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Зоряна БУРКОВСЬКА

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**THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN BUKOVYNA DURING
THE FIRST POSTWAR YEARS (1919 – 1923)**

Abstract. *The purpose of the research is to analyze the education system transformation in Bukovyna during 1918 – 1923, when the region belonged to the Kingdom of Romania. The methodology of the research is based on general scientific principles (analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction), as well as the application of special historical methods (credible historical, etc.). The scientific novelty of the study is to analyze the changes in the educational system in Bukovyna during the first postwar years (1918 – 1923). It was an extremely crucial period when the Romanian authorities, by joining these territories with their state, tried to transform the educational system of Bukovyna in their own way. The Conclusions.* Taking everything into consideration, we should state that the system of educational institutions in Bukovyna during the first years after the Great War of 1914 – 1918 underwent significant changes. On the one hand, the Romanian authorities tried to adapt these institutions to their own,

which existed in the Kingdom of Romania before World War I with the help of educational measures. On the other hand, such actions should gain loyalty and integrate the various national communities of the region as soon as possible. However, with these actions, the new government administration only caused a negative attitude of these ethnic communities to such steps and to the Romanian government in general. Although these measures taken by the Romanian government representatives should be assessed not only from the point of view of the internal political life of the Kingdom of Romania, but also considered in the broader Central and Eastern European context of that time.

Key words: World War I, the Kingdom of Romania, Bukovyna, the system of education.

СИСТЕМА ОСВІТИ НА БУКОВИНІ У ПЕРШІ ПОВОЄННІ РОКИ (1919 – 1923)

Анотація. *Мета статті* – проаналізувати перетворення системи освіти Буковини упродовж 1918–1923 рр., коли цей край був приєднаний до складу Королівства Румунії. **Методологія дослідження** ґрунтується на загальнонаукових принципах (аналіз, синтез, індукція, дедукція), а також застосуванні спеціально-історичних методів (порівняльно-історичний тощо). **Наукова новизна** дослідження полягає у тому, щоб проаналізувати зміни освітньої царини на Буковині в перші повоєнні роки (1918 – 1923). Адже це був надзвичайно важливий період, коли румунська влада, приєднавши ці території до складу своєї держави, намагалася трансформувати освітню систему Буковини на свій лад. **Висновок.** Підбиваючи підсумки, зазначимо, що система освітніх закладів на Буковині у перші роки після Великої війни 1914 – 1918 рр. зазнала суттєвих змін. Румунська влада намагалася за допомогою заходів у царині освіти, з одного боку, адаптувати ці інститути до власних, які існували у Королівстві Румунія до початку Першої світової війни. З іншого, такими діями заручитися лояльністю та якомога швидше інтегрувати різні національні спільноти краю. Однак цими діями нова владна адміністрація лише спричиняла негативне ставлення цих етнічних громад як до таких кроків, так і до румунської влади загалом. Однак ці заходи представників румунської владної адміністрації слід оцінювати не лише з точки зору внутрішньополітичного життя Королівства Румунії, але й розглядати у ширшому центрально-східноєвропейському тогочасному контексті.

Ключові слова: Перша світова війна, Королівство Румунія, Буковина, система освіти.

The Problem Statement. Central and Eastern Europe was an extremely interesting region during the interwar period. The modernization transformations took place in the newly created states formed on the territories of the former continental empires (Kaiser's Germany, Austria-Hungary and Tsarist Russia) after the end of the Great War of 1914 – 1918. In addition, the above-mentioned changes affected almost every area of their socio-political, socio-economic and cultural life. Consequently, it is obvious that such measures faced significant internal and external difficulties, and at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s it became clear that modernization according to the liberal democracy and market economy model failed. As a result, numerous coups and the authoritarian political regimes establishment took place in almost every country in the Central and Eastern European region in the next years. According to the Ukrainian historian Oleksandr Sych, who emphasized decently, one should not assume that the first democratic experience did not give anything to these peoples. Even a short period in a democratic system triggered the process of forming the foundations of a modern civil society, and the authoritarian dictatorships established by conservative forces could not fully restore a traditional society (Sych, 2019, pp. 79–85).

Furthermore, the history of the Kingdom of Romania of the above-mentioned period seems no less interesting. According to the decisions made at the Paris Peace Conference by the “architects” of the post-war world order, the Romanian ruling elite managed to realize its foreign policy concept of the “Greater Romania”. Nowadays, the Romanian state includes the territories inhabited by multifarious national communities (the Germans, the Jews, the

Hungarians, the Ukrainians), whose loyalty had to be gained. The education system was one such mechanism, which was controlled by state institutions and could help achieve ethnic commitment. The Romanian government made great efforts to establish educational institutions in the new territories (Transylvania, Bukovyna, Bessarabia).

The Analysis of Recent Researches and Publications. Ukrainian and foreign scholars studied the education system in Bukovyna. To our mind, such researchers should be singled out as V. Botushanskyi (Botushanskyi, 2017), O. Dobrzhanskyi (Dobrzhanskyi, 2002), I. Zhytaryuk (Zhytaryuk, 2011), I. Piddubnyi (Piddubnyi, 1997), P. Rykhlo (Rykhlo, 2005), S. Osachuk (Osachuk, 2005), I. Skurtu (Skurtu, 2005), M. Mandryk-Melnychuk and H. Kotsur (Mandryk-Melnychuk & Kotsur, 2020). It should be mentioned that the above-mentioned scholars analyzed the functioning of educational structures in their works during the interwar period. First of all, they were interested in issues related to the financial support of the educational system during the above-mentioned period, the opportunity for representatives of national communities to study at schools and universities, staff and material support, and etc. However, their research focus did not concentrate on the short but rather important period of time when the Romanian authorities, by joining those territories with their state, tried to transform the educational system of Bukovyna in their own way.

The purpose of the research is to analyze the education system transformation in Bukovyna during the period of 1918 – 1923, when the region started to belong to the Kingdom of Romania.

The Main Material Statement. The western Ukrainian lands, which were the part of Austria-Hungary, were divided among different states after World War I, for instance, Bukovyna became the part of Romania, the northern part was mainly inhabited by the Ukrainians, as well as Bessarabia, where along with other nationalities, the Ukrainians lived. As a result of significant territorial gains, Romania went from being a virtually mono-ethnic state to a multinational country in which the non-Romanians made up 38 percent of the population. The domestic policy of the Government of the Kingdom of Romania on the national issue was aimed at the Romanianization of the national minorities members. Hence, in Bukovyna, such a state policy was facilitated, in particular, by the state of siege that lasted from 1918 to 1928. While implementing the project of the Romanianization of this region, the Romanian government practically violated the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye signed in 1919 and the Treaty on the rights of the national minorities.

The Romanian authorities took advantage of Ion Nistor's position, the renowned politician of that time, which was aimed at eliminating any signs of Bukovyna autonomy, the implementation of the Romanianization of all institutions, from administrative institutions to schools. In addition, the version that the population of the region was "the Romanians, who forgot their mother tongue" also met the needs. The new government began to liquidate schools with Ukrainian and other languages of instruction, substituted the Ukrainians as principals and teachers with the Romanians, expelled the Ukrainian priests from the region, introduced the Romanian language as a common language due to the long dreamed struggle for the Romanian school in the northern part of the region. As a result, very active policy of Romanianization led to the liquidation of educational institutions of different levels with the Ukrainian language of instruction by 1924 (Piddubnyi, 1997, p. 210).

It should be mentioned that the Romanian authorities actions were the most active in the field of school education. First of all, the authorities began to move the Ukrainian teachers from northern Bukovyna to the southern, brought in more Romanian language, and appointed

the Romanian teachers in order to supersede the displaced. The Ukrainian school inspectors were superseded by the Romanian ones. Consequently, the process of the Romanianization of Ukrainian schools was accelerated and 38 Ukrainian schools with 5,536 children were Romanianized in 1919. Still, even in 1922, there were 150 Ukrainian schools. In Ukrainian schools there began the introduction of teaching of some subjects in Romanian, or the entire educational process was conducted in Romanian. During the “gradual” constitution of 1923, an explanatory law was introduced stating that the Ukrainians were “the Romanians, who had forgotten their mother tongue”. Therefore, when the legislation came into power, the Ukrainian teachers were forced to take an exam in the Romanian language and literature, Geography, Romanian History and the Romanian Constitution under the threat of dismissal. Hence, at the end of 1919, another 84 schools were Romanianized in such counties as Storozhynets and Seret, where approximately 16,000 Ukrainian students studied (Kvitkovskyyi, 2019, pp. 672–674).

According to the Romanian statistics, which provided the following figures there were only 508 schools in Bukovyna, 257 of which were Romanian and 157 allegedly Ukrainian in 1920. Moreover, there were 64 German schools at that time, 27 Polish and 2 Hungarian. About 48,000 students went to Romanian schools, and 51,000 in other schools (Kvitkovskyyi, 2019, p. 674).

However, in 1923 there were 575 schools in Bukovyna, 175 of which were Ukrainian schools. There were already 319 Romanian schools, 47 in the German community, 25 in the Polish community, and 2 in the Hungarian community. At that time, almost 53,000 children went to the Romanian schools, and in the others – about 45 thousand. But we should not forget that at the so-called Ukrainian schools then there already was either the Romanian language of instruction, and Ukrainian was only one of the subjects or at least half of the subjects were taught in Ukrainian and half in Romanian (Kvitkovskyyi, 2019, p. 674).

A similar situation was at Chernivtsi University. If we compare the number of the Ukrainian students studying during the Austrian period with that of the Romanian period, their number decreased. Due to the lack of archival documents, we cannot indicate the exact number of the Ukrainian students, who studied at that time. We have the opportunity to use only fragmentary data, however, and it, to our mind, confirms the existence of the process of Romanianization in higher education. Let’s consider the data only for the academic year of 1923 – 1924, when there was a total amount of 77 students at the faculties of Philology and Natural Sciences, among them the percentage of the Ukrainians was only 12.7 %, 47.8% – the Romanians, and the rest – of other nationalities. Unfortunately, there are no figures for Theological and Law faculties, where the percentage of the Ukrainians was slightly higher. The information provided indicates that representatives of the Ukrainian community had great difficulty in obtaining higher education. On the one hand, it was due to the lack of material resources in the Ukrainian community. On the other hand, the Romanian administration disapproved of them openly (Kvitkovskyyi, 2019, p. 699).

However, we should also keep in mind that graduating from University did not bring many benefits to the Ukrainian studying youth, because very often, in order to take a position according to specialty, a graduate had to change one’s social and political position. What’s more, it was necessary to declare th Romanian citizenship, often even to change one’s surname. But only a few agreed to such conditions (Kvitkovskyyi, 2019, p. 700).

Moreover, there were many Ukrainian young people with a University Degree, who could not get a job in the specialty in Bukovyna. Under such circumstances, the particularly poor peasantry and bourgeoisie were not very happy to send their children to study at University. If we add to this the fact that the liquidation of the Ukrainian departments at Chernivtsi

University during the Romanian administration destroyed the University attractiveness among the Ukrainian population, we have a rough picture of why the percentage of the Ukrainian students decreased, despite the fact that the population increased (Kvitkovskiy, 2019, p. 700).

Dwelling on the issue of Chernivtsi University, it should be noted that in the framework of the rapid Romanianization strategy in Bukovyna, the educational reform was to change the multinational nature of all education, including higher education, in favour of Romanian. Hence, the last meeting of the academic senate took place at German University on July 25, 1919. Rector prof. A. Tarnavskiy said goodbye to his German colleagues, who expressed a desire to go to Austria. On September 6, 1919, at 3 p.m., the German professor left Chernivtsi without any official celebrations. However, hundreds of University students and alumni accompanied their lecturers to the railway station with sadness and words of gratitude. According to Mayer Ebner, a renowned leader of the Bukovynian Zionists, wrote the following: "Likewise, we, the Jews do not want to keep silence and need to say a word of respect for the departing German University, and no one can deny that the thought that German University is leaving the beautiful city on the Prut River forever brings feelings of sadness. For thousands of Jewish University graduates, the University was a true alma mater, not a stepmother. Honor and glory to the departing University!" However, not all German professors at Chernivtsi University were forced to leave Bukovyna – a philosopher Carl Siegel, a novelist Eugene Herzog, a paleontologist Karl Penecke, a pharmacologist Fritz Mayer, who spoke Romanian, continued their work at the Romanian University in Chernivtsi. It should be mentioned that the only professor of German nationality, who was allowed to teach at the Royal Romanian University in German and take exams in German was the famous economist Friedrich Kleinwächter (Osachuk, 2005, pp. 91–92).

Due to the closure of the German University in Chernivtsi, there was a problem of obtaining higher education in German, so in the winter semester of 1919 – 1920 on the initiative of the German community of Bukovyna higher public education courses were opened, whose interesting reports were provided by German professors Herzog, Kleinwächter, Raubicsek, Siegel and the others. By the press and church parishes of the two denominations, the Roman Catholic and Evangelical governments of the German community drew attention to the work of these courses, which became the substitute for the liquidated German university. The purpose of the courses was to maintain a high level of science and culture among the Germans of the region, and the money earned was used for creating and operating the German language courses for the German youth (Osachuk, 2005, pp. 92–93).

The educational issue for the Germans of the region, as well as for the Ukrainian community and other national communities of Bukovyna, became vital because it was associated with the problem of the national development of the ethnic group. Along with the above-mentioned issue, all other issues of political, economic or cultural development receded into the background, because with the destruction of schooling, the basis of the national existence of the ethnic communities of the region was shaken (Osachuk, 2005, pp. 98).

As a result, the Romanianization of educational institutions triggered protests from the Bukovynians, hence, the Bukovynian Social Democrats representatives in the Parliament of the Kingdom of Romania K. Kracalia and H. Hryhorovych opposed the introduction of compulsory exams in the Romanian language at the entrance to the gymnasium, the liquidation of the departments of Eastern European History and the Ukrainian language at Chernivtsi University (Pidubnyi, 1997, p. 210).

However, the main role in defending the right to education in the mother tongue was to be played by the Bukovynians themselves, the representatives of minorities, because the

Romanianization of educational institutions led to the gradual denationalization of non-Romanians in the long run. Hence, along with the intensification of the Romanianization process, in particular, the introduction of compulsory education in Romanian in 1922 – 1923, there were many public protests. Therefore, after the decision to Romanianize Chernivtsi gymnasiums issued on June 18, 1922, in the German House in Chernivtsi gathered the representatives of the German, the Jewish and the Ukrainian communities numbering in 1 thousand people. The renowned figures of that time V. Dutchak, M. Ebner, A. Kolrus and the others got their messages across to the audience. The paramount aim of the meeting was to identify public protest and the way national minorities in the country were treated. The content of the speeches was generally almost the same and all speakers put emphasis on the contradictions between the Romanian government law on the rights of national minorities and the Romanian administration action to Romanianize the region, dividing the population of Bukovyna into upper and lower classes. Moreover, the speakers also gave examples, in their opinion, concerning the unfair solution of the national minorities issue in Italy and Czechoslovakia. In addition, criticism of the Romanian government actions accused the Romanian ministers of the “Bolshevism” for their ways of introducing the Romanian language in Bukovyna. The meeting adopted a final resolution stating that representatives of the Germans, the Poles, the Ukrainians and the Jews, obeying the Romanian law and recognizing the Romanian state, insisted on respect for the development of national minorities in Bukovyna and permission to use other languages in education (Piddubnyi, 1997, pp. 210–211).

The protests against the Romanianization of Bukovyna were also expressed at the meeting of the Social Democratic Party of Bukovyna, which took place in 1922 in the Workers’ House in Chernivtsi, where J. Pistiner, T. Roznovan, p. Viktorchuk, F. Bilek, R. Haidosh delivered speeches. The result of the meeting reflected the summary made by R. Haidosh, in which it was stated that in court, the representatives of all nations of the region must speak their native language (Piddubnyi, 1997, p. 211).

The German community representatives also protested against the Romanianization of educational institutions. At the meeting on November 26, 1922, the issues of German loyalty to the Romanian administration were discussed and the task of achieving rights with the Romanians in the field of education was set. There was also a demand for the return of the German schools in Radovce, Kimpulung, Seret and Dorno-Vatri. Consequently, the Romanianization of education was so intense that even members of those national communities that in November of 1918 agreed to join the Kingdom of Romania, hoping that the government would respect the cultural rights of its people, were forced to fight for the resumption of education in their native language (Piddubnyi, 1997, p. 211).

Although all public protests in Chernivtsi went unnoticed by the authorities, its representatives tried to continue activities aimed at returning the native language (the Ukrainian, the German, and the Polish languages as a language of instruction) to schools. A special role in the activities of the Ukrainian representatives was played by the press, which was a source of information and could also act as a textbook. The Ukrainian periodicals of that time repeatedly published materials about the difficult situation of the Ukrainians, about the deprivation of their rights declared by the Romanian constitution and international agreements, published separate works with scientific evidence of the autochthonous Ukrainian population in Bukovyna (Piddubnyi, 1997, p. 212).

The Ukrainian press also published critical remarks about the consequences of the Romanianization of educational institutions. One issue of “Zoria” quoted a member of

Parliament, I. Siminovic, as saying that the Romanian school system was in a difficult position and emphasized that in Transylvania and Bukovyna, professorships were held by people with insufficient education. Commenting on this speech, the editors of the newspaper “Zoria” pointed out that “the future will show the damage caused by the Romanian chauvinists in their dementia to their region, destroying the education of the minorities and neglecting the cultural level of the Romanian population” (Pidubnyi, 1997, p. 212).

At the same time, the Ukrainian press, fighting for the rights of the Ukrainians, was critical of the disunity that prevailed in the Ukrainian community. The Ukrainians belonged to different political currents, there was no organization capable of uniting them, although different political parties put forward slogans in their programmes to protect the cultural rights of the Ukrainians. The Ukrainian People’s Democratic Party (UNDP), formed on the basis of the former People’s Party in 1921, also dealt with these issues. Its leadership at the first organizational meeting proposed to appeal to the Romanian authorities with a demand for teaching in Ukrainian at schools, abolishing the ban on the import of the Ukrainian literature from abroad, increasing the number of the Ukrainian counties to their pre-war number (Pidubnyi, 1997, p. 212).

It is worth emphasizing that the Ukrainian community tried to draw attention of the international community to the dire situation in Bukovyna. Moreover, the Ukrainian emigrant circles were also involved in this process. For example, one of the leaders of the Ukrainian Revolution (1917 – 1921), Yevhen Petrushevych, who was outside Ukraine at that time and headed the Ukrainian National Council, which coordinated the activities of the Ukrainians abroad, addressed notes of protest to Western governments and international institutions. One such appeal was sent to the League of Nations, an international body that played the role of the modern UN during the interwar period. It stated that the Government of the Kingdom of Romania “does not fulfill its international obligations towards the Ukrainian population, demanded the commencement of international proceedings for these illegal actions and measures to prevent such measures in the future” (Petytsiia Ye. Petrushevycha, 2005, p. 150).

However, when assessing the policy of Romanianization in the field of education in Bukovyna, the following factors should be taken into account – internal factors and external factors. As for the internal factors, such measures, which took place not only in the field of education, implemented by the Romanian authorities, concerned all national minorities living in the region. Due to the above-mentioned situation, the government and other national communities rejected the government action. Their opposition was in the legal field: writing petitions and memoranda demanding to resume teaching in their native language. The Romanian authorities justified such steps from the following positions. The Representatives of national minorities can be interpreted quite freely in the areas of the new provinces (districts) in the country, as Article 8 of the first chapter of the first section introduced into the legislative field of education “citizens of the Romanian origin, who lost their mother tongue”, who were obliged to send children to the Romanian schools.

The foreign policy factor is much more complicated, because it is necessary to take into account the political trends that took place in Central and Eastern Europe after World War I. Almost each of the newly created states or those that received numerous territorial possessions as a result of World War I, reproduced, ostensibly in miniature, the Empire that previously included its peoples, in particular, included ethnic minorities, usually dissatisfied with their status in these new states, whose governments denied their right to self-determination, realizing it only for their peoples. Moreover, the situation of ethnic minorities in the newly

formed states worsened somehow. It happened because the candidates for the legacy of the former empires were nationalist leaders of National Liberation Movements, who were inclined to support and who were short-sightedly indulged by the leaders of the Entente, relying on their anti-Bolshevik positions (Sych, 2010, pp. 110–129).

The Conclusions. Taking everything into consideration, we should state that the system of educational institutions in Bukovyna during the first years after the Great War of 1914 – 1918 underwent significant changes. On the one hand, the Romanian authorities tried to adapt these institutions to their own, which existed in the Kingdom of Romania before World War I with the help of educational measures. On the other hand, such actions should gain loyalty and integrate the various national communities of the region as soon as possible. However, with these actions, the new government administration only caused a negative attitude of these ethnic communities to such steps and to the Romanian government in general. Although these measures taken by the Romanian government representatives should be assessed not only from the point of view of the internal political life of the Kingdom of Romania, but also considered in the broader Central and Eastern European context of that time.

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