

## AGNES VON KUROWSKY, ERNEST HEMINGWAY AND THE AMERICAN RED CROSS– ROMANIA THROUGH THE EYES OF A UNIVERSAL LITERATURE MUSE\*

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**Abstract:** After the end of World War I, Romania was severely affected by epidemics, famine, poverty, and had over a hundred thousand orphaned children, in addition to the wounded and infirm. As a result, by the end of 1918, American aid was seen as the saving solution. In 1919, a new mission of the American Red Cross arrived in Bucharest, following a previous one during the war. However, due to differences in vision between Herbert Hoover, the leader of the American Relief Administration, and the Romanian government, most members of the American Red Cross withdrew in the fall of 1919. Consequently, in 1920, only a small team of the American Junior Red Cross remained, responsible for the care of the children. Agnes von Kurowski was assigned as a nurse of the Junior Red Cross. Today, we know that she was the nurse with whom Ernest Hemingway had a love affair during the war, in Italy, in 1918. After their separation, she spent almost two years, in two different stages, at the centers and sanatoriums for Romanian children in Bucharest, Techirghiol, Constanța, and Breaza. During the first stage, Agnes von Kurowski wrote several letters to her mother and one to an acquaintance. Furthermore, in December 1922, even though they were no longer together, Agnes wrote a letter to her former lover, Ernest, in which she made references to the period spent in Romania. Thus, this study has two components. On the one hand, it traces the biographical profile of the woman who would become one of the most famous muses of universal literature, starting from her relationship with Ernest Hemingway. On the other hand, based on the letters, it explores the image of Romania through the eyes of the nurse Agnes von Kurowski. For this second part, we have reproduced the letters as documents.

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