In the wake of the February events, in early 1848 most Wallachian forty-eighters were back in Romania, channelling their now re-ignited revolutionary spirit via the activities of a “Committee for the liberation of the homeland” which had sprung from the already existing political and para-Masonic association “Justice-Brotherhood” (*Dreptate-Frăţie*), founded in 1843 in Bucharest. Soon, everybody was referring to the Committee (which comprised Rosetti, the Brătianus, the Golescus, and others) in short-hand as the “Revolutionary Committee”. The homes of the committee members were placed under surveillance by Prince Gheorghe Bibescu, who refused his support when Rosetti submitted his reformist project of national “renaissance” on the grounds that it was premature.\(^{151}\)

Broadly speaking, the liberals’ strategy was based on working with Turkey against Russia’s growing interference and on hijacking the spirit of the *Tanzimat* – the imperial reform programme launched by Sultan Mahmud II in 1839 – to achieve reform in the Principalities. Although ultimate independence from the Ottoman Porte remained in the background of all nation-building projects from 1848 onwards, the immediate threat was perceived as coming from Russia’s increasingly tenacious expansionism in South-East Europe. Russia’s grip on the Danubian Principalities had been steadily growing since the landmark treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774, which established internationally her self-assumed role as protectress of the Christian Orthodox peoples.

\(^{149}\) The following section does not provide a comprehensive narrative of the 1848 revolution in Wallachia. For a recent, serviceable and brief English-language account, see Lothar Maier, “The Revolution of 1848 in Moldavia and Wallachia”, in *Europe in 1848*, ed. Dowe et al., 186–209.

\(^{150}\) Florescu, *The Struggle Against Russia*, 179.

\(^{151}\) Bucur, *C. A. Rosetti: mesianism*, 49.
in the Ottoman Empire, while also granting her free navigation on the Black Sea and, through the Straits, into the Mediterranean. The growing strategic importance of the Principalities as a military outpost against both Constantinople and the Habsburg Empire and as a source of army supplies, Moldavia’s proximity to restive Poland and its availability as a haven for Polish refugees, the importance of Danubian navigation, were all crucial geopolitical considerations which led to further Russian inroads into Ottoman suzerainty and Romanian autonomy. The Treaty of Adrianople (1829) brought this process of integration within the Russian sphere of influence to a close. By that treaty, the Ottomans confirmed Greek and Serbian autonomy and granted Russia concessions in the Principalities which turned the provinces into virtual tsarist satellites.152

The Organic Statutes of 1831–1832, widely regarded today as Romania’s earliest modern constitutional blueprints, were drawn up under Russian military occupation by a very competent administrator, General Pavel Kiseleff, in order to ensure a better administration of the provinces, a faithful native aristocracy and, more generally, a less discontented population in what Russia hoped would be a stable buffer zone. The Statutes went some way towards a modernization of the juridical and political language in Romania, as well towards introducing a ‘pre-parliamentary’ system which reduced the prerogatives of the Prince, secularised law, until then almost exclusively administered by the church, and created ‘ministries’ with paid, accountable civil servants and more clearly defined roles. The Statutes remained, however, hybrid creations with many old regime features, such as maintaining the right of the ruling prince to dissolve the country’s assemblies, and almost completely ignoring civil liberties and rights. But they also made attempts towards a separation of powers, they recognised, at least in theory, the right of the Principalities to elect their rulers (until then nominated and recognised by the Porte), distinguished between the state treasury and the prince’s personal revenues and, generally speaking, reduced the amount of arbitrariness in the country’s political institutions.153 Yet, although it could be argued with hindsight that

153 For recent assessments of the Organic Statutes, see Ioan Stanomir, Nașterea Constituției: limbaj și drept în Principate până la 1866 (Bucharest, 2004), Ch. 3: “Para-