THE REVOLUTION OF TUDOR VLADIMIRESCU – 200 YEARS OF NATIONAL REBIRTH

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Abstract

With the Revolution led by Tudor Vladimirescu, the Romanian nation joined the European nations' movement to affirm their sovereign rights. By their sustained actions and by adhering to the novel ideas emerging across Europe at that time, a generation of Romanian patriots coming from all Romanian territories contributed to the ascent of the Romanian nation and the fulfillment of its political, cultural, social and economic aspirations. The period of national rebirth helped prepare the internal changes in the Danubian Principalities that were brought about by the events in the second half of the 19th century. It was the period when the domestic forces in the principalities determined the goals of their actions and how to fulfill those goals. The Romanian national movement was therefore gradually defining its own way of affirmation and the purpose thereof: achieving national unity.

Keywords: *revolution, rights, Romanian nation, principalities, national movement, Phanariote regime, domestic rule, oppression, taxation obligations, Ottoman Empire, Phanariotes, privileges, political aspirations.*

1. Introduction

The early 19th century saw Wallachia and Moldavia undergoing a severe political, economic, social and cultural crisis. The Phanariote regime, which had been established more than a century before, proved to be so burdensome and disconnected from the interests of its subjects that it had to ever increasingly cope with their hostility. The benefits that came with the appointment on the throne gave rise to fierce competition among the Greek aristocratic families in the district of Phanar. The rivalries for the throne continued even after the Porte fixed the term of rulers at seven years and the number of families entitled to rulership at four. Those matters were governed by the edicts of 1802 and 1819. Taking office with huge debts incurred with the very efforts to obtain the appointment, the Phanariotes were first and foremost concerned with paying off those debts. Then, they had to satisfy the Porte's pecuniary claims and pursue the enrichment of their relatives, who offered them support with the Sultan and the Ottoman dignitaries. For example, Alexandru Sutu came to Wallachia in 1818 with a debt of 4-to-5 million piasters and an 820-strong entourage, including nine children and about 80 relatives, each wanting to get rich[1]. The means to make money were as varied as they were harmful for the country. Office peddling, income leasing, awarding trade licenses, aristocratic titles or other favors were among the most common and resulted in the diminishing of the authority of the ruler and the other Government institutions. According to some assessments, the same Alexandru Sutu earned almost 29 million piasters in his two years of rule (1818 - 1820); his predecessor, Ioan Caragea, had left the office in September 1818 after having made an immense fortune through the methods listed above. Besides the obedience of the Phanariote regime to the Porte, which would allow such systematic despoiling by the rulers through new taxes and levies, there were also the abuses by the pashas governing the Danube forts, who would often carry out raids in Wallachia, looting and setting everything on fire. For instance, in December 1800, the troops of the Pasha of Vidin, Pasvan-Oglu, plundered Oltenia and burned the city of Craiova almost entirely; the ransacking raids repeated in the winter of 1801 - 1802, when Craiova was again set on fire, and the towns of Targu Jiu and Targu Ocna were pillaged by the Pasha's aide, Manaf Ibrahim. As if those were not enough, a major earthquake occurred in October 1802, when the Coltea Tower collapsed in Bucharest, and, in September 1804, a fire burned down the Princely Court and much of Bucharest; more destruction was brought about by the Russo-Turkish War from 1806 until 1812, while in 1813 "Caragea's Plague" took 70,000 lives in just one year. The multitude of direct and indirect levies (which increased following their lease) and the abuses in collecting such levies were causing a constant state of uncertainty in regard to the people's wealth and property; the taxpayers fleeing would result in the so called "dismemberment of villages"[2], as inhabitants left them and settled elsewhere. The country's treasury, which in most of the cases would be similar to the ruler's treasury, would barely cope with the Porte's ever increasing demands.

On the eve of the Revolution of 1821, of Wallachia's total budget of 5,910,000 thalers, 2,083,000 thalers were earmarked for the Sultan and

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[1] Pascu Vasile, *Istoria modernă a românilor (1821-1918) (The Modern History of Romanians (1821-1918))*, Clio Nova Publishing House, Bucharest, 1996, page 9.
[2] Neagu Djuvara, *O scurtă istorie ilustrată a românilor* (*A Brief Illustrated History of Romanians*), Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 2013, page 223.

Ottoman dignitaries, 1,394,000 thalers were allocated to the Prince, and the remaining amount accounted for wages of the state officials or payments for various services. So, the cost of rulership and Ottoman suzerainty amounted to 60% of the country's treasury. The culture of the Danubian Principalities was undergoing a marked process of "greecification". Most of the writings were printed in Greek. Many Romanian boyars endeavored to learn the Greek language, adopted Greek customs and dressed according to the Greek fashion. Greek would be used in the official documents, in higher education and in the printed law codices. During the Phanariote regime, there were attempts to introduce Greek as a second language besides Romanian. A number of Greek and Turkish words entered the vocabulary. Political intrigue, favoritism and corruption, servility were practiced in the Romanian principalities the same as in Constantinople. It is equally true that, through the Greeks, the Danubian Principalities also came into contact with the French ideas and culture, but that happened through the agency of their language, and not through the filter of our own Romanian language and spirit.

The Revolution of Tudor Vladimirescu happened to put an end to this sort of a regime and to reinstate the principalities' old rights. This is why this event is thought to be the beginning of the Romanians' National Rebirth. The immediate effect of the revolution in terms of national revival was the return to domestic rulership and the ousting of foreign (Greek) elements from the internal matters of the principalities. The involvement of the local aristocracy in the revolutionary surged over the next decades by conceiving domestic institutional reorganization projects based on new principles: separation of powers, accountability of state officials, rule of law, removal of economic barriers, greater role for education in the national language. This renewing process had to face and overcome a number of conservative positions, both domestic and foreign, but was permanent in nature and became prevalent, culminating with the Revolution of 1848[3].

2. The European Context of the Revolution

The Revolution led by Tudor Vladimirescu unfolded against a historical European background dominated by the clash between the monarchic legitimism and conservatism on the one hand, and the new liberal ideas generated by the French Revolution on the other hand. Napoleon's attempts to establish a new European order, based on the constitutional sovereignty of nations, led to a coalition between the monarchic powers (Austria, Prussia, Russia, England) against him, giving rise to the long series of wars throughout 1805 – 1815.

After the defeat and exile of Napoleon on the Island of St. Helena, the victorious European powers met at the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815) and, with the decisions made there, they reinstated the former absolute monarchic order on the continent. In September 1815, Austria, Prussia and Russia signed in Paris the document giving birth to the "Holy Alliance", an agreement directed against any political movement that could jeopardize the principle of "monarchic legitimacy". It underlined its conservative purpose to maintain the political status quo that had been in place before the French Revolution. The liberal & constitutional movement continued to act against the resolutions of the Congress of Vienna and the "Holy Alliance", condemning the absolute power of monarchs and advocating for the separation of the branches of government[4]. This movement's main purpose was to restrict the power of rulers by adopting constitutional acts to secure civil rights and freedoms. To that effect, the revolutionary movement led by Rafael Riego started on January 1, 1820 in Spain (where the Bourbon dynasty had been restored in 1814), following which King Ferdinand VII was forced to reinstate the Constitution of Cadiz of 1812. Following the intervention of French troops in 1823, the movement was defeated, the Constitution was repealed and absolute monarchy was restored.

Similar revolutionary movements also took place in the Italian states (Piedmont, Naples) in 1820 – 1827, as well as in Portugal (1820 – 1821), with the latter introducing constitutional monarchy in 1822. As Spain and Portugal were facing liberal & constitutional movements domestically, their colonies in Latin America started declaring their independence from their parent states (1815 – 1830), giving rise to the independent national states in South America.

Concurrently with the events in Western and Southern Europe in the early 19th century, in the Balkans, the Ottoman Empire was barely coping with Russia's expansionist tendencies and with the national emancipation movements among the peoples in this region. The rebellion of the Serbs started in 1804 (initially against the janissaries who held vast domains), which subsequently turned into a national movement for liberation from the Ottoman rule. Russia, which dubbed itself as the protector of the Balkan Slavs, stepped in and, by supporting the war of 1806 – 1812, determined the Porte to sign the Treaty of Bucharest, which granted Serbia domestic autonomy and a general pardon for all those who had fought against the Ottoman Empire. However, the Turks occupied Belgrade the next year and established a

[3] Ioan Ceterchi, coord., *Istoria dreptului românesc (History of Romanian Law)*, vol. II, part I, Academy's Publishing House, Bucharest, 1984, page 41.

[4] For a detailed analysis of the legal concepts, please see Nicolae Popa, Elena Anghel, Cornelia Beatrice Gabriela Ene-Dinu, Laura-Cristiana Spătaru-Negură, *Teoria generală a dreptului. Caiet de seminar (General Theory of Law. Seminar Notes)*, Edition 2, C.H. Beck Publishing House, Bucharest, 2014.

regime of fierce retaliations. The Serbs took up arms once again in 1815, and, upon Russia's intervention (which was at the time one of the victorious powers against Napoleon), the sultan recognized Milos Obrenovici as Prince of Serbia, which became an Ottoman province with limited autonomy.

The Greek also started organizing their national movement in the same period by founding a secret (Freemason-like) society called the "Eteria." Established in Odessa in 1814, this society created a vast network of branches (*ephories*) in Russia, in the Danubian Principalities and, of course, in Greece. In its endeavor to call upon the Greeks to take up arms against the Ottoman regime, the Eteria hoped for the support of Russia, which was also interested in weakening the Porte's power. The main advisor to Tsar Alexander I was Greek national Kapodistrias, whom the eterists intended to elect as leader of the society. However, the potential complications of such an appointment determined them to choose Alexander Ypsilanti as Ephor General of the Eteria, who was the son of former ruler of Wallachia Constantine Ypsilanti.[5]

The eterists placed great importance on the Danubian Principalities in their action plan, as indicated by numerous Greek boyars in the Principalities joining the movement. There were *ephories* in the cities of Iasi, Galati and Bucharest, also including some Romanian boyars. However, the purposes of the Eteria were not the same as those of the Revolution of Tudor Vladimirescu, as we shall see. The Phanariote regime, represented by the Greek aristocracy, had stirred much resentment in the Principalities, where it had been the cause of institutional degradation for more than one century. Those circumstances of revolutionary political, social and national turmoil among the European peoples constituted the background of the Romanian Revolution of 1821, led by Tudor Vladimirescu.

3. Domestic Political and Social & Economic Background

The Revolution of 1821 started under the circumstances of a severe crisis seen by the Romanian society in the Principalities as a consequence of the Phanariote regime. Throughout their rule, the Phanariote princes had instituted practices such as office peddling, political instability, servility and corruption, economic monopoly and property uncertainty, greed and abuse by the state officials. In spite of all the reforms initiated throughout the second half of the 18th century and in the first two decades of the next century, the Phanariote regime proved to be

increasingly burdensome and contrary to the country's best interests. When they received their appointment decrees, Phanariote rulers would arrive in the principalities accompanied by hosts of relatives and creditors, to whom they granted the most lucrative positions. Titles and offices would be sold, heavy and abusive taxes would be levied, with severe consequences to the taxpayers. The Phanariote rulers would thusly gather and leave the country with vast fortunes, thereby stripping the principalities of significant financial resources. Displeased with the Phanariotes' policies, the local aristocracy submitted memoranda with the Porte citing all wrongdoings and asking for the reinstatement of the Principalities' former entitlements. For example, in the memorandum sent to the sultan in 1818, the boyars demanded that they be granted right to make the appointments for the vacant church positions, that the official positions in the principalities only be taken by natives, and that the Phanariote rulers be compelled to take with them all Greeks they had brought along, upon the completion of their terms.

The Phanariote regime had created a general state of discontent in Wallachia and Moldavia. The Porte was still hesitant to permanently remove Phanariotes from rulership. However, their disrepute and abuses did determine the sultan to issue the edict of 1819, whereby the right to take the throne of the Principalities was restricted to four Phanar families: Skarlatos Kallimahis, Alexandros Soutzos, Michael Soutzos and Demetrius Mourouzi.

The economic state of the Principalities had been worsened by the excessive taxation policies, with ever increasing taxes and levies. Boyar Dinicu Golescu wrote that "Wallachian tributaries living on that beautiful land are so poor and miserable that any foreigner could not possibly believe their misfortune[6]." A regulation on tax obligations was enacted in 1783, introducing a taxation unit called "*lude*". The "*lude*" consisted of a variable number of taxpayers (4, 6, 8 families), who were held jointly liable to pay the tax, which curtailed individual drive and discouraged entrepreneurship. Although the state treasury saw significant income from levies collected from taxpayers, most of it was used to meet the payment obligations towards the Porte and the Ottoman dignitaries, to sustain the forts on the Danube and the troops stationed there, to maintain the Princely Court and to pay the wages of the state officials. On the other hand, expenditure for public works (roads, bridges, urban buildings), constructing cultural, healthcare or manufacturing venues were minimal.

Economic growth was very slow, although the conditions were met for its development. This was prevented not only by the abuse and greed particular to

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[5] Constantin C. Giurescu, *Istoria românilor* (*History of Romanians*), Encyclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2011, page 331.

[6] Bogdan Bucur, *Devălmăşia valahă (1716-1828). O istorie anarhică a spaţiului românesc (Wallachian Anomie (1716-1828): an Anarchical History of the Romanian Areal),* Paralela 45 Publishing House, Pitesti, 2008, page 177, apud Golescu, Dinicu. Însemnare a călătoriii mele, Constantin Radovici din Goleşti, făcută în anul 1824, 1825, 1826 (An Account of My Travels, Constantin Radovici of Golesti, in the Years of 1824, 1825, 1826), Minerva Publishing House, Bucharest, 1977, pages 75-78.

the Phanariote system, but also by the obligations and contributions to the Porte, both monetary and in agricultural products. Wallachian boyars indicated that, from 1812 through 1821, Wallachia had to make cash or in-kind payments amounting to approximately 63 million lei to the Porte, with Moldavia contributing a similar amount. The Romanian Principalities also saw significant loss because of the Ottoman monopoly on their foreign trade. The agricultural products purchased from the Principalities at ridiculously low prices would suffice to supply Constantinople for 4 months a year. Furthermore, this obligation to supply the Porte would double when it was engaged in wars with Russia or the Habsburg Empire.

The Phanariote regime was also in stark contrast to the novel elements emerging in the Danubian Principalities. First of all, it is worth mentioning the expanding contacts between the Principalities and the Western civilization, particularly the French one. The establishing of Russian, Austrian and French consulates in Iasi and Bucharest made it possible for closer ties to appear between the Romanian and European worlds. News travelled faster and more extensively from one side to another, there was a greater interest in the events on the continent on the part of the Romanian boyars, writings in French appeared in and about the Principalities. After one such paper – the first one, in fact – was published in 1777, thanks to Jean Louis Carra (a Jacobin, who was executed in 1793), and republished in 1789 and 1793, more writings containing information about the Danubian Principalities are printed in the early 19th century. The French publications brought to Iasi or Bucharest in various ways disseminated the ideas of the French Revolution, and the Romanian boyars would closely follow the unfolding of Napoleon's wars with Europe's monarchs. Many sons of native boyars studied in the major Western cultural hotspots and came in contact with the novel liberal ideas. The cities in the Principalities grew particularly important, as they became the main cultural and economic venues. Schools, printing works, workshops, manufactory shops represented drivers for the modernization of society. Cities were also important commercial centers, with markets becoming stimulators of economic activities.

The limitation of the Ottoman monopoly (by the Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji of 1774) facilitated the circulation of agricultural products from the Principalities to the European markets. In order to increase the volume of marketed products, landowners started introducing work quotas for the corvée laborers – the "*nart*"[7] – therefore better harnessing their labor day obligations. Consequently, the role of agricultural land began changing from representing a means of subsistence to becoming a driver for the circulation of goods (agricultural products).

Furthermore, the Caragea Law of 1818 strengthened the boyars' authority to arable land, substituting the feudal type of possession (granted by the will of the lord) with full ownership.

However, those reforms occurred under a failing political regime that was less conducive to more profound changes in line with the modern era. The general discontent in the Principalities favored the start of the revolution and provided it with the required social support. In his proclamations, Tudor Vladimirescu called upon all social ranks, all inhabitants, "kinsfolk of whatever ancestry", to take part in his endeavor.

While it was first and foremost caused by the poor domestic situation of Wallachia, the Revolution of 1821 was also facilitated by external drivers: the spread of the ideas of the French Revolution, the European liberal movements, the national liberation movements in the Balkans, the decay of the Ottoman Empire. This latter element was considered by Tudor Vladimirescu during the Revolution in determining the boundaries of its agenda.

4. Program of the Revolution of 1821

The agenda of the revolution was reflected in the many papers and documents that were developed at its various phases: proclamations, letters, calls to action, agreements made with and demands addressed to the local boyars.

The first manifesto of the revolution was the Proclamation of Pades (which was in fact conceived at Tismana), which was presented to the crowd that had gathered there and which was a call to all inhabitants of Wallachia to join the movement against the evil "bestowed onto us by our masters, both political and churchly." That document of January 23, 1821 merely showed the reasons for Tudor's actions, as well as one of the methods to rectify the country's situation: "let it be that those that can do good be chosen from among our leaders," who should work "with us all for the good of all" ("in the benefit of the community"). Furthermore, the crowd and the rest of the country's inhabitants were asked to "sacrifice the ill-gathered fortunes of the tyrant boyars," but do no harm to the estates of those joining the cause of the revolution.

Chronologically speaking, another document was the letter sent to the sultan through the agency of the Pasha of Vidin, which indicated that the movement was not against the Ottoman Empire, but only for the good of the people and the country. It also presented the poor condition of the country, the complaints of which could not have reached the sultan's ears. In order to prevent a military intervention by the Porte, the letter asked that "a trustworthy man be dispatched" to "do us justice and order." Letters with similar contents were also sent by Tudor Vladimirescu to the tsar and to the emperor at

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[7] Cornelia Ene-Dinu, *Istoria statului şi dreptului românesc* (*History of the Romanian State and Law*), Universul Juridic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2020, page 182.

Vienna, indicating the reasons for his actions. In doing so, Tudor showed caution, as well as proper knowledge of the then-current realities of Europe, where the Habsburgs and Russia set the political tone.

Other ideas related to the revolutionary movement can be inferred from Tudor's correspondence with the boyars in Bucharest throughout February 1821. In one of his letters, he urged the boyars "to become true patriots, and not the foes to the motherland that you have been so far." In a reply to *Vornic* Nicolae Vacarescu on February 11, 1821, he stated that "the Motherland is the people, and not the league of spoliators."

The most important manifesto of the revolution was that entitled "Demands of the Romanian People" and was developed in February – March 1821. The document had three versions (containing 20, 33 and 48 items, respectively) and was the most comprehensive program of the revolution. It included modern principles for the internal organization of Wallachia. The fundamental idea that can be derived from its text was the removal of the Phanariote regime and could therefore be applied to Moldavia as well. In fact, the document demanded the enforcement of the principle of the sovereignty of the people, who sustained the ruler's authority. According to the document, the ruler had executive powers, while the "People's Assembly" represented the legislative power. The ruler was bound to comply with the will of the people ("the people's bidding") and "to take an oath to safeguard it to the letter." Another principle was the abolishment of privileges based on family origins. The program stated that the appointments to state offices "should not be made for money and should be based not on lineage, but on worthiness." It also stipulated the abolishment of the classes of peasant servants known as "*posluşnic*" and "*scutelnic*". The manifesto further included significant reforms in the areas of justice, administration, taxation, trade, public education, army and public order. As regards the legal system, it called for the enforcement of legal codes mandatory to all, therefore allowing for the removal of arbitrary decisions and the establishment of domestic stability. The administrative reforms targeted the simplification of the administrative system by abolishing positions that increased treasury expenditure. In the taxation area, the document spoke of using a portion of the Church's income to fund the schools and the army, and covering the cost of enhancing the streets of Bucharest from customs duties. The taxes were to be levied in four installments, and any tax increases were to be made by resolutions of the People's Assembly. The document further required the expansion of the network of schools, which were to be maintained by the church authorities and provide education to children of poor families. Another major item of the manifesto was the organization of the army, which was to consist of 4,000 *pandurs* and 200 *arnauts*, who would be hired on pay and exempted from paying taxes. In order to enhance trade, the document asked for the abolishment of internal customs duties and the lowering of those on the borders, therefore facilitating the export of products from the Principalities.

As to the legal status of the Principalities, the program of the Revolution of 1821 demanded that their autonomy be observed and guaranteed by international documents adopted by Russia and the Habsburg monarchy. This had been an older demand by the Wallachian and Moldavian boyars, which had been presented to the same powers as far back as in 1772, at the Congress of Focsani.

Other documents containing items of the revolution's program were the proclamations given by Tudor Vladimirescu to the people of Bucharest. One first proclamation was probably delivered on March 8, 1821, but its contents is unknown. The ideas contained therein were however reiterated in the second proclamation to the people of Bucharest, issued at Bolintin on March 16, 1821. It urged the inhabitants of Bucharest to join him "in gaining the rights benefiting the entire community." The third proclamation was more comprehensive, and was addressed to the people of Bucharest on March 20, 1821, out of Cotroceni. It restated the causes for his actions – "the loss of our privileges" and "the loathsome despoliations" – and also included a call to join the revolution for "the gaining and rebirth of our rights."

So, the programmatic documents of the Revolution of 1821 included a whole range of demands regarding the reorganization and modernization of the political, social and economic structures. A constant presence was the demand regarding the redeeming of "the country's entitlements", which – together with the other items on the agenda – meant not just a return to a national political regime, but also a change in its substance, a third, more comprehensive version of which was made known to the people of Wallachia in early April 1821.

We can therefore conclude that it was the attempt to start making some changes in the internal organization of the principality, in the spirit of the revolution's programs. However, those changes did not gain amplitude due to the conservative ideological and political limitations of both the domestic and external legal status of Wallachia.

It is worth noting that one of Tudor Vladimirescu's advisors during the revolution was Gheorghe Lazar, a well-known scholar and founder of the education system in the Romanian language. He urged the leader of the movement to continue negotiations with the Porte and not let himself be deluded by Russia's promises to intervene, as made by Alexander Ypsilanti.

5. End of the Revolution and Its Significance

The revolution unfolded under adverse domestic and international circumstances.

Domestically, the political aristocratic and ecclesiastic classes were not in favor of such profound changes as those included in the revolution's agenda. Although many Wallachian boyars were displeased with the Phanariote regime, the fear of an intervention by the suzerain power made them hostile to an overt action against the Greeks and the Phanariote rulers. That was why some of the boyars took refuge in Brasov in an act to show their lack of support for Tudor's endeavor.

However, the end of the Revolution of 1821 was not caused by the lack of support from the local aristocracy, but by the Porte's decision to send troops in the Principalities and by the eterists' attitude towards the leader of the Romanian revolution. The Porte's decision was greatly expedited by the position adopted by Russia, which, as we have seen, manifested its disproval of both movements. As early as the start of April, the Ottomans had taken positions on the left bank of the Danube, opposite of the Silistra, Ruschuk and Vidin forts. One month later, in early May, the Ottoman troops advanced in Wallachia in large numbers. Three columns headed for Craiova, with two more dispatched to Bucharest and one towards Moldavia. They were under the command of Cara Ahmed Efendi, lieutenant to the Pasha of Silistra.[8]

The failed negotiations with the pashas along the Danube, the superiority of the Ottoman forces and the positions in the capital, which were inadequate for armed resistance, made Tudor Vladimirescu withdraw from Bucharest. Since the post road through Slatina was threatened by the Turks, the retreat was made via the road to Pitesti (May 15, 1821). The Eterist act of suppressing Tudor Vladimirescu occurred during this phase of the events. Taking advantage of the discontent of some of his captains (including Dimitrie Macedonski and Hagi Prodan) with his excessive disciplining of the *pandurs*, Tudor Vladimirescu was arrested at Golesti by a band of eterists under the command of Giorgakis Olympios. Accused of having made a deal with and, therefore, betraying the fight against the Ottomans, he was taken to Targoviste and assassinated by Vasilis Caravias and several other eterists during the night of May 26/27, 1821. His mangled body was thrown in an abandoned water well. The assassination of Tudor Vladimirescu – a despicable act of revenge – was entirely unwarranted, as the accusations against him were a misinterpretation of his negotiations with the pashas along the Danube.

As indicated by the documentary evidence, those negotiations had an entirely different purpose: getting the Porte to replace the Phanariote rulers, which only the sultan could decide at the time. The eterists chose the worst way to settle their report with Vladimirescu. Given the Ottoman invasion, the most appropriate solution would have been to work with the *pandur* forces under his command. Left without a leader, the

pandur army fought one initial battle at Zavideni, on the Olt river, on May 26, 1821. Under the Ottoman pressure, the *pandurs* retreated to Dragasani, where they fought another battle on May 29, 1821, suffering major losses. The eterists fought the decisive battle also at Dragasani, on June 7, 1821, but were defeated. Ypsilanti and some of his close associates retreated to Transylvania and then to Austria (aided by Russia in obtaining the approval of the Austrian authorities). The remaining eterist troops, under the command of Yiannis Pharmakis and Giorgakis Olympios, withdrew to Moldavia in an attempt to reach Russia through Bessarabia. A battle was fought at the Secu monastery, where Olympios resisted the Ottoman attacks for a while, then, not being able to carry on fighting, he set the gunpowder on fire and was blown up together with his few remaining troops. One last fight took place at Sculeni, on the Prut river, where the eterists were definitively defeated; Yiannis Pharmakis was taken prisoner and executed at Constantinople. The *pandur* bands led by Dimitrie Macedonski and Hagi Prodan took refuge at the monasteries in Northern Oltenia, whence they organized attacks against the Ottoman troops. In the battle at Slobozia, on July 17, the *pandurs* were however defeated, and Papa Vladimirescu and Ghita Haiducu were taken prisoners. After being taken across the Danube, nothing else was heard of them. Macedonski and Prodan managed to take refuge in Transylvania. By August, the Ottoman forces were in control of the situation in the Principalities. Their presence there extended until 1822.

Thus ended the first major Romanian action of the 19th century, which was intended to put an end to a political regime that was strange to the national interest and contrary to progress. With his proclamations, Tudor Vladimirescu voiced the aspirations of national rebirth and openness to progress in the two Romanian principalities. In April 1821, he urged the Wallachian boyars to get in touch with the Moldavian ones, so that "we can equally gain the rights for these principalities, by helping each other." The Revolution of Tudor Vladimirescu had a clear anti-Phanariote nature, as the regime enforced by the Porte was held accountable for the loss of the "country's just rights." Throughout the events that unfolded, Tudor Vladimirescu also spoke in multiple instances against the native boyars who accepted the Phanariote regime, urging them to "become patriots" and support him in his actions. The agenda of the Revolution of 1821 was comprehensive, stipulating reforms in all areas of society, with some of them applied while Tudor Vladimirescu and the Council (the "*Divan*") ruled the country. It is worth noting that some items in the programmatic documents were also included in the boyars' memoranda submitted to the Christian powers or the Porte on the occasions of their conferences, starting the Peace Congress of Focsani.

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[8] Pascu Vasile, *Istoria modernă a românilor (1821-1918)* (The Modern History of Romanians (1821-1918)), Clio Nova Publishing House, Bucharest, 1996, page 21.

Furthermore, demands of the Revolution of 1821 continued to be supported by the native aristocracy after the removal of the Phanariotes, with the enlightened boyars establishing a "national party." The main consequence of the revolution was the return to native rulership. Tudor Vladimirescu's sacrifice led to the abolishment of a regime that had become unbearable due to its consequences on the principalities. As early as in February 1821, the Porte had appointed the new ruler of Wallachia, Skarlatos Kallimahis, who was also a Phanariote, but, after the revolution, neither him, nor other Phanariotes were ever appointed as rulers. The return to the national political regime meant not merely a return to the appointment (and then election) of princes from among the native boyars, but also the beginning of Romanians integrating in the modern European world. Historian Alexandru D. Xenopol wrote of the year 1821: "... indeed, the start of a new age in the history of the Romanian people dates back to that time."

6. Conclusions

The Revolution of 1821 led by Tudor Vladimirescu represents the starting point of our modern history, a time when the Romanians spoke up and took action for the affirmation of their national rights and the modernization of domestic institutions. Originating in the political, social, cultural and economic crisis of the Phanariote regime, the revolution was the beginning of our national rebirth, proving the Romanians' aspirations for modernity and progress. The agenda of the revolution, the application of which was limited by the domestic and foreign conditions in which it unfolded, aimed at turning deem transformations in the Romanian society into reality: abolishment of personal privileges and servitudes, equality before the law, affirmation of the nation's sovereignty, political, administrative and taxation reorganization, true domestic autonomy. Based on those programmatic principles, we can safely conclude that the Revolution of Tudor Vladimirescu was a comprehensive act, akin to the European revolutionary movements in the first quarter of the 19th century.[9]

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[9] For a detailed analysis of the general principles of law, see Elena Anghel, *Principiile generale ale dreptului*, in Challenges of the Knowledge Society 2016, pag. 332-337.