

THE ACTIVITY OF IOAN PUȘCARIU IN THE DIET OF SIBIU OF 1863—1864

SUMMARY

An important moment among the general events of the Transylvanian Romanian's struggle for freedom in the second half of the XIXth century was the Diet of Sibiu of 1863—1864. Its place in history is especially marked by the fact that it passed the bills of emancipation of the Romanian nation, of its language and confessions.

Ioan Pușcariu, at that time supreme governor of the county of Tîrnava (Cetea de Baltă), deputy elect in the Diet as the representative of the district of Făgăraș, was a personality well known to the Romanian public opinion, both for his militant political activity and for his merits in the field of national culture. He was to assert himself as one of the most active Romanian deputies, not only as a remarkable orator, but also through the firmness of his interventions, the remarkable logic he displayed, the warmth and strength with which he permanently sustained the rightful causes of his nation.

The analysis of Pușcariu's activity within this memorable Diet shows that he played an important part in the debates and the passing of the bills of emancipation, as well as of other law of major significance, as the electoral law, the law concerning the creation of the Supreme Court of Transylvania and especially in the debates on the complex agrarian problems. It is possible thereby to stress the role of the rather distinct and influential group of the national bourgeoisie represented by the Romanian civil servants in this supreme Transylvanian legislative assembly. Undeniably penetrated by warm national feelings, deeply attached to the oppressed Romanian people from the midst of which they came, Pușcariu and the other members of the Diet who had been employed in more or less exalted functions at the time of the Habsburg Empire liberalization experiment inaugurated in 1860, adopted a seemingly moderate attitude within the debates of the draft bills formulated by the agents of the regime. But this attitude was generated by the conviction that it was necessary to obtain rapidly at least some partial solutions to the grievances of the Romanians, as against the alternative of lengthened debates which could compromise the chances of turning them into laws in the circumstances of that time.

Unfortunately for the Romanians, the further political evolution was unfavourable. The reactionary dualist Austro-Hungarian pact of 1867 brought about the annulment of the laws passed by the memorable Sibiu Diet of 1863—1864. Decades of passionate and tireless national struggle were to follow until the final victory of 1918, but all along the struggle, the beautiful days of the Diet remained as a live remembrance, as a real support for resistance and encouragement.