

MIHAELA MEHEDINȚI-BEIEAN, **Solidarity across Borders: Transylvanians and the Romanian War of Independence (1877-1878)**

Abstract: Transylvania's multi-ethnic and multi-religious character and the Romanians' disadvantaged position within a province in which they represented the numerical majority greatly impacted upon how events concerning Romania were seen from within the Carpathian arch. Motivated by a yearning for political rights, Transylvanians were very sympathetic towards Romania's fight for independence from the Ottoman Empire. As a result, the Romanian press in Transylvania resorted to a number of strategies to avoid the vexations of the harsh censorship system imposed by the Hungarian authorities, in order to publish numerous articles that informed their readers about the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. Moreover, editors managed to express more or less directly their solidarity with the national struggle taking place on the other side of the Carpathian Mountains and some voices even suggested concrete ways in which Transylvanians could help the Moldavians and Wallachians.

The present study uses press articles as sources and reveals the declarative and practical forms solidarity took in Transylvania during the Romanian War of Independence. Relevant texts published by four literary periodicals, namely *Familia* [The Family], *Gura satului* [roughly, Gossip from the Village], *Transilvania* [Transylvania] and *Albina Carpaților* [The Carpathians' Bee], are discussed from the perspective of the period's geopolitical context, but also with regards to the previous cultural ties between Romanians inhabiting all of the three large historical provinces of today's Romania. The results of collections of money and other aid for wounded Romanian soldiers organised by the Transylvanians, the manner in which the news from the frontline was presented, the literary creations inspired by the conflict, and the consternation towards Russia's annexation of Cahul, Bolgrad and Ismail after the end of the war demonstrate beyond any doubt that Transylvanians fully supported their fellow nationals in their endeavours.

Keywords: ethnic and national solidarity, Romanian periodicals, Transylvania, Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, nineteenth century.

Mihaela MEHEDINȚI-BEIEAN, PhD, is a Postdoctoral Researcher at West University of Timișoara and a Research Assistant at "Babeș-Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania; e-mail: mihaela_mehedinti@yahoo.com.