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GENERAL COUNT PAVEL D. KISSELEV AND THE ORGANIC REGULATION IN THE DANUBIAN PRINCIPALITIES*

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On November 11, 1829, General Count Pavel D. Kisselev arrived in Bucharest to take over the position of Plenipotentiary President of the Rumanian Divans (Assemblies). He was appointed by Czar Nicholas I of Russia to work out the first Rumanian constitution known also as the Organic Regulation (Regulamentul Organic). At the same time Kisselev became the supreme administrator of the two Danubian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia 1829-1834¹.

In contrast to previous Russian administrators in Wallachia and Moldavia, Kisselev called upon the cooperation of the most popular Rumanian patriots like Michael Sturdza, Conachi, Asachi and many others. In this way he was able to win the confidence of the Rumanian people and greatly increase the Russian prestige in the Danubian Principalities. The five years of Kisselev's administration accomplished also a great deal in the field of public utility and social welfare. For the first time the Danubian Principalities obtained such accomplishments as modern highways, hospitals, city parks, pavements, sidewalks, and canalization². Kisselev introduced many administrative reforms and the first constitution for the Danubian Principalities known as the Organias Regulation (Regualmentul Organic). The great Rumanian Historian Nicolae Iorga says that it prepared in fact the way for the final union of Moldavia and Wallachia into the Kingdom of Rumania (1881) by

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1. A. P. Zablotskii-Desiatovskii, Graf P. D. Kisselev I ego vremia (Count P. D. Kisselev and his time) (St. Petersburg, 1882), Vol. I, p. 324. See also V. Y. Grosul, *Reformy v Daunaiskikh kniazhestvakh i Rossia* (The reforms in the Danubian principalites and Russia) (Moscow, 1966), pp. 200-261.

2. Nicolae Iorga, *Histoire des Relations Russo-Roumaines* (Jassy, 1917), p. 274. Hereafter cited as Iorga, *Relations*. See also A. Ojetea et al eds., *Istoria Rominiei* (History of Rumania) (Bucharest, 1964), Vol. III, p. 944. Hereafter cited as Ojetea, *History*.

creating an identical administration in both principalities³, and at the same time it created out of the Rumanian Boyars a sort of a Russian nobility with a division into classes and titles in connection with any function or position in the affairs of the State. It lasted for twenty years, giving way to the constitutional struggles out of which the government of the Rumanian Kingdom was born⁴.

Count Kisselev was from an old Russian family the nobility which dates back to the seventh century. He received a very good education at home and later in the Russian Imperial Guards he proved to be ambitious, trying to make profitable acquaintances among the members of the Russian aristocracy. The first part of the reign of Czar Alexander I, with its liberal tendencies, did not remain without effect on the chancter of Count Kisselev⁵. He introduced the principles of contemporary philosophical thought. Iorga considers him a colorful representative of this current when he states that

Cet administrateur d'un grand talent et d'un dévoûment absolu à sa mission était plutôt un des derniers élèves de cette philosophie d'Etat du XVIII-me siècle, à laquelle l'humanité doit sans doute de profondes erreurs de conception, des tourments atroces dans la réalisation de ses projets, mais aussi un grand nombre des établissements utiles, sur lesquels repose encore la vie des sociétés modernes⁶.

The French Consul in Jassy, Moldavia, expressed a similar opinion in his letter to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Polignac, on July 30, 1830. Monsieur Lagan wrote the followings:

Miltaire, diplomate, administrateur éclairé, ayant commandé pendant plusieurs années, en qualité de chef d'état-major, le corps d'armée du maréchal Wittgenstein, placé à Tulcea de manière à pouvoir étudier les resources de Principautés qui bientôt devaient recevoir les troupes russes (affranchies par la paix d'Adrianople de l'obligation d'opérer des fournitures considérables) et jouissant de la faveur de l'Empereur Nicolas, le général Kisseleff s'est fait donner toute lattitude pour servir la politique de son gouvernement en

^{3.} Ibid., p. 279. See also Andrei Otetea, Scrieri Istorice Alese (Chosen Historical Writings) (Cluj-Napoca, 1980), p. 229. Hereafter cited as Otetea, Writings.

^{4.} Nicolae Iorga, Istoria Românilor în Chipuri și Icoane (History of the Rumanians in Biographies) (Craiova, 1921), p. 163.

^{5.} Zablotskii-Desiatovskii, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 324.

^{6.} Iorga, Relations, op. cit., pp. 275-276,

même temps que l'intérêt de ce pays, en y faisant le bien et en cherchant à y cicatriser les plaies profondes⁷.

This letter of the French Consul Lagan is valuable as a primary source material because Lagan was a neutral observer during the administration of Count Kisselev and he most probably did meet Kisselev personally.

The internal situation of the Danubian Principalities was very bad. with abuses everywhere and no security. The position of the chief of Police was sold by the previous hospodars for a considerable amount of money. In Wallachia he was called "Spatar" and in Moldavia "Hatman". In order to get back their investment they sold each year the positions of Colonels and Captains of Police. These rapeated the same procedure with lower Police officials called "Catane", who were recruited from the peasant population. The most important revenue of the police came from the proceeds of robbery and banditry. The criminals and the police officials made common cause and divided the proceeds of stolen goods. The Boyars fled to the cities and came out only under heavy guard. Any kind of enterprise was almost impossible, General Count Kisselev corrected these abuses by establishing a small but efficient native police force and frontier guards under officers trained by the Russians. A militia was started. The corps of "Dorobanți" and "Grăniceri" introduced by Kisselev became the cornerstone foundation of the future national Rumanian army⁸.

The Danubian Principalities experienced under Kisselev's administration a transition from chaos and decay to the first rudiments of ordered and decent government. Measures were taken to combat a cholera epidemic. Kisselev planned the action with the assistance of Russian officers and Russian quarantine officials. He inspected the hospitals personally and in five weeks he carried out the inspection of 36 towns and 5,496 villages. By 1830 the epidemics were stopped only to break out again in 1831. A quarantine sanitary cordon under the supervision of Russian officials was established along the Danube in order to prevent the renewal of the epidemics coming from the Ottoman Empire⁹.

7. Jean C. Filitti, Les Principautés Roumaines sous l'Occupation Russe (1828-1834) (Bucharest, 1904), p. 64.

8. Zablotskii-Desiatovskii, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 336. See also Dimitrie Onciul, Die Istoria României (From the History of Rumania) (Bucharest, 1913), p. 103. Also R. W. Seton-Watson, A History of the Roumanians (Cambridge, England, 1934), p. 207.

9. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 334. See also N. S. Govora, Relatille Româno-Ruse (Rumanian-Russian Relations) (Madrid, 1979), p. 151.

The danger of starvation in Wallachia as the result of war and previous corrupt administration was prevented by Kisselev. He ordered bread from the Russian army and bought some in Moldavia and Odessa. The high prices of bread in Bucharest went down and starvation was avoided¹⁰.

Temporary investigating commissions were set up in order to examine complaints and with authority to take immediate action on the spot. These commissions were each composed of three Boyars of the upper class, who previously did not play any part in public affairs. This trust awakened their ambition which was directed this way for the public welfare. Each commission included a Russian official as a public prosecutor. They discovered for example thirty six thousant families missing from the tax rosters of the government and more than two million Piaster of unauthorised taxes. This money was restored and so the war emergency which was maintained in the principalities by dishonest officials was terminated¹¹.

In order to avoid abuses, the taxes which were ordered by the government, kept secret previously, were published under Kisselev in newspapers and other publications. The Boyars were not satisfied with the new reforms in the administration. Common people and the merchants were the first ones to feel the benefits of the reforms. State officials received their pay regularly and were not forced to steal from the people anymore¹².

John Eliade Radulescu a distinguished Rumanian writer began to print the first Rumanian newspaper in Wallachia the "Curierul Românesc" (The Rumanian Messenger) in 1829, and another Rumanian newspaper, "Albina Româneasca" (The Rumanian Bee), was started almost at the same time in Moldavia by Gheorghe Asachi, another Rumanian writer, politician, and a friend of Kisselev. Theaters were founded and high schools were organized in Bucharest and Jassy. In this connection it is pointed out that

> Soon a High School is opened where the teachers are not Greeks or Frenchmen as it was before, but Rumanians...Gradually the High School changes into an "Academy" with the addition of university courses. For the first time in the Moldavian institutions of learning along with the French language the instruction of Russian language is introduced...Following the Russian model the first Moldavian

Ibid., pp. 334-335.
Ibid., p. 335.
Ibid., pp. 336-337.

institution of learning for women, an institute for the orphans and daughters of civil servants is introduced¹³.

Under the administration of Kisselev the national life of the Danubian Principalities made this a real progress. Education began to spread all over and a great many books were printed, among them numerous translations from Western literature as well as the Russian¹⁴.

Another very important reform of Kisselev was the currency reform. The legal Turkish monetary system was detrimental to the economy of the Danubian Principalities. The Ottoman government devaluated often its currency. The banks were paying for good stable European money with an unstable local currency. General Zheltukhin ordered all governmental collections and revenues to be conducted according to the basic standard of the Dutch Ducat, which corresponded in value to thirty and a half Leva. This order was carried out only in Moldavia. The rate of exchange of the Turkish money, in accordance with its internal value came down twenty percent in contrast to the nominal price. The prices of merchandise were changed according to the value of the Dutch Ducat and consequently business increased considerably. In Wallachia Zheltukhin's order about the money reform was not carried out and it was up to Kisselev to push it through the assembly. The Rumanian members of the assembly as well as its Russian Vice-President Boshniak opposed the reform efforts of Kisselev bitterly. At the same time the merchants were clamoring for a fixed value of the Ducat. It came to a crisis and a misunderstanding betweel Kisselev and Fieldmarshal Diebich. Kisselev wanted to resign and only a personal meeting with Diebich in Kyustendzhi on May 2, 1830, cleared up the matters. Boshniak was recalled and the reform was pushed through¹⁵.

The most remarkable of all the reforms, however, was the Organic Regulation, which was due very largely to Kisselev's personal theories and initiative, and which assured to the Danubian Principalities for the first time a constitutional regime. The Organic Regulation encountered great opposi-

13. E. M. Dvoichenko-Markova, Russko-Rumynskie Literaturnye Sviazi v Pervoi Polovine xix veka (Russian-Rumanian Literary Relations in the First Half of the nineteenth century) (Moscow, 1966), p. 162. See also Euphrosine Dvoičenko-Markoff, "L'influence de la littérature Russe sur la littérature Roumaine", Communications et Rapports du III-ème Congrès International des Slavistes (Belgrade, 1939), pp. 1-4.

14. Nicolae Balcescu, Historical Survey of the Rumanian People (Bucharest, 1926), p. 49. See also Govora, op. cit., p. 162.

15. Zablotskii-Desiatovskii, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 340-341.

tion from the Boyars, who were afraid to losse some of their extra income at the expense of the people. The clergy was also afraid to cooperate in order not to lose their privileges acquired during the rule of previous hospodars. In addition to this internal opposition in the Danubian Principalities, the Organic Regulation was attacked also by foreign powers and particularly by Austria. So for example on February 28, 1830, Kisselev was informed by a note from Count Nesselrode that the Austrian Ambassador in St. Petersburg Count Fockelman tranamitted a complaint from Metternich that the Organic Regulation was undermining the privileges of Austrian citizens in the Danubian Principalities. Kisselev explained to the Russian Court in St. Petersburg that the privileges of Austrian citizens were not touched but only abuses were curtailed. In this connection Kisselev reported that more than six thousand families that came from the bordering lands were engaged in a very profitable business under the protection of Austria without paying any taxes. Abuses created speculation and their curtailment stirred up great opposition. The Austrian trade interests wanted to maintain the abuses in the Danubian Principalities in order to be able to sell their cheap luxury items to the privileged classes without paying any taxes. This brought about a coalition between the two interested parties in their common opposition against the reforms of the Organic Regulation¹⁶.

On May 8, 1830, Kisselev visited Jassy. The Russian Vice-President of the Moldavian assembly (Divan) was General Mirkovich. Many Austrian agents in Moldavia were promising the help of Austria if the Moldavian Boyars would oppose the reforms of Kisselev. Kisselev remained in Moldavia until June 27, 1830, and than returned to Bucharest¹⁷.

The first two chapters of the Organic Regulation project about the lifelong election of the hospodars and the composition of the assemblies were sent previously to the State Secretary Dashkov by General Zheltukhin. Count Nesselrode approved this project and asked later Kisselev in his note of March 24, 1830, to explain it to the Rumanian Boyars then they were called to discuss the reforms. The Russian Imperial Court wanted the general improvement of the country. Furthermore it did not want to support any single social class to the disadvantage of the others and to replace the abuses of the past administration with a complicated representative system of other countries which could not fit the needs of the Danubian Principalities. It wanted only to replace the precarious and formless administration of the hospodars elected

Ibid., p. 349.
Ibid., pp. 341-347.

for a seven years period by one with the hospodars to be elected by a majority vote for a life term. The assemblies with their intrigues, favoritism and with resposibilities which were not clearly defined or carried out properly were to be replaced by assemblies composed of people worthy of confidence. The Czar expressed his desire that the results of the commission on this project should be reported to St. Petersburg by the Russian Consul Minciaky and two Rumanian Boyars with good character and ability to give all the required explanations to the Russian ministry. By the end of April 1830 the commission completed the project of the Organic Regulation and in May Minciaky and the Rumanian Boyars Michael **Sturdza** and Vilori (Vellaras) left for St. Petersburg. Sturdza represented Moldavia and the "Logofat" (Chancellor) Vellaras Wallachia¹⁸. In St. Petersburg the whole project was reviewed by a special commission under the chairmanship of the Russian State Secretary Dashkov¹⁹.

Meanwhile the Ottoman Empire wanted a reduction of war contribution and a revision of the Peace Treaty of Adrianopol. The revision was first refused in St. Petersburg but on April 14, 1830, a convention was negotiated between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. This St. Petersburg Convention granted Turkey a reduction of military tribute from the original ten million Ducats per year to eight million Ducats payable in yearly installments of one million Ducats per year begining with May 1, 1831, for a period of eight years. The one million Ducats of commercial damages to citizens who lost out as the result of the war remained unchanged. After the payment of five hundred Ducats of commercial damages the Russian Empire agreed to evacuate its army from the Black Sea to the Danube with the exception of Silistra. Russia refused to make use of its right according to the Peace Treaty of Adrianople to occupy the Danubian Principalities until the completion of the military tribute by the Ottoman Empire. In fact after the payment of the second half of the commercial damages Russia promised to evacuate its army from the Danubian Principalities. As a security for the payment of the indemnity Russia reserved the right to retain Silistra and the control of its strategic highway to the Prut river. Furthermore in case Turkey should not carry out any term of the convention Russia was entitled to continue the occupation of the Danubian Principalities. The reasons for these great concessions on the part of the Russian Empire were the political pressure of Europe, the desire

Ibid., p. 350. The name of the Boyar from Wallachia is spelled Vilori, however Iorga, Relations, op. cit., pp. 277-278 gives his name as "le Logothète valaque Vellaras".
19. Ibid., p. 350.

to preserve the peace, cholera epidemics in Russia and the Polish revolt²⁰.

Kisselev wanted the election of the hospodars before the end of the Russian administration in order to avoid disorders and intrigues which would have destroyed completely his reforms in the Danubian Principalities. In his report to Nesselrode from February 9, 1831 (No. 20-21), Kisselev writes that he has decided to have two different assemblies: one for the revision of the Organic Regulation and the other for the election of the hospodars. The first assembly opened its sessions on March 10, 1831, in Bucharest, Wallachia. The Convention of Akkerman of 1826 and the Peace Treaty of Adrianopol of 1829 were taken as the basis for the Organic Regulation²¹. The revision was completed on April 29, 1831²², and the whole Organic Regulation was voted and applied first in Wallachia in July of 1831²³.

In Moldavia, however, the application of the Organic Regulation was not so easy. Kisselev came to Jassy on April 9, 1831, and on April 12, 1831, he ordered the Russian General Begidov to crush a peasant uprising in the district of Roman. Most of the peasants involved were Hungarians and Roman Catholics. They refused to be recruited for the Moldavian militia and to carry out their obligations towards the Boyars. There were about eight to nine thousand rebels. During a battle between the rebels and the Russian troops one Russian officer and one Russian soldier were killed. The losses of the rebels were higher. Eighteen peasants were killed and fourty two wounded. The cause of the uprising was the rumor about a Turkish invasion which would have had destroyed the Russians and their allies. Another source of rumors was the revolt in Poland. The Boyars used this opportunity to send secret complaints to the Porte distorting the facts. Kisselev was informed about this by the Russian Ambassador in Constantinople Butyenev²⁴.

After the order was restored in Moldavia the extraordinary assembly was opened on May 7, 1831. It did not last long because on April 23, 1831, another cholera epidemic broke out in Jassy. This time the disease was brought over from the neighbouring Bessarabia. In July 1831 the cholera epidemic almost ceased in Jassy, but broke out in Bucharest again. Kisselev arrived in Bucharest on July 6, 1831. His arrival gave courage to the local authorities to stay and fight the epidemics²⁵.

- 20. Ibid., p. 393.
- 21. Ibid., pp. 358-359.
- 22. Ibid., p. 360.
- 23. Onciul, op. cit., pp. 102-103.
- 24. Zablotskii-Desiatovskii, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 364-369.
- 25. Ibid., pp. 368-371.

In the beginning of August the Moldavian revisional assembly under the chairmanship of its Vice-President Minciaky renewed its activity in Jassy. By the end of October the Moldavian extraordinary assembly finished the revision of the Organic Regulation. After so much delay the Organic Regulation was voted and passed in Moldavia only in January, 1832²⁶. According to this Organic Regulation the Danubian Principalities were ruled until the revolution of 1848.

The main revisions of the Organic Regulation are summarised in nine chapters:

- I. For the election of the hospodar for a life term it provided for an extraordinary assembly of 190 members including the Metropolitan, Bishops, Boyars of the high class and the lower class, district deputies from local notables and deputies from the towns.
- II. Regular assemblies of 43 members were to meet each year for the revision of reports and the budget.
- III. New finance system. The tax of 30 Piaster per year for each peasant family was fixed. Two classes of artisans 90 Piaster and 50 Piaster tax were created. The merchants were divided in three classes 240, 120, and 60 Piaster tax. The State salaries were increased.
- IV. Administrative council for current affairs to be composed of a president, Vornic (Minister of the Interior), Vistiar (Finance Minister), and Postelnic (State Secretary). In case of very important business a Logofat (Minister of Justice) and other departmental heads could be added.
- V. Free trade. With one limitation that in case of bad harvest the export of bread would be prohibited.
- VI. Regulations about quarantine on the left bank of the Danube.
- VII. The organization of the department of Justice and its separation from the administrative power.
- VIII. Officials, their titles and promotion. The administration of church property. Education and close cooperation of the two Danubian Principalities.
 - IX. The organization of the people's militia²⁷.

The Organic Regulation was transcribed in two languages: Rumanian and French, and signed by all members of both assemblies. One copy was

- 26. Onciul, op. cit., p. 102.
- 27. Zablotskii-Desiatovskii, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 361-364.

put into the governmental archives and a copy was sent to St. Petersburg and another to Constantinople²⁸. The Porte however delayed its ratification and sanction of the Organic Regulation until 1834.

Kisselev fought a losing battle against the Rumanian Boyars in trying to protect the peasants in the Danubian Principalities. The proposition to raise the taxes for the peasants, but to free them from the payment in goods to the Boyars, was misinterpreted by the special commission for the Organic Regulation in favor of the Boyars. In his letter to the Russian Ambassador in Constantinople (December 20, 1832) Kisselev complains about the fact that the peasants were without representation and were not protected by anybody. He himself was able to fight the Boyars only within the limitations of the Organic Regulation and therefore he asked the Russian Ambassador Butyenev to try to take the Organic Regulation out of the hands of the Porte and to insert a few administrative changes in favor of the common people²⁹.

On October 31, 1832, Kisselev asked for a leave to be spent in his estates and in St. Petersburg. The Czar, however, was concerned about Mehmet Ali of Egypt and the existence of the Ottoman Empire, and asked Kisselev to stay on until the crisis was over³⁰.

On February 12, 1833, Nesselrode wrote Kisselev that he had been informed that Kisselev would be appointed as the supreme commander of the expedition destined to save the existance of the Ottoman Empire. Orlov wrote Kisselev on March 15, 1833, that the appointment of Kisselev was decided by the Czar before he received his reports and letters. It was planned to move the Russian army under Kisselev across the Danube and save Constantinople from the conquest by the advancing Egyptian army. The first Russian troops landed on the Bosphorus on March 23, 1833, under the command of General Muraviev. The Russian naval squadron was under the command of Vice-Admiral Lazarev and there was no unity of command. Kisselev, however, was prevented from crossing the Danube and taking supreme command of the entire expedition by the changing attitude of the Porte³¹.

On Juqe 8, 1833, Kisselev wrote Orlov, at that time the extraordinary Russian Ambassador in Constantinople, that now Russia could not count on the friendship of the Sultan. The Russian occupation of the Danubian Principalities should therefore be extended for a period of ten years because Kisselev considered the Danube as the natural border of the Russian Empire

Ibid., p. 363.
Ibid., pp. 386-391.
Ibid., p. 398.
Ibid., pp. 407-408.

despite the contrary opinion of Nesselrode and other politicians in St. Petersburg. A prolonged occupation of the Danubian Principalities would have facilitated an annexation by Russia and Kisselev considered it foolish for Russia to abandon such a convenient position on the Danube³².

The favorite of the Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) and the commander of his personal guard Ahmet Pasha was sent to St. Petersburg as an extraordinary Ambassador to discuss the Danubian Principalities. The St. Petersburg Convention of November 22, 1833, was concluded with him. According to this convention the Porte agreed to ratify the Organic Regulation. After the inauguration of the hospodars, Russia agreed to withdraw its army from the Danubian Principalities. The election of the hospodars was left to the Porte from a list of candidates to be presented by Russia. The Porte still owed Russia six millions Ducats in military tribute. The Czar reduced this debt to four millions to be paid in a period of eight years beginning with May 1, 1834, with yearly installments of five hundred thousand Ducats³³.

In order to avoid new intrigues and disorders the choice of the hospodars was left to the Sultan and not to an extraordinary assembly of the Boyars as was provided in the Organic Regulation. Kisselev gave the list of candidates to Ahmet Pasha on February 25, 1834, in Jassy. In April, 1834, Ahmet Pasha informed Kisselev that the Porte had chosen the Vistiar (Finance Minister) Michael Sturdza as the Hospodar of Moldavia and Spatar (Chief of Police and Militia) Alexander Ghica as the Hospodar of Wallachia³⁴. "The manner of their appointment and their dependence on the Russian consuls" and the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire "placed them in a weak and humiliating position"³⁵ and paved the way for the revolutionary movement of 1848.

General Count Pavel D. Kisselev left the Danubian Principalities on April 11, 1834, but the memory of his beneficial reforms was kept alive in Rumania. During his lifetime an attempt was undertaken to erect a monument to him in Bucharest, but he turned down this honor. However one of the most beautiful boulevards of Bucharest with the national arch of triumph on it even today still bears the name of Kisselev "Şoseaua Kisselev". A well known Rumanian politician and historian Mihail Kogâlniceanu (1817-1891) in his "Introductory statement to the National History Course" in 1843 paid a fitting tribute to Kisselev by stating that

35. Seton-Watson, op. cit., p. 212.

^{32.} Ibid., p. 415. See also Vol. IV, p. 65. Also Seton-Watson, op. cit., p. 218.

^{33.} Ibid., pp. 418-419.

^{34.} Ibid., p. 420.

Kisselev is a name which the Rumanians should not pronounce but with love and gratitude, it is charged with the regeneration of the fatherland by activating the laws destined to create for us a nation³⁶.

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36. G. Bezviconi, *Contribuții la Istoria Relațillor Romino-Ruse* (Contributions to the History of Rumanian-Russian Relations) (Bucharest, 1962), p. 240.