

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ALEXANDRU IOAN CUZA AND DIMITRIE ALEXANDRU STURDZA-MICLĂUȘANU

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The date of January 24 remained, remains, and will remain deeply ingrained in the heart of every Romanian, being the date on which in 1859 Alexandru Ioan Cuza was elected ruler of all those living in the Danubian Principalities. This was a celebration for all Romanians. They felt that there had been made progresses for the removal of the Phanariotes through the efforts of that wonderful Oltenian that was Tudor Vladimirescu, stopping, with difficulty, the wish of Count Pavel Kiseleff who was aiming to become prince of the extra-Carpathian Romanian countries, finally, turning away the bitterness of the defeat of the 1848-1849 Revolution, made by enthusiastic youth, wishing for the progress of their people.

After the Crimean War (1853-1856), that led to the defeat of the gendarme of Europe, the Russian Empire, through the Congress of Paris (February-March 1856), the Romanian delegation succeeded in including conditions, in the final protocol of the peace treaty, for regaining the three counties from south-eastern Moldova – Cahul, Bolgrad, Ismail – that were reassigned to the Principality of Moldova. At the same time, there were written provisions that, following the international law, could have led to the union of the Danubian Principalities. These were ably exploited by the young Romanian lawyers, who had studied abroad. Gains were also made from bringing lecturers and lectures of notable historians such as Jules Michelet, Edgar Quinet, Hyppolite Taine etc.

Moreso, a unification of the Italian and German states was also being followed. They wanted to be unified, and it was also a necessity. The Italians succeeded, due to count Cavour and the energetic Giuseppe Garibaldi, born in Nice in 1807, to undertake an efficient, successful action, regarding the unification of the Italian states around the Kingdom of the Sardinia, on the throne on which there sat King Vittorio Emmanuele II (King of Sardinia between 1849-1861 and King of Italy between 1861-1878).

In the German states the situation was similar. There, on the throne of the Prussian Kingdom on which there was sitting King Friedrich Wilhelm IV,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Friedrich Wilhelm IV (King of Prussia between June 7, 1840-January 2, 1861) was nicknamed the “romantic on the throne”. He led a policy of reconciliation between those of the Catholic confession and the Evangelicals. He remained in memory through numerous

Bismarck affirmed himself as a brave politician. As in Italy, he was a member of the progressist nobility, filled with patriotism. Despite the advanced ideas of the youth, Bismarck registered among the tough Junker class, that wanted the unification of Germany through force, by fire and steel, meaning through war. This was an idea that Bismarck had clearly formulated, imposed, and to which he subordinated the entire action of the development of the future German state. These were the conditions in which there took place the instruction of D. A. Sturdza, as a youth with a sword in his hand, as were all the epoch's students of German origin or from the kindred that came to study there. This instruction was done through the current called Kulturunion. D. A. Sturdza was registered in this current as a person that came to study in Germany. D. A. Sturdza, born on March 10, 1833, in Miclăușani (d. October 1914, Bucharest) was the adult son of Alexandru (Alec) Dimitrie Sturdza Miclăușanu and of Ecaterina Sturdza, daughter of logothete Costache Sturdza of Ruginoasa. Both were grand boyars. Following the custom of the era, young Dimitrie was home schooled by German professor Johann Kormann. He proved himself to be inventive starting from his childhood. Together with his sister Elena he built a balloon. From then on, his megalomania was remarked. In his adolescence he left for Germany. There he studied in universities in Munich (1850-1851), Göttingen (1851-1852), Bonn (1852-1854), Berlin (1854-1856).<sup>4</sup> He came back to the country and enrolled among those that were fighting for the unification of the Danubian Principalities. He did this because he had been influenced by the unionist politics of Bismarck. He believed that at the European level the ethnic states were going to dominate, taking the place of the large empires – prisons for the people. Like the sons of other Romanian grand boyars, he joined the unionist movement. It was one of the great ideas of the failed Revolution of 1848-1849. Its ideas and programs would be fulfilled by those that had participated in it, also by a younger generation. Dimitrie Sturdza was helped by his instruction, his education, and the principles received in his family and in the German universities, to register among those that were working on the success of the union of the Danubian Principalities, along future ruler Alexandru Ioan Cuza, Mihail Kogălniceanu etc. He became the personal secretary of Alexandru Ioan Cuza. His collaboration as secretary (January-March 1859) had proven to be short termed and unhappy. Dimitrie A. Sturdza was benefiting from the deep confidence of

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royal buildings in Berlin and Potsdam. In 1848-1849 he stifled the revolution, with the help of the army and politician Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898, Fürst = prince from 1871). Immediately after the end of the revolution he transformed the Kingdom of Prussia to a constitutional monarchy. In 1857 he had several strokes. As a consequence, his brother, Wilhelm, became regent. Friedrich Wilhelm IV died on January 2, 1861, when his place was taken by Wilhelm I (1861-1888).

<sup>4</sup>He had also been to Freiburg, but it is not known when and in which conditions; his degree of graduate of a law faculty was obtained from the University of Berlin. N. Iorga shows that he had studied both theology and law.

Mihail Kogălniceanu, who, years prior, had also been to Germany. The position of sympathy towards young D. A. Sturdza weighed heavily with ruler Al. I. Cuza, who, at the beginning, did not sympathise the newcomer that came with him. D. A. Sturdza was rigid, with a punctuality and work force that were exasperating.

*Domnitorul* (Ruler) Alexandru Ioan Cuza, 14 years older than Dimitrie Sturdza,<sup>5</sup> had completed, as was customary, his first years of study with his mother Sultana (n. Cozadini). Because she was Greek, he had studied the Greek language that was used in the family. Then, until 1831, he studied in the French boarding school of Victor Cuenin, in Iași. There, he was colleagues with Mihail Kogălniceanu, Vasile Alecsandri, Eugen Alcaz, the Docan brothers – of which he was a cousin, Matei Millo etc.<sup>6</sup> Immediately after he had learned to express himself in French, he was sent to Paris to obtain a diploma of youth who had passed his baccalaureate exams in France. Upon his return, on September 15, 1837, he joined the army with the rank of cadet. On February 8, 1840, he resigned from the army.<sup>7</sup> In 1843, he became judge in the Tribunal of the Covurlui Land. Then he married Elena Rosetti, in Solești, on April 30, 1844, the daughter of seneschal Iordache Rosetti from Solești and of Caterina Rosetti, nee Sturdza, daughter of logothete Dumitru Sturdza of Ruginoasa. Therefore, D. A. Sturdza and Al. I. Cuza were related through Cuza's marriage with a lady from the Sturdza family – Cuza's wife were first cousin of D. Sturdza, so the two politicians were, more precisely, cousins-in-law. Alexandru Ioan Cuza, by chance, participated in the reunion in the Mavrocordat House around the time of the so-called Revolution of 1848, in the city of Iași. After a brief arrest, during which he was wounded at the leg, Cuza entered with great succes in the politics. As he was a man of average height, handsome, blond, agreeable, pleasant, also proving an upright character, he easily won over those surrounding him. The later accusations that his enemies had made, who have written that he was a great lover of wine, cannot be believed. Dimitrie Bolintineanu, who had known him well, wrote in his book that the ruler only drank water when dining.<sup>8</sup> He was also accused of being a servant of the triple-named god Eros-Cupid-Amor. Mihail Kogălniceanu, who was also a faithful servant of the same god,<sup>9</sup> defended the ruler. He wrote that it is best for the country to have on its throne a healthy man and not an evil and powerless patient.

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5Acc. C. C. Giurescu, *Viața și opera lui Cuza vodă*, Bucharest, 1966, p. 61.

6Acc. Al. D. Xenopol, *Domnia lui Cuza vodă*, vol. I (vol. VII al Istoriei Românilor din Dacia Traiană), Iași, 1903, p. 19; C. C. Giurescu, op. cit., p. 63.

7Acc. C. C. Giurescu, op. cit., p. 63.

8Acc. Dimitrie Bolintineanu, *Viața lui Cuza Vodă*, memoriu istoric, a treia ediție revăzută și adăugită, Noua Librărie G. Ioanide, Bucharest, 1869, p. 163.

9It is known that M. Kogălniceanu had a notebook in which he was writing down all his conquests and successes. He had reached 700. He did not write any further, declaring himself bored.

Cuza used D. A. Sturdza in correspondence missions with Vienna and Berlin, including for having his correspondence and newspaper articles from these two great German cities translated.<sup>10</sup> D. A. Sturdza was gifted with an ebullient energy and the belief that he was gifted with the power to accomplish something above his contemporaries, which was largely real, however in the relationship with the ruler he had proven himself to be destructive to the national interests.

An episode of this relationship in which D. A. Sturdza was led by irrational anger is related by several sources. Although disputed, a truth must still exist in there. Thus, it seems that during the short while in which he had been the princely secretary, D. A. Sturdza browsed through the correspondence of the ruler. Perhaps this was one of his work tasks. He had to answer the letters in German and inform the prince on which important articles were published in the newspapers from Vienna, Budapest, and the German cities. The letters in Russian he did not understand, not knowing the language. However, he must have read the name of Cnjaz Sergey of Leuchtenberg in there, the nephew of the tsar, presumptively next in line to Cuza<sup>11</sup> to the throne of Romania, commander of the guard of Knights of Malta to the tsar of Russia. But Sergey too was in fact a de Beauharnais (1849-1877), thus being related to both imperial Houses of France and Russia. It was negotiated, in 1863, for Sergey of Leuchtenberg to be proposed for the throne of Romania starting from 1866. The 1866 problem was very clear: this year there were ending the 7 years of rule for Alexandru Ioan Cuza, mentioned as the maximum time of occupation for the throne of Romania, by the great European powers through the Treaty of Paris. Cnjaz Sergey had been rejected due to his youth, for in 1864, when his name came into discussion, he was barely 14. He was not even 15 years old, the age of becoming an adult for royals. Secondly, the proposal could not have been accepted by France, who considered that Sergey's ties to Russia were much stronger and did not want Russia to expand its political and dynastic influence over Romania, and the mouths of the Danube implicitly.<sup>12</sup>

It seems that during his search through the princely correspondence, D. A. Sturdza had found an epistle recently addressed by the Emperor of France, Napoleon III (1851-1870) to Ruler Alexandru Ioan Cuza. In that letter from

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10Iliia Garașnin, the Serbian minister of foreign affairs, also former and future Prime Minister, had repeatedly asked the guarantor of the Romanian agency in Belgrade, Prohasca, whether Prince Cuza knew German. The answer was negative. He was told that the prince speaks and writes well in Greek. That which he had discovered had pleased the Serbian minister, since he was thus able to communicate in Greek with the Romanian prince. The Serbian minister specified that he could not use the international communication instrument, French, because he did not know that language (Arhivele Cuza, XIV, f. 557).

11Acc. A. D. Xenopol, op. cit., vol. I, ed. cit., p. 277, 278 – rumours with which the English newspapers spreaded and concerned themselves.

12Acc. Radu Ștefan Vergatti, introduction to G. Voican Voiculescu, *O genealogie care vorbește*, Ed. Ordesos, Pitești, 2019, p. 6.

the emperor to the *domnitor* in Bucharest, for whom he had a particular sympathy, he had proposed that he gather, beside the 12.000 well-trained border guards that he already had, others, to sum up 20.000 soldiers. With them he was to make a “demonstration” on the banks of the Danube. At the time, the great river was considered to be a boundary between the Sublime Porte and the Danubian Principalities, who had an autonomous statute. Due to the influence that the emperor had at the time, he promised to use it to pressure Sultan Abdul Aziz into accepting the independence of Romania. Dimitrie Sturdza took the letter and handed it to the consuls of the Austrian Empire, the Sublime Porte, and of the Kingdom of Great Britain, who were in Bucharest. Immediately, the text of the epistle got published in the widely circulated newspapers. The Emperor of France and his cousin Count Walewsky, foreign minister of the French Empire, reacted. They wrote to the ruler in Bucharest that “A country that has such traitors is not worthy of independence.”<sup>13</sup> Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza, who was usually a calm, gentle man, reprimanded D. A. Sturdza asking him if he realised what he had done. Then he allegedly slapped him twice and declared him terminated.<sup>14</sup> While he was descending the stairs, or more accurately, tumbling down, it is possible that Dimitrie Sturdza shouted towards the ruler: You’ll see what will happen to you! Then he ran off towards the stables. Since he was a fine rider, he is said to have straddled the horse and quickly left for Giurgiu. There, there was another garrison of the Sublime Porte. He is said to have crossed south of the Danube and shortly hidden in Istanbul.<sup>15</sup> Yet it is accurate that in the country, he was sued and condemned for having insulted the entire ensemble of clerks of the state. In January 1860, he was condemned to two months of imprisonment in a monastery, for press misdemeanours.<sup>16</sup> Then he suffered a stroke, that left him with a distorted face and a half-closed eye for the rest of his life. A. C. Cuza always made fun of his deformity of the face.<sup>17</sup>

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13Acc. Trădarea lui Sturdza față de Cuza, in „Țara” newspaper, 1903, apud *Cuza Vodă – România*, volume assembled and edited by Stelian Neagoe, Bucharest, Editura Machiavelli, 2009, pp. 433-434.

14Acc. A. C. Cuza, *Însemnări din viață și documente omenești*, text, presentation, and notes by Marian Ștefan, Editura Oscar Print, Bucharest, 2011, pp. 132-133. The event was told by a Colonel Lipan, who knew it from one of his colleagues that was on guard during the incident.

15Acc. Trădarea lui Sturdza față de Cuza, in „Țara” newspaper, 1903, loc.cit.

16Acc. A.D. Xenopol, *Istoria partidelor politice în România*, Librăria Stănciulescu, Bucharest, 1920, p. 404; Mihaela Damean, *Dimitrie A. Sturdza – colaborator al domnitorului Alexandru Ioan Cuza și apoi contestatar al său*, in „Analele Universității din Craiova”, Seria Istorie, Anul XVII, Nr. 2(22)/2012, p. 47.

17Acc. A. C. Cuza, *op. cit.*, p. 147; Sabina Cantacuzino, a devoted friend, portrays him as an absolutely impeccable man. However, she herself admits the existence of an untimely serious nervous disease: “As a physical appearance, he was small, well-bound, not beautiful, but [with] an expressive figure, passing from gravity to malice glare. A great frost had paralysed his face and it remained a bit asymmetrical (...) at the age of 75, when[, under the blow of a

Sturdza was pardoned and retreated to his estate in Miclăușeni to take care of himself. Alexandru Ioan Cuza, a balanced, humane person, had tried, out of pity, also because they were family, to help D. A. Sturdza. He considered his suffering and, on January 17, 1861, he named him minister of Public Works in the Anastasie Panu government in Iași.<sup>18</sup> In 1863 Sturdza joined the Masonry.<sup>19</sup> With all his good will, ruler Alexandru Ioan Cuza could not oppose the hatred that D. A. Sturdza had against him. Probably this situation was also due to the precarious health of D. A. Sturdza. It is very possible that he had suffered, from as early as 1860, visibly, of neuropsychic affections (immobility of the face, exaggerated redness of the skin, agitation and hyperactivity, lack of comprehension of situations, obsessions, obscure revenge impulses).<sup>20</sup> Being convinced – without any base – that ruler Alexandru Ioan Cuza wanted to persecute him, he joined the ranks of those that wished to remove Cuza, replacing him with a foreign prince. D. A. Sturdza was one of those who had permanently animated the “monstruous coalition”. Upon the dethronement of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, during the night of February 10/11, 1866, he entered the princely palace and took a large part of the prince’s archives. This was an illegal act. He had held the archive for 46 years, only returning it in 1912 to acad. Ioan Bianu, who was heading the Library of the Academy. Nevertheless, he did not return the entire archive. The archive could only be studied after 1928, when Ion I. C. Brătianu (the most prominent son of one of the conspirators against Al .I. Cuza) was not alive anymore.<sup>21</sup> General Ion Argetoianu that had heard public rumours about the attitude of D. A. Sturdza, had condemned him in the French-written letters to his wife

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family event, the nervous system, on which sclerosis had already crept upon, was shaken so violently, that] he became gravely ill and was forced to leave all his obligations and get hospitalized in Paris in a health house. There he was taken care of for almost a year, returned home tranquil and empowered, but sad, miserly, mortified, remembering the crisis that he had been through, and misanthropic, not wanting to see anyone. My husband, with whom he was so intimate, who had taken care of him for many years and to which he had confessed his most secret impressions, was pleasing him no more, he but gazed at him and was silent.” (acc. Sabina Cantacuzino, *Din viața familiei Ion C. Brătianu, 1821-1891*, ed. III, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2013, pp. 135-136).

18On May 23, 1861, D. A. Sturdza resigned from the government (acc. Stelian Neagoe, *Istoria guvernelor României*, Ed. Machiavelli, Bucharest, 1999, p. 24).

19Acc. Mihai Dimitrie Sturdza, *România între frica de Rusia și dragostea de Franța*, Editura Roza Vânturilor, Bucharest, 2006, pp. 78-79; Horia Nestorescu-Bălcești, *Enciclopedia ilustrată a francmasoneriei din România*, vol. III, Centrul Național de Studii Francmasonice, Bucharest, 2005, pp. 276-277.

20Proper madness, as called by N. Iorga, in *Supt trei regi. Istorie a unei lupte pentru un ideal moral și național*, Ed. II, Bucharest, 1932, p. 50.

21Acc. Giurescu, op.cit., p. 6.

Clemence Otetelișanu.<sup>22</sup> Also, the retention of the archive of Al. I. Cuza is also confirmed by Sabina Cantacuzino. D. A. Sturdza showed her letters regarding the relationship between Cuza and Maria Obrenovici, referring to the Cuza children "But they should not raise their heads to what is not theirs, because I publish them!"<sup>23</sup> In his turn, A. C. Cuza writes about an event from 1903, that he knew about from a faculty colleague, Nino B. Cantacuzino, who was part of the diplomatic corps of Vienna. He had told A. C. Cuza that when the possibility of erecting a statue in honor of Alexandru Ioan Cuza in Iași was discussed, the politician D. A. Sturdza had an outburst, launching a series of mean things about the late Prince of the Romanian union. Sturdza told Cantacuzino that once they were walking down the street, Cuza was humming a series of cheerful songs, that were heard on the streets of Paris. Then he said that when he came to Cuza to sign a series of papers for the ministry, he had found him next to a scantily clad woman (Maria Obrenovici). D. A. Sturdza, that according to Nino B. Cantacuzino was incapable of having physical relationships, but was surely of a well-known and arch-recognised chastity, had openly accused Al. I. Cuza of frivolousness and worse. The words of Nino B. Cantacuzino, recorded by A. C. Cuza, show and reinforce the affirmation that D. A. Sturdza was a sick man, with whom no normal understanding could be reached.

I must conclude by mentioning, once again, that the relationships between prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza and Dimitrie A. Sturdza were, unfortunately, not good. At the beginning of his reign, Al. I. Cuza tried to help D. A. Sturdza. Unfortunately, the latter, most probably already suffering from a neuropsychic condition, did not accept. And this despite the fact that he was an absolutely remarkable personality culturally and scientifically. He manifested the aspects of a destructive megalomania. Because of this, he betrayed the interest of the country, blocking the potential obtaining of independence when this possibility was offered by Emperor Napoleon III. He was part of the general actions of the "monstrous coalition", that had removed Cuza. In this way there was reached, further on, the necessity of the War of Independence of Romania from 1877-1878, that led to the loss of thousands of Romanian soldiers' lives.

Dimitrie A. Sturdza's behavioural problems seems to be related to a medical psychological condition, namely a form of bipolar disorder: a chronic mood disorder that causes intense shifts in mood, energy levels and behaviour. Manic and hypomanic episodes are the main sign of the condition, and most people with bipolar disorder also have depressive episodes. People who are in manic states may indulge in activities that cause them physical, social or financial harm, such in this case the recklessly inappropriate behaviour to prince Cuza.

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22R. Șt. Vergatti, *Epistole inedite ale unui ofițer român participant la Războiul pentru cucerirea Independenței de Stat (1877-1878)*, in *Studii și materiale de istorie modernă*, vol. XIV, Bucharest, 2000-2001.

23Acc. S. Cantacuzino, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

As mentioned, Sturdza was sued and condemned for having insulted the entire ensemble of clerks of the state, and well as for press misdemeanours, thus suggesting also psychotic symptoms such as delusions and maybe hallucinations. Another medical condition of Sturdza could be a borderline personality disorder, which involves a longstanding pattern of abrupt, moment-to-moment swings in moods, behaviour and self-image that are often triggered by conflicts in interactions with other people.