

ROMANIA ON THE ROAD TO SOVIETISATION (1944–1945). A TURKISH DIPLOMAT’S TESTIMONIAL¹

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L’entrée de la Roumanie dans le système totalitaire de type soviétique est de plus en plus connue et les témoignages roumains ou étrangers de cette époque y ont apporté une contribution importante. Nous voulons mettre en question un journal que les historiens roumains n’ont guère utilisé, écrit par Zeki Kunalp, le secrétaire de la Légation de Turquie de 1943 à 1947. Ce qui nous intéresse ici c’est la manière dont il a perçu le changement dans la société roumaine. Dans ses mémoires (car on ne peut pas parler vraiment d’un journal) on peut retrouver des observations sur la Roumanie dans la dernière année de guerre, sur les troupes et les autorités soviétiques, les personnages politiques, leurs ambitions et motivations, les Roumains et les Hongrois de Transylvanie, ainsi qu’un témoignage de la sympathie de la Roumanie pour la Turquie et du changement radical après le 23 août 1944.

Mots clés: la scène politique, l’occupation soviétique, les perceptions turques.

I. Some considerations about the Romanian-Turkish relations and their historiography

For almost ninety years, the relations between those countries are depicted as excellent, a model for the whole area. And this from very beginning: “*Among all Eastern Powers, we are absolutely entrusted that the only one with which we will build sincere relations which would lead to a close friendship is ROMANIA. It’s the only state strongly enhanced and in whose honesty and loyalty we put our thrust. Governments from Bucharest always held their pledge. Romania is the most tolerant, welcoming and free of chauvinism.*” This was the words of a “Turkish personality”, used in a conversation with a Romanian diplomat in Sofia, in February 1924, which, on his turn, transmitted to Constantin Langa-Rășcanu, extraordinary and plenipotentiary envoy of Romania in Sofia².

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² According to February 1st report of the Romanian diplomat, sent to I. Gh. Duca, minister of Foreign Affairs, in *România-Turcia. Relații diplomatice*, vol. I, 1923–1938, edition by Dumitru Preda, București, Editura Cavallioti, p. 7. Last sentence is quoted also by Mircea N. Popa, *Quelques aspects des relations roumano-turques durant la période comprise entre les deux guerres mondiales*, in „*Revue Roumaine d’Histoire*”, XX, 4, p. 758.

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Indeed, without territorial problems or historical unsolved issues (the long common past becoming only an academic subject, after the Ottoman Empire's breakdown), without problems arising by the Turkish and Tatars community, large enough and concentrated especially in Dobruja, bilateral relations could be characterized, starting from these conclusions, by stability, understanding, good neighborhood, similar views, at least for the interwar period and also, despite of the different political options, during World War Two and postwar period. The examples of common views on the Balkan Entente and the Straits's regime topics are definitory and are treated with priority by the Romanian historiography.

However, in this picture, some nuances of gray appeared but we would not discuss them here. Instead, we could state, without fear of committing a mistake, that the level of academic mutual knowledge is quite unsatisfactory³. We dare to

³ There are not many names of scholars which analyzed this problem nor the studies and/or monographs published in Romania. Here are what it could be an almost complete list of this works, without repeating the titles mentioned above: Mehmet Ali Ekrem, *Relațiile româno – turce între cele două războaie mondiale*, București, Editura Științifică, 1993; Idem, *Relațiile româno – turce (1928–1934)*, in "Revista Istorică", 1981, 34, nr. 5; Idem, *Considerations sur les réformes intérieures et sur la politique étrangère de Kemal Atatürk*, in „Revue Roumaine d’Histoire”, 1981, 20, no.3; Idem, *Atatürk – făuritorul Turciei moderne*, București, Editura Politică, 1969; Petre Ghiță, *Atatürk*, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 1975; Eliza Campus, *Les relations entre la Turquie kémaliste et la Roumanie pendant l’entre deux-guerres*, in „Revue Roumaine d’Histoire”, 1981, 20, no. 3; C. Iordan–Sima, *La Turquie kémaliste et l’idée du pacte balkanique dans les années 1925–1926*, in „Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes”, 1981, 19, nr. 2; Idem, *Le place de la Roumanie dans les relations internationales de la Turquie républicaine jusqu’en 1925*, in „Anuarul Institutului de Istorie A.D. Xenopol”, Iași, 1994, 31; Idem, *Un diplomate roumain sur la victoire de la révolution kémaliste à Istanbul*, in „Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes”, 1980, 18, nr. 3; Camelia Brâncoveanu, *Relațiile româno–turce din februarie 1943 până la încheierea celui de Al Doilea Război Mondial*, în „Analele Universității Dimitrie Cantemir. Seria Istorie”, 2003, 5; Andrei Nicolescu, *Aspecte ale colaborării militare româno-turce în perioada interbelică (1934–1939)*, în *Omagiu Istoricului Florin Constantiniu*, Focșani, 2003; Idem, *Misiunea militară la Constantinopol în perioada 1919–1933*, in *Omagiu istoricului Gheorghe Buzatu*, Focșani, 1999; Vasile Stoica, *1939. Dialog diplomatic București – Ankara*, in „Magazin Istoric”, 1994, nr. 11–12/1994, nr. 1/1995; Marian Zădaru, *Eforturi româno-turce pentru salvarea păcii în Europa în primăvara și vara anului 1939*, in *Tătarii în istoria românilor*, Constanța, 2004; Nicolae Ciachir, *Informații din arhivele române despre Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1905–1938)*, in „Revista Istorică”, 1981, 24, nr. 6; Anca Ghiță, *La conception kémaliste de la nation et l’Etat moderne*, in „Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes”, 1979, 17, no. 4; Mihail Guboglu, *Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938) – fondatorul Republicii Turcia*, in „RCNR – UNESCO”, 1981, 23, nr. 3; Idem, *Moustapha Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938), illustre personnalité de l’histoire turque*, in „Analele Universității București. Seria Istorie”, 1981, 30; Mustafa Ali Mehmed, *Mustafa Kemal Atatürk – penseur et humaniste*, in „Revue des Études Sud Est Européennes”, 1982, 20, nr. 1; Dumitru Preda, *Romanian diplomatic documents on the political – military evolution of Turkey during Atatürk (1923–1938)*, in Acts of XIXth International Colloquium of Military History. July 17–24, 1993, Istanbul: *The Studies of the period between First and Second World Wars (1918–1939) from a view of military history*, Ankara, 1994; Idem, *Republica Turcia în timpul lui Atatürk (1923–1938). După documente diplomatice române*, in *Hegemoniile trecutului. Evoluții române și europene. Profesorului Ioan Chiper la 70 de ani*, coord. Mioara Anton, Florin Anghel, Cosmin Popa, București, Editura Curtea Veche, București, 2006; Florin Anghel, „*Noul curs*” în relațiile dintre România și Turcia, 1927–1928, in *Tătarii în istoria românilor*, Constanța, 2004.

forward some hypothesis: language barrier, which limited the Romanian historians' access to Turkish historiography and the opposite; the low interest of Romanian historians for issues which exceed the topic of Balkan Entente; the Turkish historians' attitude, more preoccupied by the consolidation of a national historiography centered on Mustafa Kemal Atatürk⁴; difficult access to Turkish Republican Archives and no availability, until now, of the Diplomatic Archives; lack of some personalities (political, economical or from academic area) whose activity may highlight the bilateral relations issue.

Within these limits we propose to bring into attention an issue which is a part of the whole picture: that of *perceptions*. Indeed, the way in which people, despite their quality or occupation, perceive a foreign society, in which, for a longer or shorter period, they live, is quite important. Their testimonies, difficult to categorize or summarize, allow us to discover a situation more complex than the image which was until now recognized by historians.

For Romanian-Turkish relations, we have only few Turkish testimonies⁵, covering the 20th century, anyhow much more than those from the Romanian side (at least in the present stage of research).

Our goal is not to make a comparative analysis of these testimonies (a difficult task, taking into consideration their variety and distance in time); instead, we focused on a book which covered a very sensitive and dramatical period of Romanian history.

II. A special destiny: Zeki Kuneralp

The author of the memoirs lived a spectacular life, which was not exempt of tragic moments. It was born on October 5, 1914, in an elite family; his father was Ali Kemal Bey, a well-known journalist, writer and liberal and pro-British

⁴ As we mentioned above, a huge lack of interest for studying bilateral relations is manifested in Turkish historiography. We cannot highlight more than a few number of works, in our present state of knowing: İlkyay Çapraz, *Atatürk Türkiye'si ile Romanya Arasındaki Diplomatik İlişkilere Toplu Bir Bakış (An overview about diplomatic relations between Atatürk's Turkey and Romania)*, Atatürkçülük ve Modern Türkiye, Uluslararası Konferans, Ankara, Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi, 1999; İdem, *Romanya ülke etüdü ve Türk yatırımları (Romania-country study and Turkish investments)*, İstanbul Ticaret Odası, İstanbul, 2003; Yusuf Uralgiray, *Romanya'da Türk ve İslam kültürü: Dobruca'nın dünü, bugünü ve yarını (Turkish and Islamic culture from Romania: Dobrudja, past, present and future)*, Ankara Üniv., Ankara, 1981.

⁵ Sadri Ertem, *Ankara-Bükreş*, İstanbul, Tan Yayınları, 1937; Zeki Kuneralp, *Les Debuts de la Sovietisation de la Roumanie: Aout 1944 – Aout 1945. Témoignage d'un diplomate turec*, İstanbul, İsis Yayınları, 1992; Kamuran Gürün, *Bükreş – Paris – Atina Büyükelçilik Anıları (Bucharest – Paris – Athens. Embassy Memoirs)*, Milliyet Yayınları, 1994; Ahmet Rasim, Hazırlayan – Ridvan Yakın, *Romanya Mektupları (Romanian Letters)*, İstanbul, Arba Yayınları, 1988; Yusuf Ziya Bahadinli, *Dört sosyalist ülke: gezi izlenimleri: Bulgaristan, Macaristan, Polonya, Romanya (Four socialist states: travel memoirs: Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania)*, Hür Yayınevi, İstanbul, 1970.

politician. His mother, Sabiha Hanım, was descendent from an important Pasha of the Ottoman Empire⁶.

But the collapse of the Empire brought the tragedy into this honourable family. Ali Kemal, the last minister of Interior during the British occupation of Constantinople, was in favour to a political project which opposed that of Mustafa Kemal. He was kidnapped from the *Grand Cercle d'Orient* by the nationalists, in 1922, sent to Ankara for trial, but lynched by the population in Izmit, with the consent of his guardians and the approval of general Nureddin Pasha.

With his mother, Zeki Kunalalp took the road of exile. Having settled in Switzerland, he completed his education until the level of doctoral studies, in Law, in Bern, a degree obtained in 1938. He returned to Turkey after Atatürk's death and, with special approval of President İsmet İnönü, he began to work in diplomacy, having as his first assignment Bucharest, as a Legacy secretary, third degree (1943–1947). The following missions occurred in Prague, Paris, as Head of the Turkish delegation at NATO, then Bern, London (1964–1966, 1969–1972). Between the two missions in London, Kunalalp was general secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From that position he assisted, together with Professor Suat Bilge, the chief legal advisor of the same institution, the Turkish Cypriot Provisional Administration, established in 1967, as central authority for directing the affairs of the Turkish Cypriots⁷.

The end of his career was marked by a series of unhappy and dramatic events. The multiple sclerosis made him unable to walk without help. His illness convinced him to choose, as a final mission, to be Ambassador in Madrid (1972–1979), where he felt attracted by the history, art and, maybe the country's conservatorism. Here, tragedy struck back again. In 1978, three gunmen open fire on the ambassadorial car, where his wife, Necla Kunalalp was with her brother, the retired Ambassador Beşir Balcıoğlu. Both (and also the driver) lost their lives. This murder was claimed by an Armenian group, known either as the *Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia* or *Justice Commandos Against Armenian Genocide*. The target was the Ambassador himself, but he was confounded with his brother-in-law, both men using crutches in their move⁸. Kunalalp received with great dignity this tragedy; it is relevant, in that sense, his reply to a comment from *The Economist* (“an act of vengeance against an historical enemy”). He asked, in a letter to the journal, how events that had taken place before the birth of his wife could justify her killing⁹.

⁶ Interesting details about Ali Kemal, his policy and his vision for Turkey, we found in an article signed by Norman Stone: *My dream for Turkey, by Boris's great-grandfather*, in www.spectator.co.uk, April 23, 2008. The mentioned Boris is nobody else than Boris Johnson, present Mayor of London.

⁷ Constantine P. Danopoulos, Dharendra Vajpeyi, Amir Bar-Or, *Civil-Military Relations, Nation Building, and National Identity: Comparative Perspectives*, Westport CT, Praeger, 2004, p. 260–261.

⁸ www.mfa.gov.tr.

⁹ David Barchard, *Obituary: Zeki Kunalalp*, 12 August 1998, in www.independent.co.uk.

The last year of his life was dedicated to historical and autobiographical reflections¹⁰, and to maintain long established friendships: all persons who visited him, “on a quiet street, in a suburb over Marmara Sea”, described his vivid, open, fine spirit, his charm, intellectual distinction and his true affection, which remained the same, despite the very poor physical condition”¹¹. “A Saint”, in the opinion of Sir Bernard Burrows, former British diplomat in Ankara, who added that this quality is quite unusual for a diplomat.

In his public career, Kunalalp proved to have a liberal and pro-European mind. The unshaken belief in the necessity of Turkey’s integration in European Union was one of the major principle of Kunalalp thought. Also, his deep conviction that Greece and Turkey must reach a close friendship, as a cornerstone of stability and good neighborhood in Mediteranean Sea. Equally interesting are his opinions about Israel: “the only country in the Middle East, which is 'like us' is Israel [...]a fellow Western country which operates according to the rules and norms of acceptable international political conduct [...] Thus, Turkey, as a geographical marginal state, and Israel, with its political marginality in the region, contemplate one another, empathetically”¹² and both consider themselves as belonging to Western civilization.

III. Romania in Zeki Kunalalp testimony

The title of Kunalalp’s book is a clear statement. The period between September 1944 and August 1945¹³ is defined as *the beginning of Sovietization*. At the beginning of his notes, Kunalalp warns us: “my goal is not to keep a personal

¹⁰ He started with his own life narration, in a book called *Just a Diplomat*, published in 1981 in Turkish and in 1992 in English (Istanbul, The Isis Press). It was followed by a short biography of his father, in 1993: *Ali Kemal: a portrait for the benefit of his English-speaking progeny*. Two years later, his notes from the period spent in Bucharest (actually, only the year 1944 and the first half of 1945 are presented) was published, in French, as we mentioned above. His last paper is a historical one, referring to Turkish-Greek relations (*A footnote to Turco-Greek history: the Keşan-Alexandroupolis talks, September 9–10, 1968*, Istanbul, The Isis Press, 1998, 65 p.). In the same period, some writings about him was published. For example, in 1998, an article from number 16 of *Cornucopia* was dedicated to Zeki Kunalalp and, as a final eulogy, a volume containing remembers of Turkish and British diplomats, friends and family, about his career and life, was released in 1998: *Zeki Kunalalp 1914–1998. A tribute by Friends and Family*, Istanbul, The Isis Press, 43 p. It is not by chance that most of Kunalalp works appeared at one and the same publishing house. The Isis Press head is Sinan Kunalalp, a distinguished scholar, one of Zeki’s two sons (the other one, Selim, embraced the diplomatic career).

¹¹ David Barchard, *op. cit.*

¹² Yücel Bozdaglioglu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, New York, Routledge, 2003, p. 152.

¹³ An observation: in the title of this book, references are made to the period from August 1944 to August 1945. From the beginning, a warning (not signed) made a correction: the events between September 1944 and September 1945 are included. Both Kunalalp and the author of the warning failed to be more vigilant: first entry is from September 1944 (actually, a summary of what happened from April) and the last one is from August, 1945.

diary but to record the present political events. My mediocrity is compensated by the present times importance and by the possibility which I have, due to my profession, to know. If I will have the patience to carry on this diary, it will represent, later, a documentary which serves for my personal use”.

We note, from the beginning, the establishment of the goal and its limitations. However, as we will see, Kunalp didn't limit himself to *record* events which he observed. The journal itself does not have a uniform structure. We could divide it into three parts. *First*, where Kunalp refers to the events happened before September 1944, the date of the first entries into his diary. Some samples of the notes from this category: *The beginning of bombing raids in April 4; The Legation activity during bombardments; The political effects of the bombardments; News about the landing in Normandy; Sympathy for Turkey; Menemencioğlu resign; Coup d'etat from August 23*¹⁴. A *second* one is the effective beginning of diary, from September onward, part in which notes are headlined: *Crisis in NDU*¹⁵; *Tătărescu appearance on political stage; The decrease of Turkey's prestige; Incidents provoked by Russian soldiers; Soviet National Day reception*¹⁶ (some examples). Starting with page 26, we find ourselves into a *third* section¹⁷, characterized by the fact that the notes aren't headlined anymore, being preceded only the date in which are consigned (starting with December 3, 1944). A last technical mention: in this last part, a note bearing a specific date could refer to events happen in that day or in previous days or even weeks, which gave to the text a certain irregularity.

The first part opens with commentaries about the impact of April-May Allied air bombings, “foreseen by some but unexpected by the majority, which was pleased to believe that their good feelings toward Anglo-Saxons assured Romania immunity against air attacks”¹⁸. An interesting connection between bombing raids and Molotov's speech, from April 2, 1944, is made. The attack from April 4 “had the effect of a cold shower which waked up Romania to the cruel reality. The optimism induced by Molotov, vanished”¹⁹.

This episode is completed with references to the social and economic consequences, bad administrative organization, destruction of important buildings in Bucharest, the situation of Turkish Legation which “migrated” into rural areas, with furniture and value assets, being stationed in Afumați, in the villa of the well-known lawyer Aznavorian²⁰.

Very interesting considerations are made by Kunalp regarding *political effects of the bombing raids*. As immediate ones, “some decrease of the Romanian sympathy for Anglo-Americans without demonstrating, however, open hostility

¹⁴ This remembrance of recent events covered pages from one to ten from Kunalp book.

¹⁵ National Democratic Unit (Blocul Național Democrat, in translation).

¹⁶ Pages 11 to 25.

¹⁷ Pages 26 to 42.

¹⁸ Zeki Kunalp, *Les Debuts...*, p. 1.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 2–3

against the airmen and their countries”. Despite the Governmental anti-American propaganda, “public opinion maintained a hostile attitude regarding the alliance with Germany”. Moreover, Romanians desire of peace increased; “they see this military power demonstration, with hundred of airplanes flying into air, and they convince themselves, more and more, of the inevitable defeat”²¹. Another glimpse of how Romanian mind worked is related to the landing in Western Europe, on June 6th: “for everybody around me, peace-desiring Romanians and foreigners, the beginning of invasion represented, in a general manner, a prelude to the final assault, and a sincere joy invaded public opinion”. However, “the initial slowdown of military operations in Normandy provoked some kind of disappointment”²².

Kuneralp remembers what he perceived when he arrived in Bucharest, in March 1943. In his opinion, the feelings of “the great majority” of Romanians were: 1. dislike of Germany; 2. fear of Russia; 3. sympathy mixed with admiration for Anglo-Americans, especially for the last ones. Moreover, for many of the Romanians, “who confound wishes with reality”, a British landing in Greece or even on Black Sea shores should answer to their expectations²³. In this equation the role of Turkey was very important, Kuneralp mentioning a pro-Turkish movement, supported by the authorities, especially by the Foreign Minister Mihai Antonescu. At the moment of Turkish-German relations breakdown (August 2), both Mihai Antonescu and the Romanian Minister in Ankara stated their will to maintain good relations with Turkey, despite any possible German pressures²⁴.

However, the day after August 23, this situation reversed completely. The lack of reaction to that event in Turkey recasted the attitude of the Romanian press, which didn’t give any attention to the Turkish national celebration²⁵, on August 30, though it had been largely presented, by the same press, one year before²⁶. In October too, Kuneralp was deploring “the eclipse of the Turkish prestige in Romania”. Among neutral states, Turkey wasn’t present in the Romanian press articles, as Switzerland, Sweden or other neutral countries were. Moreover, some newspapers (those, we believe, that were issued by the Communist Party), repeated “with large headlines” threatening articles from *Pravda*, about a so-called Turkish bad intentioned neutrality. “Which was not possible under the old regime”, Kuneralp concluded²⁷.

The whole context, of resuming Soviet offensive on the Romanian front, in June, and of the *coup d’état* on August 23, is also described by Kuneralp. He is writing about the surprise, even panic, that had seized the Romanians, “all well

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 5.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

²⁵ Victory Day (Zafer Bayramı), commemorates the victory in the Battle of Dumlupınar, near Kütahya, between August 26 and 30, 1922, the last battle of the Turkish-Greek War.

²⁶ Zeki Kuneralp, *Les Debuts...*, p. 16.

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

aware about Romania's lack of military resources", while "there was nothing to expect from Germany"²⁸. Also, Kuneralp records that, in the evening of August 22, Mihai Antonescu requested from the Allies, *through the Turkish Legation*, details about the place and ways in which truce negotiations could start. In the Turkish diplomat's opinion, it was "too late" and "an error"; he thinks that a very complicated path was chosen, instead of a demarche directly to Moscow²⁹.

Slowly, we are entering into the second part of the book. A night of celebration, August 23rd to 24th, "with the city regaining, for a night, the peace atmosphere", is followed by German attacks and, ultimately, by the Red Army entering into Bucharest³⁰.

Kuneralp wonders if, somehow, Romania was not made to chose between Scylla and Charybda. That is because the Russians were received with "contemptuous fear"; the manifestations of sympathy were ordered, and the sincere ones came from Communists and Jews. The violences, the hardness of the Soviet Commandment decisions, the requisitions of cars and other objects "provoked a vivid emotion". Romanians started to compare the earlier behaviour of Germans with that of Russians, and the result wasn't favourable at all to the last ones³¹.

A feeling of frustration arises from Kuneralp's notes about August 23rd. Understandably, this event brought the Red Army straight into the Balkans heart (taking into consideration also the collapse of Bulgaria and the instauration, more rapidly than in Romania, of a Government dominated by Communists) and, obviously, close to Turkey³².

The events which took then place on the Romanian political scene were witnessed by Kuneralp. An important space is allotted to the activity and goals of Communist Party, which, in Kuneralp's opinion, "is aware of the part which it will play in the future and, as it knows that it could count on the Soviets support, doesn't give any attention to the other political parties, therefore it rises more and more daring demands"³³. The Communists have "the loudest newspapers", held the most impressive manifestations, accuse the politicians who collaborated with the former regime and launch attacks against other political parties³⁴.

Intrigues, vanities and political rivalities are to be found in these pages. Some of them are devoted to the vigorous opposition of Iuliu Maniu and Constantin I.C. Brătianu against Gheorghe Tătărescu and Mihai Ralea, accused to have supported the dictatorial regime of King Carol II³⁵. For Kuneralp, one basic reason of this

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 8

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 9. The author gives a large place, in his notes, to the Soviet entrance in Bucharest, their implications in actions which affected Romanian populations (devastations, rapes, robberies and so on). Due to space limitations, we refrain to quote them more extensively.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 10–11.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 11.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

³⁴ *Ibidem*.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

rivalry is “a vivid resentment for those two [the last ones], because they didn’t respect their authority inside their parties and created, one an independent group and the other a whole new party”³⁶. “The attempts of Maniu and Brătianu to bring back Tătărescu were not successful [...]”³⁷. Kuneralp doesn’t forget to mention that the real goal of the presence of these political factions in the successive coalitions organized by the Communists was that of sowing discord among the bourgeois political parties³⁸.

Also, the manifestations of the “Workers’ Front” are presented, as the incidents occurred on October 8, when Kuneralp noticed that, among the slogans hailed (Stalin, Red Army, Romanian Army, Communist Party) the name of King Michael didn’t find its place. Instead, “Down with Maniu” and claims that the Sănătescu Government should leave the place to another one with the participation of organisations as the Union of Patriots and the Ploughers’ Front. Kuneralp understood: “we are, here, in the middle of a total conflict between parties”³⁹. A conclusion which the author will resume, after several pages, adding that NPP⁴⁰, “is the most dynamic from the bourgeois parties”⁴¹. He also summarizes bleakly the accusations from the press, especially those coming from the leftist journals against “Curierul” and its owner, Augustin Popa, which leads him to the conclusion that the press confrontation “takes a more venomous character, each day”⁴².

The role of the ethnic minorities in this new political context is equally mentioned. Kuneralp distinguished between NPP attitude, of resentment towards the Hungarians, explained by the Transylvanian origin of Iuliu Maniu, and the position of CPR⁴³, which strongly promoted a “sincere alliance with the Hungarian people”⁴⁴. For Kuneralp, this situation represented “a curious” overcoming of the ethnic rivalry in the name of working class solidarity⁴⁵.

Among the political evolutions of late October and beginning of November, the diary entertains us by describing the reception offered by the Soviet mission, at the ACC⁴⁶ headquarters, on the occasion of National Celebration. According to the author, Petru Groza, head of the Ploughers’ Front and vice-president of the Government, showed “a very curious outfit for a representative of the working class”⁴⁷.

Details of considerable interest concern the visit of A.I. Vychinski in Bucharest and the rumours that surrounded it. One of such rumours reported that

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 16–17.

⁴⁰ National Peasant Party (Partidul Național Țărănesc, in translation).

⁴¹ Zeki Kuneralp, *Les Debuts...*, p. 20.

⁴² *Ibidem*.

⁴³ Communist Party of Romania (Partidul Comunist din România, in translation).

⁴⁴ Zeki Kuneralp, *Les Debuts...*, p. 21.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 25–26.

⁴⁶ Allied Control Commission.

⁴⁷ Zeki Kuneralp, *Les Debuts...*, p. 24.

USSR had already prepared the annexation of Moldavia, on the basis of a falsified plebiscite, but gave away that project because of the US resistance; the author concludes that “it was the first time when the Anglo-Americans, which, until now, always made concessions to the Russians, adopted a more vigorous stand regarding the demands of the Soviet Allies”⁴⁸.

After December 1944, in Kunalp’s opinion, the violent anti-Governmental attitude of NDF⁴⁹ was caused by the strife for the Internal Affairs and War Ministries. And, in the middle of this deep political crisis, the author discovers the nature and aims of the CPR and their allies: “in spite of what was believed at the beginning, it seems more and more obvious that CPR is supported by the Soviet Government”⁵⁰.

The new Government, led by General Nicolae Rădescu, tried to bring some peace in the country; press attacks are less violent, street manifestations reduced or even ceased “and calm and trust seem to return”⁵¹. However, the economic situation is critical, with unchecked risings of prices and lack of goods and fuels. Nevertheless, for those Romanians who have sufficient incomes, the standard of living is comparatively higher than in other countries, more severely tried by war⁵².

After a short recounting of Tătărescu’s activity, apparently sustained by the Communists⁵³, Kunalp writes, again, about the expectations of the Romanians, on December 24, 1944. They “like to believe that tensions appeared between Soviets and their overseas Allies” and *something will happen* : the latest ones will manifest their presence more firmly in Romania, liberating this country of the Soviet domination. However, despite many clashes, provoked by the damages produced to the US economical interests in Romania, Americans urge Romanians “to compel to the Soviet Government demands”⁵⁴.

A large space is dedicated to the German population deportation problem, also presented with details. Kunalp writes about the Romanian perceptions of this drama: “though Romanians never felt a profound sympathy for their German native fellow citizens and measures taken, at that moment, regarding Hungarians and Jews from Hungary and Transnistria are still present in each spirit, this deportation had a demoralising effect on the Romanian public opinion. The cause is not only the compassion to these unfortunate people, sent like animals to an unknown destination after being separated from parents and children, too old or too young to be exposed to such fate, but also the concern that such a measure could be applied, later, to the Romanians themselves and the feeling of being completely at the mercy of arbitrariness [...]”⁵⁵.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁹ National Democratic Front (Frontul National Democrat, in translation)

⁵⁰ Zeki Kunalp, *Les Debuts...*, p. 27.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 28.

⁵² *Ibidem*.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, p. 29.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 31.

At the beginning of 1945 the notes of Kunalp become more rare. He believes in some detente in Soviet-Romanian relations, marked by a slowdown of German deportations, though their danger still existed for men until 60 and women until 45. The Government situation seemed “stable”, despite the “resumption of workers’ manifestations”⁵⁶.

On February 18, after more than two weeks of interruption, Kunalp comes back with an account of the events occurred in that period, which, as well known, were not few and not without importance either. Kunalp mentions the “attacks directed against bourgeois Ministers” and the decision of General Rădescu to speak to the people. The Turkish diplomat appreciated the frankness of the Romanian Prime-Minister and the courage of his forceful criticisms, “which cannot be received with indifference by the Soviet authorities, whose sympathy for the Left groups is generally recognized”⁵⁷. The character of General Rădescu is present in the centre of the narrative.

Another note is written on March 11, after decisive events had already taken place in Romanian history. Details are not missing: the refusal of printing workers to publish the National Peasant newspaper “Dreptatea”; Rădescu being stigmatized as “fascist”, “war criminal” and “hangman”; the February 24 manifestation, in which gunshots were fired and several people were killed “without ever letting known who did it”, incidents at the Malaxa factories⁵⁸.

The character of the immediate post March 6 1945 Soviet measures didn’t escape to Kunalp: “through these concessions, Moscow is trying to forge the new Government popularity, a Government which is meant to be the obedient instrument of Kremlin’s masters”⁵⁹.

After more than one month, Kunalp is increasingly firm in clarifying the nature of new Government. Any kind of nuances are abandoned: “the forming of Groza Government meant the end of the quasidemocratic regime that had emerged after August 23 events. Suppressing newspapers at right, forbidding the opposition parties, a severe censorship which compelled independent journalists to obediency, all contributed to instoring a *virtual dictatorship*, comparable, from every point of view, with Antonescu’s regime, with the exception of the fact that the new Government was much more subservient to the will of Moscow than Antonescu had been to the Nazi leaders”⁶⁰.

The words “dictatorial regime” are to be found also in a note dating from May 1, 1945, which speaks of “the total lack of critique concerning the Governmental activity”⁶¹. The country’s isolation was growing, because of “unlimited obedience”

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 31–32.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 33.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 34.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 35.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 36.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*.

to Soviet Union and US and UK refusal to recognize the new Government. Zeki Kuneralp illustrated these allegations by not answering the Romanian Government's telegram of condolences occasioned by the death of F. D. Roosevelt and, earlier, the intentionate absence of the British and American missions at the ceremony of restoration of the Romanian administration in Northern Transylvania⁶².

Again, the author takes interest in the economic situation. Unbridled rising of prices, lack of food and other primary goods which were limited even for diplomats, show, in the opinion of Kuneralp, the economic failure of Romania *after* March 6. Great social reforms, as the distribution of land, are, in fact, actions of confiscation which could lead only to a collapse of land production, because "the new owner didn't have either financial means or necessary knowledge to pursue the land exploitation in the same rhythm as their predecessors"⁶³. Moreover, an additional proof of Romania's enslavement to the Soviet Union is the commercial treaty, "which delivered the country to the economical domination of Moscow, while the Soviet influence raised in industry, acquiring a massive participation in the main industrial, commercial and banking enterprises"⁶⁴.

After a large entry dedicated to Turkey's situation, and to anti-Turkish propaganda in Romania, including heated declarations from the Armenian community leaders⁶⁵, the author returns to the Romanian internal evolutions, with two notes, on August 22 and 23: "we could say that the rising of temperature during August provoked, in the same degree, a political turmoil in the country"⁶⁶. But, before analyzing political disputes, Kuneralp is still eager to learn more about the new Romanian-Hungarian clashes in Transylvania, provoked by the return of the Romanian troops who had fought in Czechoslovakia. Their triumphant ingress in Cluj was followed by fightings between Romanians and Hungarians which drove to casualties. This brought a harsh repression upon the NPP in Transylvania, the arrest of professor Iuliu Hațieganu and of many others; "the charges were having prepared an anti-Governmental conspiracy and stimulating the chauvinist feelings of Romanians in Transylvania"⁶⁷. However, in Kuneralp's opinion, the guilt was divided, but, "what deserves to be remembered" was the favorable attitude of the authorities to the Hungarian Communists: "they were allowed to organise grandiose funerals for their dead, while the Romanian soldiers killed were buried in silence"⁶⁸.

More important, however, was the constitutional crisis. Kuneralp mentions a so-called "clandestine opposition" ("encouraged by the evolving of the international situation, which permitted to the Anglo-Saxon powers to act with much more

⁶² *Ibidem*, p. 36–37.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 37.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 39–40.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 40.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*.

firmness toward Soviets”). Therefore they felt encouraged to spread rumours about the Government’s resignation⁶⁹.

In his last lines, Kunalp returns to this information, having to admit that the rumour was premature. He is also stirred by King Michael requesting Petru Groza to resign (after having taken the advice of US and UK political representatives and chiefs of parties). At Groza’s refusal, the King asked for help from all Powers to facilitate the instoration of a new Government, recognized by all and with whom the peace treaty could be signed. This initiative was made public through Radio London, in the morning of August 23, a day of national celebration. But -and here our Turkish diplomat suddenly ends his diary – on this first anniversary of his joining the Allies, the King left vacant his place between Marshal Tolboukhin and Dr. Groza: “the King was missing. Also missing from the military parade were the representatives of the American and British Missions”⁷⁰. It was the beginning of the royal strike.

As a conclusion, Kunalp gives us profound insights of a very troubled period of Romanian history. He proved to be a very fine observer, with a sharp intuition, with firm conclusions, regarding the character of the new political regime. He knew enough to appreciate the tangle of roots from which Communism arose in Romania. Zeki Kunalp was one of those rare authors with both a clear narrative voice and a fine eye for historical irony.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 40–41.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 41–42.