of the new program, but a less than efficacious implementer. His dominant and bullying nature estranged him from those whom his course of action had initially enthused.\textsuperscript{65} Onciul himself accused his Jewish and Ruthenian allies of willfully disturbing the harmony.\textsuperscript{66} The local press regarded the Alliance as dominated by the Young-Ruthenians and wondered what Jewish and German nationalists possibly gained by their membership.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{60} Nistor 1991, p. 323-324.
\textsuperscript{61}\textit{Trennung der Kinder an den kommunalen Volksschulen nach der Muttersprache}, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung, 10.01.1905, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{62} Ceaușu 2004, p. 156.
\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Ovațiuni pentru deputatul Dr. Aurel Onciul}, Voința Poporului, 46, 12.11.1904, pp. 11-12.
\textsuperscript{64} Onciul 1999, pp. 39-44.
\textsuperscript{65} \textit{Die Bilanz der Aera Onciul}, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung, 05.09.1906, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{66} Onciul 1999, p. 53.
In the short time the Alliance enjoyed its majority diet sessions were overshadowed by unpleasant bickering over favours, positions and salaries. The cracks already visible when Romanian and Ruthenian nationalists fought over prominent positions in the Orthodox Church widened when positions needed to be filled in the new regional bank. The original concept stipulated that its president be from the Romanian camp while his deputy be appointed by the Ruthenian faction. Since the Romanian Democrats had supported Smal’-Stotsky’s candidacy for diet vice-president, they now demanded Florea Lupu to be appointed bank president for life. Vasylko’s Ruthenians refused since they believed that this way, only Romanian national interests would be served and suggested the president be re-elected every six years. Onciul’s Democrats refused and the Alliance thus met an untimely end. *Czernowitzer Tagblatt* complained that the failure of the Alliance had not been a matter of nationalist politics, but purely a case of personal issues and concluded that this general feature of Bukovinian politics had to be eradicated first of all. *Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung* did not pretend to be sorry, reminded its readers how it had deemed the Alliance a monstrosity from day one and pointed at the inconsistencies which had plagued it:

*The genius Mr Aurel Onciul could not have contrived a more cunning plan of campaign to set the Young-Ruthenians in the saddle, even though he repeatedly emphasised that he is a national Romanian. The elections came with their battle cries and before you knew it, Dr. Smal’-Stotsky was deputy to the diet president and, with respect to the given conditions, the autonomous administrator of the entire land. It goes without saying that the Young-Ruthenians happily complied with this plan, both in their own interest and in the interest of their Young-Ruthenian electorate.***

Furthermore, the newspaper regarded Onciul not a selfish, but rather an ‘amateurish’ (stümperhaft) politician, who managed to be accused of nepotism - Lupu was his brother-in-law - on the first occasion he actually had to defend Romanian national interests. *Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung* predicted a future for Bukovinian politics largely based on pre-Onciul traditions:

*Now, the politics of the land will return to the track leading to true national equality and continuous economic development - but only after many battles still to be argued out. Our diet is based on the principle of representing interests. The large landowners will eliminate the clearly nationalist element from their ranks and gradually switch to a generous agricultural policy which only takes into account the national element insofar as it is necessary to prevent abuse. Jews and Germans will establish an urban faction together, which will represent the economic interests of business and trade professionals as well as the German cultural element while the peasants’ interests will be embodied nationally and economically in a Romanian and a Ruthenian Diet club.***

However, such scenarios disregarded the developments in Austria’s electoral reform discussions: what had had seemed revolutionary in Bukovina in 1904 when the first reforms

---

68 *Bukowiner Landtag, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung*, 03.06.1905, p. 1.
had led to an additional curia seemed overhauled by the Moravian Compromise of 1905. The Moravian system provided completely separate registers for Czechs and Germans, requiring lists or registers according to nationality. A predetermined number of delegates were elected for each nationality. The new system caused excitement in progressive Bukovinian circles and seemed compatible with the philosophy the Freethinking Alliance had already applied in the Bukovinian school system: national conflicts should be solved by ‘unbundling’ (Entflechtung) and separation, as former governor Regner von Bleyleben - whose entire term in office from 1904 until 1911 had been dominated by the Bukovinian electoral reform debate - had described the concept.

After the Collapse of the Freethinking Alliance

With the failure of the Alliance, Onciul’s Democrats and the Romanian conservatives found each other once more. In Onciul’s view, it was this rapprochement as well as the successful implementation of the planned reforms which had now made the Freethinking Alliance redundant. He claimed that it was not the cooperation with Vasylko and Straucher that had been his leading motive, but only the ‘national principle’ and the national right to self-determination: once his conservative fellow-nationalist had recognised this, reunification had been the only logical step.

With regard to this confession, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung certainly had a point with the observation that the ‘struggle against the boyars’, which had been the focus of the Democrats’ campaign, seemed little more than a pretext. It explained why for the so-called a-national Democrats in predominantly Ruthenian-speaking districts only Ruthenian nationalists had run, while by analogy the same method was applied in largely Romanian-speaking districts while, as the newspaper claimed, Jewish electors had been pushed to vote for anti-Semitic candidates for the sake of the Alliance’s victory. ‘The proper flag should declare what goods are being shipped’, Allgemeine concluded.

The new developments created a new majority in the diet, consisting of six Romanian conservatives, five Romanian Democrats from the now defunct Alliance, four Armeno-Polish conservatives, two German delegates and the two ‘virilists’, Metropolitan Repta and university rector Herzberg-Fränk. After long debates, the new majority managed to have Lupu installed as regional state bank president.

In October 1905, Onciul achieved another significant political success once Gheorghe Popovici had died. Popovici had represented the religiously and linguistically mixed central Bukovinian district in the Imperial Parliament. Onciul ran a successful campaign at the local

---

74 Onciul 1999, p. 47.
75 Unter eigene Flaggge, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung, 08.06.1905.
by-election against the Ruthenian-speaking Uniate Arthur Malyk, albeit a messy one: on 13 August 1905, Titus Onciul came to the village of Bahrinestie to talk about the regional bank. Instead, Ruthenian newspaper Ruska Rada argued, Onciul had warned his Ruthenian-speaking audience not to vote for Malyk ‘or else they could forget about getting money from the regional bank, since Lupu, a friend of the Onciuls, was its president’. In Hadikfalva, Hungarian-speaking peasants disrupted one of Onciul’s rallies with pro-Malyk cheering which eventually led to a brawl with Onciul’s supporters. Similar unrest was reported from Sereth, where larger groups of followers of Onciul’s and Malyk’s came to blows. Onciul balanced his act carefully and made sure that he conveyed the right message to the motley crew of voters by maintaining that in parliament, he would first and foremost defend his autonomy agenda of economic reforms and peasant emancipation. He furthermore exploited the notion of ‘true Bukovinianness’ which he skillfully contrasted with ‘that spirit of discord and national and religious incitement invading us from abroad’. Without mentioning anyone in particular, it was obvious he meant his Uniate and Galician-born opponent Malyk. As soon as he was sure of his victory, he also chose to ignore the failure his Freethinking Alliance had been on the local level and declared:

Once again, the new coalition of Romanians, Ruthenians, Germans and Jews which unifies all indigenous, honest elements has shown that it is strong enough to secure a brilliant victory despite all the mostly very unfair means argued against them.

Once Onciul had secured his seat in parliament, it was only a matter of time before his political adversaries in Vienna found out that his reputation at home was tarnished by rumours of nepotism, corruption and stealth and subsequently put this knowledge to use. In Bukovina, his supporters and his adversaries at least agreed that the unrest surrounding Onciul’s doings and dealing damaged the crownland’s reputation. According to the Romanian nationalists of Apărarea Națională, it cost Bukovinan Romanians the respect of their fellow nationalities and the trust of their fellow Romanians outside Bukovina.

The Bukovinian Compromise

Onciul’s parliamentary ambitions had temporarily steered away the attention from the unfinished Bukovinian electoral reform, but in 1907, Vienna returned the 1904 draft to the

---

77 Агітація Волохів, Руска Рада, 14.08.1905, pp. 261-262.
79 Zur Reichsratsergänzungswahl, Bukowinaer Rundschau, 06.09.1905, p. 2.
80 Sieg des echten Bukowinaertums! Dr. Onciul - gewählt! Bukowinaer Rundschau, 11.10.1905, p. 1; Брама! Народна Рада, 23.08.1905, p.1.
Bukovinian Diet for some minor alterations. In order to avoid lengthy deliberations, the issue was postponed until the 1908 session. When the conservative majority - supported by Governor Regner von Bleyleben who feared the entire reform was at risk - tried to have the original version approved without further debate, they encountered resistance from the German nationalist diet delegates. The German nationalist electorate was spread all over the crownland and as such they felt underrepresented in the revised electoral law which, like its predecessor, was based on geographical district voting. Vienna decided thereupon that the draft had to be discussed once more on diet level, while taking into account the German nationalist objections. Aurel Onciul, encouraged by the high participation rate at the 1907 parliamentary elections, then proposed a completely new draft based on the Moravian Compromise of 1905, introducing separate voter registers for different national groups. Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung needed little time to recognise its old Freethinking adversaries with their crypto-nationalist agendas and issued strong warnings against the register concept which it feared would lead to ‘the rupture of the peasant class, the destruction of the bourgeoisie which is struggling to survive and the division and atomisation of the cities, of the land and indirectly of the State as a whole’. The newspaper also questioned the government’s position in the matter:

What is forcing the government now to carelessly abandon the territorial principle, which - as far as the national demarcation is concerned - was maintained at the elections for the Imperial Parliament, and to put in its place a personality principle which tears apart all sense of unity, opens the door to national radicalism, intolerance and ethnic hatred and helps to build dangerous states within the State?84

Since Onciul favoured separate registers for Germans and Jews as well, he had found Straucher and Skedl at his side. Although the diet’s conservative forces tried to ignore the initiative and and continued their attempt to have the initial 1904 draft approved, the governor informed them they would not stand a chance to meet with supreme approval once they neglected the wishes of an entire national faction. On 15 October 1908, they finally gave up resistance and Vasylko joined Straucher and Skedl in their ambition to completely revise the reformed draft law. The permanent committee had its first meeting on 25 July 1909 and decided ‘that a national register with a proportional allocation of seats according to the number of voters be introduced’. This system required the voter to decide to which nationality he belonged and to register himself accordingly. From then on, he could only vote for candidates within his own national group. The basic idea was to recognise different peoples or nationalities in a crownland as ‘having equal status as members of the state’s population’. Another central idea was the principle of national self-government, not related to a territory but to individuals. This ‘personal autonomy’ implied that every ethnic group, no matter how big or small, should be entitled to solve its particular cultural and national issues.

It was clear from the start that the register system for Bukovina would be significantly more complicated than the one for Moravia: whereas in the latter only two - a German and a Czech - registers had been created, in Bukovina no less than five were planned. And yet this number failed to correspond with the religious and linguistic reality of the land, as the Russian speakers from Lippovan settlements were listed in the Ruthenian register and the Magyar speakers from the villages around Radautz in the Romanian one. Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung mocked that ‘the Lippovans’ beards should be shaved off in order for them to fit better into the Ruthenian register, and the pants of the Magyars from Hadikfalva should be narrowed and their hat brims widened in order for them not to swim around in the Romanian register as some alien element’.86

Then there was the Jewish question. Although the permanent committee proposed to include a Jewish national register, Vienna refused to recognise a Jewish national identity. The matter proved to be a major stumbling block on the way to approval of the new system and was finally resolved by having Jews and Germans share one register in such a way that a fixed number of Jewish delegates would be - more or less - guaranteed. Furthermore, the new order was not consistently national, for the large landowners secured the continued existence of their landowner curiae and blocked a truly democratic reform: class suffrage, related to tax payments and registered property was perpetuated.

Once deliberations were finished and the Emperor had approved the new communal law in March 1909, universal suffrage for all males older that twenty-four and with more than two years of residency within their respective communities was introduced.87 The six Bukovinian curiae now looked as follows: The first (landowner) curia consisted of eight deputies and included the ‘virilist’ Metropolitan, a representative of consistory and monasteries, a Romanian plus a Ruthenian high-ranking cleric and four Romanian large landowners. The second (landowner) curia equally had eight members: four Armeno-Polish large landowners, two large landowners of other nationalities and four Polish delegates, two from the rural areas and two from the general register. The third one was the Romanian curia numbering sixteen representatives from the rural areas and the general register and the fourth a similar Ruthenian curia of sixteen. The fifth curia was German with the university rector as ‘virilist’, four deputies from electoral districts with a German majority plus three from district with a German minority. Finally, the sixth was officially named the curia for cities and chambers of commerce, but was actually the - officially discarded - Jewish curia and consisted of two members of the chamber of commerce and five urban delegates.88 The very complicated system had caused the number of mandates to increase from thirty-one to sixty-three, while universal and class suffrage had been combined.89

86 Der Kataster, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung, 04.06.1910, p. 1.
88 Kotzian 2004, pp. 120-121.
In Bukovina proper, the electoral reform was not univocally cheered. Apart from German and Jewish nationalists who remained deeply unhappy about their forced cohabitation, university rector Adler voted against because he found the system unfit for Bukovina altogether. He explained his position in the Diet:

Where is the national register at home? Where did it originate? It was created in Moravia, where two nations are facing each other ready for combat, where the tide of nationality hatred threatened to break all dams and where it was about reducing the friction between Germans and Czechs, about creating a separation between those two warring nations and keeping them apart at all costs. Are the conditions in this land that bad? (...) I do not think so! My view is rather that, in spite of some amusing vigorous heckling in this hall, in spite of all family disputes, all parties have the large home country and our native land in common, and deep in their heart do not foster lasting enmity.90

The ‘urban element’, therefore mostly German-Jewish circles, felt wronged by the meager two seats the new system allocated to them and blamed - not incorrectly - Onciul’s lobby for rural emancipation for this. *Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung* held the leaders of the diverse national factions in Bukovina responsible for the ‘register fuss’ (*Katasterrummel*) and for the ‘import of national hatred’.91 The newspaper concluded that ‘the register had been cut from the Bukovinian body so thoroughly that there were national lists, but no homeland’. It predicted that ‘those elected would move into the diet armed to the teeth and take up their positions’ after which ‘the battle would be terrible, in a bloodily-grotesque way distorted by direct contact and cramped space’. It foresaw a future of only ten years at most for the new system, enough for the masterminds of the scheme to leave the political stage ‘together with their devastating and corrupting influence’.92 *Bukowinaer Post* lamented how the spirit of the Freethinking Alliance with its focus on common Bukovinian interests had been abandoned and how nationalist agendas dominated the spectrum once more. The *Post* expressed uncertainty about the outcome of the new system, noting how ‘every nation was separate and for its vested rights had put up the picket fence of the national register while no one could foresee nor predict yet how things would take shape in the new diet’. It also expressed hope that, in due time, the planned segregation would neutralise nationalist preoccupations:

The national idea has been strengthened, in a sense a mighty fortress (eine feste Burg) was created for it. First, it must feel at home there and then allow the consideration that this way the beautiful land of Bukovina does not cease to be the common homeland of all (...).93

*Czernowitzer Tagblatt* on the other hand cheered recent negotiations between Romanian and Ruthenian nationalists in Vienna, regarding these ‘as proof for the clarifying effect of the much-maligned separation’ and in a rather self-contradictory way concluded that ‘in

---

92 *Der Kataster*, *Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung*, 04.06.1910, p. 1.
93 *Der Landesgedanke*, *Bukowinaer Post*, 27.03.1910, pp. 1-2.
Bukovina, as it were, natural boundaries between the Romanian and Ruthenian neighbours had been drawn.\textsuperscript{94}

The 1911 elections were held as the first ballot under the register system. A major change was the prominent presence of the Ruthenian vote with seventeen mandates.\textsuperscript{95} The results also showed that, after the Romanian and Ruthenian nationalists, the Jews were now the biggest political force in Bukovina. Within the Ruthenian camp, the Old-Ruthenians were effectively eradicated.\textsuperscript{96} \textit{Czernowitzer Tagblatt} expressed its satisfaction with the way ‘the national dynamite had been eliminated’, while \textit{Bukowinaer Post} reported from the opening session of the new diet:

\begin{quote}
The separation by nationality in the new regional election regulations aimed at eliminating existing frictions and the removal of many points of conflict: to each nation its own. This was fulfilled. The desire for peace will now have to be the common, unifying bond with imprinted on its bright national colours the shibboleth of all those who cherish a sense of homeland: Bukovina.\textsuperscript{97}
\end{quote}

Then again, complications swiftly came to the fore: first of all, like Straucher, Skedl and others had predicted, the cleverly designed ‘hidden’ Jewish mandates within the German-speaking register were not that steady and instead of the planned nine seats, the Jewish faction had won ten. This caused a renewed lobby for a separate Jewish register, supported by all Bukovinian national groups. Second, the envisaged calm with every national group safely in its own ‘fortress’ failed to materialise because the nationalities involved - Romanian, Ruthenian, German and Jewish - soon found themselves torn between competing forces in their own ranks which severely frustrated the performance of the national clubs within the diet.\textsuperscript{98} In this respect, the predictions of \textit{Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung} were not far off the mark:

\begin{quote}
The shadowy and rather unsubstantial national register, which provides the regional structure, seems to us the cause rather than the conqueror of the national disputes, and since the register principle lacks consistency due to the paucity of completeness and symmetry, it will not be beneficial to the national-cultural and economic development of the land.\textsuperscript{99}
\end{quote}

While Austrian patriots hoped that the new order would neutralise nationalist agitation, nationalists themselves regarded it to be the first step towards complete segregation. On the verge of the outbreak of the World War, Bukovina’s Christian Germans - claiming a ‘German ethnicity’ and thus implicitly excluding Jewish German speakers - accepted the decline of

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{\textit{Friedensakkorde}, Czernowitzer Tagblatt, 31.10.1909, p. 1.}
\footnote{Ceau\c{s}u, p. 139.}
\footnote{Ibid., pp. 383-388.}
\footnote{\textit{Bukowina}, Bukowinaer Post, 02.07.1911, pp. 1-2.}
\footnote{Leslie 1991, pp. 134-135; Ceau\c{s}u 2004, p. 396.}
\footnote{\textit{Ostern 1911}, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung, 16.04.1911, p. 1.}
\end{footnotes}
German cultural influence in Bukovina as the natural course of events and focused on ‘the development of their own nationality’ exclusively. As they saw it, politically the register system was to be expanded to local and parliamentary elections and economically to the cooperative banks.\textsuperscript{100} The last pre-war years of the regional Bukovinian Diet were marred by numerous scandals featuring the names of both prominent Romanian and Ruthenian deputies and kept politicians from dealing with the urgent economic problems in the crownland.\textsuperscript{101}

\textit{The Diet and its Local Reputation}

The Bukovinian Diet, once hailed as symbol of independence from Galicia and recognition by Vienna, gradually lost its shine in the course of its existence. In 1887, \textit{Czernowitz Presse} still eulogised the ‘peaceful picture’ of the diet, while it rejoiced in ‘the true joy of seeing the majority of representatives agree on all matters concerning the land’.\textsuperscript{102} Over the years, however, that soothing majority had done little to liven up political debates in Bukovinian society. From the beginning, the Romanian-language large landowners had managed to assure themselves of a steady diet majority. The handful of peasant deputies, often without any knowledge of German and therefore unable to follow the debates, had simply been told to stand up or keep sitting by their leaders.\textsuperscript{103} Still, by 1888, this did not keep the editors of \textit{Bukowinaer Nachrichten} from cherishing memories of a livelier debate in older days:

\textit{People spoke in detail of the expectations they had of the diet and ventilated already in detail and in advance the possible topics of discussion. No matter the political views of the parties, all without distinction of colour engaged with interest in the issue and they all anticipated with growing excitement the opening of the counsel hall, in which they were certain to hear the effective voices of men driven by enthusiasm for freedom, progress and the welfare of the people.}

Although \textit{Nachrichten} added that many of these representatives were decent and reliable, it still deemed the situation ‘unhealthy’.\textsuperscript{104} In 1900, \textit{Bukowinaer Post} also expressed worries about the faltering relationship between the local political elite and its electorate, but blamed this on an overly loyal attitude towards Vienna by Bukovina’s politicians. These politicians, with their ‘orgies of servility and careerism’, were accused of having only one priority: faithful obedience to any government. Instead of regarding diet mandates as ‘honourable signs of trust’ from their electorate like before, they apparently saw these mandates now as ‘gifts of grace’ from the Governor’s Office, ‘surrendering them to absolutism while claiming a mandate as a miserable reward (\textit{Schandlohn}) in return’.\textsuperscript{105} Furthermore, the \textit{Post} also voiced concern over the politically uneducated masses in Bukovina, who were in no way in contact with their diet representatives and whose wishes, needs and complaints therefore also

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{100} \textit{Die deutschvölkische Politik im Buchenlande}, Bukowinaer Nachrichten, 07.06.1914, pp. 1-2.
\item \textsuperscript{101} Ceauşu 2004, p. 397.
\item \textsuperscript{102} \textit{Der Bukowiner Landtag}, Czernowitz Presse, 01.12.1887, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{103} \textit{Adel und Bürgerthum in der Bukowina}, Sonntagsblatt der Bukowina, 16.03.1862, p. 85.
\item \textsuperscript{104} \textit{Unser Landtag}, Bukowinaer Nachrichten, 10.06.1888, pp. 1-2.
\item \textsuperscript{105} \textit{Es dämmert}, Bukowinaer Post, 1070, 11.11.1900, p. 1.
\end{itemize}
remained unnoticed in the Imperial Parliament. These observations did not change over the years and voter apathy and ignorance continued to be a theme during Bukovina’s final election year 1911.

When the 1907 diet session closed in October 1907, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung did little to hide its contempt for the institution, maintaining that ‘as far as the population was interested in the political processes in the land, it breathed a sigh of relief when it heard that the famous legislative body of the duchy of Bukovina had dispersed for what was hopefully a considerable period of time’. As a matter of fact, the depreciative tone of the Allgemeine quickly zoomed in on the person of Aurel Onciul and the way he was said to have intoxicated the diet as a whole with his accusations and rude behaviour. Clearly, the newspaper had always rallied against the Freethinking Alliance in general and against Onciul in particular, so this criticism was not surprising. The style of the new generation of politicians in Bukovina, most prominently represented by Onciul, Vasylko and Straucher obviously contrasted with the complacency of their predecessors the local press had ranted against before. Onciul had repeatedly pleaded for a more active and dynamic Bukovinian diet and had indisputably contributed to more turbulent and raucous diet sessions. In the early days of the Alliance, as illustrated by columnist Pekelmann’s exclamations on the ‘delightfulness’ of the diet and by Vasylko’s musical tribute to Onciul at the Czernowitz railway station, the turbulence was of a by and large cheerful nature. Diet debates were marked by bravado, good spirits and laughs. Mykola (Koko) Vasylko’s speeches were famously witty. Although he was too young to have actually remembered the occasions, author and actor Georg Drozdowski wrote:

*Back then it was amusing in the diet, and Koko earned tumultuous applause from the listening audience, which was happy that there were only ‘silk worries’ (sadene zores), and no evil otherwise. Wasn’t that a happy time?*

The new dynamics also provided less favourable images, as first of all the Alliance’s conservative opponents experienced. In a debate on alleged misbehaviour by Conservative Romanian nationalist Iancu Flondor, the participants were repeatedly reproached for referring to each other as ‘worms’, ‘crooks’ or for wishing for the other ‘to have been put behind bars a long time ago’. When in 1908 Pihuliak’s Young-Ruthenians tried to block the election of Onciul - now the head of the diet’s Christian-Social club - as chairman of the diet’s executive committee, the latter responded with ‘verbal injuries’ and threats to have Pihuliak

---

106 Auch eine Auferstehung, Bukowinaer Post, 07.04.1901, pp. 1-2.
107 Der große Wahltag, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung, 02.04.1911, p. 1.
111 *Die Affaire Dr. Janku v. Flondor vor dem landtäglichen Mißbilligungsausschusse* (supplement to ’Bukowinaer Journal’ no. 323), Bukowinaer Vereinsdruckerei, Czernowitz 1903.
112 Bukowiner Landtag, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung, 06.10.1908, p. 1.
removed by the diet usher. Onciul did not stop at attacking his opponents verbally: *Czernowitz Tagblatt* reported in 1914 how Onciul came to blows with his Romanian nationalist colleague Zurkan from the executive committee whom he had accused of irredentism. Onciul had used a chair, a water glass and an ink blottor as ‘the key points for his argumentation’. The ink blottor had left Zurkan with a black eye and *Tagblatt* conceded ‘to have stopped being outraged and to reckon with the well-known fact that the politics of this Democrat leader had nothing in common with societal respectability (*Salonfähigkeit*)’.

**The Illusion of a Bukovinian Parliamentary Club**

With the traditional complaint - voiced by the entire spectrum of the Bukovinian press - that Vienna neglected Bukovina in its economic misery, the big question was why there was no effective Bukovinian lobby in the Habsburg capital. The obvious platform for this was the Austrian Parliament (*Reichsrat*), where the humble size of the most eastern crownland of the Empire was reflected by its number of representatives, but where its voice could be heard nevertheless. In general, in the early 1890s the Bukovinian press was less than impressed with the crownland representation in Vienna:

> When we think of our parliamentary deputies, a feeling of pity for beautiful Bukovina always comes over us regarding the way they behave towards each other. Bukovina has very specific interests which assigns a very special position to its appointed representatives among the parties. (...) In other provinces, parliamentarians always bring something home to their voters for the holidays, some proof that they have thought of them in Vienna and that they have exploited their party connections to the benefit of those voters. In Bukovina, we consider this a beautiful fairy tale of the kind that takes place somewhere else. Here we are supposed to be overjoyed if a welter of petitions causes our imperial envoys to stand up for what we would get anyway.

The main problem, however, was the absence of a unified Bukovinian voice. With only nine Bukovinians in a parliament of 353 members, that voice was necessarily not the loudest, but, as *Bukowinaer Rundschau* insisted, this number would suffice ‘to be the factor which tips the scales, courted by all parties, while doing not badly for themselves in the process’. Moreover, *Rundschau* maintained, this goal was within reach ‘since differences between parties were hardly noticeable in Bukovina anyway’. There were firm expectations that the situation of ‘the nations of Bukovina, living together peacefully and all equally depressed by the bad

---


115 *Einigkeit ist Macht!* Bukowinaer Rundschau, 03.04.1890, pp. 1-2.
times and the miserable employment conditions’ would make Bukovinian deputies realise that they had ‘high and sacred obligations, much higher and more sacred than people’s representatives had ever had’, transcending ‘the mostly superficial satisfaction of national vanities’. A year later, in 1891, Rundschau had to conclude that initiatives by Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki to unite the Bukovinian deputies ‘had foundered on the lack of responsiveness of the others’ but was still convinced the project would succeed since ‘Bukovina’s common interests were purely economical and not political’. By 1895, there was still no unification in sight and Bukowinaer Post had to concede that only ‘personal sensitivities and jealousy (persönliche Empfindelei und Eifersüchtelei) were to blame. As the situation stagnated during the following years, Bukovinian politicians became subject to even harsher criticism. They were said to be ‘flatheads’ who lacked ‘the right, fresh, entrepreneurial and organising spirit’ necessary to unite ‘the most reluctant elements’. After years of work in Vienna, Bukovina’s representatives decided to form a block against the Romanian Club in parliament, thus only enlarging discord instead of promoting unity. Bukowinaer Rundschau had only one word for this attitude: ‘anti-Bukovinian’.

In Vienna, hardened and numbed as it was by the all-encompassing nationalist bickering inside and outside the walls of parliament, the possibility of parliamentary cooperation on crownland level was simply brushed aside as ‘a political lie, aimed at providing instruments of power to some individual and selfish politicians who hoped for a leading role in the Club’. Vienna’s Neue Freie Presse denied the existence of common crownland interests altogether and claimed that interests were formulated along the lines of nationality, profession and religion. Moreover, no economic interest could be regarded separately from political, national, social and local issues. National questions were basically economic ones, and for no nation economical goals were the same. In Bukowinaer Rundschau, one of the most ardent advocates of a Bukovinian parliamentary club, the response to yet another example of Viennese disdain was immediate and furious: in Vienna they apparently knew more about Siberia than about Bukovina and the author of the article had obviously been unaware of the fact that nationalism in Bukovina had not reached the toxic levels of that in other crownlands. No matter how skeptical the Bukovinian press had been about Bukovina’s own deputies, the fact that similar criticism now came from the Habsburg capital did not go down well and Rundschau declared ‘not to be blind to the faults of some of the deputies but to resolutely reject that the entire lot was accused of having such a low mentality’.

The absence of a Bukovinian Club had practical disadvantages as well: only official parliamentary clubs could participate in the annual budget debate. Since not every Bukovinian deputy belonged to one of the existing national or political clubs, some of them were

---

117 Bukowinaer, seid einig! Bukowinaer Rundschau, 15.03.1891, pp. 1-2.
120 Der Bukowinaer Club, Neue Freie Presse, 24.10.1900, p. 3.
121 Der Bukowinaer Club, Bukowinaer Rundschau, 26.10.1900, pp. 1-2.
automatically excluded from those debates.\(^{122}\) Even though such practical arguments did not lead to the formation of a Bukovinian Club, the local press would not let go and insisted that even though a club was evidently not within reach, ‘it was clear that all deputies, irrespective of nationality and party status emphatically represented either together or separately the economic and cultural interests of their crownland, both in parliament and to a certain extent confidentially to the individual departmental ministers’.\(^{123}\) In 1902, the situation had not really changed and although some Bukovinian deputies joined the Romanian Club, the Ruthenian Club and the German Progressives while others had remained autonomous, for a while there was at least an informal coalition called the ‘Bukovinian Association’ (\(Bukowiner\) \(Vereinigung\)). According to \(Czernowitzer\) \(Tagblatt\) it was nothing more than an attempt ‘to hide the break from the public and to give in to the insistence of the press to take notice of what has become the dictum of “Bukovineriness’, a ‘let-me-have-my-cake-and-eat-it-too’-thing which had never really existed’. The reasons behind the non-appearance of a formal Bukovinian Club equally kept the loose ‘Association’ from being effective: whenever some sort sort of success was achieved, it was the result of individual deputies joining forces, just like it had always been. For the rest, the Bukovinians seem to have spent their time and energy telling off non-Bukovinian deputies for mingling in Bukovinian affairs, even when that mingling was in the crownland’s best interests. When the uninspired ‘Association’ collapsed within a few months, the \(Tagblatt\) commented bitterly:

\begin{quote}
\textit{One can learn only one thing from the accounts of the sequence of events: the gentlemen have transferred their personal squabbles, their rivalry and their mutual envy to the ‘Association’ - which led only a pseudo-life to begin with - and now they argue about the question of who brought the poor creature from a situation of pseudo-life into one of apparent death.}\(^{124}\)
\end{quote}

Nationalism had been the main stumbling block, however. Personal rivalry aside, the idea behind a united Bukovinian lobby in parliament was a neutralisation of nationalist activism for the benefit of the economic development of the crownland. \(Bukowinaer\) \(Rundschau\) concluded that it had been exactly this lack of goodwill, ‘this canker, this bacillus’, which had infected the ‘Association’: Bukovinian deputies had simply brought along their nationalist agendas, ‘very often not even real, but pretended because it was so fashionable in those days’. Bukovinians simply wanted their deputies to defend Bukovinian interests, the \(Rundschau\) continued, ‘and for all they cared, the nationality of those deputies might as well have been Chinese’. The verdict was clear:

\begin{quote}
The dissolution of the ‘Bukovinian Association’ was unavoidable simply because our representatives are not what they ought to be, because they are Bukovinians not in the first, but only in the last place.\(^{125}\)
\end{quote}


The failed experiment did not dash all hopes for the future. For as long as the Habsburg Empire existed, calls for Bukovinian unity in Vienna continued to be heard, especially since electoral reforms in 1907 ensured three extra parliamentary seats for Bukovina. Reassurances from the existing national clubs had not brought any results, as Czernowitzer Tagblatt implied:

_Do not give us that from their respective national clubs, our deputies join forces in matters of crownland interests. We will not be fobbed off every time with a deputation welded together for the occasion._

The unanswered appeals for a joint Bukovinian representation on state level and the one half-hearted attempt in that direction thus failed partly because of personal ambitions and vanities, but mainly because of the continuing electoral appeal of nationalism. The Bukovinian press may well have been right about the less toxic relations between nationalist politicians in Bukovina compared to those in other Austrian crownlands, but nationalist politics prevailed here nevertheless. The fact that Neue Freie Presse regarded common policy based on nationality, religion or profession, but excluded this possibility based on regional or provincial interests aptly illustrates the dominant position of nationalism in the political discourse of the time.

Later Analysis

It is remarkable how the confusion surrounding the Freethinking Alliance, its political program and its figureheads inspired generally positive appreciations in recent decades. Most studies refer to the initiative as the undisputed highlight of a specific Bukovinian brand of political dynamism. Some praised the open-mindedness of the Freethinkers who were flexible enough not to side automatically with their co-nationals in the diet factions. To others, the Alliance represents a home-grown ‘reconciliatory Bukovinism’ in which nationalism was ‘neither ignored nor neglected, not treated as an end in itself, but as a component of social mechanisms’. Yet another speaks of ‘a multi-ethnic majority with a common political agenda’ rather than of an occasional coalition aimed at national segregation. Onciul himself

126 _Klubsorgen, Czernowitzer Tagblatt_, 02.06.1907, p. 1.
127 It is puzzling how Canadian historian Fred Stambrook, referring to parliamentary relations, regarded ‘a mostly Bukovinian tendency among Bukovina’s Ruthenian population’. As underlined earlier, ‘population’ and ‘politicians’ should not be automatically grouped together; more importantly, the fact that Bukovinian Ruthenians maintained a Bukovinian identity within the Ruthenian parliamentary club - which Stambrook used here to substantiate his view - was purely a matter of fending off Galician dominance within that same group. As such, this ‘Bukovinian tendency’ should be regarded within the strict confines of the Ruthenian context, as a Bukovinian-Ruthenian subset. It says little or nothing about ‘the Bukovinian identity’ of Bukovinian Ruthenian politicians in general, let alone about any ‘tendency among Bukovina’s Ruthenian population’ as a whole. Stambrook 2004, p. 199.
128 Wagner 1979, p. 52.
130 Corbea-Hoisie 2004, p. 60.
131 Ceaușu 2004, p. 357.
had admitted that ‘neutralising’ nationalism by confining ‘national issues’ to the respective ‘national communities’ had failed in daily reality; national clubs creatively found ways to broaden the national sphere of influence and labeled more and more political topics ‘matters of national interest’.132

Perhaps Onciul’s massive lack of popularity in Romanian nationalist historiography133 - his assertion that Ruthenians in Bukovina had the same national rights as Romanians was enough to accomplish this - made him and the Alliance look a-national and tolerant in comparison. Philipp Menczel was the editor-in-chief of Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung in the years of the Alliance and the Compromise. His newspaper had been univocally negative regarding both and in his memoirs he provided his own concise and critical analysis of what the Freethinking Alliance had achieved:

The Alliance prepared the ground for national professionalism: occupational Ruthenians, Romanians, Germans and professional Jews soon monopolised the debates in the diet and exerted a hitherto unknown negative influence on the administration of the land. The Alliance fell apart after less than two years, but the atmosphere it had created remained, an atmosphere of petty-bourgeois nationalist covetousness and rivalry. Cultural bridges were threatened with destruction, and time and again I had to climb to the Austrian ramparts erected in my paper to mitigate the effect of the sling stones coming from national catapults.134

Menczel’s conclusion, although formulated emotionally rather than academically, implied what Austrian historian Gerald Stourzh later saw as part of a tendency he called ‘the ethnicising of Austrian politics’: the organisation of ethnic groups for purposes of provincial and imperial elections, including the construction of double or (in Bukovina) multiple networks of constituencies along ethnic lines and the drawing up of ethnically or linguistically separate voters’ registers.135

In the tale of Habsburg Bukovina, the Compromise and its impact remain the ultimate cliffhanger. Scholars widely agree that the scanty three years between 1911 and 1914 were clearly inadequate to provide a decent assessment. The phenomenon is seen as ‘only one link in the chain of many compromises, necessary for democracy and pluralist parliamentarism’,136 or proof that ‘in order to avoid blockages at the national level, solutions could be found within the framework of the land’.137 This last assertion remains unsubstantiated, however.

Analysts in the Romanian realm closely link the Compromise with the state of the Habsburg Empire: they acknowledge the insufficient span of time, but also maintain that the Compromise had been the work of the ‘skilful, but not very wise’ Austrian government which

133 See for example Iorga 1905/2006, pp. 57-58.
136 Turczynski 1979, p. 17.
137 Michel 1995, p. 130.
had allegedly attempted to lower the pressure of *inter*-ethnic conflicts by turning them into *intra*-ethnic ones.\textsuperscript{138} Others ignore the pro-Austrian attitude of Onciul and his fellow Freethinkers and assert that ‘the separation along ethnic lines of educational institutions, the Orthodox Church and other denominations, of cultural and student societies, political parties, of voters in times of local and parliamentary elections, was in fact a peaceful process to reduce the influence of the Austrian authorities on Bukovina, but also on other provinces with a non-German majority, ultimately precipitating the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy’.\textsuperscript{139}

Some historians generally paint a positive picture of the Bukovinan Compromise which they regard a clever and locally conceived way out of the pervasive nationalist turmoil. As such, the Compromise is seen as having ‘formally institutionalised the vastly improved patterns of inter-ethnic relations’\textsuperscript{140} or as a ‘masterpiece of political culture’ successful in ‘largely channeling national disputes’ with ‘the high level of education of the political elites as one of the factors facilitating a balance of interests between the four largest national groups and the five religious communities’.\textsuperscript{141} Furthermore, it is argued that the conflict between Romanians and Ruthenians in Bukovina had made the Compromise necessary and that in the span of its existence the construct had been effective. In this line of thinking, ‘any compromise required political will and tolerance with all groups involved’ and thus the conclusion is that this had been the case with the Bukovinan population around 1910.\textsuperscript{142} The reshaped diet is said to have ‘proved to be able to function’\textsuperscript{143} and even that ‘Bukovina in the last years of peace presented a somewhat utopian model for peaceful coexistence of different nationalities in a limited settlement area’.\textsuperscript{144}

In spite of the praise, most analysts recognise fundamental difficulties. They generally object to the way the state interfered in the personal sphere of its citizens by forcing them to adhere to one nationality in order to be able to vote in a designated register. Apart from the practical absurdities created by this requirement (Jews and Germans were clustered in one register although all nationalist factions in Bukovina opposed this, while Russian-speaking Old-Believers or Lippovans were relabeled Ruthenians and Hungarian speakers were to vote in the Romanian register), the nationality criterion was hard to apply in Bukovina anyway. Both Leslie and Kotzian quote the eloquent conclusion of *Czernowitzer Tagblatt*:

*To imprint on everyone in Czernowitz a national stamp is not as easy a task as it might appear at first sight, especially since those to be imprinted on often do not even know to which stamp they are likely to be more entitled.*\textsuperscript{145}

\textsuperscript{138} Grigorovici 1996, pp. 266-267.
\textsuperscript{139} Ungureanu, Constantin, *Bucovina în perioada stăpânirii austriece 1774-1918*, Civitas, Chişinău 2003, p. 231.
\textsuperscript{140} Ciuciura and Nahrebecky 1982, p. 98.
\textsuperscript{141} Turczynski 2003, p. 206; Kotzian 2004, p. 119.
\textsuperscript{142} Kotzian 2004, pp. 119-122.
\textsuperscript{143} Kusdat 2002, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{144} Leslie 1991, p. 136.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid.; Kotzian p. 122.
The fact that the Bukovinian Compromise had followed its Moravian example also imported an ugly side effect. In Moravia, voters not only had the right to claim they had been entered in the wrong national register, but were furthermore entitled to denounce other voters. As such, Czech nationalist ‘Trojan horses’ deliberately registered as Germans in order to ‘out’ others in the group as Czechs and thus to enlarge the Czech national electorate. Similar cases occurred later in Bukovina, although it remains unclear how these cases were handled and if they influenced the election results.\textsuperscript{146} Two thousand complaints regarding national voter registration were reported.\textsuperscript{147}

On top of all this, ‘nationality’ was now allotted the status of legal entity with the right to ‘autonomous development’, although a clear notion of what ‘nationality’ really meant was utterly lacking. From the lengthy debates on the recognition of a Jewish nationality, one may digest that having a proper language was the decisive argument for Vienna. However, there was no legal basis to substantiate this and it was clear that the authorities had no intention to change that situation. The Austrian constitutional law expert Herrnritt had voiced his concerns at the time of the Moravian and Bukovinian Compromises that creating peace through isolation and separation eventually led to mutual alienation and consequently to erosion of the concept of an integrated state (\textit{einheitlicher Staatsgedanke}).\textsuperscript{148} So, what Herrnritt had considered a threat, decades later, historian Ungureanu from the Republic of Moldova labeled a ‘peaceful process’ aimed at undermining the Austrian state.

In addition to the institutional and practical problems presented by research and analysis, arguments in defense of the ‘Bukovinian solution’ are not very convincing. When statements like ‘necessary for democracy and pluralist parliamentarism’, ‘capable of finding solutions within the framework of the land’ or a mere ‘proved to be able to function’ are not backed by argumentation or illustrative examples, they are not helpful. Assigning to Austria a central role in trying to reshape interethnic into intra-ethnic conflicts largely ignores the decidedly local initiative which eventually led to the introduction of the register system. By seeing the register system as a conscious attempt to diminish and gradually eliminate Austrian state power, the Austrophile mindset of its spiritual fathers is not taken into account. Assertions that the system ‘institutionalised patterns of inter-ethnic relations’, ‘channeled national disputes’ or ‘presented a model for peaceful coexistence of different nationalities’ first of all fail to make a distinction between nationalist politicians and the population at large; furthermore, they imply that the notion of ‘national differences’ was as firmly entrenched in the consciousness of the electorate as nationalist propagandists wanted their audiences to believe. The same can be argued where ‘the political will and tolerance within the Bukovinian population around 1910’ is held responsible for the political compromise.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the political fencing-in of nationalist bickering on diet level did little to appease nationalists outside these confinements: Romanian and Ruthenian

\textsuperscript{146} Stourzh 1995, p. 39.
\textsuperscript{147} Leslie 1991, p. 136.
activists moved all their weight to the issue of the Orthodox church split, while anti-Slavic and anti-Semitic rhetoric grew even louder.
2.2  Franz Joseph University

Establishment

In 1890, fifteen years after the Franz Joseph University in Czernowitz was established, *Czernowitzer Presse* stated that at that time, ‘education in Bukovina had progressed to such a degree that the land could obtain its own university (...) and as such Bukovina and especially Czernowitz belonged to the so-called civilised world so that the author from Czortków who meanwhile had been promoted to ‘Berliner’ had quite a bit to rectify in his cultural images ‘from Semi-Asia’. Apart from the obvious sneer at the address of the now Berlin-based Karl Emil Franzos, *Presse* also simplified the underlying motives for the university establishment.149 After Lemberg university (as well as Cracow university) had been Polonised in 1871, the language barrier had made that education centre virtually inaccessible to most Bukovinian students. In the Hungarian part of the Monarchy, nationalist policies had been intensified after the 1867 Compromise, one of the results being the Magyarisation of the university of Hermannstadt (Hungarian: Nagyszeben, Romanian: Sibiu) and the exclusion of Romanian-language education at the university of Klausenburg (Hung: Kolozsvár, Rom: Cluj). According to an idea attributed to Austrian culture minister Stremayr, a German-language university between Galicia and Transylvania would offer Romanian-language students an alternative and could appease Romanian nationalists at the same time.150

In 1868, regional diet deputy Joseph Pompe had already brought the proposal for the founding of a proper Bukovinian law school to a vote with the argument that Polonised Lemberg was no longer fit to educate young Bukovinians. Apart even from the language issue, Pompe had insisted that students from constitutionally loyal (*verfassungstreu*) Bukovina could not be expected to attend university in a crownland with a diet aiming for nothing less than ‘the destruction of the Empire’ (*die Zertrümmerung des Reiches*). Since sending their offspring all the way to Vienna was financially not feasible for most Bukovinian parents, all possibilities were basically exhausted. Pompe insisted that he ‘did not want to Polonise or Germanise Bukovina, but hoped that the German cultural element would merge appropriately with national development’. In spite of these assurances, the proposal was almost unanimously turned down: only Pompe himself voted in favour.151 Still, the image of a clearly Austrian education facility in a time when universities increasingly adopted a nationalist and linguistic identity must have appealed to Vienna. When Bukovinian deputy Constantin Tomasciuc attempted to convince the Viennese parliament of the necessity of a Bukovinian university in March 1875, he used the exact same argumentation.152 Within the Austrian constellation of

---

149  *Die Compleitirung der Czernowitzer Universität*, Czernowitzer Presse, 01.04.1890, pp. 1-2.
nationalist competition, the allocation of a university to Czernowitz was not a matter of course: Italians demanded a university in the south of the Empire, Slovenians wanted one in Laibach (Ljubljana), in Bohemia it was acknowledged that the oldest German university - in Prague - could not simply be Czechified, but Czech nationalists demanded compensation for this. Then there were provincial claims: Salzburg wanted a university because Innsbruck had one; wealthy Moravia with its many inhabitants had its proper ambitions, just like Olmütz (Olomouc) with its longstanding academic tradition.\footnote{Die Gründung der Universität Czernowitz, (Linzer) Tages-Post, 05.10.1875, p. 1.}

Next to his centralist motivation, Tomasciuc also emphasised that German science had a claim to universality and that therefore non-German Bukovinians equally sought a German education. He praised the favourable conditions Bukovina offered for such an ambitious project: here, State, Church and nationalities had harmoniously worked together for the modernisation of the crownland. Furthermore, Bukovinian achievements boasted an efficient and respected seminary and a well-equipped theology institute, both financed by the wealthy Church Fund. The local nobility and the intellectual upper class assured that the substantial regional library (\textit{Landesbibliothek}) was kept up to date.\footnote{Turczynski, Emanuel, \textit{Czernowitz, eine vom Bildungsbürgertum errungene Universität im Dienst staatlicher Bildungs- und Wissenschaftsförderung}, in: Wörster, Peter (ed.), \textit{Universitäten im östlichen Mitteleuropa - Zwischen Kirche, Staat und Nation - Sozialgeschichtliche und politische Entwicklungen}, Oldenbourg, Munich 2008, 109-226 , pp. 213-215.}

The initiative for the application came neither from Vienna, nor specifically from German-speaking Bukovinians. The document Tomasciuc submitted was a collective request of the regional diet, endorsed by diet president Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki\footnote{“Welchen hohen Werth unser Landtag auf die Verbreitung der wissenschaftlichen Ausbildung in unserer Heimath legte, leuchtet aus seinem an die hohe Regierung gestellten Ansinnen hervor, dass die Errichtung einer Universität in Czernowitz angeordnet werden möge”. Schlussrede des Landeshauptmannes Eudoxius Freiherr von Hormuzaki in der XIII. Sitzung vom 9. December 1872, in: Luceac, Ilie, \textit{Discursurile lui Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki in Dieta Bucovinei - Din viața parlamentară a Bucovinei în cea de a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea}, Institutul Cultural Român, Bucharest 2007, p. 334.} - represented a broad spectrum of Bukovinian names and groups:\footnote{Wagner 1996, p. 219.} German, Romanian and Ruthenian nationalist politicians had been equally involved in the lobby.\footnote{Turczynski 1979, p. 8.}

Locally, the idea had provoked enthusiasm in wide circles: the Kimpolung city council addressed an ardent endorsement letter to the Viennese parliament in January 1873 in which it highlighted the necessity of a proper Bukovinian university once more, adding that ‘considering this was a matter of serious interests for a land hitherto not remembered too handsomely from the Empire’s resources, [Parliament] was kindly asked to devote the well-deserved attention to the desire of the entire population of Bukovina as expressed by the diet’.\footnote{“(…) daß es sich hier um sicher wiegende Interessen eines bisher aus Reichsquellen nur spärlich bedachten Landes handelt, dem von der Landesvertretung zum Ausdruck gebrachtenVerlangen der Gesamtbevölkerung Bukowinas auf Errichtung einer Universität in Czernowitz, die verdiente Würdigung angedeihen zu lassen”.} Once the decision had been taken on the highest level, Governor Alesani informed
the Imperial administration that a wide range of local organisations had specifically requested him to convey their gratitude to the Throne: the Society for the Advancement of Science Education, the Chamber of Commerce, the Archbishop’s Consistory, the Jewish Community Board and the Ruthenian ‘Rada Ruska’ society.\textsuperscript{159}

In the Imperial Foundation Charter of the ‘Czernowitz Imperial and Royal Franz Joseph University’, the Emperor outlined that the founding was to be regarded as the culmination of the educational reforms Joseph II had commenced a century earlier. The charter specifically noted that the request had originated from Bukovina proper and that the new institution was expected to benefit not only the Duchy, but also the surrounding territories. Furthermore, it was to consist of an Orthodox theology department next to law and philology departments. The necessary funds were provided by the State.\textsuperscript{160} Upon insistence by Romanian and Ruthenian nationalist parliamentarians, the university was also accorded a chair for Romanian and a chair for Ruthenian philology.\textsuperscript{161} In spite of the careful considerations and the balanced curriculum, the opening ceremony included a number of speeches that reeked of German cultural superiority. Innsbruck university dean Inama-Strengg expressed the hope that the new university would be ‘a bastion of intellectual freedom, but also the breeding ground for true patriotism, with its sons always defending the welfare of the state with energy and self-sacrifice’. This, the speaker had continued, would automatically secure the fulfillment of his third wish, ‘that the university always remain faithful to the spirit which had created it in the first place: the German spirit, for therein the care of the genuine spirit of freedom and the care of true love for the fatherland was found’.\textsuperscript{162} Strengg’s colleague from Graz, Schmidt, added that ‘anyone who accused German science of chauvinism (Chauvinismus), for which German did not even have a word, had not looked into its face for rather it raised the spirit above the struggles of the day’.\textsuperscript{163} The freshly inaugurated dean of the law faculty, Friedrich Schuler-Libloy praised the German university to such extent that Romanian nationalists regarded his speech as a comment on Romanian academic accomplishments - or rather, on the lack thereof.\textsuperscript{164} Anti-Semitic circles in Vienna considered the establishment of a German university and the accompanying celebrations of German culture a farce in this faraway corner of the Empire where most adherents of that very culture were in fact Jews.\textsuperscript{165}

Still, such dissonants remained in the background. Thirty years onwards, the Viennese and Czernowitz press fondly remembered how ‘all of a sudden, Bukovina - which so far had

---

\textsuperscript{159} Alesani, Hieronymus, \textit{Letter to Regional Diet}, 748, 19 December 1874/ DACHO, Viddil 1, Fond 3, Opis 1, spr. 3966.


\textsuperscript{161} Turczynski 2008, p. 214.

\textsuperscript{162} Friedwagner, Matthias, \textit{Mommsen und die Czernowitzer Universität}, Bukowinaer Rundschau, 10.12.1903, pp. 1-2.

\textsuperscript{163} \textit{Die Czernowitzer Jubelfeier}, Neue Freie Presse, 05.10.1875, pp. 1-3.

\textsuperscript{164} Nistor 1991, p. 216.

\textsuperscript{165} Hausleitner 2006 (\textit{Eine wechselvolle Geschichte...}), p. 40; \textit{Die Czernowitzer Feste}, Das Vaterland, 05.10.1875, p. 3.
received little attention in literature - had become the object of general interest not only in Austria, but in all German lands’. It was claimed that ‘the university founding in Czernowitz had occasioned magnificent celebrations, making the thousands of Austrian and German guests aware of the picturesque scenic and ethnographic charms of the land which blossomed under the blessings of German culture’.\(^\text{166}\) Apparently, German-national anti-Semites regarded the university successful enough to revise their view on its origins: in 1906, Christian German deputy Wiedmann insisted that the university had been a Christian German creation instead of what anti-Semites had previously called a Jewish-liberal concoction.\(^\text{167}\)

**Disputed Quality**

The first semester at the newly established facility started with a modest 188 students.\(^\text{168}\) In the first decade of its existence it never surpassed the number of 280 and therefore failed to meet the high expectations raised by its spiritual fathers. In 1885, *Bukowinaer Rundschau* wailed that ‘of all the thousands of young men who in the imagination of poetic chroniclers like Franzos would fill the lecture halls in the future, with utmost effort just less than three hundred had actually materialised’.\(^\text{169}\) It would take until 1909 for the Franz Joseph University to have more than a thousand registered students.\(^\text{170}\) Tutors and professors had to be lured from abroad and mainly came from Vienna, Innsbruck and Graz, but also from Heidelberg, Basel and Fribourg.\(^\text{171}\) In its early days, the university even needed help from outside with the recruiting process: when a tutor for Hungarian linguistics applied for a position, the academic staff turned to the University of Klausenburg (Kolozsvár) for an assessment of the candidate’s language abilities.\(^\text{172}\)

The combination of disciplines in the far east of the Habsburg Empire was a novelty: the successfully negotiated chairs for Romanian and Ruthenian linguistics with their well-stocked collection of cutting-edge publications gave impetus to Romance and Slavic philology as well as to the historiography of Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Prominent scholars like historian Johann Loserth, geographer Alexander Suppan, law expert and legal historian Moritz Wlassak and economists Joseph Schumpeter and Friedrich Kleinwächter started their careers in Czernowitz. Many Czernowitz scholars were linked to other universities as corresponding

\(^{166}\) Quotes from Das Neue Tagblatt (03.03.1906) in: Heiteres und Ernstes aus der Bukowina (Czernowitz Angelegenheiten), Czernowitz Allgemeine Zeitung, 06.03.1906, p. 4.

\(^{167}\) *Wer hat die Czernowitzer Universität gegründet? (Tagespost)*, Bukowina Post, 02.08.1906, p. 3.

\(^{168}\) Franz Joseph University, *Statistische Übersicht der im Winter-Semester 1875/6 an der Franz-Josephs-Universität zu Czernowitz inscibirten Hörer*, Czernowitz 1875/ DAChO, Viddil 1, Fond 3, Opis 1, spr. 4070.

\(^{169}\) *Die wandernde Muse*, Bukowinaer Rundschau, 18.05.1885, pp. 1-2.

\(^{170}\) Lechner 2001, p. 6.

\(^{171}\) Turczynski 1993, p. 156.

members. The theological department with its roots in the theological institute of the Bukovinian Metropoly attracted students from all over the Empire, but also from Romania, Serbia and Greece.

That said, the Franz Joseph University had a number of persistent flaws from the start. It certainly had not helped that the centralist government with its all-Austrian assimilation mission had fallen in 1879 and was succeeded by the autonomist coalition under Eduard von Taaffe, known as the ‘iron ring’. As the years passed and the initial excitement about the newly-acquired Bukovinian status symbol had worn off, complaints got louder. Most striking was the lack of a medical faculty, which made Bukovinians regard their university as ‘incomplete’ and enhanced the fear that ambitious students would leave Czernowitz after all. In 1890, Czernowitzer Presse insisted that ‘all strata of the population considered its establishment an urgent requirement (ein lebhaftes Bedürfnis)’. The argument brought against a medical faculty - the number of inhabitants as well as the number of patients in the general hospitals was said to be too low - was dismissed as beside the point, since a much smaller city like Innsbruck boasted a ‘complete’ university from the moment it had been founded. Ten years later, the unchanged situation had resulted in bitterness:

*When the land was to be granted a special favour on the occasion of the centenary of its inclusion in the Monarchy, it obtained a university. With its establishment, the practice of dealing with the land’s requests was introduced: the university lacked completeness; a medical faculty was not included. (...) Whenever the high Central Government is finally confronted with the inescapable necessity to do something for the land, it only throws it a few of the most miserable crumbs (einige meist armselige Brocken) in order to appease it.*

Complaints were not limited to perceived missing elements in the new institute alone. The local press constantly worried about the quality of the education on offer, and Vienna was accused of having created ‘a dressage institute for future priests, officials, professors and pharmacists’ instead of a ‘hotbed of scholarship’. As such, the authorities better not be surprised that ‘the lively spirit of the students died away and that the philosophical faculty, with its free direction disagreeing the most with the requirements of uninspired pot-boiling studying (trockenes Brodstudium), attracted the smallest number’. In 1902, Bukovinian German deputy Arthur Skedl drew the attention of the Austrian parliament to the dire straits of the local alma mater:

*By founding the university a gentle, noble little tree was planted, but the gardener who was supposed to nurture and cherish it and to bring it fertile humus was absent all the time. So it came about that after twenty-five years, the university is still a skeleton institute (Rumpfanstalt), and so it came about, gentlemen, that in twenty-five years not a single new*
chair was established at the juridical faculty, no matter how necessary. So it came about that the institutes at the philosophical faculty in many cases still resemble secondary school collections of teaching materials and so it came about that almost every lecturer considered his appointment in Czernowitz a transitional stage from the start, that every lecturer already tried to get appointed elsewhere even before his arrival at Czernowitz University, that he could not warm to this university, this to the detriment of the university and that of the land for which it was founded.¹⁷⁹

Be that as it may, the problem of the neglected philosophy program proved to be short-lived: by 1907, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung observed that ‘Czernowitz University and especially its philosophical faculty were overcrowded and that the number of its graduates exceeded the actual need by far’. However, this change of fate had not led to more generosity from Vienna. The Franz Joseph University was still ‘the Cinderella among the Austrian universities’, nothing more than ‘a torso’. In the Viennese parliament, German nationalist deputy Otto Steinwender - one of the architects of the Linzer Program and as such not a great friend of Bukovina and its inclusion in Austria to begin with - had even proposed to close the Czernowitz philosophy department, which he deemed ‘superfluous’. The implementation of such a plan would degrade the university to the level of a ‘factory of priests and civil servants’, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung predicted. Even more, ‘taking the German university away from Bukovina would mean breaking the ties with Vienna and the heart of the Empire and a true degradation to the level of Semi-Asia’. The institute which had been opened as the crown on hundred years of Austrian integration policies thirty-two years earlier was now depicted as the sole remaining symbol of unity between Vienna and Czernowitz.¹⁸⁰

The idea of moving the university - or at least part of it - away from Bukovina was not new. In the 1880s, renowned Romance scholar Alexander Budinsky and a group of like-minded professors in Czernowitz had actively lobbied for a relocation of the philosophy department to Brünn (Brno) since they had considered both the academic and the everyday living conditions in Czernowitz substandard.¹⁸¹ The Austrian authorities had had little patience with the plaintiffs. In the words of Governor Pino, ‘Budinsky had been a well-known malcontent for years and just wanted to get away from Czernowitz at any cost because the local conditions did not appeal to him’.¹⁸² Pino’s successor Bourguignon had noted that ‘the ranting and discontent about the necessity to carry out their teaching activities in Czernowitz was typical mostly for the younger professors of both secular faculties’.¹⁸³ The local press had shown

¹⁷⁹ Bukowina im Abgeordnetenhause (Rede des Abgeordneten Dr. Skedl), Bukowinaer Journal, 76, 23.03.1902, p. 2.
¹⁸⁰ Die Czernowitzer Universität, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung, 19.01.1907, pp. 1-2.
¹⁸² “Professor Budinsky ist seit Jahren ein hier allgemein bekannter Malcontent und möchte um jeden Preis von Czernowitz wegkommen, weil ihm die hiesigen Verhältnisse nicht zusagen”. Pino-Friedenthal, Felix, Schreiben an das KUM, Z1, 9946 Praes., 24 May 1887/ ANR, Fond ‘Guvernământul Bucovinei’, MČI LXXXVIII.
¹⁸³ “Charakteristisch und zumeist bei den jüngeren Professoren beider weltlichen Fakultäten in die Augen springend ist das Losziehen und der Unmut über die Nothwendigkeit in Czernowitz die Lehrthätigkeit ausüben
understanding for the unhappiness for Bukovina’s academic pioneers and had partly blamed the local social conditions. *Bukowinaer Rundschau* had observed how the years after the creation of the Franz Joseph University had been followed by economic decline and national division among the intelligentsia. The latter was said to have suffocated creativity and academic ambition. On top of this, the newcomers were said to have been met with ‘the limited narrow-minded spirit of local patriotism’ (*der beschränkte engherzige Geist unseres Local-Patriotismus*) which surely had not encouraged them to contribute to the spiritual and material welfare of Bukovina.184

In an updated edition of his classic ‘Semi-Asia’, Karl Emil Franzos expressed his disappointment with the way the university had evolved: to begin with, the Austrian government had provided inadequate funding and had made little effort to convince reputed academies to move to Czernowitz. Referring to the government change and Vienna’s half-hearted commitment so far, Franzos wondered ‘what was possibly to be expected from Vienna’s care after 1879, when an orientation had come to power inherently indifferent to if not even annoyed by the German cultural mission in the East’. He suspected that only the pump and circumstance surrounding its establishment had prevented the authorities from closing the institute altogether.185 Upon the death of historian and Nobel laureate Theodor Mommsen in 1903, Franzos published a memoir in *Neue Freie Presse* recalling Mommsen’s views on Czernowitz University:

> When I read your enthusiastic article about the founding of the university in your ‘Semi Asia’, I thought: “The young man will get a nasty surprise! They dreamed of a kind of Strasbourg in the East. And what has it become? The Imperial and Royal academic penal colony (*Die k.k. akademische Strafcoloni*)! One is sentenced to several years Czernowitz and then pardoned to Innsbruck”.

Franzos claimed to have tried to convince Mommsen of the quality of some of the tutors, but he had to admit that back in 1875, a teacher from an agricultural technical school had been appointed professor of German language and literature simply because he had been the least expensive.186 In his own book, Franzos had already complained about what Czernowitz University could have meant to the entire East if only the government had not regarded it as a poor cousin (*Stiefkind*) and had assured better material conditions. Now, Franzos stated, ‘it eked out a miserable existence’.187 “One truly believes to do something illicit when he refers to all this with the word ‘university’”, *Bukowinaer Rundschau* complained in 1903: lecture halls were insufficient in number and far too small for the number of students that filled it; the library building would not even suffice for a secondary school.188 ‘Penal colony’ and ‘poor

---

185 Franzos 1901, pp. 244-247.
187 Franzos 1901, p. XXXIII.
188 *Unsere Universitätsverhältnisse*, *Bukowinaer Rundschau*, 30.01.1903, p. 1.
cousin’ remained core notions in the Bukovina-Vienna discourse and were not limited to the university alone.\textsuperscript{189}

Fault-finders seem to have given the new institute very little time to build a reputation. A fair share of snobbery also played a role: Austrian-American Peter Drucker recalled how ‘even Polish Jewish boys did not go to Czernowitz unless they absolutely had to’ and how they ‘scrounged and finagled to make it to a university in ‘the West’, such as Vienna or Prague’. According to Drucker, Czernowitz was unacceptable socially and ‘hardly the right place to launch a career’: renowned for the competitive ardour of its students, but shunned by anyone who had the chance to go anywhere else.\textsuperscript{190} Yet the Bukovinian press regarded the university as one of the, if not the, strongest symbol of Austrian civilisation in Bukovina. At the occasion of Emperor’s forty years on the throne, \textit{Czernowitzer Presse} specifically mentioned the establishment of the Franz Joseph University as the prime example of the Imperial blessings bestowed on the crownland.\textsuperscript{191} When \textit{Czernowitzer Tagblatt} celebrated its first anniversary, it reiterated as one of its basic principles ‘saving from repression the German university as a mediator of Western culture’.\textsuperscript{192} By 1906, \textit{Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung} noted that the past five to six years had shown a remarkable turn of events. A medical faculty was still not in sight, but the other departments had done well: the theological faculty with its Orthodox focus unique in Austria had been a success from the start and around the turn of the century and the philosophy department had managed to add two chairs to its history section. Czernowitz zoology, biology, chemistry and botany had earned respect outside Bukovina and the chemistry institute was even rumoured to have the best scientific library in Austria. As a reversal of trend, respectable scholars no longer regarded a position in Czernowitz a \textit{capitis deminutio}. The fact that famous historian Johannes Kromayer turned down an offer by the Prussian University of Halle because he preferred to stay in Czernowitz, ‘where life was not half as bad as often claimed and where one could quietly devote oneself to scholarly work’ certainly enhanced the reputation of the Franz Joseph University. The stigma of ‘penal colony’ seemed to have faded.\textsuperscript{193} In 1907, linguist Agenor Artymovych was the first to obtain a PhD \textit{sub auspiciis Imperatoris} in Czernowitz. This special award added luster to the university as a respectable academic institution. Laureate Artymovych solemnly declared ‘to educate the youth entrusted to him as a teacher (…) in the sense of the sublime wish of the illustrious Monarch (…) to be efficient and steadfast men, to be good Austrian citizens’ while his supervisor R.F. Kaindl could not refrain from gloating that ‘the more frequently unfavourable judgments were made about Bukovina, the more often harsh judgments were made about our backwardness, the more pleasing it was when these biased views were met by brilliant successes’.\textsuperscript{194}

\textsuperscript{189} For more on this paragraph 4 of this section: ‘Bukovinian Diseases’: Images, Allegories and Stereotypes/Semi-Asia, Penal Colony, Stepchild and Cinderella: Crownland Allegories.

\textsuperscript{190} Drucker, Peter Ferdinand, \textit{Adventures of a Bystander}, Harper & Row, New York 1979, p. 28.

\textsuperscript{191} \textit{Vierzig Jahre Kaiser}, Czernowitzer Presse, 01.12.1888, pp. 2-3.

\textsuperscript{192} \textit{Ein Jahr, Czernowitzer Tagblatt}, 31.01.1904, pp. 1-2.

\textsuperscript{193} \textit{Kulturfragen- II}, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung, 04.02.1906, pp. 1-2.

\textsuperscript{194} \textit{Promotio sub auspiciis Imperatoris (Czernowitzer Angelegenheiten)}, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung, 17.11.1907, p. 5. The \textit{Promotio sub auspiciis Imperatoris} (under supervision of the Emperor) and in the
Naturally, judgments were often passed in an atmosphere of competition with other universities, first of all with those in the German-speaking world. Matthias Friedwagner, professor of Romanian philology in Czernowitz, noted in 1903 that the Franz Joseph University was no longer the youngest or the smallest German university, for the German Empire had four similar establishments with a lower number of students. Whereas Czernowitz continuously felt the competition from those other universities, it was held in high esteem in neighbouring Romania. Former Romanian Prime Minister and renowned academic Dimitrie Sturdza issued a statement at the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Franz Joseph University which read:

*At German universities they teach solely from the standpoint of scientific research. This is the spirit pervading these institutions. There are no secondary purposes outside of science and therefore the German universities have reached the highest level of human cultural institutions. As a statesman however I’d like to add that it is highly important for Romania that near its border a university in the German tradition has so firmly taken root.*

During the first period of its existence the university had been criticised for being a second-rate - but necessary - provider of local officials and schoolteachers. As the Franz Joseph University matured, the match between its freshly graduated academics and the local labour market became increasingly strained. The combination of an ever-growing number of university graduates and an economically weak, pre-industrial society became a major problem in Bukovina. Whereas the university had been designed as a vehicle for assimilation and emancipation, it gradually became a producer of an ‘intellectual proletariat’ with ‘a PhD industry’ as the only thriving economic activity. The success of nationalist campaigns with their focus on education resulted in even more graduates and thus in more frustration and unemployment. Moreover, it was widely felt that Bukovinians did not stand a chance to find an academic position in other parts of Austria, while the opposite happened all the time. As Czernowitzer Tagblatt put it in 1913:

*A Bukovinian student can only find employment and professional opportunities in Bukovina, most of the remaining crownlands are off-limits for him. Moreover, those lands have their own overproduction from which we sporadically suffer severely, for they often seek and find a valve here. Numerous positions are occupied by non-Bukovinians and recently as many as three Czech candidates are said to have outstripped all Bukovinians. In addition to being*

---

Hungarian half of the Empire *sub auspiciis Regis* (under supervision of the King) was a particularly solemn form of promotion since the time of the Counter-Reformation. A doctoral candidate who had passed the matriculation exam and university exams with distinction was entitled to seek such a particularly solemn *Promotionsakt*, the Emperor usually being represented by the governor of the crownland in question. A diamond ring with the Emperor’s initials was handed over to the new PhD. Akademischer Senat der Wiener Universität (ed), *Geschichte der Wiener Universität von 1848 bis 1898. Huldigungsfestschrift zum 50jährigen Regierungsjubiläum seiner k. u. k. apostolischen Majestät Kaiser Franz Josef I*, Vienna 1898, pp. 393-395.


Lechner 2001, p. 5.
brusquely dismissed, a Bukovinian applying for a position in Prague would certainly need to have his mental health checked.197

A City and Its Student Population

Reports on the interaction of the new academic centre with the general public in Bukovina are varied. At first, provincial attitudes were said to force newly-arrived university staff to stay only within the confinements of their own circle.198 Decades later, it was still maintained that ‘spiritual life in the regional capital was weak’ and that ‘contacts between the university and the population lacked the intimacy which appeared so desirable for both sides’.199 However, the large number of students coming from all corners of the crownland and their subsequent local deployment after graduation must have amply guaranteed the aspired interaction. As early as 1890, *Czernowitzer Presse* indicated how the professors provided a stimulus through public lectures with a popular scientific content and through mere private conversations with acquaintances. It was argued that ‘everything they uttered spread through the entire city (…) and as such, the university was the guiding force of intellectual life not only in the city itself, but also in the countryside’.200 Romanian nationalist Nicolae Iorga noted that Romanian-speakers in Bukovina were very proud of their university and held it in much higher esteem than universities in the Romanian Kingdom. When Iorga was visiting a Bukovinian monastery, a day-tripping university professor from Czernowitz was received ‘like a superior human being’ (*o ființă de o esență superioară*), while the internationally-acclaimed academic Iorga was treated just like anyone else.201

The processes leading up to the foundation as well as to the subsequent development of the university show a clear nationalist involvement. From the start, Romanian nationalists had lobbied for courses in Romanian. They succeeded - with the support of the Italian nationalists in the Viennese parliament - but only as far as the theological faculty was concerned. This arrangement automatically implied that the theological faculty had to include Ruthenian classes as well.202 The fact that the Czernowitz professor for Eastern European history, Vladimir Mikulicz, was appointed in this capacity was again a reason for outrage among Romanian nationalist lobbyists. Mikulicz, who had excellent academic credentials and whose lectures were very popular,203 was a ‘Ruthenian’, whom they claimed knew little more of Romanian history than, say, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Serbian or Greek history and who did not

198 *Die wandernde Muse*, Bukowinaer Rundschau, 18.05.1885, pp. 1-2
200 * Die Completirung der Czernowitzer Universität*, Czernowitzer Presse, 01.04.1890, p. 2.
master the Romanian language.\textsuperscript{204} In this respect, \textit{Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung} supported the Romanian nationalists: with the situation of the Romanian speakers in Transylvania under the Budapest government in mind, the newspaper saw it as the moral obligation of Vienna to provide a chair of Romanian history in Czernowitz, ‘for a university can only be fruitful when it culturally intertwines with its location’.\textsuperscript{205} From 1912, this chair was to be occupied by Ion Nistor, who provided exactly the political approach the Romanian nationalists advocated.\textsuperscript{206} From 1899 onwards, Ruthenian nationalists had demanded their own university in Lemberg.\textsuperscript{207} As the introduction of universal suffrage in Austria resulted in a significant increase of the number of Ruthenian parliamentary deputies and this ambition could no longer be ignored, the Polish Club in parliament tried to thwart it by proposing to make the Franz Joseph University Ruthenian. Ruthenian nationalists dismissed this idea because its implementation would put the local Bukovinian relations under too much pressure,\textsuperscript{208} but probably also because of tactical considerations: it would significantly weaken the Ruthenian position in much larger Galicia.\textsuperscript{209}

As nationalist student associations became more influential, their demands grew louder. By 1909, there was the Jewish lobby for the recognition of Yiddish and the Jewish nationality, the small number of Polish-speaking students demanded a chair for Polish language and literature, Young-Ruthenian language students (by now calling themselves Ukrainians) wanted the right to communicate in Ukrainian with the university administration, whereas Old-Ruthenians demanded a section for Russian language education. The German character of the university was gradually forced into the cramped confinements of German ethno-nationalism, with only a handful of students plus a majority of the academic staff as its representatives. \textit{Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung} feared that the developments could jeopardise the very existence of the institute, since the German cultural identity was the only viable one: A ‘German-Ruthenian-Romanian-Polish Jewish national university’ could only exist in the heads of ‘some national segregationists’ (\textit{einige Katasterköpfe}).\textsuperscript{210} Iorga dismissed the university as ‘an Austrian university for Jews, with a law faculty where Austria lined up the functionaries it needed and more Jewish lawyers than the land needed’.\textsuperscript{211} Vasile Greciuc, a school teacher from Kimpolung \textit{Câmpulung in Romanian}, made the same point and within the limited frame of mind typical of nationalist reasoning deemed only the Romanian language and history departments valuable for ‘Romanian Bukovina’.\textsuperscript{212}

\textsuperscript{204} \textit{Catedra de istoria română}, Voința Poporului, 14. 05.04.1908, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{205} “… daß eine Hochschule in dem Lande, in welchem sie besteht, nur dann ersprießlich wirken kann, wenn sie mit diesem Lande zu einer kulturellen Einheit verwächst”. \textit{Von der Universität}, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung, 09.04.1908, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{206} Hausleitner 2001, p. 66.
\textsuperscript{207} Turczynski 1993, p. 174.
\textsuperscript{208} Hausleitner 2001, p. 66; Turczynski 1993 p. 192; Turczynski 1979, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{209} \textit{Der Sturmlauf gegen die Universität}, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung, 04.11.1909, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{210} Ibid.; Hofbauer 1997, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{211} Iorga 1905/2006, pp. 211-212.
\textsuperscript{212} Greciuc 1913, pp. 34-35.
From the first moments Czernowitz had a university, student life developed in the same way it had in other Austrian university towns. There was a sharp contrast between ‘student leagues’ (Burschenschaften) with national affiliations and ‘student associations’ (Corpora) without.213

In Czernowitz, students in the early years had the choice between the association ‘Austria’ (and later ‘Alemania’) and between the two Romanian leagues ‘Arborosa’ - quickly disbanded after the 1876 loyalty scandal214- and ‘Junimea’. The number of leagues quickly expanded to twenty-five and accurately reflected the various nationalist branches in Bukovina. The Romanians gathered in ‘Junimea’, the Old-Ruthenians in ‘Bukovyna’, their Young-Ruthenian adversaries in ‘Soyuz’, the Poles in ‘Ognisko’, the Germans in ‘Arminia’ and ‘Teutonia’ and later also in the catholic ‘Frankonia’. From 1891 onwards, Jewish nationalists founded their own leagues, Zionist ‘Hasmonea’, ‘Emunah’, ‘Zephirah’, ‘Hebronia’ and later ‘Heatid’. The Romanians with their alleged irredentist sympathies and the Old-Ruthenians with their preference for Tsarist Russia were not the only ones under close Austrian scrutiny: for members of German ‘Arminia’, also known as ‘Bismarckians’, Germany was said to come first and Austria only second. Polish ‘Ognisko’ was considered harmless, since next to being Polish-national it was clearly pro-Austria because in Austria the Poles ‘simply fared the best’. The same was said about Young-Ruthenian ‘Soyuz’, which was considered loyal ‘and seeking the salvation of the Ruthenians under Austrian rule’.215

The arrival of a university student community with its specific social dynamics profoundly altered the provincial capital. Former student and ‘Arminia’ member Bruno Skrehunetz-Hillebrand declared in his memoir that he remembered ‘as if it were today, that occasionally, but only very rarely, even in Czernowitz student brawls took place’. According to Skrehunetz-Hillebrand, these ‘occasional brawls’ did not result from national conflicts, but rather from disputes over student traditions ‘just like in Vienna or in other western German universities’.216 The mood reflected in the local press of the time presents a less conciliatory picture and suggests that Czernowitz had not quite become inured to the turbulence typical for university towns: after a night of unrest at the central Ringplatz, Bukowinaer Rundschau fumed:


214 For more on this, see paragraph 3 of this section: The Empire, the Nation and the Region: Competing Identifications in Bukovina/ 3.3: Cracks in the Layer of Loyalty.


As long as the principles of individual student representations do not exceed the narrow framework of the student groups, some appreciate this kind of manifestations as a hobby-horse, others as youthful ideals. But if the revered students are not satisfied with this sphere of action and wish to exert a certain influence on the existing social relations and conditions, the population is entitled to foster the expectation that the result of such behaviour is not contrary to the dignity of academic citizens, that those who are called to introduce both education and culture to the broad strata of the population do not disavow male dignity by rudeness and boorishness and by toughness and brutality. That it had to come to this is deeply sad and typical of the prevailing conditions at our university. (...)

Police reports indicated an increase of violent incidents, Rundschau reported, and it vowed to continue to draw the university's attention to these excesses. Police reports had been filed as early as 1892, when members of the Czernowitz Polish reading hall (Czytelnia Polska) and their Galician guests claimed to have been insulted, provoked and abused by Romanian students. Czernowitz University promised to investigate the matter. In 1910, a dinner party of Old-Ruthenians and Romanians ignited a brawl with a group of Young-Ruthenian students, which caused tensions at the university and resulted in a demonstration of Young-Ruthenian students and craftsmen. A year later, a fight between Ruthenian and German students in the German National House (Deutsches Haus) in Czernowitz resulted in several injured and a ruined venue. Again, an investigation was started. In 1912, serious fighting between members of Polish ‘Ognisko’, Young-Ruthenian ‘Zaporozhe’ and the Romanian ‘Junimea’, ‘Bucovina’ and ‘Moldava’ led to eleven arrests. According to Governor Meran, ‘the reason for the clashes was to be found in personal differences and disputes of individual members of the associations’. A confrontation between a German student from Vienna and a Jewish one from Czernowitz caused several days of violence, unrest and traffic hindrance in the Bukovinian capital.

Whereas it has been suggested that separate and at times antagonistic developments of the various nationalist groups in general - and of their student bodies in particular - indicated that in Bukovina the same processes which had led to the partition of Prague university were likewise under way, it is striking how just as often tensions between student associations concentrated on disputes between different organisations of the same national group. In this

217 Studentische Brutalitäten, Bukowinaer Rundschau, 23.05.1895, p. 1.
219 Румунія а українців, Громадянин, 01.07.1910, p. 3.
223 Maurer 2000, pp. 341-382.
respect, unsurprisingly, the student associations followed the pattern of local nationalist politics. As Governor Bourguignon had already noted in 1889, a wide gap existed between ‘Arminia’ and the other German leagues, while at the same time ‘Arminia’ maintained cordial relations with Romanian ‘Junimea’. Whenever ‘joint commemorations for whatever patriotic reasons’ (eine gemeinsame Feier aus irgend einem patriotischen Anlaß) had been in order, as had been the case when Crown Prince Rudolf married in 1881, when he had visited Bukovina in 1887 and lastly when he passed away in 1889, this task had been impossible: each and every association and league had held its own, separate manifestation.224

In October 1905, Czernowitz witnessed riots when Zionist students clashed with their fellow Jewish students who had refused to become members of Jewish national leagues, but had chosen to join the a-national ‘Austria’ or ‘Alemania’ instead. A confrontation between a Zionist student from Vienna and members of ‘Austria’ resulted in a joint retaliation of Jewish national student leagues and the temporary suspension of two of their members, Leonhard Eckstein and Schloima Drimmer.225 In 1907, the establishment of the Catholic German league ‘Frankonia’ was welcomed with dismay by the other German national leagues, which were said to see the newcomer as a competitor and a contributing factor to confessional hatred within German nationalist circles. Although German ‘Arminia’ and ‘Teutonia’ allegedly led the disturbances during the inaugural parade of ‘Frankonia’, Romanian liberal ‘Bucovina’ and the a-national ‘Austria’ were reported to have lent full support (tatkräftigst unterstützt), while Zionist student associations refrained from interfering.226 In 1910, university professor Milkowicz officially accused a student by the name of Euhen Wasyk of publicly humiliating him by calling him a ‘Zaporozhets’ or ‘Cossack’, only because Milkowicz had been a founding member of the ‘Zaporozhe’ student league; Wasyk himself was a member of the Ukrainian ‘Sych’ which abominated ‘Zaporozhe’.227 In 1913, personal quarrels between members of Romanian ‘Junimea’ on one side and ‘Bucovina’ on the other escalated to such extent that it came to ‘wild brawls and excesses’ (wüste Prügeleien und Exzesse) in the streets.228

The Final Days

The arrival of the World War in Czernowitz brought the activities of the Franz Joseph University to a grinding halt. From the first time the Russian invaders set foot in the Bukovinian capital, the university closed down and only opened for a two month period in the

---

226 Studentenkrawalle in Czernowitz, Reichspost, 24, 29.01.1907, p. 24.
The summer of 1916. The seventy-seven professors and tutors employed at the time shared the faith of other men in Bukovina: thirty-five of them were called to arms, two of them perished on the battlefield, others were injured or taken prisoner. Most of the remaining high-ranking university officials served either the State or the Church during the war years, or accepted jobs at other universities. Only nineteen members of the original teaching staff were still free to do their jobs, although this was a virtual impossibility without students or decent academic facilities. Students fought in national battalions along national lines they themselves had formed for the defense of Bukovina. Some of those not involved in war activities tried to continue their studies elsewhere in Austria, but were often hindered by poverty. In Czernowitz, private collections of absent academics were plundered and sometimes surfaced on the local market. Russian and Austrian troops alternately confiscated university buildings to use them as offices, military hospitals or officers’ quarters and damaged them in the process. Surprisingly, the university library remained largely intact.

As the only training institute for Orthodox priests in Austria, solely the theology faculty was ordered by the central authorities to resume its activities in early 1918 to assure a minimum of active and qualified priests. Once the fighting was over, most scholarly staff and their families returned to Czernowitz in September 1918 and tried to pick up their work where they had left off. Nevertheless, disillusionment with the way the Bukovinian university had been treated now became apparent: other Austrian universities had not felt inclined to offer the wandering academic staff from besieged Czernowitz scholarly refuge. Moreover, the discussion about moving the institute - to Salzburg this time - while it was entrapped in the frontline had flared up once more. Some Czernowitz professors had been in favour of such a transfer as well, just as had been the case when the matter had been debated in earlier years.229 The substantiation of their wish now was a different one, however: unlike his lobbying predecessors who had promoted the university’s transfer in order to be away from Czernowitz once and for all, a prominent scholar like legal expert Eugen Ehrlich simply wanted to rid Bukovina of its university altogether, since he blamed the institute for the creation of a large intellectual proletariat in a backward region badly in desperate need of capable tradesmen. The majority of Czernowitz university staff preferred to keep the university where it was.230 Professor Paul Leder, who read canon law in Czernowitz, insisted on the continued existence of the Franz Joseph University. Next to the moral argument - the way the university and its staff had been neglected during the war - Leder also invoked the traditional justification of Austrian state interest.231 History soon rendered the entire discussion obsolete, for the Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed in November 1918 and soon afterwards, the entire territory of Bukovina was annexed by Romania. In an address to his students, Dean Eugen Herzog of the philosophy faculty prepared his audience for the impending closure of the university:

229 Leder, Paul, *Die Universität von Czernowitz und der Friede im Osten*, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung/Czernowitzer Tagblatt (Gemeinsame Kriegsausgabe), 19.02.1918, pp. 3-4, 23.02.1918, pp. 2-3 and 27.02.1918, pp. 2-3.
231 Leder, Paul, *Die Universität von Czernowitz und der Friede im Osten (Schluß)*, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung/ Czernowitzer Tagblatt (Gemeinsame Kriegsausgabe), 28.02.1918, p. 2.
although the Romanian authorities had promised to maintain a German-language philosophy department in Greater-Romania, chances were slight that its location would be Czernowiz. Given the new circumstances, German culture could no longer claim the cultural role it once had in the Habsburg Empire. Herzog underlined once again how the Franz Joseph University had produced two generations of intellectuals, how it had built a bridge to the local ‘uneducated’ by organising well-frequented public courses and how its lecture halls had lacked ‘burning xenophobia and racism’ (knirschender Völker- und Rassenhaß). By focusing on how nationalist movements had flourished rather than perished under the nourishing German cultural influence, by congratulating the new Romanian rulers on achieving the goal of a nation-state and by - somewhat patronisingly - calling on the Bukovinians to cherish interethnic peace and harmony in the times to come, Herzog’s address closely resembled the classic farewell speech of a defeated colonial power.

On 15 June 1919, Czernowitzer Morgenblatt announced that all professors had been forced into retirement. They were invited to reapply for their positions only if they were willing and capable to teach in Romanian. Not more than four professors, among them interestingly enough also the aforementioned Eugen Herzog, agreed to these terms. The others left Czernowitz in September of that same year. The joint edition of Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung and Czernowitzer Tagblatt mourned that ‘no matter if they were upper or middle rank European scholars, they had all done their bit to ensure that Czernowitz and the towns of Bukovina became part of the enlightened communities of the former Austrian Empire’. The editor felt compelled to stress that ‘they had only been teachers, not Germanisators or critics of public life’ and that they ‘had never descended from the noble heights of the researcher to the often barren level of the politician’. The general public was said to have acknowledged this and had therefore always held the scholars in high esteem. “But”, the Czernowitzer concluded, “the public and politicians do not always think alike, and so the professors need to pack their bags”. Hedda Wolff, the wife of one of them, noted in her diary how on 6 September, ‘half of Czernowitz accompanied the departing professors to the railway station and lined the railroad track waving them goodbye’.

---

232 Herzog, Eugen, Der Abschied der deutschen Universität Czernowitz, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung/Czernowitzer Tagblatt, 05.02.1919, pp. 1-2.
Appraisal

From the day it was founded, Czernowitz University provided an important contribution to the development of a provincial identity among the Bukovinian bourgeoisie outside the nationalist framework. Its capacity to shape Bukovina’s own learned classes and the arrival of western scholars were seen as decisive elements of the Duchy’s detachment from Galicia. The university was depicted as ‘a bridge between different ethnicities’ and when it closed its doors in 1919, *Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung* predicted that ‘the memory of the effectiveness of the German university and its teachers would forever fill the most prominent glorious chapter in the history of Bukovina’.

In evaluations following the demise of Austrian Bukovina and its German university, the questions of its Austrian character – as well as the opportunity for the central authorities to flaunt the success of Bukovina in the framework of the Austrian integration process and its presumed Germanising role often play a central role: Philipp Menczel called it ‘the last offshoot of Josephinism in Austria which would have been an anachronism in any other part of the vast Danube Empire’; Emanuel Turczynski highlighted the importance of the founding of a quintessential Austrian institution with the specific aim of strengthening ties between the state and its subjects. He concluded that the university had not been an ivory tower, but that it had stood in close contact with the educated classes of the land, ‘thus allowing a multifunctional cultivation of mother tongues while trying to satisfy the socio-cultural needs of all ethnic groups’.

Robert Seton-Watson, with his sympathy for ‘national awakenings’ in the region, had judged in 1934 that ‘the new seat of learning had too often been regarded by Vienna as an instrument of spreading German culture farther eastwards, and [that] a great proportion of the chairs had been held by Germans’. Just like faculty dean Eugen Herzog had pointed out in his 1919 speech, Bukovinian journalist Philipp Menczel later underlined how the ‘Germanisers’ had been crucial for the development of local nationalist movements:

> The indigenous nationalities of Bukovina, Romanians and Ruthenians, owed much of what they might see in later decades as the fulfillment of their national ideals in Austria to this university. What had been considered a Germanising act in the Sudetenland a entire century earlier, but had been in reality the wakening call for the Czech nation, repeated itself on a smaller scale.

---

237 Mischler 1893, p. 2.
240 Maner 2007, p. 275.
241 Menczel 1932, p. 36.
242 Turczynski 2008, pp. 149-222.
244 Menczel 1932, pp. 36-37.
A staunch defender of German cultural colonialism even during the post-Habsburg times like Emanuel Kapri compared ‘the Landl Bukovina, the smallest crownland as well as the most recently acquired one’ and the Kingdom of Romania, ‘the principal territory (Hauptland) of the Romanian nation’ and pointed out that in Czernowitz the university had been established only fifteen years after Iaşi and eleven years after Bucharest.\footnote{Kapri 1974, p. 103.}

What is more, Romanian nationalists acknowledged this phenomenon as well. They maintained that Czernowitz University had unwillingly provided Bukovina with a host of Romanian intellectuals, who were not hindered by privileges and possessions like boyars and as such could devote all their energy to the national idea.\footnote{Bălan, Teodor, Bucovina în războiul mondial, in: Codrul Cosminului, 6, 1930, 1-136, p. 6.} Others admitted that Czernowitz University had been created upon request of Bukovinian Romanian nationalists among others, but questioned its additional value for ‘the national cause’.\footnote{Roman 2002, p. 29.} Predictably, (Soviet) Ukrainian and nationalist Romanian sources later claimed that a conscious Germanisation policy had been at the root of the creation of the university.\footnote{Botushans’kyi 1980, p. 153; Nistor 1991, p. 212.} Although mainly Romanian nationalist sources in later years tended to zoom in on perceived shortcomings of the university within the specific focus of their political goals, both Romanian and Ukrainian sources nowadays acknowledge the pivotal role the university has played in the process of Ruthenian/Ukrainian emancipation.\footnote{Nowosiwsky 1970, p. 64.} Additionally, Ukrainian sources maintain that Ruthenian nationalists had been convinced that at the time of the university’s establishment only a German university was able put a stop the aspirations of Romanians and of other nationalities to assimilate them.\footnote{Nowosiwsky, I.M. and Kolotylo, Basil, Die Ukrainistik an der Universität Czernowitz, in: Wagner, Rudolf, Alma Mater Francisco Josephina : die deutschsprachige Nationalitäten-Univ. in Czernowitz : Festschrift zum 100. Jahrestag ihrer Eröffnung 1875, Hans Meschedörfner, Munich 1975, p. 196.}

The Franz Joseph University had not only ‘produced’ nationalists, it had also imported them. German nationalism and political anti-Semitism in Bukovina were closely linked to the professors who brought these influences from Vienna and other Austrian cities.\footnote{Ebner, Mayer, Der Antisemitismus in der Bukowina, Czernowitzer Tagblatt, 14.02.1909, pp. 1-2.} Since a number of university professors had been active journalists as well - as was standing practice in those days - they had little difficulty distributing their views.\footnote{Turczynski 2008, pp. 224.}