

*The Regionalist Discourse and its Political Expressions
in Moldavia and Transylvania*

“The Wallachians Deceived Us”.
**The Issue of Compensations in Moldavia’s Political Actions after the Union
(1874-1902) (II)**
(Abstract)

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The second part of the paper analyses the radical changes that the law of compensations – which Iasi received from the 1866 Constituent Assembly – went through in the period 1874-1902. The variant of the 1874 law of compensations, stipulating an amount of 10 million lei, was not enforced. Between 1880-1882, the commune of Iasi was offered estates and urban properties for the town hall to administrate or to sell, in order to obtain incomes for urban development. But the estates proved to be an administrative chore, providing insufficient funds to support local investments. After a decade, in 1893, the State acknowledged it had been wrong, repurchasing the properties for 6.5 million lei. The money was invested by the local authorities in the building of the National Theatre, of the Slaughterhouse and of the Public Bath, as well as in the rehabilitation of some streets, while the main stake of the damages – water conveyance in Iasi – was missed.

The law of compensations acquired in 1880 a xenophobe connotation as well. Prime-minister I. C. Brătianu transformed the damages from a dispute between the regionalist Moldavians and the centralist Wallachians into a form of anti-Semite Reconquista. The law provided that the sale of the given plots of land be done to the farmers in order to “strengthen the Romanian element” and to turn Iasi into a redoubt of nationalism. The plan was finally a total fiasco, as very few of those who requested land were also willing and able to pay the price that the local authorities had asked.

From the standpoint of the Moldavian regionalist trend, the compensations remained a recurrent topic in the political discourse of the public agenda in Iasi. The change of form that the compensations took in 1880 – from money into lands and real estates – was rejected by an unprecedented gesture of the Communal Council of Iasi. It was considered a “revolutionary” form of refusal, being the only case in Romania’s modern history when a law that had been passed by the Parliament was rejected by a local authority. The vote produced perplexity and agitation in Bucharest. The centralist political leaders, while claiming that a “deep peace” needed to be established between the Moldavians and the Wallachians, were still pointing to the lack of gratitude for the “present” that Iasi was offered. The regionalists, on the other hand, deemed the gesture Bucharest had made as a mockery of the vote that the Constituent Assembly had given in 1866, of the promises made at that time, of the country’s duty towards Iasi, the sacrificed city that had never been properly supported after having lost its capital status.

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