

## **Ideology and Education in Moldavia before 1848**

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**Abstract:** The period before the 1848 revolution was the one in which the ideas of nation and national unity were formed. National ideology did not appear out of nowhere and it could not have come to life without it being supported by the people of culture and propagated through education. The European ideological currents penetrated in Moldavia, fuelling Romanians' centuries old dream of being united, the national ideology having had to wage a fierce struggle for the establishment of a Romanian education in which the Romanian language to have the supremacy.

**Keywords:** ideology; national; education; enlightenment; school

### **1. Introduction**

The period before 1848 represents a time in which the national consciousness was clearly shaped in the Principalities, mainly as a result of the influence of the ideas promoted by the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Taking into consideration the fact that education was limited to religious studies, it is interesting to see to what extent the national ideology was influenced and promoted by what was taught in schools and preached in churches, with the aid of the teachers, whether they were layman or clergy representatives, especially that between 1821-1848, those institutions and cultural fields that give personality of the nation were matured: school, historiography, literature.

The Romanian Principalities, situated in the sphere of interest of the major powers tried to keep up with political and cultural changes in the West, strongly influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution of 1789, which promoted the concepts of justice, fraternity and equality.

## **2. Church and Education**

The national ideology manifested in the Romanian Principalities blended with cultural activities, the expansion of the national consciousness being evident in the Age of Enlightenment, when culture and education took a special proportion. Therefore, the concerns for educating people through culture, thus, for emancipation in general, were in close contact with the national idea. Therefore, it can be inferred that the formation of the Romanian nation and the establishment of a national education system, which obviously included theological education, are conjugated.

The revolutionary literature entered in the Principalities, among the first works that have come to Bucharest and Iasi being “De la souveranite du peuple” (Paris, 1790) and “Le manuel du citoyen”. (Paris, 1791) Western ideologies will soon arise within principalities, the enlightened absolutism penetrating through the writings of C. Wolf. Simultaneously, Enlightenment itself will appear, especially through the works of the French writers (Melabranche, Pascal, Descartes and Voltaire). These two currents will impose themselves in the Principalities, the enlightened absolutism generating reformist thinking, while the Enlightenment criticism will influence it towards Progressivism.

It is known the particularly important role that Orthodoxy had in organizing, developing and retaining the medieval European culture in Moldavia. In order to prepare priests and clerks for the chancery of the princely rulers of Moldavia, they founded monasteries which were to become important cultural centres where there will operate schools and libraries, such as those at Bistrita, Neamt, Putna, Probota and Dragomirna.

## **3. Enlightenment and Reforms**

The education reforms of the eighteenth century were mostly inspired by the Enlightenment. The ideology of this important European current entered in Moldavia, creating a positive climate for the development of education here, especially as the lords of that time, in their majority, howed great interest for the cultural area, their sphere of interest containing the education reform and the propagation of the didactic act. This fact is definitely confirmed by the official documents which established the legal framework of the education reforms in 1714, 1728, 1742, 1747, 1759, 1765-1766, 1803 and 1813. In 1706, Antioch

Cantemir decided that all monasteries in the country contribute by 120 ducats in order to help support the schools and that the money would be raised by the Metropolitan Bishop. The same ruler set up an academy in Iasi in 1707 that will be reorganized by C. Mavrocordat.

In April 1714, Royal School is created in Iasi, with the contribution of the first Phanariot ruler, N. Mavrocordat. This will become a true academy in 1717 by introducing the study of philosophy and science academic program in Greek. This institution, reorganized several times, ceased to exist in 1821, although it had become a school with an academic profile. It acquired, in time, a local character and a modern organization. Education in Greek lost its popularity in the second half of the seventeenth century, the Moldavian society turning its interest towards education institutions with a Western orientation or to the local ones.

Beginning with the mid seventeenth century, the concern for education in Slavonic decreased, the last important legal document supporting the Slavonic schools being the one issued by Grigore Ghica in 1747, and which was rich in national significance. Gr. Ghica will restore some welfare, ensuring the relative increase of the salaries, reorganizing the Academy, trusting the function of inspector to the Metropolitan Bishop and even establishing besides the Bishoprics of Roman, Husi and Radauti three secondary level schools. In addition, there functioned other 23 country schools with just as much teachers in Suceava, Neamt, Putna, Tecuci, Covurlui, Vaslui, Tutova, Falcu Greceni, Lapusna, Chisinau, Orhei, Soroca, Cernauti, Campulung, Dorohoi, Botosani, Harlau, Carligatura and in Iasi County, in two places. The establishment of the new Guardianship of the Schools, organised by the Metropolitan Bishop, five noblemen and four merchants, proved, by this inclusion of the merchant class, the important changes that occurred in the society of the time. Also, there were offered to the schools the fortunes due to the rulers in case that one person had no heirs. Another significant fact is that only education in towns and cities was done in Greek or Slavonic language, the education in villages being strongly connected to the Church, the language of teaching was the language of the people.

There were many valuable educational projects initiated either by the rulers, or by the enlightened clergymen, however the one from 6<sup>th</sup> of July 1789, initiated by the Metropolitan Bishop, I. Grecul, exceeded the tradition of the time in the European world, as it stated the instruction of young men from the age of 3 to 20 years old (in the churches of St. Nicholas, St. Vineri and St. Sava in Iasi).

The attempts at replacing the Greek language in schools with the local language will not take long to appear. Thus, in 1771, the Metropolitan Bishop of Moldavia, Gabriel Calimachi (the Moldavian prince's brother) together with the bishop of Roman, Leon Gheuca, demanded General Rumyantsev support for replacing Greek in education with the language of the people, an attempt that remained unanswered.

The second half of the eighteenth century brought the secularization of schools determined, among others, by the appearance of the school textbook, the first published in Moldavia being primers, starting with the one printed at Iasi in 1755 ("Bucvar or the beginning of learning"), having as authors Vartolomei Mazareanu, the Abbot of Putna. This primer was printed from the initiative of Iacob Putneanul who, in the preface, expressed the necessity of compulsory education there will be published, still at Iasi, several other primers, in 1783, and later, in 1795, the first manual of arithmetic in the Principalities, "Elements of arithmetic shown by Amphilochius of Hotin". It is recorded also the appearance of the first Romanian grammar, that of Demetrius Eustatievici in 1757, which remained as a manuscript, the first printed grammar being that of Samuil Micu, in 1780, a book used in Moldavia. The Metropolitan Bishop James Putneanul will establish in 1774, at Putna, a theological school, entrusting its organization to Vartolomei Mazareanu which followed the model of Kiev Theological Academy where he had studied. In 1786, it was established a "clergy school" at a monastery near Suceava, headed by Archimandrite Daniel Vlahovici. After that he will become in 1789 bishop, and the school will continue its activity at Cernauti. In 1827, Bishop Isaia Balosescu (1823-1834) will succeed to open the courses, still in Cernauti, of a theological institute, which received only high school graduates. The courses were taught in German, Greek and Latin, and after a few months it was set up a boarding school for 50 students, supported, as well as the institute, from the Religionists Fund. Teachers were recruited among theologians who studied at Roman Catholic institutions in Vienna and Lvov (Lemberg). This institute operated until 1875.

At the end of the eighteenth century, Bishop Iacob Stamate proposed the establishment at the Academy at Iasi of a course of practical engineering. The same Metropolitan Bishop took care of the Academy library.

Ghica reorganized the Academy which becomes an "Academy of the teachings and of the episteme" within which the Greek language teacher and the ones of Latin and Slavonic had disappeared. It is also mentioned the existence of a librarian, as a proof of the functioning of an Academic library.

The end of the eighteenth century marked the beginning of a decisive stage in the struggle for the establishment of a national education in Moldavia which had as main objective the promotion of Romanian as the language of education and culture. At the same time there existed a current of strong orientation of the school towards the West, by studying French and later other Western languages; rationalism and encyclopaedism are also implemented. The educational reforms of the eighteenth century led to the enhancement of the Moldavian education and thus to its development towards secularization and modernization. The School's struggle for a national Romanian education blended with the fight for national emergence and affirmation.

The beginning of the nineteenth century, the century of the emancipation of nations, marks the first successes of the national schools of Moldavia, that period being the one when the representatives of the revolutionary generation, began their activity as a result of the fact that they were men of school or even founders of the Romanian national schools. Among them there were also metropolitans, bishops or abbots of major monasteries, who were present alongside rulers and noblemen at the materialisation of documents significant for the existence of the principalities. Hierarchs as Gabriel Calimachi, Leon Gheuca, Iacob Stamate and especially Veniamin Costachi had special roles in what concern the supporting of the printing and writing in Romanian language, of education and in terms of defence of the country and of the interests of Romanians in the historical provinces. By a decree of 24 May 1803, Moruzzi establish schools in Focsani, Barlad, Galati and Chisinau, which had as teaching languages Greek and "Moldavian".

#### **4. The Seminar, Vasilian Gymnasium and Elementary Schools**

By another decree of 1 September 1803, Prince Alexander C. Moruzzi founded the Priests' Seminar, the "high school" which was the work of Bishop Veniamin Costachi. The seminar is the first Romanian Orthodox theological school seriously organized. Initially, the seminar received as students only the sons of priests and deacons. In 1840, the school will receive by the wish of Prince Michael Sturdza, the name "Veniamin Seminar" in recognition of the great merits of its founder, Bishop Veniamin.

Studies of the seminar spans six years and, in addition to theological subjects there are taught also profane ones. Alongside the Seminar there functioned the Royal

School, reorganized by the same document as “Academy of philology and science” which, by the provisions of the bill of Scarlat Calimachi from 1813, was called “Higher Education School of Sciences”, having Romanian as a teaching language. It starts the struggle for affirmation of the Romanian language in the educational institutions, at the same time with the struggle for national affirmation, a situation that generated a conflict between the Romanian national movement and the ideal professed by the Phanariot regime and implicitly, by the Greek Academy in Iasi where the Romanian language was not a language of study at the higher levels of education. The conflict peaked in the decade before 1821. The Greek language education system and the institutions that represented it disappeared along with the regime that had supported it.

Another important step for asserting national language education, in addition to setting up the Socola Seminar was opening and keeping, in 1814, of the engineering course led by Asachi at the Principality Academy, helped in this endeavour by the Metropolitan Veniamin Costachi. This course, with a duration of four years and taught after course books created by Gh. Asachi, gave the first graduated engineers on 18 July 1818.

After 1821, it can be noticed an increased interest in elementary schools, at villages, who functioned in the Romanian language having a predominantly religious education and fulfilling a very important role in keeping the union of thought of Romanians and the awakening and strengthening of national consciousness, even if sometimes they operated outdoors or on the porch of the church. During the same period, it was crystallized a new generation of scholars who promoted a movement of assertion of Romanian culture in order to diminish the influence of the Greek culture which was a barrier for the development of the national culture and of education in Romanian language.

The Revolution of 1821, although defeated, succeeded in largely achieving its political goals, thereby breaking the Phanariot rule. The development of education became a primary objective, the memoirs and the projects for constitutions including firm propositions in the direction of the development of the education. The 1822 bill of the representatives of the bourgeoisie, presented to ruler Ioan Sandu Sturdza, known under the name of “Coalmen Constitution” (and inspired by the principles of the “Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen”), provides, in paragraph 65, the freedom of education, proposing to establish at Iasi and in other cities, public schools.

The Metropolitan Veniamin Costachi, a prelate with obvious concerns for the Romanian school after the opening and the reorganization of the seminar in Socola, founded an elementary school in a room of the Three Hierarchs Monastery, trusting, in 1826, its management to Gh. Saulescu. Of great importance was the opening of a new perspective in what concerns the development of the national education by the Organic Rule and by the laws elaborated on its basis. The bill for the establishment of the Vasilian Gymnasium anticipated the creation of a national education as an institutionalized state service.

The decades prior to 1848 have a great importance for the formation of national consciousness, a very important role being fulfilled by the national culture and the school; the men of culture being, at the same time, men of action will not miss the action at the forefront of the revolution of 1848, after previously having dedicated much of their work for the struggle for unity and national affirmation. The school was to educate the generations that will engage in the revolution of 1848, sharing this task with Church.

The first systematic attempt to rebuild modern Romanian society, the Organic Rule proclaimed for the first time, the education as a duty of the state and the school as a permanent institution setting thus the grounds for a national school policy. The presentation of the school as a public good in the Organic Rule causes the need for each county to have a national public elementary school, initially, these schools functioned in the cities of Roman, Husi, Galati, Focsani, Botosani and Barlad.

On the number and the degree of the public education institutions, the Rule's provisions are:

- a) Vasilian Gymnasium, founded in 1644 by Vasile Lupu and reinstated January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1828;
- b) in addition to the Gymnasium there was a provisional institute for the sons of the state clerks;
- c) six elementary schools established in Roman, Husi, Botosani, Barlad, Focsani, Galati;
- d) Socola Seminar, for training clergy.

## **5. The Mihailean Academy**

The Academic Committee in its first meeting on 12 January 1833, will discuss the formation of a new regulation and will stipulate the norms of elaboration of textbooks to be approved by the Bishopric Settlement on April 15, 1833; these norms were the use of words of Romanian origin, the simple presentation of the material, the lack of comments and that the contents should not contain statements against religion, morality or the state.

The Academic Committee's Concern for a new school regulation that includes clear regulations regarding the operation of a modern national education will result in Gh. Asachi writing of the known "Regulation of the public schools of the Principality of Moldavia under the auspices of Prince Michael Grigoriu Sturdza and realised by the Settlement of public education" which was approved on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1835, on the eve of the inauguration of the Mihailean Academy. This new regulation was dictated by the progress made in developing and the diversifying of the Moldavian education by the establishment of a school for girls with a studies' span of 3 years, inaugurated on November 8, 1834.

Another important document for public education was the one released by Asachi with the new regulation from June 1, 1835, called "General frame of the matters to be studied at the Mihailean Academy and in the public schools of Moldavia", following that on 1 October 1838, the new successes of education be strengthened by Asachi through the "Regulation of public schools in the Principality of Moldavia".

The legal framework promoted by the Organic Regulation will enable achievement of the most important foundations in the development of the Romanian national education in the first half of the nineteenth century, the Mihailean Academy of Iasi. This institution is considered to be the first high education school of Moldavia, established through the efforts of Bishop Veniamin and Gh. Asachi, its first set of students being also those of private schools which, because the academy provided free boarding, came in a position of not having students anymore.

In 1835, the gymnasium classes at Vasilian Gymnasium ceases they are transferred to the Academy, together with the faculty and the extraordinary courses. At Three Hierarchs there will remain the elementary school and the normal school, which means that the Mihailean Academy had all forms of education, except the elementary ones. The Mihailean Academy was the highest



education institution to function in the Principalities until 1860. From its establishment, the Academy will continuously evolve in terms of improving the educational process, especially the care with which he chose its teachers, among whom there were many sounding names, Western, Transylvanian or Greek ones.

An important step for the development of national ideology is the opening of the National Academy history course taken by Mihail Kogalniceanu (which will only work at the Academy until the spring of 1843, the national history course being held in the following years by I. Albinet) because, until school year 1843 - 1844, "national history" did not enjoy the status of distinctive discipline within the curriculum of the Academy. The period in which Mihail Kogalniceanu held its activity at the Mihailean Academy, was ruled by a climate that manifested openly divergent trends in the school: the national-radical one and noblemen' conservative one. A part of the noblemen class opposed a strong resistance to national education because it was of French influence. The French trend existed, of course, since a long time ago and was seen with good eyes especially by those who had followed their studies at Western universities. French was the common language not only in selected salons but had a general spreading. Bucharest and Iasi held first place in Europe, in what concerns the diffusion of Parisian books and periodicals.

In 1833 it had been established in Iasi, as a continuation of earlier French school, an institute that had as students Mihail Kogalniceanu and Alecsandri, as well; in 1836 there functioned a boarding school for girls of the Countess E. de Grandpre where Constantin Eunomie taught and who himself will open a school. Such French schools, along with the Greek, Greek-German or Franco-German ones could be found 1837 all over Moldavia (at Roman, Focsani, Barlad, Botosani and so on). The often attempts on education at imposing an educational system in the detriment of the Romanian one will be rejected according to the regulations of the Organic Rule demanding that education be made in Romanian.

In the 30s of the nineteenth - century there it arises new political and intellectual elite, educated in the Western Europe, which saw the gap between Western countries' progress and the "backwardness" of the Romanian countries. They proposed to change attitudes and to reform institutions, despite the Eastern Orthodox heritage of Romanians. Earlier in the last decades of the eighteenth century, a few Romanian intellectuals had attempted to redefine the idea of community which they referred until then to the Orthodox community that included Greeks, Slavs and the Romanian. Thus, there are encountered more and

more the terms “country” and “nation” regarding the goal of the political organisation for the good sake of the people.

The legislation subsequent to the Organic Rule created a framework which ensured a certain legal certainty to cultural and educational reforms accomplished in Moldavia, the initiatives and the activity of the school people becoming more radical in the sense of an accentuation of the national-patriotic movement in the area of education, because these people of the school were also leaders of the revolutionary movement in the country, and sometimes exceeded the limits permitted by officials, often entering into conflict with foreign policy and even the internal political regime of the time. The Mihailean Academy teachers had their vision beyond specific scholarly concerns and cared to convey the national spirit to those they educated, trying to form true patriots to whom to hand over the struggle. Fervent concerns for the cultivation of language and national history were no longer a novelty for the Romanian space, the basis being settled by the Transylvanian School representatives.

The national and liberal spirit promoted by the Academy will not take long to provoke an adverse reaction from the conservative political factor both internal and external. Another important factor for the national unity was that the Moldavian education developed in accordance with the Romanian Country and Transylvania, both in terms of the historical factors that led this and of the ideas that had inspired it. The collaboration of the Romanian scholars developed during the period prior to 1848, generated a spiritual and cultural unity, which preceded the political unity of the state. Between 1821 and 1848, those institutions and cultural fields had matured, giving personality to a nation: school, historiography, literature etc.

## **6. Conclusions**

The politicians of the 1848 period saw the important role that schools should play in the development of national consciousness through the sustaining of a patriotic national education, and they attempted to impose the revolutionary ideas from either at school or through publications, conferences or even legislation. Then Romanian students from abroad were influenced by modern ideas regarding the need to support patriotism and national affirmation, a fact that made them actively involved in preparing the revolution, establishing societies abroad of which the most important was “The Romanian Students Society” founded in 1845 at Paris,

and becoming “professional revolutionaries”. Dan Berindei stresses the link between culture and national ideals during the formation of modern nation. Romanian national culture was influenced by the period of the formation of a national consciousness by two trends that have succeeded without opposing one another, the Enlightenment (manifested at the end of the eighteenth century and the first decade of the nineteenth century) and the Romanticism (predominantly during the period prior to 1848) currents that were strongly linked to the national and the social liberation movement of the Romanians. The revolutionary change that should have occurred according to the model of other European countries and which erupted in 1848 in the Principalities, was the result of effervescence generated by the conjugation of occidental ideas of national emancipation and of the century old desire of the Romanian people of becoming an independent nation, to whose achievement all the social classes brought their contribution, among them, the intellectuals who, through school and education, had prepared at an ideological level the development of the 1848 events. It is interesting to remark the fact that in the Romanian Principalities, the clergy and the Church, despite the Orthodox traditionalism, were not refractory to the ideas of the European Enlightenment, but rather through education, culture and political position of senior members they brought their important contribution to the national emancipation movement.

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