

## THE ROMANIANS, THE ITALIANS AND THE NATIONAL IDEAL

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In the second half of the 19th century, military cooperation between the Romanians and the Italians was present under various forms, from the idealistic plans of forming a joint military legion with the Italians in 1848 – 1849, with the mission of fighting alongside the Hungarian revolutionaries, to the enthusiasm of the Romanian volunteers who joined Garibaldi on his way to Sicily in 1860, or the desideratum of the Romanian prisoners taken by the Austro-Hungarian army on the Italian front to form a military unit capable of fighting alongside the Entente cordiale, in 1917.

Sharing the same principles and national values, the Italians and the Romanians have considered that, on one hand, by helping each other they had more chances to succeed, and, on the other hand, fulfilling the national ideals of one of the two nations would create a legitimating precedent for the other.

If the year 1848 – 1849 marked a year of insurrectional failures and the crystallization of some guiding ideological concepts, the years that followed were characterized by joint efforts of the European revolutionaries to materialize such concepts, through some political strategies that were adequate for the proposed purposes by romantic heroism, and the development of a speech filled with identity symbols.

The voluntarism of those years is justified by the existence of some intellectual generations, who turned into political people and idealistic revolutionaries. The military cooperation between nations like the Italians and Romanians, among others, was possible because of a new typology of space representation, as physical boundaries were no longer uncrossable frontiers, and the notion of homeland implies the same symbolic valence and values both in Rome, and in Bucharest or Iași.

The new generations of revolutionaries, regardless of nationality, study together at the leading European universities, share the same ideas, attend common political clubs, and the battlefield is wherever they think that social-political relations have become anachronistic.

Garibaldi's campaign from 1860 provided the decisive impetus to the process of the unification of Italy. Taking advantage of a generous influx of young idealistic revolutionaries and the specific national liveliness, this campaign emphasized, through a series of military victories, the selfless heroic spirit of the participants and the impressive vocational and principled stature of Garibaldi.

Representing the transition from the low number of troops who disembarked at Marsala, whose victories all the way to Palermo are known as the expedition "of the Thousand", to the army organized according to rigorous military rules of the Battle of Milazzo, numerous heterogeneous insurrectional groups joined the initial formations. This amorphous mass of people, driven more by spirit than by science, was joined by approximately 1500 non-Italian fighters, who turned it into a European campaign. Some of these groups were organized according to national principles and formed legions of single national titles, although they also

included other nationalities in lower numbers, among which were the Polish and Romanians, who, although significant in number, did not form distinctive national legions. Thus, the legion that bore the Hungarian name was only partially Hungarian, just like the French, English, or Swiss Legions.

The reconstruction of the revolutionary events was facilitated by the fact that some participants-observers adhered to Garibaldism, who either participated directly in the development of Garibaldi's campaign, or wrote in their notes or memoirs published afterwards about the things some Garibaldi followers had told or seen.

Romanian followers of Garibaldi left no notes, no letters were found, mainly because a large number of these people were simple, and left no memoirs.

In his memoirs, Garibaldi wrote of some valuable fighters from all over Europe, but did not explicitly mention the Romanians. The history of the division most of them belonged to includes in its lists of the dead and wounded many Romanian names, but it does so without pointing out their role in the campaign<sup>1</sup>.

The fact that the Italian memoirists of Garibaldi's campaign do not mention the Romanians is because none of them were members of the units who disembarked initially; they came to Sicily afterwards, when the units had spread throughout the island. Engaged in continuous traveling, they could not witness the constitution of the Hungarian Legion, which was founded in the capital of Sicily on July 16, 1860, and which included numerous Romanians, who came from various battalions, which continued to disembark in Sicily. Another explanation is that, for instance, Giulio Adamoli, a memoirist, was stationed at the Headquarters, which were usually visited only by army corps commanders, none of whom were Romanian; the officers of the General Staff did not include any Romanians, either<sup>2</sup>. Although not relevant in terms of certifying the presence and number of the Romanians in Garibaldi's army, Italian memoirism is essential for the study of military behavior, allowing the reconstruction of the genesis and progress of Türr's Hungarian Legion, and the battles it fought during the campaign.

Romanian historiography does not have certified numbers concerning the Romanians who joined Garibaldi's army; Italianists Claudiu Isopescu<sup>3</sup> and Alexandru Marcu<sup>4</sup> made some estimations, of questionable plausibility, considering the fact that they were based on data and numbers from after 1860 when, for example, the Türr Division was no longer used on the battlefield, but to suppress the acts of brigandage committed in Sicily and southern Italy, and its members were quite different.

The assessment of approximately 200 Romanians participating in the battle of Voltorno, number suggested by Claudiu Isopescu, is considered exaggerated by Gaetano Falzone, who says that: "Certainly a lot of Transylvanians fought alongside Garibaldi, but it's unlikely that all of them considered themselves Romanian"<sup>5</sup>.

Angelo Tamborra tells of the existence of some Romanians among the Garibaldi's troops, mentioning the fact that many among them were Romanians from Transylvania who had deserted the Austrian army and chose to join Garibaldi<sup>6</sup>. Colonel Vigevano, the author of a history of the Hungarian Legion, considers names such as Stoica, Filimon, Grancea as being

<sup>1</sup> Carlo Pecorini Marconi, *Storia della 15-a Divisione Türr*. Florence, Sansoni, 1876, p. 530.

<sup>2</sup> Giulio Adamoli, *Ricordi di un volontario. Da San Martino a Meniana*. Milan, Arti Grafiche, 1892, p. 146-149.

<sup>3</sup> Claudiu Isopescu, *Saggi romeno-italo-ispatici*. Rome, 1943, p. 187-189.

<sup>4</sup> Alexandru Marcu, *Conspiratori și conspirații în istoria renașterii politice a României 1848-1877 (Conspirators and Conspiracies in the History of Romania's Political Renaissance 1848-1877)*. Bucharest, 1930, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Gaetano Falzone, *Sicilia 1860*. Palermo, 1862, p. 265.

<sup>6</sup> Angelo Tamborra, *Garibaldi e l'Europa*, in *Atti del XXXIX Congresso di Storia del Risorgimento Italiano*. Rome, 1961, p. 458.

Hungarian, although he admits that some of the soldiers were not Hungarian; he still cannot find any Romanians, "error" which can be explained by the time when this paper was published<sup>7</sup>.

We find a specific mention of the presence of the Romanians in the liberal Bucharest newspaper of C.A. Rosetti, "The Romanian", which pointed out particular facts concerning the methods of recruitments for the Hungarian Legion, remarking the fact that there were a lot of Transylvanian Romanians fighting in this legion, and also cautioning about the Magyarization of the names, but also presented warfare chronicles, or attempted to inspire patriotic sympathy for the Italian cause. It mentioned the war actions of some important Romanians, such as Captain Ion Mircea's during the battles of Volturmo, or the Romanians' desire to form a distinct unit<sup>8</sup>.

The fact that a lot of Romanians died during Italian Risorgimento, conquering under the "Hungarian" name the right to Italian gratitude, is also certified by Giovenalle Vegezzi Ruscalla from Turin, who admits in his writings the role played by Romanians in the battles of southern Italy. Considering all the fighters who formed the Hungarian legion as Hungarians was not due to willful negligence or incompetence, but to the usage for denomination of the cartographic representation of Hungary as a political entity, which also included non-Hungarian nationalities.

As far as the history of the Hungarian Legion is concerned, it was founded by Garibaldi's decree on July 16, 1860; it was, in fact, one infantry company, made of 47 people, out of which 12 Romanians. On July 24, out of 71 people forming the troop, 20 were Romanians, the others being identified as Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, Croats, Poles, Italians, Germans and Swiss, while on August 23 there were 118 soldiers.

After the disembarking of August 29 in continental Italy, we find the Italian Legion, led by Eber la Cosenza, on September 7, participating in a series of official ceremonies; then, on September 10 they embark at Paola for Naples, where they are quartered in the Granili barracks. After two days in Naples, the Hungarian Legion heads for Santa Maria, the final destination being Caserta, where they arrive on October 22. From a roll from September 2, 1860 we find that the unit was made up of 107 soldiers, out of which: 48 Hungarians, 18 Romanians, 17 Italians, 10 Czechs and Slovaks, 5 Germans, 2 Austrians, 2 French, 2 Swiss, and 1 Croat. The cumulative nominal lists of the two infantry companies of the legion give us on October 1 the following ethnic composition: 57 Italians, 57 Hungarians, 23 Germans, 22 Romanians, 14 Slovaks and Czechs, 8 Austrians, 7 English, 6 Poles, 4 Swiss, 4 Croats, 1 Finn, 1 French, 1 Lithuanian, and 1 Swede<sup>9</sup>.

At the review of November 13, 1860, when the southern army had been dissolved, out of the total of 197 members of the infantry companies, the Italians and Hungarians were now 57, followed by 19 Germans, 17 Romanians, 12 Poles, 9 Czechs, 4 Swiss, and 2 Croats. The Hungarians represented approximately 30% of the troop total. On August 9, the first cavalry squadron of the southern army allocated to the Hungarian Legion, was made up of 28 hussars without horses, and registered a significant increase around August 23, when we find a total of 118 soldiers<sup>10</sup>.

The cavalry, for which we have precise and detailed notes signed by Lieutenant Nicolae Dunca from Maramureș, an Adjutant Major, contains, in the first ten days of September, a total of 75 or 76 people, who come to be real cavalymen in Calabria, where they receive horses; the total doubles in Caserta, around the time of the battle of Volturmo, when it consists of 141 members<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Attilio Vigeveno, *La Legione Ungherese in Italia (1859-1867)*. Rome, Alma Publishing House, 1924, p. 88.

<sup>8</sup> These reports appeared in *Românul (The Romanian)*, between October 1861 and January 1862.

<sup>9</sup> Ștefan Delureanu, *Romani alături de Garibaldi în expediția celor O Mie (Romanians together with Garibaldi in the Expedition of the Thousand)*, in *Revista de Istorie (History Magazine)*, 10, volume 35, 1982, p. 1130.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 1131.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*.

The picture of the ethnic composition of the cavalry unit is as follows: on August 18, in Messina the squadron consisted of 37 people, out of which 6 officers.

Among the 31 names forming the troop there are: 13 Hungarian, 3 Romanian, 8 Germanic, 3 Czech, 2 Croatian, and one Polish name. On October 1 we find a troop of 126 people, out of which: 54 Italians, 45 Hungarians, 10 Romanians, 8 Germans, 4 Poles, 3 Croats, and 2 Czechs. The officers are Hungarian, both for the infantry and the cavalry units.

The role of the legion that included the largest number of Romanians could be defined as brilliant, since, traveling from Caserta to Santa Maria on the day of the battle of Volturmo, as reserve for Garibaldi's army, it generally contributed to the victory of the revolutionary army. Giovanni Alessandri, the Head of the General Staff, tells that during those events the cavalymen distinguished themselves; although a small number, they attacked four times a much larger enemy, while the legion's infantry heroically resisted the attack of the Neapolitan troops, causing important losses<sup>12</sup>.

The actions that distinguished the soldiers of the Hungarian Legion were followed by the recognition of the merits on the battlefield; Captain Ioan Sumlai was one of the three officers of the legion's infantry who received a medal for the valor proven on the battlefield, and he was Romanian; the other two medals were awarded to the commander and his adjutant; the captain received a Sardinian silver medal. Gabriel Badici was among the soldiers who received honorary mentions. The total number of people from the legion's infantry and cavalry who received special praise for their merits in the battle of Volturmo was 23, among which 10 officers<sup>13</sup>.

Another form of military merit recognition is rank promotion; in this case we can mention Ioan Sumlai, who was a lieutenant and was promoted to captain, 1<sup>st</sup> class, and Nicolae Dunca, whose progress from tenente to primo tenente, capitano, and capitano de prima classe we can accurately follow. Similar interpretation can be given to the gradual promotion to the rank of sergeant of soldiers Ion Beltegar, Ștefan Lupea, Iuliu Pop, Nicolae Stan, and Adam Crăciun.

As far as the losses are concerned, the general dead and wounded list includes Filimon Crișan, who died on October 11 in the Marina hospital, and Rafael Grancea, who died on October 12 in the Del Carmine hospital, as Hungarians, obviously because they belonged to the Hungarian Legion. A nominal list of the dead and wounded of the Eber brigade includes Nicolae Stoica as dead, and Filimon Crisan and Rafael Grancea as wounded, although they had already died. They are all reported as Hungarians. The total number of the legion's losses after Volturmo was 18 dead, out of which 10 were unidentified, and 8 had no first names, and 32 wounded.

During his research at the *Archivio di Stato di Torino*, Ștefan Delureanu identified a list of names of the Romanians who were part of Garibaldi's army<sup>14</sup>, out of which three officers, Sublieutenant Gheorghe Sajo and Captain Ioan Șumulai from the infantry, and Captain Nicolae Dunca from the cavalry. Other specialties and units outside the legion include: Major Alexandru Buda, Sublieutenant Ion Fircea, Captain Mircea Ion, Lieutenant Ștefan Matia, Captain Ion Pop, and Sublieutenant Ion Pascal Pop. At the beginning of December, therefore after the dissolution of Garibaldi's army, another name is added, that of Sublieutenant Daniel Șerban.

The following soldiers and non-commissioned officers were members of the infantry of the Hungarian Legion during the Sicily and southern Italy campaign:

Iuliu Andrei, Ion Anghel, Gabriel Badici, Iosif Balint, Ștefan Balint, Ion Biriș, Ștefan Biriș, Ion Beltegar, Vladislav Bogdan, Ion Boroș, Paul Boroș, Ion Boteanu, Ludovic Boteanu, Ion Burcean, Nicolae Burcean, Ștefan Ciontoș, Adam Crăciun, Filimon Crișan, Ion Crișan, Dionisie Doboși, Rafael Grancea, Ștefan Groza, Iosif Hentiu, Ștefan Lupea, Andrei Mihai, Francisc

<sup>12</sup> Giovanni Alessandri, *Brigata Eber. Diario*. Rome, 1887, p. 180-201.

<sup>13</sup> Ștefan Delureanu, *op. cit.*, p. 1133.

<sup>14</sup> In fact, of the Hungarian Legion.

Mitruț, Iosif Pop, Iuliu Pop, Martin Pop, Mihai Repeș, Mihai Șanta, Francisc Saras, Toader Saras, Ion Simion, Simion Simion, Ștefan Simion, Nicolae Stan, Nicolae Stoica, Ion Șerban, Nicolae Șerban. Besides Ion Anghel and Martin Pop, who were transferred from the cavalry, the cavalry included: Albert Bălean, Anton Borza, Mihai Dobra, Ștefan Matei, Mihai Odor, Matei Pavlovici, Gabriel Pop, Iuliu Perhelean, Iosif Raicu, Gabriel Rațiu, Anton Stoian, Ion Suciu, and Gheorghe Topal.

Besides the names of these Romanians who have been identified as participants in Garibaldi's expedition, a relevant number can be identified from other sources, such as the Austrian archives. Some of the enlistment dates are subsequent to the dissolution of the southern army. While we are not sure that some of the people took part in the campaign of "the Thousand", their participation in Garibaldi's 1862 action in Rome is clear. We specify the following names: Alexandru Andea, Gabriel Balaș, Carol Banu, Gheorghe Bîrsan, Iosif Boroș, Alexandru Botar, Paul Comșa, Ion Cosma, Vladislav Dane, Iosif Daneș, Francisc Daneș, Ignat Doman, Mihai Farago, Anton Hossu, Albert Iordan, Iuliu Lucaci, Iuliu Mocioni, Ion Munteanu, Iosif Novac, Iosif Paloș, Gheorghe Popdan, Dionisie Sitar, Anton Rachias, Paul Suciu, Paul Talaba, Iosif Tămaș, Stavru Teohari, and Anton Troițan. The participation in the Rome campaign only meant that the Romanians also wanted to take part in the glory of entering the ancient city and turning it into the capital of a secular state, based on the principle of national self-determination.

The Romanians were present in all the war actions in which Garibaldi's army units were involved. Their glory is both national, and Italian or European. The expressions of the Romanian participation in the Italian revolutionary expedition were the constant increase in the numbers subsequent to the Thousand, whose reunion with their remaining core created the Southern Army; the political-diplomatic and military contribution to the constitution and development of the Hungarian Legion and other of Garibaldi's units; the participation in the Sicily actions, until the liberation of the island; and, after the disembarking in Calabria, all the war actions in southern and central Italy.

Although the formation of a national identity military unit proved to be a practically impossible desideratum, the fact that the Romanians reunited in different components of an army such as Garibaldi's proves that shared values bring with them shared purposes, regardless of nationality or the name of the unit one is a part of.

The significantly larger number of Romanians coming from Transylvania or Banat than from the Principalities who joined Garibaldi's army can be explained not by a difference of opinions, but by the different political circumstances. The enlistment of the former was facilitated by the existence of some Austrian garrisons, which included regiments with obvious Romanian national characteristics<sup>15</sup>.

Therefore, the Austrian military administration decided to station the Italian Bianchi and Stassoldo regiments in Timișoara and Sibiu, and to make the Romanian 50<sup>th</sup> and 61<sup>st</sup> regiments garrison troops in Venice and Treviso<sup>16</sup>. The desertions from such units created both on the Italian, and the Transylvanian and Hungarian territories reservoirs of potential recruits for future revolutionary actions.

Another reason why the Principalities' contribution to Garibaldi's forces was limited was that by 1860 there was no more Romanian revolutionary migration, and its representatives were returning to the new state, formed on January 24, 1859, while the Polish or Hungarian

<sup>15</sup> Liviu Maior, *Habsburgi și români. De la loialitate dinastică la identitate națională (Habsburgs and Romanians. From Dynastic Loyalty to National Identity)*. Bucharest, Enciclopedica Publishing House, 2006, p. 105-115.

<sup>16</sup> Sorin Mitu, *Carbonari și tribune: interferențe revoluționare româno-italiene (Carbonari and Tribunes: Romanian-Italian Revolutionary Interferences)*, in *Transilvania mea (My Transylvania)*. Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2006, p. 361.

migration was well represented in western Europe; however, through the tolerance shown to the recruitment on the Principalities' territory, the Romanians allowed the Italian revolutionary armies to increase their numbers.

The Romanians' enlistment in the same volunteer unit as the Hungarians, and their military cooperation with them, as well as with the other nationalities represented in such unit and the Southern Army, such as Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Croats, Greeks, Italians, and other nationalities, correspond to the European vocation of the national political ideas in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The direct correlation between ideology, as a manifestation of political theories, and political action, represented by the activities of the secret societies, and especially the battles fought by revolutionary armies, which were motivated to fight by a shared creed, and not due to a recruitment system that was mandatory or promised material rewards (soldier's pay), was an element that characterized revolutionary romanticism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Romanian volunteers from Garibaldi's armies turned the fight to achieve different national goals into a way of life and even a profession; we find many of them in Garibaldi's troops who begin the failed Rome campaign in 1862, but we also find them within the northern troops during the American Civil War, tying their destinies to principles such as freedom and equal rights regardless of skin color; we also find these volunteers in the Romanian army, which fights for independence in Bulgaria in 1877-1878. They even fight in such exotic places as Latin America, a region where both civil wars, and battles for borders succeeded rapidly during the entire 19<sup>th</sup> century. A classic example is that of the Dunca brothers, who fought from Italy to America, and then returned home to fight the Romanian War of Independence.

In conclusion, we can say that the generalized European revolution from 1848-1849, although defeated from a military point of view, led to the opening of new battlefronts from Italy to Poland, fronts which did not lack volunteers, who were ready to sacrifice themselves in order to achieve their goals; and the Romanians could make no exception.

### **Românii, italienii și Idealul Național**

#### *Rezumat*

Secolul XIX este perioada de efervescentă maximă a tot ceea ce înseamnă afirmarea identității naționale și lupta pentru unitate. Românii și italienii se regăsesc, în acest context mobilizator, de aceeași parte a baricadei, ambele popoare dorindu-și formarea unor state naționale proprii. Empatia și colaborarea revoluționară fac să regăsim în rândurile armatelor garibaldine numeroși români, care au considerat că luptând pentru cauza Italiei unificate, servesc un ideal mai larg, acela al afirmării la scară europeană a conștiinței naționale.