

# ECONOMIC ASPECTS FROM THE ACTIVITY OF THE BUCOVINA'S UKRAINIAN MINORITIES, WITHIN THE INTER- WAR PERIOD

Ph.D. candidate **Ionuț BRAN**  
The „Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava, Romania  
ionutbrn@yahoo.com

## **Abstract:**

*The present article represents the partial result of the studies which were performed over the Ukainian minority in Romania throughtout the inter-war period, the way it is reflected from the organisational and actng point of view, in the historical documents consulted within the Ministry of External Affairs' Records. The material is focused on economical aspects which capture manifestations of the Ukrainian minorities within the new context, characterized on one hand, by the necessity of a rapid remaking of the post-war national economy, and on the other hand, by the achievement of the Ukrainian population's unity desideratum, in the borders of the independent Ukraine. The results of the research emphasize the causal connection between the political and the economical element, existent at the level of the Ukrainian minority, the purpose being the formation of their own national economy.*

**Key words:** inter-war context, Bucovina, Ukrainian minority, economic organizations, objectives

**JEL classification:** N34

## **INTRODUCTION**

The study aims at the valorification of historical information offered by a series of unpublished documents, completed by the coroboration with the ones existing in accesible speciality works, of certain Romanian historians. The understanding of the Bucovina's Ukrainian minority's economic organization within the inter-war period is conditioned by the framing within the general context of those times, both internationally and nationally. Subsequent to the First World War, no state was without a national minority. The integration of national minorities within the Romanian state has been a complex process, difficult at times, due to the tight connections developed by the ethnic groups with their country of origin or thanks to their intentions of unification manifested at the borders of their own independent countries.

The handling of the issue combines, in a chronological formula, demographic aspects with other economical and political ones, which, even though briefly emphasized, offer a punctual image over the evolution of the Ukrainian community of the inter-war Bucovina, a period in which the Romanian state has made great efforts in order to implement a correct policy as to the cohabiting populations.

## **SUMMARY**

In 1919, the population of Bucovina summed up 811.721 inhabitants, out of which 378.859 (46, 7%) Romanians, 227.361 (28%) Ukrainians, 88.666 (10, 9%) Jewish people, 68.075 (8, 4%) Germans, 34.119 (4, 2%) Polish and 14.641 (1, 8%) other ethnicities. Bucovina's urban population, representing 173.000 inhabitants, was composed of 64.000 Jewish people (37,2%), 44.000 (25,4%) Romanians, 18.300 (10,5%) Ukrainians, 28.200 (16,3%) Germans, 15.400 (8,9%) Polish people, while the rural one was mainly composed of Romanians (51,8%) and, in a lower quantum, of Ukrainians (32,1%).

The 1921 agrarian reform produces significant mutations in the land plan and also from the agricultural exploitation point of view, but the expropriation and the abolition of latifundia, followed by allotment of land to the peasants, conferred a low lucrativeness to the Romanian agriculture. By the agrarian reform Law, promulgated on September 23<sup>rd</sup> 1921, the big land owners

would acquire the right of keeping a maximum of 250 hectares of the surface total previously held. In the eastern part of Bucovina, in the Vijnița, Coțmani și Zastavna counties respectively, where the percentage of Romanians was significantly low compared to the population total [1], representing between 0,5 % and 1,5%, the Ukrainian ethnics were acquiring property right over 32.647 hectares of land, while the congeners from the south-western part of the historical province, from Rădăuți, Câmpulung Moldovenesc, Suceava și Gura Humorului, where Romanians were to be found in absolute majority (73% - 79,9%), were the beneficiaries of a larger area, which summed up to 40.329 hectares of land [2].

According to the 1930 census, from the total of the 853.009 inhabitants of Bucovina, 499.608 were active, while 89,9% of the rural active inhabitants handled soil exploitation [3].

Once with the development of the handicraft workshops, belonging mostly to the Jewish and the Germans, one would observe the diversification of handicrafts categories, served, in 1938, in the county of Câmpulung, by 2.424 qualified workers and craftsmen, out of which 1317 were German, 585 Jewish, 500 Romanians and 22 Ukrainians [4], from a total of 9.502 inhabitants.

Due to the intensification of commercial exchange, favored by the road and railway extension, the financial activity also got a boost. Thus, in Bucovina's urban localities, we find branches of central and popular banks belonging to Romanians, Germans and Ukrainians. In 1921, in Bucovina 101 bank branches with 10.910 members were functioning, as well as other 220 popular banks, out of which 142 - Romanian, 65 - German and 13 - Ukrainian. At the same time, at the level of 1925, we find 277 cooperative and consumer production companies with 42.000 members, out of which 23.000 Romanians, 11.000 Germans, 6.000 Polish and 2.000 Ukrainians.

## UKRAINIAN ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS

Throughout the inter-war period, one observed the decrease of the Ukrainian institutions' activities [5] from Bucovina, a factual state which was seen in the gradual decrease of Ukrainian number of cooperatives, following the First World War, from 207 to 17. The 190 cooperatives functioning cease was blamed on the conflagration and its consequences, Ukrainians pretending that, due to the Bucovina's state of siege, the General Congress of the Ukrainian Cooperatives was no longer possible, a congress which would have been the optimal moment for the remaking and the boosting of the Ukrainian cooperatives.

In December 1929, only the „Popular Trade” Cooperatives in the Township of Bergamot - the Credit and economies Cooperative for the Ukrainian townsmen, headquarters in Chernovtsy, the Credit and economies Cooperatives from Doroșăuți, Carapești, Călinești, Lucavăț, Orșăuți, Vicno and the Townships of Prihce, Stănești, Tăuteni and Jadova, the Zamistea Dairy Products Cooperative, the Industrial and Trading Orthodox Cooperative from the Township of Brodina - were still functioning [6].

These were functioning following the model of the „*Bucovina de Nord SA*” (tables 1 and 2) și „*de Credit*” Banks (tables 3 and 4) from Chernovtsy, as well as that of the „*Vans Pumice*” Credit and Mutual Help Cooperative (table 5), headquarters in the Township of Abdicat, all of them being Ukrainian.

**Table no 1. „*Bucovina de Nord SA*” Bank Balance, December 31<sup>st</sup> 1930**

Asset		Liability	
<b>Cash</b>	423.510 lei	<b>Joint stock</b>	3.000.000 lei
<b>Policies</b>	11.649.806 lei	<b>Reserve fund</b>	212.869,90 lei
<b>Current account</b>	2.106.103 lei	<b>Fructify. Dept.</b>	11.577.827 lei
<b>Immovables: House on str. I. Flounder 33</b>	200.000 lei	<b>Dividends</b>	7.204 lei
<b>In Minuend</b>	37.575 lei	<b>Profit</b>	206.078,10 lei
<b>Furniture</b>	60.000 lei		
<b>Suspense account</b>	526.985 lei		
	15.003.979 lei		15.003.979 lei

**Table no 2. Profit and losses account, concluded on December 31<sup>st</sup> 1930**

Flow		Credit	
<b>Fees and taxes</b>	256.453 lei	<b>Interests</b>	1.237.890 lei
<b>Administration charges</b>	306.399,90 lei		
<b>Wages</b>	468.500 lei		
<b>Income and house maintenance</b>	459 lei		
<b>Net benefit</b>	206.078,10 lei		
<b>Total</b>	1.237.890 lei	<b>Total</b>	1.237.890 lei

**Table no 3. Balance on the 1930 exercise**

Asset		Liability	
<b>Cash</b>	316.176 lei	<b>Joint stock</b>	2.000.000 lei
<b>Current account</b>	6.321.313 lei	<b>Deposits</b>	13.750.554 lei
<b>Policies</b>	13.445.978 lei	<b>Current account</b>	3.186.526 lei
<b>Inventory</b>	143.715 lei	<b>Unpaid divid.</b>	4.563 lei
<b>Immovables</b>	250.000 lei	<b>Reserve funds</b>	222.283 lei
<b>Goods</b>	160.199 lei	<b>Rediscounted bills</b>	880.698 lei
<b>Total</b>	20.637.381 lei	<b>Antacid. Cash.</b>	146.675 lei
		<b>Interests</b>	
		<b>Welfare funds</b>	40.000 lei
		<b>Net profit</b>	406.082 lei

**Table no 4. Profit and losses account, concluded on December 31<sup>st</sup> 1930**

Flow		Credit	
<b>Administration</b>	216.155 lei	<b>Interests</b>	1.122.743 lei
<b>Taxes and fees</b>	152.397 lei	<b>Administration</b>	45.422 lei
<b>Wages</b>	447.000 lei	<b>Goods</b>	81.469 lei
	28.000 lei		
<b>Net profit</b>	406.082 lei		
<b>Total</b>	1.249.634 lei	<b>Total</b>	1.249.634 lei

**Table no 5. Balance on the 1930 exercise**

Asset		Liability	
<b>Cash</b>	9.276 lei	<b>Reserve fund</b>	38.000 lei
<b>Policies</b>	324.300 lei	<b>Shares</b>	45.756 lei
<b>Delayed interests</b>	5.874 lei	<b>Economies deposit</b>	262.066 lei
<b>Inventory</b>	4.244 lei	<b>Cashed anticip.int.</b>	5.645 lei
<b>Total</b>	343.694 lei	<b>Net income</b>	2.218 lei
		<b>Total</b>	343.694 lei

The management of the „*Bucovina de Nord SA*” Bank was represented by Mastino Conte della Scala – president, Nicolai Rusnak – director, Isidor Hoinic – member, Florea Florescu and dr. Basil Duceak – censors, as well as Voitenovici. With the headquarters in Chernivtsi, the „*Bucovina de Nord SA*” Bank had as purpose the funding and supporting of the irredentism in Bucovina [7].

Isidor Hoinic has been co-opted in the administration council with the purpose of facilitating the connection with the „liberal finance”, while Basil Duceak, considered to be the soul of the Ukrainian movement in Bucovina, held solid connections within the Ukrainian National Party, a political formation established in 1929, with the headquarters in Chernivtsi, which centralized and managed officially, the political activity of the Ukrainian minority in Bucovina [8], of which member of mark he was.

Standing on the term stipulated by the new Law of cooperation, all those 17 cooperatives opted for the maintaining of the current method of functioning, until September 1<sup>st</sup> 1938, the way it had been allowed by the old law. In fact, Ukrainians were hoping to succeed in uniting all Bucovina’s cooperatives into a single solid and standalone organization. Due tot the lack of capital which was necessary for the achievement of the desideratum, the Bucovina Ukrainians opted in 1930 for getting closer to the rich and well organized by Poland -Ukrainian cooperation, after which, the previous year, the Ukrainian press from Bucovina had promoted the usefulness idea of

re-establishing the Ukrainian cooperatives in villages, recommending „*Raiffeisen*” type of cooperative.

The data extracted from the documents of that time emphasize the manifestation of a certain dissatisfaction within the Ukrainian population from Romania and outside the country, expressed whether directly or through intermediaries, regarding the economic development. The causes invoked, characterized by an obvious overreacting tendency and sustained by unsubstantiated allegations [9], vary from the supposed refusal of the Romanian village popular banks to grant the requested credits, for reasons related to the lack of knowing the Romanian language, up to the accusation of violation of the rights granted by the Paris Peace Treaty, signed on December 9<sup>th</sup> 1919.

Referring to the latter aspect, we emphasize the intercession made by Dr. Basil Duceak, performed in 1924, by the Nations Society, under the form of a memoire within the contents of which he emphasized the idea according to which the text of the Law regarding the acquiring and loss of the Romanian citizenship, promulgated on February 24<sup>th</sup> 1924, contravened the provisions of the Minorities Treaty [10]. In fact, art. 56 of the Great Romania’s normative act re-confirmed the Romanian citizenship in the case of all people of Great Romania, provided they hadn’t opted for another nationality, granting the possibility of acquiring Romanian citizenship to all Romanians from the localities situated outside the country’s borders. At the United Nations’ request, the Romanian authorities have defended themselves, considering the reasons invoked by Basil Duceak as being abstract and illusory [11], while the Ministers Council meeting which took place on October 20<sup>th</sup> 1924 has concluded that the dispositions of art. 56 of the Law regarding the acquiring and loss of Romanian citizenship were not contravening the provisions of art.3 of the Minorities Treaty. According to the Report given by the Romanian Delegation in Bern, no 501/ March 17<sup>th</sup> 1925, The Nations Society Council Three Members Committee, which dealt with the inspection of Basil Duceak’s complaint, considered it as being groundless [12].

## OTHER FORMS OF UKRAINIAN MINORITY ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

Also in the economic field, in Bucovina’s inter-war period the following Ukrainian companies were still functioning [13]:

- „*Misceansky Chor*”, managed by Sidak and Mural, headquarters in str. General Averescu nr. 10, which purpose was the organization of Ukrainian craftsmen;
- „*Misceanska Citalnaea*”, managed by Bendac and Bezborodko, headquarters in str. General Averescu nr. 10, which was aiming at the organization of Ukrainian craftsmen;
- „*Cultfond*” (The Cultural Fund), headquarters in Narodni Dim, Chernivtsi, managed by senator dr. Zalozețchi, dr. Duceak and Serbeniuk, which had in sight the centralization of the Ukrainians’ financial life, along with the subsidy of the Ukrainian movement;
- „*Bucovenski Hospodar*” (Agraria), headquarters in Chernivtsi, str. Petrovici nr. 4, was managed by dr. Kohut and senator Zalozețchi, having as main functioning objectives the centralization of the entire economic life of the people and the boycotting of the foreign economic institutions, by establishing cooperatives, under the slogan „Through economic power, we reach political power”;
- „*Narodna Cancelaria*” (Popular), headquarter in Chernivtsi, str. Petrovici nr. 4, has been managed by Hrenek and was functioning as a department of the Ukrainian National Party, having the purpose of clarifying all problems related to the organization and applying of the party’s programs, which secondary objective was the maintaining of the connection with the congener population from abroad. Among the last tasks granted to the „*Narodna Cancelaria*” organization, one may find also the achievement of the Ukrainian population census from Romania.

## CONCLUSIONS

The documents used for the elaboration of the present study, far from completely presenting the organization method and the evolution of the Ukrainian minority in Bucovina, have

economically the purpose to offer new information which would complete the knowledge in the field, constituting an important support of the paper.

Future studies in the reference field may emphasize, as far as the Ukrainian minority in the inter-war period is concerned, the structure of the occupation and their evolution manner in direct relation with the economy's degree of development, including by comparing it with the situations from the other states, some of them more industrially advanced. Also, subsequent research may contribute to the emphasizing of the role which the economic manifestation of the Ukrainian community has registered in the development of those times' Romania (1918-1940) and the manner in which the country's leadership knew how to capitalize the production potential of the Ukrainian minority, especially in Bucovina.

## NOTES

- [1] *Romania's statistical bulletin, no. 3, 1920, p. 174 – 175.*
- [2] Daniel Hrenciuc, *Continuity and change. Integration of Bucovina's national minorities within the Great Romania's royalty. (1918-1940)*, Septentrion Publishing House Rădăuți, 2005, p. 120.
- [3] *Romania's general census from December 29<sup>th</sup> 1930, published by dr. Sabin Manuilă , vol. V, Bucharest, 1940, p. XLII-XLIV.*
- [4] *Suceava County Service of National Records, county Câmpulung's Prefecture Fund, file 3/1938, f. 67, 75. Excerpt of a report of the Câmpulung County Prefecture, dated 1938.*
- [5] *Ministry of External Affairs Records (will be named as AMAE). Romania Fund (1939-1944). The Ukrainian minority. Volume 390. informative bulletin upon the Ukraine's irrident action from Romania, p. 30.*
- [6] *AMAE, Romania Fund (1920-1944). Volume 388. Essay regarding the Ukrainian cooperatives and banks from the country (Bucovina), p. 177-178.*
- [7] *National minorities in Romania (1925-1931). Documents. Coordinators, Ioan Scurtu and Ioan Dordea, Bucharest, 1996, p. 475.*
- [8] *AMAE. Romania Fund (1920-1944), Volume 389 The Ukrainian Minority, Essay regarding the Ukrainian National Party, p. 57.*
- [9] *AMAE. Romania Fund (1939-1944). Volume 390. From the letter of the Romanian General Consulate in Canada, headquarters in Montreal, addressed to Grigore Gafencu, minister of Foreign Affairs, dated July 29 1939, regarding the memoire addressed to Armand Călinescu by the Central Committee of the Society for the defending of Bucovina and Basarabia, headquarters in Winnipeg, p. 34.*
- [10] *Daniel Hrenciuc, op. cit, p. 127.*
- [11] *AMAE. Romania Fund (1920-1944). Volume 386, p. 90.*
- [12] *Idem. Volumul 388, p. 95.*
- [13] *Romania's national minorities (1925-1931). Documents. Coordinators, Ioan Scurtu and Ioan Dordea, Bucharest, 1996, p. 473-475.*

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