

BUKOVINA AND ITS INHABITANTS DURING THE GREAT WAR

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Abstract. A component part of the Romanian State's individuality, Bukovina was at the beginning of the Great War, due to its special geopolitical position, in the centre of the interests of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Russian Empire, and German Empire and naturally, of the legitimate interests of the Kingdom of Romania. The very diverse ethnic and confessional structure of Bukovina (Romanians, Ukrainians, Jews, Germans, Poles, Hungarians etc.) sustained different interests and preoccupations of its inhabitants during the war. As regards the loyalty towards the Danube Monarchy, we mention the attitude of the Germans and Jews, the Ukrainians acting for the creation of an independent state, whereas the Romanians were put in a delicate position, given the suspicions manifested by the Austrian authorities towards them. The Poles enlisted as volunteers in the Legions created by Jozef Pilsudski, fighting for the creation of an own state. Bukovina was three times under the occupation of the Tsarist troops (September /October 1914, 26th of November 1914, 23rd of January 1915 and June 1916), period during which it was subject to hostilities specific to an occupational regime. After the entry of the Kingdom of România into the war (14th of August 1916), the Romanian soldiers, enlisted in the Austro-Hungarian army, were sent to fight on the Italian front. A War Council, conducted by the General Eduard Fischer, was empowered to apply capital punishment to all the persons who committed grave offences, such as espionage or treason. The persons suspected to be able of treason or hostility towards the Habsburg authorities were confined in the detention camps from Thalerof (Styria), Munkacs (Hungary) and Olmütz (Moravia). The volunteers enlisted in the so-called „Bukovina Legion”. The fate of those who remained at home (women, children and old persons) was under the sign of suspicion manifested by the Austro-Hungarian authorities as regards their loyalty towards the two-headed monarchy. Our paper develops and studies in detail, based on documents, Bukovina's evolution during the Great War.

Keywords: Bukovina, Great War, 1914-1918, Austro-Hungarian Empire, German Empire, „Bukovina Legion”

Bukovina, as part of the Romanian State national being, was subject to important ethnic-social, political, confessional, educational and spiritual metamorphoses during the 144 years of Austrian administration. The ethnic-demographic policy of the Austrian authorities changed the ethnic and linguistic composition of Bukovina, a space where 12 nations co-inhabited, sharing 10

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