



# THE ENTIRE PEOPLE STRUGGLE



**SPECIAL  
ISSUE**



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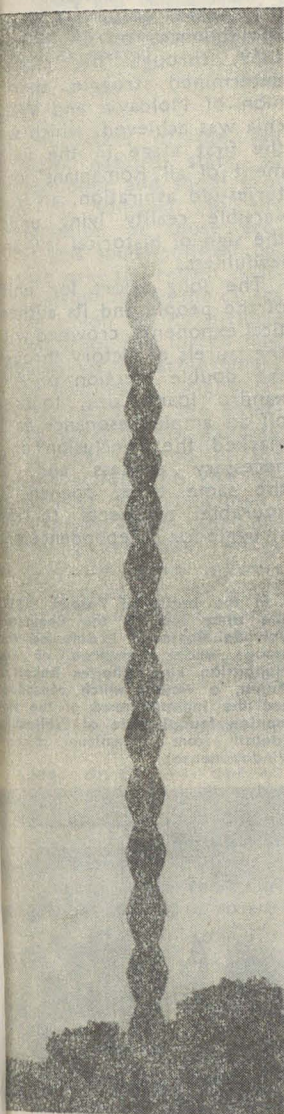
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# THE MOTHERLAND'S INDEPENDENCE —

## a sacred ideal of the Romanian People

ION COMAN



The Endless Column — symbol of the Romanian people's continuity — erected in Tg. Jiu municipality, creation of the great Romanian sculptor, Constantin Brâncuși.

One of the most important feature of the policy of Socialist Romania is the continuous thriving for the consolidating the independent and sovereign state, for expanding the free nations' dialogue and collaboration on the basis of mutual respect, for ruling out of the international arena the nefarious practices of ingercence and dictate. Independence and unity have been essential features of our people ever since its origins, being the expression of continuity in the area of Romanian ethnogenesis, from the remote Geto-Dacian forerunners to the contemporary builders of socialism. As realities and, equally, as fundamental values, independence and unity are stemming from the community of territory, of language, of social-economic organization and psychic structure, from the common struggle waged by generations one after another for freedom, against all invaders, against any forms of foreign oppression.

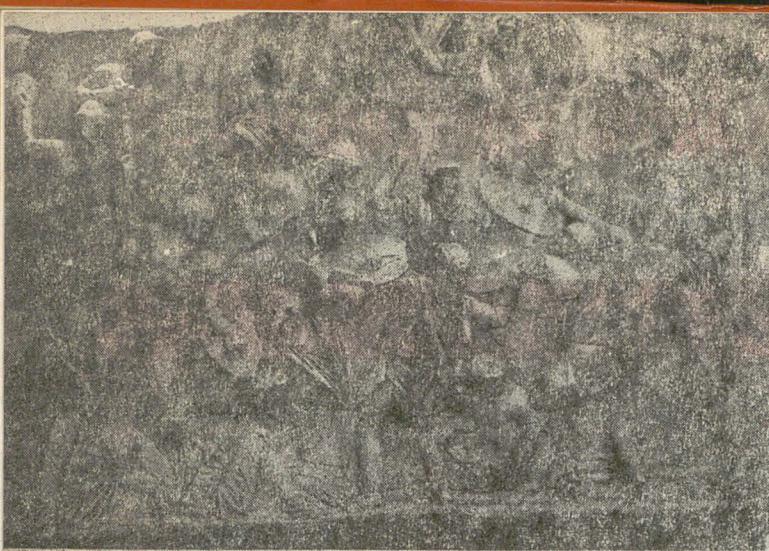
This explains why the centuries-old struggle for autonomy was intertwined with the aspiration for unity, this correlation being one of the enduring axes of our historical becoming. Against vicissitudes and obstacles that never spared us, the ideals of building one single state, strong and independent, on Dacia's soil, remained always alive and deeply rooted in the spirit of our entire people.

The idea of making the union concentrated, whenever internal and international circumstances were favourable to it, all political and military energies of the country. And even if it took centuries until

the Romanian people found itself within the frontiers of a single self-reliant state, there is an explanation for this both in the sphere of objective circumstances of the historical process and in that of specific conditions of the south-east zone of Europe. There were, as is known, the rivalries between neighbouring kingdoms and empires for the domination of the Romanian space, just like the territorial seizures of the 18th—19th centuries that raised obstacles in the way of fulfilling at the natural historical moment the Romanian statal unity and liberty.

The adverse circumstances delayed but could not check the lawful process at the end which stood the Romanian unitary and independent national state. "Foreign domination", President Nicolae Ceaușescu, says, "failed to smother the thirst for liberty in the Romanian people, to repress the ardent wish for unity. The hardships and suffering could only make the flame of the fight to unite the nation still brighter, could only reinforce the feeling of patriotism and national dignity." The permanent and numerous links that existed between the Romanian countries, the heroic battles waged throughout the Middle Ages by the popular masses against foreign invaders, under the leadership of enlightened princes, abundantly illustrated this. With great force, for that time, it was demonstrated by the deed of Michael the Brave who, in 1600, brought into a single body, through an action that entwined political skill and military valour, the Romanian souls from the three





The Dacians, the Romanian people's forefathers fought fiery defensive fights against the strong army of the Roman Empire (A.D. 87-88; 101-102 and 105-106), their bravery having been immortalized on the Column of Trajan and Decebalus in Rome

principalities — Walachia, Transylvania and Moldavia. A memorable act which has ever since enlightened the Romanians' history, having deep roots implanted in the people's centuries-old struggle. Through fiery battles waged under the command of famous voivodes, such as Basarab I, Mircea the Old and Vlad the Impaler, Stephen the Great, or Iancu of Hunedoara, and other illustrious men, the Romanian people demonstrated its immutable determination to carry with exemplary dignity, through centuries of harsh confrontations, the banner of the ideals of liberty.

If the Romanian feudal states of Walachia, Moldavia and Transylvania conferred on the Romanian people a distinct political identity in the constellation of European countries in the Middle Ages, statal pluralism — determined by historical circumstances — could not erase the struggle for liberty, independence and unity or the specific manifestation of the Romanian kin, expressed in various forms. On the basis of ethnical-linguistic unity, economic, political, cultural and military relations developed along the centuries between the three Romanian lands. The continuously expanded bonds, just like the

dramatic events, the hard trials it was put to, far from depleting the people's spirituality, constantly reinforced the consciousness of the kin's unity, diversified the actions dedicated to this grand ideals.

Ascertaining this reality easy to attest with a great amount of evidence, a reality which sometimes is "forgotten" or "ignored" by certain historians, the historical science demonstrates that the Romanians have lived for centuries in different statal structures but, in spite of this fragmentation, their conscience preserved alive the idea of unity, of their belonging to one single people. It was natural that it should be so. Due to the homogeneity of the economic, social and cultural structure of the whole territory inhabited by Romanians, to the unitary language, as well as to the clearcut consciousness of the common origin of the inhabitants, intense multilateral contacts and links existed permanently between the three states. There existed unintermitting exchanges of material goods, a strong circulation of ideas, of works of culture and art and, beyond anything else, the awareness of the necessity for united struggle against the invaders,

against the common enemy was reinforced.

As a matter of fact, on the nation asserted itself the watershed between the 18th and the 19th centuries the setting up of the independent Romanian nation state became an imperative top-of-the-line priority; it was permanently amplified by very objective historical process, by the transformations that were occurring. As consequence, on 24 January 1859, through the mass determined struggle, the union of Moldavia and Walachia was achieved, which was the first stage in the fulfilment of all Romanians' centuries-old aspiration, an irreversible reality lying under the sign of historical lawfulness.

The long effort for unity of the people and its authentic exponents, crowned with the laurels of victory through the double election of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, touched off an ample resonance as marked the conclusion of a necessary process and, at the same time, opened favourable prospects to the struggle for independence.

In the battle of Posada the army led by the Romanian Voivode Bassarab I defeated the troops under command of the Hungarian king Charles Robert Anjou, a victory which consolidated the independence of the Romanian feudal state of Wallachia (detail from Chronicon Pictum Vindobonense)







The battle at Vaslui (1475) also counts among the numberless fights that the Romanian people was forced to carry on for the country's integrity, liberty and independence; then, the small army under command of Stephan the Great, Moldavia's Prince (1457—1504) defeated a huge Ottoman army (reproduction by the picture "The end of the battle at Vaslui" by Oscar Obedeianu)

the realization of the full Romanian national state, to the economic and social progress of Romania, to the consolidation of those economic and social-political bases that make self-reliant existence possible. From the causes of the union to its historic results, from the forces that militated for its achievement to the hostility of neighbouring empires, from the determining role of the popular masses to the triumph of the unionist actions, to the importance of the statesmen's contribution, from the fight for having the union recognized by the great powers to its consolidation, the whole area of issues mentioned above proved that the Union of 1859 was the achievement of a century-old struggle of the Romanian people for liberty, independence and national unity.

Indeed, on the way opened by the union, the winning of the country's independence following the 1877—1878 war was considered by all advanced social forces as an important stepping stone in the accomplishment of the Romanian nation's imprescriptible right to organize itself in a single statal entity. Its acquisition lent a new and powerful impulse to the country's economic and social development, exerted a strong influence on the whole evolution of Romania on the path of social progress, allowed our peo-

ple's ever more vigorous assertion as self-reliant nation. In the years that came after the war, the fight for the union of all Romanians followed a continuously upward course. Numerous political and cultural actions were undertaken that were seeking the consolidation of links between the Romanian state and conationals from the outside, just as the persuasion of world public opinion of the righteousness of the Romanian cause.

In the years 1916—1918, at the cost of sacrifice and terrible privation, of blood and tears, the Romanians defended their ancestral land against the foreign invaders and — in the conditions created by the collapse of the Tsarist and Austro-Hungarian empires, of the intensification of the revolutionary and national emancipation movements — they fulfilled the centuries-long yearning to live within the boundaries of the same, free and independent, state. Speaking about the great significance of the decision of the National Assembly at Alba Iulia on 1 December 1918, about the legitimacy of that act of historical justice, about the factors

that determined it, Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu made the following clarification of imperious necessity in order to discard all simplistic or erroneous interpretations: "The course of historical events most categorically bears out that the Union was not the outcome of certain occurrences, the fruit of a mere favourable conjuncture or of an agreement reached at the negotiating table, but the issue of the determined struggle of the broadest masses of the people, an act of profound national justice, the achievement of a lawful concordance between objective reality and the people's inalienable rights on the one hand, and the national framework stringently claimed by these realities, on the other. The peace treaty concluded subsequently only sanctioned that existing state of affairs, the situation created following the popular masses' fight, the whole people's struggle in Romania and Transylvania."

Indeed, Transylvania's Union with the country, with the state to which it belonged by right was made possible by the adhesion of all the inhabitants of this land, brothers for centuries in work and also in the struggle against oppression; the struggle for Union for the completion of the national unity in the framework of a free and independent state engaged workers, peasants, the advanced circles of the bourgeoisie, the main classes and layers of the society.

A very active role in the movement for Transylvania's union with Romania was played by the proletariat, by the worker and socialist movement. The very composition of the National Council — six representatives of the National Party and six representatives of the socialist movement —





Under the skilful command of the Romanian noble lancu of Hunedoara, voivode of Transylvania (1441-1456) the anti-Ottoman struggle recorded great successes which, together with those won by the Romanian voivodes Vlad the Impaler and Stephen the Great, checked the Ottoman expansion toward Central Europe for more than half a century (reproduction by a stamp at the time representing a battle between the Ottomans and the army of lancu of Hunedoara)

speaks about that. The worker and socialist movement asserted its will and determination most energetically, through strikes and political demonstrations with a strong impact, through the creation of worker councils which seized the administration of certain Transylvanian centers from the hands of Habsburg authorities. This way, the worker movement in Romania demonstrated that the working class, the socialist, progressive, revolutionary forces are the most faithful defenders of the whole nation's interests.

After 1st of December 1918 there followed a period of effective consolidation of the unitary national state, of production forces growth and also of revolutionary elan for a democratic development of the country, for defending the working class', the popular masses' rights and democratic freedoms. But this situation did not last too long; national independence and territorial integrity, realized through great efforts and

sacrifice, were put to heavy trials again in the years of fascism's ascent, of Romania's isolation in the international arena since the beginning of the Second World War when, following the odious Vienna Diktat of August 1940 a severe amputation was operated on the country. Which is more, against the fundamental interests of the nation, Romania was dragged into war against the Soviet Union, very big dangers arising from that for the very existence of the Romanian state. In the hard times that followed, the

Romanian Communist Party, the most lucid and determined political force, unraveled the ways and means to salvage the country from catastrophe, brought one single stream all the forces of the nation against fascism, led them in the armed insurrection of August 1944, to the victory of the antifascist and imperialist revolution of social and national liberation. The communist party acted energetically for engaging the nation with all its might in the war against Hitler's Germany, along with the Soviet Union and the other allies, mobilized the entire people to the fight for thorough liberating the home from under the occupation of the Hitlerite and Horthy troops, ensured the participation of Romanian soldiers alongside those of the Soviet army, in the liberation of Hungary, Czechoslovakia also in the fights in Austria up to the definitive crushing of Nazi Germany.

It is necessary to underline the role played by the Romanian people both in the anti-Hitler struggle and in the transforming processes at various stages

In his short rule, the Prince of the Romanian state of Wallachia Michael the Brave (1593-1601) won brilliant victories therefore keeping on centuries as a grandiose symbol of the Romanian people in its millenary struggle for independence, liberty and national unity (reproduction by the painting "The battle at Călugăreni" by D. Stoica)







The 1848 year. The revolutionary army led by Avram Iancu, leader of the Romanian revolution in Transylvania, made up of peasants and miners, firmly fought for social and national liberation (reproduction by a painting by Bela Kromer)



In the name of liberty and independence, the Romanian soldiers also wrote down everlasting pages of epopee in the war for winning Romania's state independence (1877-1878) (reproduction by a sketch at the time)

having underscored the characteristic fact that as a rule sided with the advanced forces, it militated alongside the popular masses for the Romanians' freedom, independence and unity.

The Romanian people's armed deeds have been determined along the history by the lofty ideals of defending its right to a free and indepen-

dent existence in its ancient motherland. The great historian and political figure Mihail Kogălniceanu underscored that in the fights they fought the Romanians never have aimed at invasions; but their wars have always had a lofty and sacred goal: the defence of motherland and of the law.

The firmness with which our people militate for in-

dependence and sovereignty joins the respect for the interests and dignity of other peoples, an eloquent proof having been the Romanian State's démarches for collaboration with all the world's countries grounded on the principles of the respect for independence and sovereignty, full equality in rights, mutual advantage, non-interference in the domestic affairs, renunciation of the threat and use of force in international relations. And this, because independence and sovereignty, sacred ideals of the Romanian people are a real necessity for social development, human civilization, a necessity proved by history itself.

In the struggle against the Hitlerite occupants for Romania's national liberty and independence the Romanian soldiers shed their blood during the antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution for social and national independence in August 1944 and anti-Hitler war (in photo: Romanian soldiers victoriously crossing under the Triumphal Arch in Bucharest when they came back home from anti-Hitler war)





# NATIONAL UNITY — supreme value of the Romanians' history

Colonel General Dr CONSTANTIN OLTEANU



The seal of Michael the Brave with the Arms of the three Romanian Lands united under his sceptre during 1599–1601.

The Romanian people, ever since its formation, has unitarily asserted itself in its hearth of living, i.e. the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area. *It is a people—our famous historian Nicolae Iorga asserted — that through its ancestors has four-fold millenary roots: this is our pride and this is our power*<sup>1</sup>.

It was in the territory bounded by the Carpathian arch, the Danube and the Black Sea, representing by itself a harmonious geographical unity, that the forefathers of the Romanian people individualized, i.e. the Dacians—the northern branch of the Thracians —, which represented a big and well-structured unity of nation, language, material and spiritual civilization. The firmness and valiancy with which the Dacians defended their identity against the foreign invading forces made Herodotus, the father of history, call them the most valiant and rightest of the Thracians<sup>2</sup>.

The ethnic, linguistic, economic and cultural unity stood for the main pillars of the centralized Dacian state founded more than 2050 years ago under the leadership of king Burebista, of the impetuous flourishing of Dacia under king Decebalus who entered the conscience of posterity as a symbol of dignity and honour in the struggle carried through for the defence of the country's liberty and independence against the Roman legion under command of Emperor Trajan.

After some parts of the Dacian state had been turned into a province of the Roman empire in the wake of the 101–102 and 105–106 wars and other regions of that territory had been embodied within the province of Moesia Inferior, it was from the Daco-Roman symbiosis that a new people, the Romanian people, would result characterized by unity of inward nature, language, style of work and life, beliefs, customs, ethical behaviour etc.

The conscience of this unity manifested in all areas of existence, the virtues inherited from the forefathers represented essential factors of the Romanians' power of resistance in face of migratory waves which succeeded each other in their habitation area during the centuries following the Roman administration's and army's retreat from Dacia. Against the background of the old forms of social organization typical of the aboriginal forerunners, the Romanians would resume their economic and political life within the village communities, within the popular

Romanians which gradually would turn into state nuclei, i.e. the voivodeships which in their turn would unite together in independent centralized feudal states: Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania.

For all the State pluralism determined by unfavourable foreign conditions, in fact typical of the feudal world, it did not affect the unitary development of the Romanian people mirrored in the community of language and material and spiritual civilization in the similitude of economic, social and cultural structures. Military included, in the entire Romanian-inhabited territory enhanced along centuries multifarious ties, what would deepen the feeling and conscience of unity of nation and keep alive the aspiration after political unity.

The Romanian people's struggle for maintaining and winning its independence, as well as for the preservation of its political entities' autonomy carried through under some patriot princes and glorious army commanders permanently intertwined with the aspiration for union. In this respect telling is that a basic coordinate in the policy promoted by those princes was the coalescing of the Romanian Lands' efforts to repel any outside aggression, to check the expansionist tendencies of the big neighbouring empires and kingdoms, to defend the national being and Romanian statehood. Mircea the Old, the Prince of the Romanian Country (Wallachia) over 1386–1418 succeeded in guiding for a quarter of a century the efforts of the three Romanian Lands in order to





1859 — event of utmost importance in the accomplishment of the completion on national unity (reproduction painting "Union's Hora at Craiova" by Th. Amman).

to safeguard their independence in face of the Ottoman threat. Iancu of Hunedoara, Prince of Transylvania over 1441 and 1456 would also build a strong anti-Ottoman bloc of the Romanian states. As for Stephen the Great, Prince of Moldavia over 1457 and 1504, he would extend, to the same end, his authority over Wallachia and will enjoy Transylvania's collaboration succeeding in polarizing, due to his brilliant victories, the all Romanian being's aspirations for better, for liberty. Confronted with a similar attitude on the part of Petru Rareș, Prince of Moldavia — the successor of Stephen the Great —, Soliman the Magnificent was to declare he was afraid that these countries might unite together and defend themselves<sup>3</sup>. It was their common resistance that could ensure the statehood's preservation with the Romanians. Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania were never provinces of the sultan's empire, but they were independent states in the context of suzerainty relations specific to the feudal ages.

Determined by the necessity for continuing the struggle against the foreign danger, the brilliant deed of Michael the Brave who in 1600 achieved the first political union of the three Romanian countries legitimately calling himself Prince of Wallachia, Transylvania and all Moldavia,

grounded its success just on the uninterrupted Romanian solidarity. By uniting all Romanians into a whole, Michael restored the old Dacia, made a big nation worthy of being recognized by other nations, as the Transylvanian historian Aaron Florian was to write. As another Themistocles he endeavoured to liberate his country, to make the Romanian state be respected and to give the Romanians the power of preserving their dignity<sup>4</sup>.

Though accomplished for a short span of time, the Union of Michael the Brave had deep-going consequences, it standing, in the Romanians' conscience and deeds, for a permanent reminder and animating stimulus to the struggle for fully and definitively carrying through of the political — state unity. Political traditions imposed by Michael the Brave were at the basis of the numerous plans aiming at

Dacia's restoration which plans would be worked out by rulers of the three states in the 17th century; in this respect symbolical was the agreement ever more confirmed by the oath to be *brothers until death*<sup>5</sup> taken by Gabriel Bethlen, Transylvania's Prince, Radu Mihnea, Wallachia's Prince and Stephen Tomșa, Moldavia's Prince. And it was not accidental at all that it was during that century and the forthcoming one that the idea of the Romanian Countries' union was to be argued by chroniclers and scholars of this people: Grigore Ureche, Miron Costin, High Steward Constantin Cantacuzino, Dimitrie Cantemir who enlarged, grounded on rich documentary proofs, the concept on the Romanian people's community of origin, language and territory, the name of Romanian itself representing a proof of its continuity and unity. The place where Moldavia and Wallachia are now stretching was in fact Dacia, like also all Transylvania and Maramuresh and the Olt Land<sup>6</sup> — Miron Costin wrote also proving that the name of all inhabitants in all these provinces is that of Romanian. Great scholar, Dimitrie Cantemir, Prince of Moldavia who in 1714 counted among the members of the Academy in Berlin was to write in *Hronicul vechimei a romano-moldo-vlahilor* (The Chronicle of the oldness of the Roman-Moldo-Wallachians) that the Romanian Country (namely Dacia) divided into Moldavia, Wallachia and

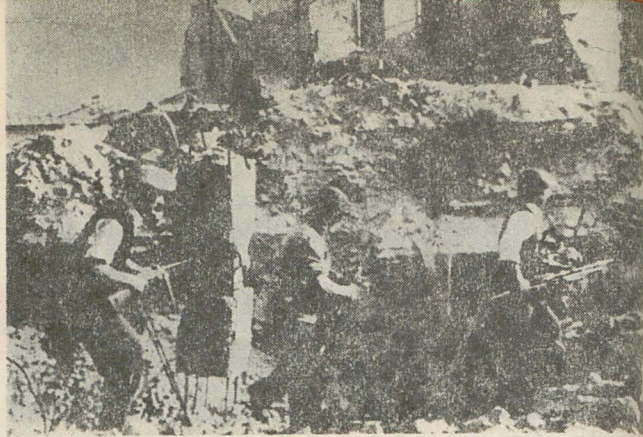
The Great Union achieved by the Romanian people in 1918 sanctioned the centuries-old dream of all Romanians — the making of the unitary Romanian national state (aspect from the Grand Popular Assembly in Alba Iulia)





Transylvania<sup>7</sup> thus evincing his conception on a unitary Romanian country. Numerous foreign personalities, like Chiril Lucaris, the Patriarch of Constantinople grasped the blood and feeling relations that keep existing, though secretly, but so much the stronger, between the Romanians living in Transylvania and the inhabitants of Wallachia and Moldavia<sup>8</sup>.

The ideas about the common origin, the Romanians' continuity and unity of ever would be embodied, starting the second half of the 18th century, into a real programme of national emancipation, of development of the Romanians' conscience of themselves, a programme of which main representative was the intellectuals' movement from Transylvania known in history as "Școala Ardeleană" (The Transylvanian School) with strong reverberations in the other Romanian provinces. Scientific, historical and linguistic research unfolded by "the Transylvanian School" were used as arguments in the Supplex Libellus Wallachorum memorandum submitted in 1791 to Emperor Leopold II, a political act that stated the Romanian nation's rights on the ancestors' territory, to arrange its life freely as it wished. Revealing is also the memorandum addressed in 1807 by Romanian patriots from Moldavia to emperor Napoleon I wherein they underscored that first of all it is desirable that present provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia to make up a single sovereign state, either under the old name of Dacia, or under the newer one of Great Wallachia. But that name revealed the existence of a larger political programme, of uniting all the Romanians, the authors of that memorandum stressing that: *The last census in Transylvania revealed that of one million inhabitants [...] there are seven hundred and sixty thousands of Romanians; their hatred against slavery is terrible and their pride is unyielding when are calling*



The antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution for social and national liberation in August 1944 ensured the winning of Romania's full independence and ushered in the road of profound social, economic and political transformations toward the building up of the socialist society (in photo an aspect of the fights against the hitlerite occupants in August 1944)

themselves Romanians through law and blood<sup>9</sup>. In the first half of the 19th century the conscience of nation would turn into a powerful national conscience in all historical Romanian provinces, included those subject to temporary foreign rules, manifesting itself as an active force of asserting the aspirations for State unity. In 1821 Tudor Vladimirescu the head of the Romanian revolution would declare for all Romanians' common struggle so as to be able to win the rights of these principalities by helping one another like people of the same origin and law<sup>10</sup>. The aspiration after unity would be written on the standards of the 1848 revolution for social and national emancipation in all three Romanian countries requiring for all rights in the whole history of the Romanian people. The national unity — Nicolae Bălcescu, the great democrat-revolutionary patriot was to write about the deep roots of this centuries — old aspiration — was the loved dream of our brave voivodes, of all our great figures who embodied the people's individuality and thinking in order to show it to the whole world<sup>11</sup>.

The defeat of the Romanian revolution, through the brutal interference of the big neighbouring empires could not quell the will of our people

for unity and independence. The trust in Romania's future as a great and undivided (Romania) has never left our hearts — the manifesto of the Romanian emigration in Paris read and writer and historian Alexandru Odobescu was to write in 1851 that the time had come for Romania to form a single and powerful nation. Revolutionary patriot Constantin Bolliac was to underline in 1853 that the Romanians' unity into one and the same state is not a mere idea to emerge from debates held since hitherto; it was the national feeling in all Romania's regions ever since history started to say us some thing about Dacia<sup>14</sup>.

In order to achieve national unity there would mobilized all energies of Romanian society, all progressive forces, the popular masses asserting themselves once in over those years as makers of history.

The double election of Constantin and Alexandru Ioan Cuza on January 5 and 24 1859, Prince of Moldavia and respectively, Wallachia united the national state of Romania represented the fundame- landmark of the process conducive to the accomplishment of the full national unity. The historic act of 1859 had strong reverberations amidst the Romanians



living in those provinces subject to foreign domination. When Cuza was elected as a Prince — historian Alexandru Papu Ilarian was to write — the enthusiasm of the Romanians living in Transylvania was maybe greater than in the Principalities<sup>15</sup>.

The making of the modern Romanian national state was the necessary, lawful process integrated, at the same time, within the general process in course of implementing with other European nations, the Italians and Germans for instance. History — President Nicolae Ceaușescu appreciated referring to the objective character of the formation of national states — has proved the incontestable righteousness of the peoples' struggle for their liberation and organization in entities of their own, in unitary, independent national states. This is the road of the swift economic and social development of every people as well as of setting up new relations in the world, of equal collaboration among all nations<sup>16</sup>.

The process for unifying was accompanied by the aspiration for independence which was achieved on May 9, 1877 and sealed with the blood shed on the battlefields south of the Danube in the war waged against the Ottoman empire. The Romanians' participation from all historical provinces of the country, in all forms, on the battlefield — arm in hand, giving material and moral support — in the 1877—1878 war proved once again the solidarity of Romanians everywhere with the cause of the state independence of Romania. Romanians from Transylvania, Bukovina and Banat nourishing the aspiration after union, would cross in 1877 in the free country and enrolled as volunteers in the Romanian army considering the war for winning the independence as their own cause, a stage in the process of carrying through the full unity. "The cause of the Romanian soldier — "Gazeta Transilvaniei" (Tran-

sylvania's Gazette) was to write in June 1877 — is a general Romanian cause, his victory belongs to the entire nation whether living in various regions of the world<sup>17</sup>.

In 1878 Dobruja, an ancient Romanian land stretching between the Danube and the Black Sea came back to the motherland, a new step on the road to national unity.

The removal of the Ottoman suzerainty and the international acknowledgement of Romania's new status represented a stimulus to definitively drive away foreign domination from the Romanian land, strengthening the fighting spirit and trust of the broad popular masses in the victory of their right struggle. It was during that struggle that the workers' and socialist movement was to assert itself, already a force on the socio-political arena of the country. This Union is not complete — socialist magazine "Dacia viitoare" (The future Dacia) read in 1883 referring to the moment of 1859 — *...! We shall say therefore bluntly and overtly our thought. We want Dacia as it was because the history and the law, the tradition and the plebiscite, the past and the present give us the right to aspire for a Romanian Dacia*<sup>18</sup>.

At the beginning of the 20th century the socio-economic development in the entire territory inhabited by the Romanians, the progress of the Romanian society in all fields firmly required for the completion of the unitary national state. All efforts, thoughts and deeds of in entire nation would be subordinated to the attainment of this fundamental goal. It was in the name of that ideal that two years after the unleashing of the First World War, Romania would join the Entente coalition which had acknowledged the righteousness of the union of the Romanian territories subject to the Austro-Hungarian sway with motherland. We have not enter the chaos of this slaughter — writer and

political figure Barbu Ștefănescu-Delavrancea declared in September 1916 — aiming at conquests, but for liberation. We do not want what is not ours, but we want union with our brothers from Transylvania and Banat<sup>19</sup>. This cause animated the Romanian army, steeled its will and arm in the epoch-making battles waged in summer 1917 at Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz which rescued the being of the Romanian state. The achievement of the unitary Romanian national state in 1918, an outcome of the unanimous consensus of all social and political forces in the entire country crowned the centuries-old struggle of our people to live freely into one and the same motherland, independent and sovereign. Revealing the historical significance of the making of the unitary Romanian national state, President Nicolae Ceaușescu pointed out that the Great Union in 1918 was not the fruit of some accidental events or of decisions taken by outside powers: The formation of the unitary Romanian national state is not a gift, it is not the result of international conferences; it is the result of the tireless struggle for unity waged by the most progressive forces of society, by the broad masses of the people, a natural outcome of the historical, social and national development of the Romanian people<sup>20</sup>.

The idea of national unity which was to come true with the grandiose act of December 1, 1918, when the big plebiscitary assembly at Alba Iulia decided Transylvania's union to Romania for good and all, strengthened through the struggle of the popular masses for justice and social progress. The people, its progressive, revolutionary forces, among which the Romanian Communist Party — set up in 1921 —, firmly asserted itself, militated for the defence of the national being against expansionist and revizionist policy promoted by the fascist states ahd with Hitler's Germany in inter-



war period. The antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution for social and national liberation in August 1944 carried through by the people, under the leadership of the communist party, set forth among its primordial goals the re-completion of the Romanian state with that part snatched off the country's body by the fascist Vienna Diktat in 1940, which goal would be accomplished on October 25, 1944 sealed through the fight of the Romanian army, alongside the Soviet army, for the final defeat of Nazi Germany.

In the new epoch in Romania's history ushered by the crucial deed of August 23, 1944, the building up of the socialist society has ensured fine conditions for the achievement of the real national independence and unity, for the strengthening and thriving of our nation. The socialist industrialization, the co-operativization of agriculture that have led to the abolition of exploitation of man by man, to the continuous development of the political, social, scientific and cultural life, the large participation of popular masses to the democratic leadership of the public affairs have offered a new and solid basis to the Romanian society's unity and cohesion which is made up of friendly social classes and categories animated by the same interests and which closely collaborate for the country's progress and prosperity.

This basis has got higher values during the period ushered in by the historic Ninth Congress of the Romanian Communist Party since the leadership of the motherland's destinies has been granted, through unanimous will, to comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu, the most brilliant son of our nation, prominent personality of the contemporary world.

Unity and independence, desired more than anything else and acquired through huge sacrifices has remained to our days too, like always,



Continuers of the heroic fighting traditions for liberty and independence of the Romanian people, the soldiers of the present-day Romanian army are ready to defend the motherland, independence and sovereignty, our great revolutionary achievements

the most precious asset of the Romanian people.

In our days, the Romanian people is building up the multilaterally developed socialist society, the economic, social, political and cultural transformations in the last 20 years which we proudly call the "NICOLAE CEAUȘESCU EPOCH" rising onto a higher stage the very idea of unity. It has fully manifested, too, on the occasion of the Thirteenth Congress of the Romanian Communist Party when a country and a people rallied round the party, round its General Secretary, comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu, firmly determined to do their utmost or raising the free, united, independent and sovereign Romania onto new peaks of progress and socialist civilization for her prestigious and dignified assertion in the world community.

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3. *Foreign travellers about the Romanian Countries*, vol. I, Scientific Publishing House, Bucharest, 1968, p. 418.
4. Aaron Florian, *Michael II the Brave, his biography and characteristics*, Bucharest, 1858.
5. Cf. Mircea Mușat, Ion Ardeleanu, *From the Geta Dacian State to the unitary Romanian state*, Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1983, p. 164.
6. Miron Costin, *Works*, ed. P.P. Ponițescu, Bucharest, 1937, p. 207.

7. Dimitrie Cantemir, *The Chronicle of the oldness of the Roman-Moldavo-Wallachians*, Bucharest, 1901, p. 25.
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14. *Ibidem*, p. 66.
15. *Ibidem*, p. 274-275.
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17. "Transylvania's Gazette", XI, nr. 42, June 2/14, 1877.
18. "Future Dacia", an. I, nr. 2, February 16, 1883.
19. Barbu Delavrancea, *The War and our duty*, Bucharest, 1916, p. 27-28.
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# THE ROMANIAN PEOPLE —

two millenia

of historical existence

in the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area

Lieutenant General Dr ILIE CEAUȘESCU

At all times generation after generation of historians have been concerned with making clear as minutely and exactly as possible the basic coordinates of emergence and assertion — in the world of the people they have belonged to. But clear and exact appreciations, judicious scientific judgements referring to such a fundamental question can be made only if one is able to give definite, pertaining and clear answers to following natural questions: when the respective people was formed both in point of time and geographic area?; how old is it and which are its remotest forefathers?; how has it contributed to the enrichment of the mankind's material and spiritual patrimony?

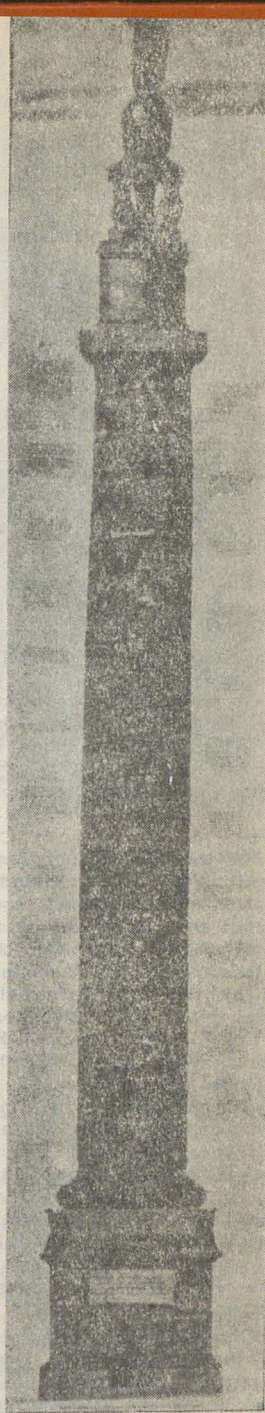
The proper elucidation of all these aspects related to the remotest beginnings of a people could be made grounded only on scientifically approaching history from the materialist-dialectical stance.

Based on archaeological sources and of other nature also, but of first importance, grasping historical phenomena in the light of ideas and these embodied in the Programme of the Romanian Communist Party of building up the multilaterally developed socialist society and Romania's advance towards communism, and in the work of our party's General Secretary, this essay will deal with some key aspects concerning such

interesting and widely-debated problems as regards the formation of the Romanian people, two millenia ago, through the blending of the two civilizations: Dacian and Roman.

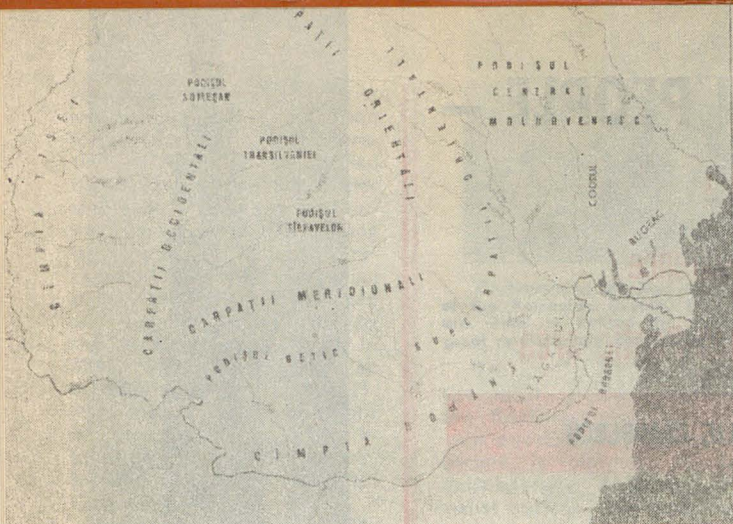
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Documents and sources of all kinds and historical deeds also attest to the fact that the Geto-Dacians — the Romanian people's legitimate forefathers — lived in the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area from times of yore, that they did not come here from some other places, that their hearth of birth and life is indissolubly linked to the Carpathians, the Danube and the Black Sea. Archaeological discoveries as well as the mankind's written memory have unquestionably revealed that Geto-Dacians were linked firmly and lastingly to this land from time immemorial, that they united like brothers with the haughty mountains, with the hills and plains, with the forests and waters and remained here, in the Carpatho-Danubian — Pontic area, putting up stoical resistance against vicissitudes of all sorts. The Geto-Dacians, direct forefathers of our people were documentarily attested, for the first time, as early as 2500 years ago, when by an extraordinary deed they faced, in fact the only ones in the entire Balkan Peninsula, the huge invading army



The Column of Trajan and Decabalus, erected in Rome in A.D. 113 on which there are engraved scenes from the grim fights between the Dacians and the Romans in the wars of A.D. 101-102 and 105-106 stand for a symbol of the two civilizations' intertwining, Dacian and Roman, the birth act of the Romanian people two thousand years ago





**Map representing the Carpatho-Danubian-Fonic area where the Romanian people has formed, fought and kept living on for two millenia, now successfully building up the multilaterally developed socialist society.**

of the Persian Empire commanded by Darius I himself.

Components of one and the same people, speaking the same language, living in the same territory, having the same civilization, the Geto-Dacians were called in ancient writings either the Getae (in Greek sources), or the Dacians (the Latin ones). In the centuries following their first documentary mentioning, the mankind's written memory always presented the Dacian people as heroically opposing the covetous invading desires nurtured by the big expansionist empires at that time. In 335 B.C., the Dacians who were living north of the Danube put up a stubborn resistance against the Macedonian army under Alexander the Great and several decades later the strong Geto-Dacian political formation ahead with king Dromichaetes would defeat the invading army led by Lissimachus, one of the Macedonian king's successor to his throne.

Once with the development of their social-political organization and domestic policy and under the supreme imperative of the ceaseless struggle against foreign aggressive actions, the Dacian people would know remarkable progresses in all fields. In the first century B.C. a strong centralized and independent state was formed under the leadership of the great king

Burebista, which state embodied all the Dacian people-inhabited territories. Dacia in the days of Burebista was one of the biggest states of ancient times, the cradle of a flourishing civilization, an expression of the exceptional State creative work of the Dacian people, an outstanding presence on the political map of the world at that time. The Dacian state led by Burebista — one of the most remarkable states of ancient times, as a foreign scholar appreciated<sup>1</sup>, exerted its rule over a large area bounded by the Slovak Mountains and the Mid-Danube on the north-west, by the Balkan Mountains on the south, stretching to the Black Sea in south-east and to Olbia in the east.

Since times of utmost thriving for the Dacian people's statehood and civilization under the great king Burebista, the main foe for the existence of the free and independent Dacia would be the Roman Empire, the superpower of the antiquity in full territorial expansion at that time. Intermittently unfolded for nearly two centuries, the confrontation between the free Dacia and the Roman

Empire would reach its acme during the wars carried out in A.D. 101—102 and 105—106. Historiography made clear for a long time the profound courses that engendered that wide-scope conflict which lasted so long span of time. On the one hand, the Dacian people carried through, obliged by Rome's expansionist policy, a heroic struggle, full of sacrifices for the defense of the independence and unity of their own state. On the other hand, the Roman Empire, in full power and glory, putting into effect its expansionist plans, attracted by Dacia's richness, would commit its army to fierce and lasting battles against the Geto-Dacians aiming at breaking up the Dacian state which was a strong obstacle in the way of its policy of conquests.

Concomitantly with the heroic defensive struggle carried out by the Geto-Dacian army and the entire population able to used means for crushing the aggressors, the Dacian people would create a prosperous material and spiritual civilization enjoying a wide prestige in ancient times, fully bearing the stamp of genius of their own. Archaeological discoveries and written sources at that time, allow us to near the truth as regards the peculiar traits of the Dacian people's civilization. Having profound knowledge of astronomy and medicine, of philosophy and music, skilful builders — Sarmizaegethusa's stronghold system stands for a tangible evidence over millenia —, and inventive creators — as it is proved, among other things by a splendid helmet discovered in the Coțofenești locality — the Dacians would assert themselves in the conscience of the antiquity and posterity also as a people with a big creative power in all fields of the material and spiritual life. During all that lapse of time the original civilization wrought by the Dacian people had large ties, mutually in-









**Map of the Romanian State under the glorious rule of Michael the Brave (1593-1401) achieved through the union of the Romanian countries of Wallachia, Transylvania and Moldavia, 1599-1601.**



**Map of the unitary Romanian national state accomplished in 1918 through the union of all territories subject to foreign sway, an union achieved through the unanimous will of the broad masses in Romania.**

conomic and political-military structures, succeeding in swiftly remaking its State existence in the territory of free Dacia which remained beyond the scope of the Roman rule; the free Dacia kept being a distinct presence in the ancient world in forthcoming centuries. There the free life of the Dacian people kept pulsating powerfully, the unity of which could not be broken by that "incident of way", i.e. the Roman rule, in its longstanding existence. In free Dacia, the fast reorganization of the whole mechanism of the Dacian people's independent life made possible the development of the defensive military potential, needed for both the preservation of independence and the struggle for Dacia's recompletion within its natural frontiers, unfolded concomitantly with and linked to the resistance put up against the Roman domination in the subdued territories. Hence, deeds and realities, partially mirrored in some sources attest to the fact

that the Dacian people was not defeated, was not uprooted from the land where it always lived. Despite all historical vicissitudes, the Dacian people, brave and daring, strong like the Carpathians' rock and haughty like their fir trees would adapt for the new conditions and its descendant, i.e. the Romanian people fully contributed to the flourishing of the civilization on the ancient Dacia's land.

Historical sources — and not less the historical logic — exclude those biased allegations, opposed to historical truth, according to which the Dacian people was destroyed once with the Roman conquest. This "theory" disseminated for the first time by R. Rösler in the second half of last century and ceaselessly resumed by the foes of the Romanian people's continuity, was given firm riposte, grounded on thorough documentary argumentations, by both Romanian and foreign historians. It is not necessary to any more prove the im-

possibility of the Dacian people's vanishing since such an assertion is flagrantly opposing to the historical truth.

"A people with sizes like the Dacian one — Romanian scholar Simion Mehedințiu emphasized —, spread over such a large geographical area and protected by so much various relief (from both orographic and vegetable cover viewpoint), could not be destroyed. Their catastrophic conception is opposing to everything we know from other peoples' history"<sup>4</sup>. Research unfolded in particular in the last two decades by Romanian historians concerning the Dacian people's continuity after the 105-106 war made that "the obsolete theory on the discontinuity of a big people, the Dacian one in the days of Decebalus, able to create a prosperous original civilization and to set up their own state, large and strong, on their ancient lands, definitively enter the realm of legend. The hidden aim, or overtly declared, of Röslerian theories and of other ones of the same false nature, historian D. Onciul stressed as early as in 1885, is meant but to hit our right to existence on the territory where we live as both political nation and historical nation"<sup>5</sup>.

The Roman conquest, like any other foreign domination, had — as we have already mentioned — negative consequences upon the Dacian state and people's life. Though the centralized and independent Dacian state, under the leadership of Decebalus, was disorganized, while important areas were subdued by the Roman troops, the Dacian people's own statehood did not cease any moment. The Dacian state, disorganized for a time following the defeat in 106, would revive in the non-occupied territory where the free Dacians, the Carps and the Costobocae would pass on the torch of the struggle for the entire people's liberty and unity. The struggle waged by the free Dacia against the Roman Empire — history recorded the Dacians' military campaigns carried out





Map of the Socialist Republic of Romania, sovereign and independent state which is successfully building up the multilaterally developed socialist society and takes part in the exchange of material and spiritual assets with all the world's states.

in 117, 143, 145—146, 153, 167, 170, 190—191, 211—212, 214, 235—236, 238, 242, 245—247, 248, 258, 260, 267, 269 of which some had the character of genuine wars against the Roman army — would closely intertwine with the Dacians' resistance struggle in the non-occupied territory. The blending of military actions waged by the free Dacians and those living in the territories subject to Rome's rule aiming at removing the foreign domination was an expression of the Dacian people's ethnic unity and of its unflinching will to live in liberty as well.

Multifarious research works — historical, sociological, linguistic, ethnographical etc. have already given conclusive answers to problems referring to forms of maintaining the ethnic being by the Dacian people during direct contacts with the Latin civilization in the II<sup>nd</sup> and III<sup>rd</sup> centuries. It main, it comes to the extraordinary vitality of the Dacian people, an agrarian community of original types with ample functions of economic, social,

military and political organization. It would keep existing both in the occupied territory and in the free Dacia representing the basis for its own political development and revival of the Dacian state after the defeat sustained in A.D. 106. It was the keeping up of the ancient community — quite remarkable as already evinced through its extraordinary capacity of assimilating allogeneous elements — that ensured the preservation of the native ethnical background as well as the uninterrupted existence of our people.

Essential fact, — Romanian historian P.P. Panaitescu would write — the continuity of communities in the territory of our country from Geta-Dacians to the setting up of the feudal states means the continuity of the Romanian people in Dacia as settled people in point of the territory, permanently linked to this land<sup>6</sup>.

The intertwining of military actions unfolded in the free Dacia against the Roman Empire with the ceaselessly waged resistance struggle in the subdued territories finally

compelled the Roman Empire to give up its conquest (271—275) and thus Dacia restored its unity existing before the A.D. 105—106 war. This re-completion of the ancient Dacia and the unity of the Dacian people would be maintained ceaselessly, in one form or another, by the Romanian people during the entire ensuing historical periods.

As already stressed, documents and historiography attest to the fact that once with the Romans' advance towards the Danube and thereafter with their crossing north of the large river, the two big civilizations, Dacian and Roman, would interweave each other, would reciprocally influence, the Dacian people assimilating the Latin language and being influenced by the Roman civilization and spirituality which would give it peculiar traits with which the Romanian people has traversed the two millenia of history. This process of cultural synthesis which lasted for several centuries, which process would reach its climax and find its issue during



Roman presence north of the Danube — i.e. the 2nd — 3rd centuries — unfolded in the entire Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area, namely in the imperial province and the free Dacia also. Through the blending of the two civilizations — Dacian and Roman — there was formed the Romanian people which is 2000 years old. Of course, the Romans strongly influenced the moral and spiritual physiognomy of the Dacian people, but not its structure as a people, as a distinct entity. The Dacian people's becoming a people of Latin language and spirituality does not mean its vanishing as a people; it assumed new linguistic and spiritual traits while preserving mostly of its own peculiar features thus having been formed the Romanian people. Romanian linguist I.I. Russu, after scientific research would draw the fundamental conclusion that the Romanians are the descendants of the Thracian-Getic populations which lived in these territories in ancient times where they Romanized in the imperial age by adopting the Latin language and the name of *Romanus*<sup>7</sup>. To the same effect, Academician Constantin C. Giurescu and Professor Dinu C. Giurescu wrote that: categorically: *the Dacians represent the ethnical basis of our people... If the Romanism took strong and lasting roots on the left bank of the Danube it is due to its bearing a high-level civilization that could win these Dacians, the natives*<sup>8</sup>. An objective connoisseur of the problems we refer to, a foreign researcher emphasized that the Geta-Dacian population kept living and proved an unusual power of adapting to outside influences without losing its individuality that characterize Romania to our days<sup>9</sup>. On his turn, historian A.D. Xenopol underscored in 1913 that the Romanian

people is historically formed on a Dacian body and energy<sup>10</sup>.

Documents of the Romanian Communist Party referring to the motherland's history profoundly and synthetically mirroring the truth assert clearly the historical reality of the Romanian ethnogenesis of 2000 years ago.

Grounded on incontestable testimonies offered by historical documents, capitalizing on the research fruit of our national historiography, of hundreds of years old, one can assert with good reason that the Romanian people formed two millennia ago when the Dacian people took over the language and elements of the Latin spirituality while were uninterruptedly living in the territory of Dacia. The process of assimilating the Latin language and spirituality would end during the IInd — IIIrd centuries when the two big civilizations of the ancient world got into direct and lasting touch. During the Aurelian withdrawal, the Romanian people remained unflinchingly in Dacia heroically defending the unity and civilization of their own. After the withdrawal of the Roman army and administration from Dacia, the autochthons uninterruptedly preserved their continuity of material and ethnical-linguistic life in the territory belonging their ancestors' hearth.

A fundamental truth of the Romanian national history, an outstanding feature of the entire Romanian civilization: the ethnic basis of the Romanian people is the Dacian people which took over both the language and elements of the Latin civilization almost two millennia ago. So, the Romanian people is, as Romanian great scholar, Nicolae Iorga wrote, a people that has four-fold millenary roots through its ancestors: this is

our pride and this is our power<sup>11</sup>.

With an unquenched thirst for liberty, with its determination not to bow to foreign rule, resolved to always be itself, the sole master of its life and fate, which it inherited from the Dacians and evincing a rational spirit, judgement and creative passion, bequeathed by the Romans, the Romanian people, that had emerged in the world — underscores the general secretary of the Romanian Communist Party and the President of Romania — recorded a heroic eventful and great history spanning nearly two thousand years, continuously developing and strongly asserting itself in ranks of the peoples and today, of the nations of the world<sup>12</sup>.

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6. P. P. Panaitescu, *The Peasant community in Wallachia and in Moldavia. The feudal system*, Bucharest, 1964, p. 20.
7. I. I. Russu, *The Romanians' Ethnogenesis*, Bucharest, 1981, p. 23.
8. Constantin C. Giurescu, Dinu C. Giurescu, *The Romanians' History*, vol. I, Bucharest, 1984, p. 73.
9. Paul Mackendrick, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
10. A. D. Xenopol, *The History of the Romanians in Trajan's Dacia*, vol. I, Bucharest, 1913, p. 106.
11. Nicolae Iorga, *The Romanian people's origin, life and fate*, in *Encyclopaedia of Romania*, vol. I, Bucharest, 1938, p. 34.
12. Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Romanians on the Way of Building up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society*, vol. 14, Political Publishing House, Bucharest, 1978, p. 292.



# THE ROMANIANS' PLACE AND ROLE

## in the world history

Dr VIRGIL CÂNDEA

There are rare the regions of Europe to which the name of crossroads of civilizations should suit so well as to the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic zone. From a geographical point of view, it opens south on three seas — the Black Sea, the Mediterranean and the Adriatic; to the north and east it issues into the vast plains of Poland and Russia; to the west, the Pannonian Plain and the great waterway which is the Danube facilitated as early as the dawns of history the access to the center of Europe and to the West. The territory of anthropogenesis, which saw the flowering of a few great cultures of the European Aeneolithic — among others the Cucuteni-Ariuşd-Tripolje —, rich in natural resources, with a charming landscape, populated and productive, was coveted and dominated for longer or shorter periods of time and to a greater or lesser degree, by several empires, from the Roman and Byzantine ones, to the Ottoman and Habsburg ones. Remarkable European civilizations left traces on this soil, or at least stimulated, through the models proposed by them, local creativity, Thraco-Dacian in the beginning, Daco-Roman afterwards: the Greek and Hellenistic civilizations, the Roman and Byzantine ones, those of the Latin and Slavic Middle Ages and, to conclude within, that of the modern times' West, nationalistic and technical in excess, with ambitions of setting a universal pattern.

Rome's "seal" conferred on the Romanians the essentials of identity: name, language, institutions and basic creeds. However, we would be on the wrong side if we limited the explanation of their existence to the Latin contribution contained in race and in *forma mentis*. Recent research shows that many settlements remained in the hands of free Dacians, that the spiritual universe of the subdued population continued to exist because the numerous subsequent faiths and traditions of the Romanian people have no doubt a prevalently Dacian or para-Roman origin.

The Roman resources and forces mustered up on the eve of the 2nd century by Trajan, *optimus princeps*, in order to secure the conquest of part of Dacia speak aplenty of the Dacian people's place in the history of Europe which at that time almost identified with that of the Empire. The Dacians, the protectors of the Greek colonies on the Left Pontus under Burebista, their unifier, king 2050 years ago. The Dacians, become — according to the wonderful description of Herodotus — characters of Greek and Latin drama. The Dacians, a military force capable to defeat the Roman armies. The Dacians, a continuous threat to

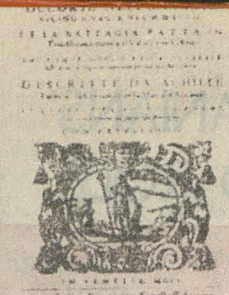
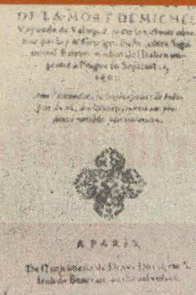
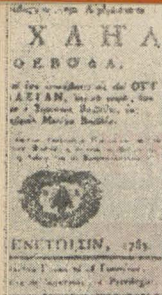
the north-eastern side of the Empire. The Dacians, finally determining Rome to take the irreversible decision of annihilating this opponent, at any price in terms of effort and sacrifice. And this decision was put in practice in the years 101—106. At the cost of two bloody wars, the Dacians were to be defeated; this brought about the expansion eastwards of the Roman frontier and, consequently, of a unitary European civilization.

Studying Trajan's Column, a careful researcher noted a few decades ago that "no other of the numerous peoples assimilated by the Empire may pride in having seen erected a greater and more enduring monument of its love of freedom" (Fröhner). The exceptional way in which Trajan understood to landmark its Dacian conquest is the eloquent expression of the Romans' pride in having managed to defeat Decebalus's kingdom. At the same time, it is a noble homage paid to a people defeated yet not liquidated.

"The Thinker at Hamangia" — small statue, autochthonous artistic work made about 5500 years ago in the present territory of the Socialist Republic of Romania.







Foreign works printed in various European countries eulogizing the feats of arms of the Romanian Prince Michael the Brave.

The Dacians and their civilization present certain characteristics that later are found with the Romanians: specific creation of material and spiritual culture doubled by a large aperture to the Greek and Roman cultural forms whose selective adoption took place in relation to local necessities and options; faithfulness to native traditions, forms of life and aspirations; love of freedom having as corollary a particular interest in everything that is likely to preserve it (such as the organization of a strong state apt to control the Greek cities on the Left Pontus and stand the Roman pressure). Therefore, the immediate forerunners of the Romanians evince themselves the characteristic of sedentary life, traditionalism, opposition to any foreign immixture, and, at the same time, receptiveness to the positive messages of other societies. The fact that in the age of migrations the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic space was commanded by a local population with such traditions, life forms and outlooks, being constantly in the focus of the Roman-Byzantine world's interest and also of the Late Empire's policy on its septentrional frontier drawn by the Danube, should have entailed decisive consequences for the whole Mediaeval history as also for the genesis of peoples and states in this part of the world. Indeed, the political geography of Meridional and Oriental Slavs, just like that of Hungarians, had to take into consideration the Romanian presence, — just as it influenced also the expansion eastwards of the Catholic world.

An isle of Latinity surrounded by alloglot populations, the Romanians gravitated from their early organization in statal units (principalities and voivodships) around the world of high civilization and prestige of Byzantium. All while developing contacts and various exchanges with the strong states in the vicinity — Bulgarian, Serbian, Hungarian — the Romanians remained faithful to the Empire's tradition, whose center had long moved to Constantinople. Nevertheless, whichever the authority of the Byzantine work might have been, that was adopted by the Romanians in a creative manner, both in statal and institutional organization and through their spirituality, architecture and plastic arts. As noted with good reason, there were rather stimuli than models. With the Romanians, the tenacious erection of statal structure, of the economy, law, culture and religious life is particularized through faithfulness, beyond any influence, pattern or external pressure, to an evolutionary line much more sensitive to local traditions, attitudes and imperatives.

First the autonomy, which the Romanian Lands secured themselves throughout the four centuries of relationships with the Ottoman Empire. Military but also economic and diplomatic reasons explain this favoured regime which was sanctioned by the Ottoman Empire's law-makers through the formula "dar al-ahd", "Land of sworn peace". Until the modern age, this status of autonomy had benefic effects on the whole of south-east Europe. In the 18th—19th centuries it constituted the fundament of the Romanian's tenacious fight for having their right to national unity, independence and sovereignty acknowledged worldwide. It defended the Romanian principalities against the expansionist tendencies of the Habsburg and Tsarist Empires.

The union of the Romanian Lands — a centuries-old ideal but also a temptation for certain European sovereigns, diplomats and strategists — was grounded both on the essential and multilateral unity of Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia.



Dimitrie Cantemir, Moldavia's Prince (1693; 1710—1711) man of culture of European fame, historian, encyclopaedist author of philosophical and political works, turkologist, member of the Academy in Berlin.

Wallachia, on the unity of blood, language, customs and traditions, forms of life and geographic framework, and on the historical mission of the Romanians "the strongest and the most combative of the trans-Danubian nations", as Enea Silvio Piccolomini — Pius II, a contemporary of Vlad the Impaler and Stephen the Great, described it. The Romanian Lands proved to be indeed "Gate of Christendom", a "Stronghold of the Christian World".

(continued at 60 pgs)



# THE EUROPEAN SIZE

of the Romanian people's struggle for independence

## IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Professor Dr CAMIL MUREȘAN

The value and greatness of a personality are established according to the extent to which his activity follows the course of historical progress and serves its promotion. A similar criterion is used when considering the worthiness and significance of a collective action carried out by a people, in all its stages and in all the aspects of its historical development, in relation to the general development of the society.

The thinking and action of personalities are not strictly individual factors, they are shaped and guided by the socio-political background in which they were born and lived. Similarly, peoples are not characterized by an immutable inclination toward a certain type and sense of their activity in history; their activity is the outcome of certain complex conditions — economic, social, political and cultural — which determine their attitude in face of the objective circumstances of their existence, and a people's specific mentality, collective consciousness is formed on the basis of those facts of development.

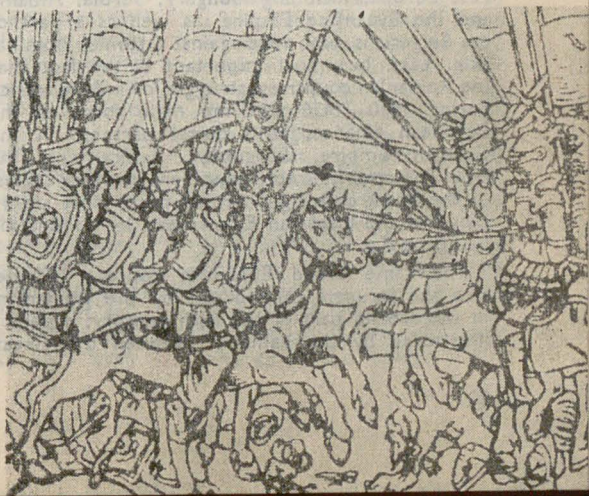
The history of the Romanian people during the Middle Ages illustrates such a confrontation between what the natural course of its development should have been and the unfavourable external conditions: a confrontation which strengthened the idea of independence in the people's consciousness, generated the endless struggle for safeguarding freedom, developed a deep feeling of love for the homeland.

The juridical-political status of independence is in itself highly valued in the history of all peoples and present in their consciousness — under various names — from remotest times up to the present. In the 14th century, when Walachia and Moldavia proclaimed their independence and won it through fight, becoming selfdependent states, the Romanian people entered, through that act, the sphere of the generally acknowledged universal values, at least theoretically and morally.

The newly-won independence of the two of the Romanian countries was soon threatened by the Ottoman expansion. The episodes and results of the century-old struggle waged by the Romanians against that danger is not only an essential facet of history but also a genuine "national epic" with deep reverberations in the people's consciousness and folk art.

During the reign of Mircea the Old, Walachia repelled the first attempt to overrun and subjugate it winning the victory over the army of Sultan Bayazid I in the battle fought at Rovine (October 10, 1394). It riveted general attention on the military value of Walachia and on its strategical position, along the natural defence line formed by the course of the Lower Danube. Standing proof to this, highly significant are the treaty of alliance between Mircea the Old and King Sigismund of Luxembourg of Hungary, concluded in Brașov, on March 7, 1395, in terms of full equality, and the participation of the Walachian prince in the great campaign of the feudal lords of the Roman-German Empire, Hungary, France, Burgundy and England which ended with the defeat suffered at Nicopolis (September 25, 1396). Walachia was therefore present in one of the first collective efforts in Europe to stop Ottoman expansion. The battle of Nicopolis was a great failure of the Western feudal lords due to the lack of discipline and their vanity which made them ignore the warnings and advises of the Romanian prince who had better experience in fighting against the Ottomans; however, we can say that the battle, disastrous on the face of it, had certain positive consequences from the strategical and political points of view.

**Battle at Nicopole, September 25, 1396** (contemporary stamp) between the crusaders and Ottomans where the Romanian army under command of Wallachia's Prince, Mircea the Old (1386-1418) also took part.







**Night attack carried through by Vlad the Impaler (1456-1462) on June 16, 1462 against the Ottoman army under command of Sultan Mahomet II himself, the winner of Constantinople who invaded Wallachia (reproduction by a painting by Theodor Amman).**

First of all, Mircea the Old consolidated his rule, driving away usurper Vlad who, with Turkish support, had reigned over a part of Walachia for about two years. Second, after 1396 the Sultan no longer resumed the offensive towards Central Europe, that being a sign that the Ottomans needed a respite to replenish their forces.

The disaster they faced at Ankara in the battle against the Mongolian army led by Timur Lenk (July 21, 1402) interrupted their expansion towards Europe for two decades. During that time, the skilfully diplomatic interference of Mircea the Old in the internal struggles in the Ottoman Empire secured him an exceptional position — of "arbitrator", according to certain historians — in South-East Europe<sup>1</sup>.

In the mid-15th century the Romanian people's struggle in defence of its independence acquired new scope, which placed it more prominently in the context of world history. Around the great army commander lancu of Hunedoara, voivode of Transylvania, the Romanian people achieved a superior political-military cohesion in a joint anti-Ottoman front of Transylvania, Walachia and Moldavia. That front was later the pivot of a broad alliance in Central and South-East Europe, including Hungary, Serbia, Albania and the Byzantine Empire, as well as a part of the Bulgarians, who rose against Ottoman domination. Last, but most important is the fact that the Romanian countries' struggle for independence during 1440-1456 was the main force of the European alliance, with direct partners in the German Empire, Burgundy, Venice and the Holy Seat and indirect supporters in other states, of the great campaigns which dealt most severe blows at the Ottoman Empire and its domination in Europe<sup>2</sup>.

The same broad European context includes also the struggle carried out by the Romanians in the second part of the 15th century, a period illustrated by the name of Stephen the Great.

For more than one decade the Moldavian prince promoted close relations with Walachia by supporting certain princes whom he thought to be more attached to the people's cause — the struggle for independence.

At the same time, Stephen also imprinted in his actions that European dimension which Mircea the Old or lancu of Hunedoara had permanently had in view. He had close relations of alliance with Poland and Matthias Corvinus (after an initial period of conflict ...) striving to lay the on equitable basis and to safeguard Moldavia's major interests, although in form, he had to accept the feudal usages established in the relations among states.<sup>3</sup>

Revealing an exceptional political insight and lucid and elevated appraisals, the address made by Ioan Tamblac, envoy of Stephen the Great to the Venetian Senate, on May 8, 1477 reads: "... Moldavia together with these counties\* form a wall in defence of Hungary and Poland". At the end of the message: "... one thing of the sort might happen; either will this country be destroyed or shall I be compelled, willy-nilly to yield in to the heathens. But the latter I shall never do, for should rather die one hundred thousand times than do such a thing."<sup>4</sup>

Stephen's fame had reached the far-away Persia where Uzun Hassan sought to make him an ally the same he did with Venice.<sup>5</sup>

In the last decade of the 15th century Stephen the Great carried out intense diplomatic activities with a view to building a great "Northern alliance" including Poland, Lithuania and the Moscow Knyazate. Although several bilateral treaties were concluded with those countries, his endeavours fell short of the expectations of organizing a new alliance against the Ottoman Empire. In the 16th century Poland would try over a long period to settle her relations with the Ottoman Empire at the Lower Danube and the Black Sea, and that policy would often imply sacrificing Moldavia's interests.

The most significant moment in the Romanian people's struggle for independence during the Middle Ages was at the end of the 16th century during the reign of Michael the Brave, the ruler-prince of Walachia and of all Romanians (1593-1601). Its significance results from the almost simultaneous fulfilment of two major political desiderata of the Romanian people: independence and unity within a single state. The reign of Michael the Brave was more than a great chapter in the history of the Romanian people. The famous prince placed the Romanian country once again in the forefront of European politics of defending the traditions of civilization of the Continent. Michael gave fresh impulse

(continued at 95 page)





**“THE BANNER...**

## **is Romania's entire history”**

Colonel Dr VASILE ALEXANDRESCU

A defining trait of the individuality of each people having its own state life, the banner has always been an enduring symbol of the history of the nation, of its continuity through time of glory or hardships. Our people has always considered the country's flag with deep emotion, with reverent homage and patriotic pride. On what grounds in the national banner waking up that force which urges to deeds of heroism, to selflessness, magnifying the fighting strength of soldiers on the battlefield to sheer defiance of death? Why is it that when military columns are parading with banners flying, old men bare their heads religiously wiping discreetly a tear, and young men's hearts start beating faster?

The famous banner of the Dacians with a wolf's head and the body under the form of a snake (up). Flags belonging to the Roman legions which fought against the Dacians in the 101-102 and 105-106 wars.



Over the years the banner has remained a genuine and evergreen soldier, a lively, active presence amidst fighters, bracing them up at difficult moments, and mingling with their innermost nature down to self-sacrifice. In the thick of battles, the military would gather around it to regroup their forces and to receive new missions. One could say that it marched with the soldiers, bled with them, was always at their head. The banner has always been borne by the most daring of the military in a unit.

As banner of war it appeared long time ago from the need to distinguish between and recognize the fighting units and details. The shape, sizes, colours and even names often changed yet the symbol of the banner and its supreme purposes have basically remained the same. Our ancestors, the Geto-Dacians used to go into battle accompanied by the famous “draco”, the wolf-headed dragon about which ancient sources say that if adequately wielded it used to give out a specific sound which was both a signal and a call to encourage the soldiers.

Not too many details of the direct clashes between Dacian and Roman military have been handed down to us. But this does not hinder us from seeing with the mind's eye the overwhelming image of a battlefield at the end of hostilities which we know for sure to have been

fierce. Among the hundreds or thousands of dead or wounded soldiers there lay also the bearers of the wolf-headed dragon, Dacian flag bearers, and the Roman bearers of the war flags called signum and vexillum.

During the Romanian Middle Ages, marked by numerous wars of defence against foreign aggression, for the state's liberty and independence, the flag of war remained a permanent insignia. The very term banner (steag in Romanian) defined in the Middle Ages not only the flag borne by the armies but also a military subunit with different effective and own command. In the Romanian Lands, both on the battlefields and on the towers of citadels the voivodal banners had always been flying since they were the country's flags, and not various banners with nobiliary coat-of-arms as was the custom in other European states.

Thus, the very symbols on mediaeval Romanian flags had a specific significance. Some of them bore as heraldic devices the aurochs head surmounted by a star, Moldavia's princely seal, or a black eagle, Walachia's seal, often featuring portraits of the Orthodox faith pantheon. Usually, these were military saints, bearing weapons (spears or swords) and the pertaining banners which the voivodes presented after the battles to monasteries, became objects of cult and were highly revered by the faithful. Vary-





A banner belonging to Stephen the Great, Moldavia's Prince (1457-1504) under the colours of which the Moldavian soldiers scored great victories against the foreign invaders.

ing in design these banners are another token of the Romanian people's unity in spirit as along its historical becoming the Romanian people has not known religious fratricidal wars. On the contrary, in the thick of the battle, against arrows, yataghans, and enemy cannon balls, at Posada, Vaslui, Podul Înalt, Jiliste, Călugăreni and Şelimbăr, the flags of Romanian voivodes called the people to fight for a just cause.

Over the centuries, the oppressed masses of serfs, workers and craftsmen downtrodden by the feudal régime, by social and national oppression rose in arms for a just cause. The documents of the time speak about the groups of Bobilna insurgent peasants (1437) who in their clashes with the nobility's armies bore their own flag — a white cloth with a black raven in the centre, about the army of Horea, Cloşca and Crişan (1784) whose soldiers bore red flags as a symbol of their liberation from bondage.

The modern epoch in the history of the Romanian people, the epoch when the struggle for social and national liberation, for state unity and independence reached high peaks, bestowed richer meanings to the national symbol of the Romanian flag. If during the 1821 revolution

Tudor Vladimirescu's flag, the flag of "liberty and national awakening" as the contemporaries used to call it, still featured besides the black eagle on a white ground, some religious pictorial elements, in the 1848 revolutionary year the red, yellow and blue flag, present in Walachia since 1834, became predominant. On June 15, 1848, according to the Romanian Babe magazine, on the Liberty Field in Bucharest (Filaret) tricolour flags were hoisted bearing the motto "Justice-Brotherhood". The same tricolour flag had been unfurled on May 15 on the Liberty Field of Blaj, amidst the 40,000 Romanians gathered from all over Transylvania, and was also flown on June 20, at Focşani and Rimnicul Sărat during an impressive show of fraternity of Moldavians and Walachians.

All the ensuing great moments marking the Romanian nation's stride to unity, independence, culture and progress took place under the tricolour flag. At its sight, the hearts of patriots beat in unison, the petty quibbles of politicians vanished and the nation's superior interests prevailed. The tricolour flags were also hoisted on January 5 and 24, 1859, when the Union of the Principalities was voted, and the young united state under Alexandru Ioan Cuza featured on the official banner the Moldavian aurochs and the Walachian eagle, and underneath the motto: "The Union of the Principalities — The Happiness of the Romanians."

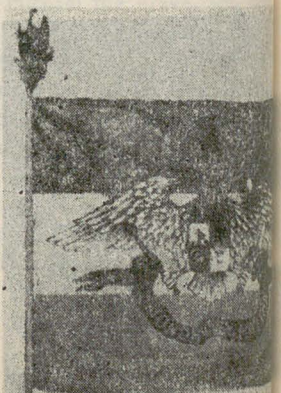
The moments when the tricolour flags of war were handed to the 10 military units (7 infantry regiments, 2 cavalry and 1 mountain corps) gathered on the Cotroceni plain on September 1, 1863 went down in golden letters in the history of the Romanian army. In an atmosphere of lofty patriotism, Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza made an emotional address to the officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers present: "This day" he said,

"will be considered one of the greatest in our chronicles. [...] On receiving the new flags, keep in mind for ever that we have put in your hands the country's honour. The flag is Romania, this blessed soil of the homeland, soaked in the blood of our ancestors and enriched by the worker's sweat. It is the family, the home of each, the house where your parents were born and where your sons will be begotten. [...] The flag is the past, the present and the future together; it is the whole history of Romania. [...] Swear to keep in honour and unstain your flags". "We swear!" the soldiers in the first army of the united Romanian principalities answered in one voice.

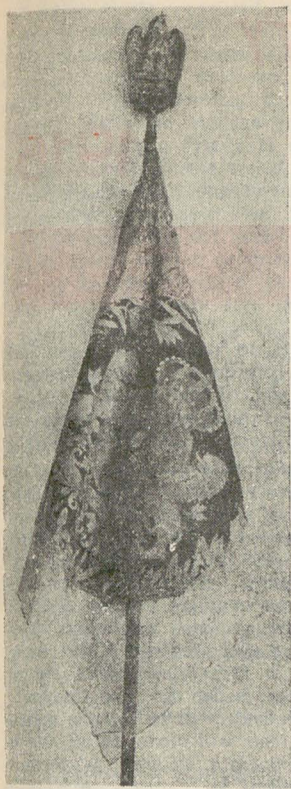
Ever since, generation after generation, all those called under the flag observed the pledge taken upon the tricolour. Under its colours the foot soldiers, the cavalry and the mountain corps took the powerful Ottoman redoubts of Grivitsa, Oryahove, Opancez, and Smyrdan during the Independence War. 4 of the regiments were decorated with "The Cross of Danube's Storming", and 3 of them with the highest award, "Romania's Star".

During the fierce clashes of the reintegration war, at the Carpathian passes, on Dobrudja's soil, at Cernei and Jiu, on the Neajlov and

Flag bearing the inscription "Honor et Patria" dating from 1863, belonging to the Romanian army.







Banner belonging to a military unit taking part in the grim clashes in the First World War when the Romanian people achieved the completion of its national unity.

Argeș, then at Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz, the dauntless defenders of the homeland made the tricolour glory with their blood, compelling the enemy to withdraw. An embodiment of millenary valour and uncircumscribed love of the ancient soil, the tricolour flag has always symbolized the ideal of national unity. It was flown triumphantly on December 1, 1918 at Alba Iulia, announcing the whole world of the Romanian people's victorious battle for the completion of its state unity, for Transylvania's Union with the motherland, Romania.

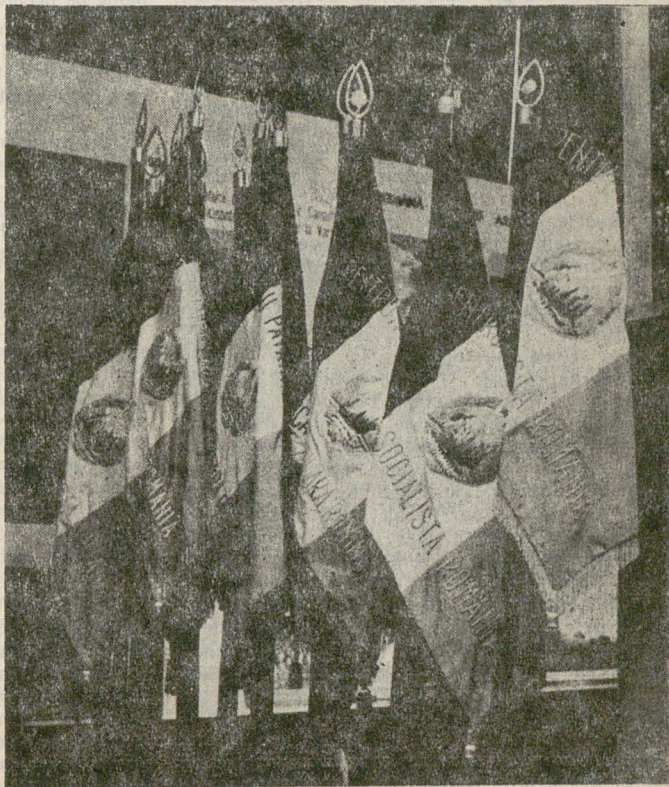
Since the outbreak of the antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution of social and national liberation of August 1944, the war flags of the units and great units of the

Romanian Army accompanied the Romanian soldiers throughout the terrible clashes with Hitler's and Horthy's troops. In turn, they were flown everywhere where insurrectional fights were waged; at Sfintu Gheorghe, Tirgu Mureș, Cluj, Oradea, Carei and Satu Mare. They were borne in triumph by the units operating on the Tisa, at Debrecen, in the Bükk Mountains, at Zvolen and Banska Bystrica, in the Tatra and Javorina Mountains, at Hohenrappersdorf and Zisterdorf, near Vienna, as a token of the valuable contribution made by Romania to the victory against fascist Germany.

Replete with fresh, superior significances, a full expression of the socialist system our people is building for more than forty years, the tricolour flags handed over to the units and big units of

the Romanian Army are today living presences in the life of Romanian soldiers and military on the whole. They are the source of mainly and self-sacrificial deeds, worthy of the forefathers heroism, performed on instruction fields or on the building sites of economic construction. "The flag of war" — write the regulations of the Romanian army — "is the symbol of honour, valour and military glory. It reminds each military of the Romanian people's glorious tradition in the century-long fight for its liberation, for national and social freedom, the battle traditions of the unity, as well as the sacred duty of each and every one to serve the homeland faithfully, to defend with valour, skill and devotion, even at the cost of one's life, the country's boundaries, the independence and sovereignty of the Socialist Republic of Romania".

Banners belonging to the armed forces of the Socialist Republic of Romania.





# ROMANIA'S NEUTRALITY

1914

## a historical option

1916

Reader Dr MIRCEA MUŞAT

The First World War broke out on July 28, 1914. It lasted four years and involved 33 states, with a population exceeding one thousand million inhabitants; it took a toll of about ten million lives, 20 million wounded or maimed, with material losses estimated to more than 278 thousand million dollars.<sup>1</sup>

With its roots in the imperialist States' struggle to divide and redivide the world, to conquer new spheres of influence, the First World War had been prepared a long time in advance.

In Romania, the event caused the swelling of the popular and national trend that was urging the liberation of the oppressed brothers beyond the Carpathians. The official circles did not speak openly against Austria-Hungary, nevertheless, they were growing ever more insistent on asserting the principle of "freedom of action". King Carol I himself was forced to declare to the imperial and royal minister that "as long as he would live, he would spare no effort to prevent the Romanian army from campaigning against Austria-Hungary, but that he could not promote a policy that ran counter to the current public opinion in Romania and that, as a consequence, in the event of a Russian attack on the Monarchy, Romania's taking side with Austria-Hungary was unconceivable, despite the existing alliance."<sup>2</sup>

The pressure the Central Powers exerted against the Romanian government did not yield the expected result. Romania was making tremendous efforts to keep the peace in southeastern Europe. The Romanian premier, Ion I.C. Brătianu stated the following in a note written in an energetic tone: "If Austria-Hungary, backed by Germany, is intent on pushing the Balkan peninsula, and hence, Europe, into the war, then Romania completely disassociates itself from it."<sup>3</sup>

The military confrontation between the big imperialist powers, sparked by Austria-Hungary's aggression on Serbia, determined the involvement into the war, over a relatively short lapse of time, of other nations and States whose objectives had nothing to do with the imperialist character of the war. They were fighting arms in hand to liberate from slavery their national-territory that was forcibly maintained within the borders of the great empires, they were fighting on a diplomatic path, to cause the recognition and respect by other states of their nations' rights to a free and sovereign life in a unitary national State, they were fighting by way of word, both written and spoken, to assert

and defend the rights to national and political reunification. With reference to the justness of Romania's cause and of the cause of other States that were in a similar position, the great Romanian historian, Nicolae Iorga, wrote: "What is imperialism? Is it that to take arm in hand to defend your kin, to use righteous violence against the most illegitimate of violences that harm all that is dearest to you and try to ruin your whole future, to paralyse all your future activity, is called imperialism? Imperialism is the tendency to rule with no right at all over whatever expanse of land, over whatever the populations inhabiting those lands and at the expense of the feelings of the people living there. That is in fact imperialism, and to demand, arms in hand, justice for your brothers, to demand that all the land inhabited by the Romanians be according to their will alone, to all Romanians' will, a big democratic country — that is definitely not imperialism."<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, the powderkeg existing in Central and Southeastern Europe at the close of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century was by no means a result of the contradictions among the Balkan peoples, but that of the contradictions between the general interests of the peoples and States of Central and Southeastern Europe and those of the big imperialist powers. It was a result of the irreconcilable contradiction between the principle of the nationalities and the policy of force and dictate in the international life.<sup>5</sup>

In the evening of July 15/28 the Council of Ministers was called at Sinaia, for consultations. Everybody said that, considering the question of the Romanians in Transylvania and the public sentiment prevailing in the Kingdom, the country could not take arms alongside Austria-Hungary, and they demanded to be instructed of Romania's commitments toward other countries, more particularly, toward Austria-Hungary.<sup>6</sup> Other meetings of the government followed, when the ministers learnt about the content of the 1893 treaty, which stipulated the following under Article 2: "If Romania, without any provocation on its side, were attacked, Austria-Hungary would be under an obligation to grant it help and assistance in due time against the aggressor. If Austria-Hungary were attacked under the same circumstances, in one of the sections of its States neighbouring Romania, *casus foederis* would be immediately submitted to the latter."<sup>7</sup>



Several times renewed. — and for the last time, in 1913, by Titu Maiorescu, — the Treaty had gradually fallen into disuse: "I do not know whether or not we have an alliance Treaty with Austria", Take Ionescu told British politician Donald Makenzie Wallace as early as 1894 — "but were such a Treaty to exist, I think just as you do: nobody in the world could implement it." And the same Take Ionescu was telling R. Poincaré, the French President, on September 9, 1913: "...if the war broke out, and I do hope that mankind will be spared such a calamity —, you would never find the Romanian army in your enemies' camp. I...I That I am absolutely sure of."<sup>8</sup>

Even in the eyes of its makers, Romania's Treaty with the Central Powers seemed unviable in 1914. Indicative to this effect are the instructions given by Austria-Hungary's foreign minister, L. Berchtold, to the minister plenipotentiary in Romania, Ottokar Czernin, when the latter was designated to the office: "Of course, I do not want to doubt the German prince's (Carol I) loyalty and faithfulness as an ally, who has been leading for decades now Romania's destinies with a strong and wise hand. Nevertheless, in Romania, the Austro-Hungarian minister showed, "more than in any other country, the Monarch is compelled — on account of the dynasty's foreign origin — to listen to the voice of the people in highly consequential foreign policy decisions."

Czernin was to learn himself that the 1893 Treaty was, in 1914, "a bare sheet of paper devoid of content."<sup>10</sup>

The refusal to implement the Treaty with the Central Powers was in fact an official expression of Romania's option: the liberation of the Romanian territories annexed by Austria-Hungary. This option was initially materialized in the decision of neutrality adopted on August 3, 1914.

The Crown Council, after being informed about the text of the 1893 secret Treaty, deliberated that the act perpetrated by Austria-Hungary on Serbia was an aggression, violating thus the Treaty's defensive character; it was assessed also that the *casus foederis* specified under Art. 2 of the Treaty could not be claimed in the given situation, with Austria-Hungary an aggressor and not a victim. Hence, Romania "had no interest at all in helping Austria-Hungary destroy Serbia."<sup>11</sup> In fact, the specification of Romania's position in this way did not mean an overruling of the alliance Treaty with the Central Powers, it was in fact a token of respect to the letter and spirit of the Treaty; Austria-Hungary and Germany were the ones that had flagrantly violated the Treaty, through their aggression on Serbia.

The option of armed neutrality, endorsed by the Crown Council, met Romania's national interests, the Romanian people's will and aspirations: During the Crown Council, in the name of the Government, Ionel Brătianu, chairman of the Council of Ministers, declared: "We demand that Romania remain neutral. As was shown, the Treaty is not binding for us, but even if it were, Romania cannot admit to it that her allies dispose

of her fate without even taking the pain of letting us know... A State such as ours, that joined the alliance as a sovereign State and on an equal footing cannot admit to be treated in such a way. On the other hand, Romania cannot admit to rise in arms in a war the cause of which is the very annihilation of a small nation. The public sentiment is almost unanimously against the war. The question of the Romanians in Transylvania prevails in the public sentiment".

The armed neutrality called for urgent military measures. A "Plan for the Supply, Transformation and Reformation of Armament, Ammunitions and War Material", a "Plan for the Supply of Equipment", a "Plan of Effectives", a "Unitary Plan of the Army" a.o., were endorsed. The draft plan of operations took account of the possibility of fighting on two fronts: along the Carpathians and the Danube.

The Government readily took major military steps. From August through October, the first drafting was made at a level slightly inferior to that in case of a war. Nearly all the army's effectives were dispatched to garrisons and along the borders.

Conceiving of neutrality as the only formula meeting the Romania people's interest at that historical moment, the extraordinary Congress of the Social-Democratic Party, called on August 10, 1914, underscored: "The Congress stands against any bellicose adventure and declares that the only policy compatible with the country's foremost interests is sincere and definitive neutrality."

Facsimile of the minute drawn up during the Crown Council held in Sinaia, August 3, 1914 (July 21) attended by members of the Romanian Government and other political figures who decided Romania's stand of neutrality, in full agreement with the country's national interests.

Council de la Couronne à Jassy  
3. Août 1914, Jassy le 1914

Cette circonstance nationale, qui ne procure la satisfaction de vous  
le peuple autour de moi, ne servira, outre son participation à la langue  
usage, comme elle est la langue de la diplomatie et qu'elle exprime  
pensée avec toute la précision requise.

guerre européenne est déclarée. La présence de cette situation danger  
ne se sera le besoin de se consulter avec les hommes d'état de nos  
re qui n'ont soutenu de leurs conseils depuis dans le cours de leur  
récent, pour connaître leur opinion dans une grave situation.

et de vous exposer la situation comme le l'empire, le fait appel à  
ne discussion ainsi qu'à votre satisfaction, pour ne faciliter la leur  
grande tâche et l'urgence responsabilité qui pèsent sur moi, aujourd'hui  
tout où la Roumanie se trouve devant une réaction qui décidera de  
et son avenir. — Une politique de sentiment ne serait inadmissible dans  
soubant où le sort de l'Europe toute entière est en jeu, de l'Europe, que  
et la Roumanie est devenue, grâce à sa sage politique, le facteur et in  
stant. — La Roumanie est une grande vertu, mais elle ne doit pas être  
lancé sous lois, dans les heures de surprise devant le courage et la dé  
l'union présent tout. — Nous devons nous décider quelle soit sa conduite  
Même en acceptant dans une possibilité la neutralité, mais l'indécision  
que que le pays qui nous met dans une configuration spéciale, et  
réduite à respecter au second plan, et à être soumise des décisions  
et la conclusion du traité, le Roumanie ne peut pas d'être exi.



for the preservation of which the Romanian working class will fight even at the cost of its sacrifice." It was also pointed out that, in the case of mobilization, the Social-Democrats would work to raise the masses to the struggle "in defence of the country's territorial integrity, against any attempt to violate it."<sup>12</sup>

In Transylvania, the position adopted by the Bucharest Government in August 1914 with respect to the conflict that was rising in scope was assessed as the only formula espousing the interests of the whole Romanian nation, a formula that bespoke "political wisdom". The newspaper "Telegraful român" (The Romanian Telegraph) of Sibiu wrote: "no side could claim that she (Romania) should abandon her waiting attitude as long as she has no obvious guarantees that the fate of her brothers will remain unchanged in the future, too".

The national unity desideratum actuating the broadest masses of the Romanian people was powerfully voiced in the press, as well as in numerous meetings and civic rallies. In Bucharest, and across the country, as a matter of fact, large meetings were staged by the "Cultural League", the "Carpathians Society", the "Patriotic Action", and other similar associations, during which personalities of the political and cultural life took the floor, such as: Nicolae Iorga, Nicolae Titulescu, Constantin Mille, Barbu Ștefănescu-Delavrancea, Vasile Lucaci, Octavian Goga, and many others. "The Unionist Federation" was set up in Bucharest on September 18, 1915, with the main goal of achieving the national ideal.

Under like internal and international circumstances, major diplomatic demarches were made for the recognition, through official documents, of Romania's historical right to the territories inhabited by Romanians then under the rule of Austria-Hungary. Two days after the Crown Council, on August 5, Sazonov, foreign minister in the Tzarist government, called Constantin Diamandi, Romania's minister in Saint Petersburg and requested him to hand-deliver the Romanian Government a draft Treaty. According to it, 1) *Russia guaranteed Romania, on the conclusion of the peace, the territories of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy inhabited by Romanians*; 2) *Romania promised immediate cooperation against Austria-Hungary, only by agreement and simultaneously with Russia*.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, Sazonov required from France and England that their ministers in Bucharest declare the Romanian government: "upon communication of the conditions offered by Russia for Romania's active cooperation against Austria-Hungary, France adheres to these conditions and, as long as Romania fights alongside Russia against Austria-Hungary, France considers itself at war with any State that will attack Romania."<sup>14</sup> On August 8, the French foreign minister, Delcassé, communicated Blondel, France's minister in Bucharest, that France fully agreed and gave Russia free hand in the negotiations with Romania — the way Sazonov had requested. In his turn, Edward Grey, the British Foreign Minister, cabled to Saint Petersburg and Bucharest England's acceptance of the statement on the recognition of Romania's territorial rights,

but that after the war, the guarantee would only carry diplomatic support. Paul Combon, the French ambassador in London, considered that reservation as "superfluous". If the Entente were victorious, then the Peace Treaty at the end of the war would have given the respective guarantees and established definitive commitments.<sup>15</sup> The domestic and international situation did not allow of Romania's commitment to an opposite alliance. This country's position with respect to the Central Powers was the same as Italy's. On August 13, I. I. C. Brătianu told Poklewski-Koziel, Russian minister in Bucharest, that Romania could not do, at that moment, more than had decided in the Crown Council, a decision with which Poklewski had declared his great satisfaction. The first international confirmation of Romania's decision to cooperate with the Entente Powers were the notes exchanged on September 18/October 1, 1914, by the Romanian minister in Saint Petersburg, C. Diamandi, and the Russian imperial foreign minister, S. Sazonov. The Russian government acknowledged Romania's rights to the territories inhabited by Romanians, under Austro-Hungarian rule, and warranted its freedom of action with respect to the entrance into the war for the liberation of these territories. In exchange, the Romanian government also vowed to "preserve a well-meaning neutrality toward Russia." The Treaty was negotiated by Brătianu and Poklewski and signed in Bucharest. It was assessed that "The Treaty is highly significant, not only in its content, which is a great success for the Romanian diplomacy, but also as an undisputable, written proof that Romania has never promoted a policy of mercantile opportunism with both parties to the conflict."<sup>16</sup>

In that international climate, the struggle of all Romanians for the attainment of the national ideal and the reunification of the homeland acquired a mass character. A series of patriotic meetings were organized. "In the Capital, just as throughout the country," Socialist leader C. Mille said, "there is only one Romanian sentiment and only one wish: to attain the national ideal."<sup>17</sup> The day of January 24, 1915, the 56th anniversary of the 1859 Union, was celebrated all over the country under the banner: "Yesterday's Union — Tomorrow's Union."<sup>18</sup> Similar demonstrations were staged in Craiova, Buzău, Brăila, Tulcea, Galați, Tîrgoviște, and elsewhere.

In September 1915, the most enthusiastic partisans of Romania's intervention in the war for the reunification of the nation grouped together to set up the "Unionist Federation", with prominent figures, politicians such as Nicolae Filipescu and representatives of the Transylvanians who had set up the League for national unity of the Transylvanian Romanians." The "Unionist Federation" organized, starting September 1915, until Romania's entrance into the war, propaganda in favour of the achievement of the Romanian national State, with Nicolae Titulescu as one of the most eloquent spokesmen of that organization with beautiful patriotic aspirations.

An aspect of all Romanians' solidarity in the struggle for national unity was the opposition.



shown in various ways, of the Romanians drafted in the Austro-Hungarian army. So, for instance, on the fronts in Russia, Italy, Serbia, tens of thousands of soldiers of Romanian and other nationalities deserted the Austro-Hungarian army and set up military legions fighting for the country's reunification; still others crossed the Carpathians and enrolled in the Romanian army. The reports and confidential notes revealed an "alarming" state of affairs "on the Austro-Hungarian front."<sup>19</sup>

Tension was rising in the occupied territories. In November 1915, deportations had begun in Transylvania. The newspapers reported lists including the names of well over 300 Romanian intellectuals: teachers, priests, lawyers were seized without discrimination from their homes and sent to jail in Hungary. Actions of open solidarity were staged in the old Kingdom.

In that context, the Entente powers stepped up their actions aimed at including Romania in their strategic and operative plans. The utilization of Romania's territory as a channel for the passage of the Russian troops toward Bulgaria in view of the campaign against Constantinople was assessed by the Russian general staff as a "fundamental operation."<sup>20</sup>

Premier I. I. C. Brătianu expressed Romania's stance in an interview with "Journal de Genève": "In fact, Romania demands only a restitutio in integrum, it harbours no ambitions of conquest elsewhere. Romania stands only for the liberation of her brothers who have always been united with her through the closest of bonds."<sup>21</sup>

Under those circumstances, in January 1916, Victor Antonescu and Colonel Rudeanu, sent on a special mission to Paris, informed the French government about the conditions in which Romania could enter into the war. As the reason for joining the war was the liberation of Transylvania, Bukovina and the Banat, and not the engagement of war on Bulgaria or Turkey, the Romanian Government considered that an offensive on Transylvania, against Austria-Hungary, would be possible, on condition that the Entente support the front in Dobrudja, by dispatching effectives of 200,000, and on condition that the Russian army launch the offensive in the north-west and the French army — in the Balkans (the expeditionary corps under the orders of General Sarraill). However, the Russian Command judged these conditions as inconvenient, on account of the length of the Romanian front, which extended on 1,300 km. Moreover, the concentration of the Russian armed forces in Dobrudja and the entry into a war against Bulgaria was undesirable also from both a strategic and a political point of view, as the Tzarist government had in mind the prospect of a separate peace with Turkey and of coming closer to Bulgaria.<sup>22</sup>

The outbreak of the big German offensive on the Western Front in February 1916 nevertheless determined the French government to press the Russian government to accept cooperation with Romania in the conditions imposed by the latter. On February 16, General Joffre sent a message to Alexeev, in which he underscored that "there

is no length to which we wouldn't go to secure Romania's support."<sup>23</sup>

In fact, the Romanian government did not refuse to negotiate. Of course, it set conditions because, just as Premier I. I. C. Brătianu told Blondel: "as long as you do nothing but resist, I take it as hazardous on my part to come out of the current expectative." What were the Romanian government's conditions? A strong army of at least 500,000 to operate in the South of the Balkan peninsula against the Bulgarian—German forces; about 200,000 Russians in southern Dobrudja to prevent a Bulgarian offensive on Romania; supply of equipment and ammunitions for the Romanian army. If these conditions were fulfilled, then the Romanian army would penetrate Transylvania, but backed with a general attack, at least on the Russian front. Otherwise, I. I. C. Brătianu pointed out, Romania's entrance into the war would have been meaningless; for both the Government and the people Romanian as a whole, military operations had to meet, in principle, the nation's aspirations. Yet, General Alexeev still refused to take into consideration Romania's plight. To him, the question of Romania's participation in the war was an exclusively military one: the extension southward of the Eastern Front.

In April 1916, the representatives of France, Great Britain and Russia in Bucharest were instructed by their governments to start negotiations with Prime Minister I. I. C. Brătianu, conducive to the achievement of a military understanding between Romania and Russia.

The Romania Premier, conversant as he was with the backstage of secret diplomacy, was in no hurry to involve Romania in a wide-scope military action without the guarantee of the political and material conditions that would have enabled the Romanian army to attain the unique goal of its action, i.e., the liberation of Transylvania, Bukovina and Banat.

With reference to this position, Saint-Aulaire reported: "Brătianu's will is that the war be imparted a national character and to rally the unanimity of the public opinion."

The situation of the war fronts in mid-1916 started to incline in favour of the Central Powers. In that context, Franco-British pressures acquired a quasi-ultimate character, with Russia adhering to them. On June 19/July 1, 1916, General Alexeev cabled the Russian military attaché in Bucharest, Col. A. Tatarinov: "The situation demands that the Romanians join us, now or never. I empower you to express this viewpoint to Mr. Brătianu and General Ilescu." The French military attaché in Bucharest, S. Pichon, requested an immediate Romanian intervention, as "the general military situation will never be more favourable than it is now."

The next day, General Joseph Joffre, Commander-in-Chief of the French Army, cabled Col. Pichon: "The situation on the front requires that the Romanian army intervene now or never."<sup>24</sup>

The Romanian government didn't yield ground, requesting a specification of the terms of its



collaboration with the Entente. On June 21/21 July 3, I. I. C. Brătianu hand-delivered the French minister in Bucharest the terms under which Romania accepted to enter into the war only against Austria-Hungary; the entry into Romania of the first ammunition train and the ensurance of rhythmical delivery of ammunitions, all through the duration of the war, — about 300 tons daily — through Arhangelsk and Vladivostok; the Romanian offensive on Austria-Hungary should be supported by a general allied offensive; the Russian army should cover the rear of the Romanian front in Bukovina and Dobruđa.<sup>25</sup>

The secret negotiations between the Romanian government and the Entente, taking place concomitantly with wide-ranging manoeuvres in the country and measures for the preparation of the decisive moment of the entrance into the war, were accompanied by a series of diplomatic and political demarches which were virtually aimed at misleading both Berlin and Vienna as to Romania's immediate intentions.

In conditions of full discretion, a Treaty of alliance and a military Convention were concluded on August 4/17, 1916, between Romania and the four Powers of the Entente (England, France, Russia and Italy)\*, whereby this country was under an obligation to enter into the war only against Austria-Hungary, with the explicate purpose of bringing back to the homeland the Romanian provinces beyond the Carpathians — not later than August 15/28, 1916. The Treaty was signed by Ion I. C. Brătianu, Romanian Prime Minister, Stanislav Poklewski-Kozel, the Count of Saint-Aulaire, Sir George Barclay and Baron Carlo Fasciotti, ministers plenipotentiary of Russia, France, England and Italy in Bucharest.

On August 14/27, in accordance with the understanding with the Entente Powers, perfected in the two Treaties, the Crown Council, called at the Cotroceni palace, decided upon Romania's entrance into the war against Austria-Hungary, for the liberation of Transylvania, Bukovina and Banat; for the reunification of the Homeland. Thereby, on August 27, at 20:45 hours, local time, the Romanian minister in Vienna, Edgar Mavrocordat, hand-delivered the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister a note containing Romania's declaration of war.

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# Romanian Battalions, cross the Carpathians!"

Colonel Dr VASILE MOCANU

The Romanian people joined the First World War in August 1916 driven by noble and just ideals. The concept of the national unity, a century-old presence in the country's whole political and economic thinking, in its whole cultural evolution, was rooted in the awareness of a common origin and kinship, in the uninterrupted existence in its national territory, inherited from the Dacians and the Daco-Romans. At the beginning of this century "the progress of the Romanian society imposed", as pointed out by President Nicolae Ceaușescu, "as an objective requirement the completion of the unitary national state — a centuries-old aspiration of our whole people."<sup>1</sup>

After long negotiations, on August 4/17 Romania concluded a treaty of alliance with Great Britain, France, Italy and Russia, materialized into the Political Convention and the Military Convention, which formed later on the basis for her participation in the war. The political convention provided among others that the quadruple alliance warranted the territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Romania, within her present frontiers and recognized Romania's right to unite to her territory — the territories under Austro-Hungarian monarchy, as stipulated and determined under Article 4; in her turn, Romania pledged to declare war and to attack Austria-Hungary under the conditions stipulated by the Military Convention, and discontinue as of the declaration of war, any commercial relationships with the Allies' enemies. Likewise, the signatory powers pledged not to conclude separate peace but only in conjunction and concomitantly, Romania enjoying the same rights with her Allies as regards the preliminaries, peace negotiations, as well as the discussions of questions under the consideration of the peace conference.<sup>2</sup>

The Military Convention provided among others that in keeping with the alliance treaty, Romania pledged that, mobilizing all her land and sea forces, to attack Austria-Hungary at latest on August 15/28 1916 (eight days after the Salonika offensive); during the mobilization and concentration of the Romanian Army, the Russian

Army committed to act extremely energetically all along the Austrian front, with a view to ensuring the success of the above-mentioned Romanian operations. That action would consist in vigorous offensive in Bukovina, in particular, where the Russian troops would have to preserve at least the positions and manpower they had at the time; likewise Russia committed itself to send to Dobruja two infantry divisions and one cavalry division in order to cooperate with the Romanian Army against the Bulgarian Army, while the fleet was to provide security to Constanța harbour; the Allied Powers pledged to precede by eight days at least, through a sustained offensive of the Salonika armies Romania's joining the War, in order to facilitate the mobilization and concentration of all Romanian armed forces. That offensive was to start on August 7/20 1916. Stipulations are made for the military cooperation on an equal footing and not on a subordination basis, distinctive operational theatres for the Romanian and Russian armed forces; assistance of the Romanian Army with ammunition, war materiel, equipment etc.<sup>3</sup>

Concurrently with the evolution of negotiations and within the spirit of their clauses, the Romanian General Staff worked out the "Romanian Combat Plan, 1916.", as well as "The Z Hypothesis." The first chapter of the combat plan mentioned that the general aim of the warfare was "the achievement of our national ideal, that is reintegration of the nation", while the strategic aim was to mop up the hostile forces in Transylvania, advancing in the Hungarian lowland and reaching the Danube and Tisa valleys, in order "to occupy the supply area of the Austro-Hungarian armies."<sup>4</sup> To implement the targets set forth, the majority of the armed forces (Northern Army, Second and First Armies), representing 65 per cent of the total Romanian forces, had to act offensively in Transylvania and Banat, as for the 3rd Army, respectively 25 per cent of the forces, were bound to ensure liberty of action to the troops that advanced passing in defensive position on the Southern State-frontier. The general reserve made of the 5th Army Corps,



represented 10 per cent of the forces. Thus, the Romanian combat plan provided the performance of an action on two fronts, that is: the offensive on the Northern and North-Western front and defence on the Southern front in the first stage and offensive in Dobrudja after the tenth day since mobilization.

The total combat manpower under arms amounted to 336 battalions with 574 machine-guns, 104 squadrons with 40 machine-guns, 374 artillery batteries. 146 of the 336 battalions were active and 120 from the reserve, while 100 were militia and territorial battalions. The total number of conscripted men amounted to 833,601 of which 19,843 were officers and cadets. Besides the conscripted armed forces a reserve was estimated which raised the availability of mobilization up to 1,234,000 people, representing 15 per cent of the country's population and 30 per cent of the male population.

Romania's decision to join the war on the Entente's side was made by the Crown Council at the Cotroceni Palace, on August 14/27 1916. At the end of the debates, King Ferdinand stated that decision had been made "after long pondering" and that he was convinced it met the interests of the whole country. That very evening, Edgar Mavrocordat, Romania's minister in Vienna, handed over the declaration of war to the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Affairs Ministry. The following day, August 15/28 Germany declared war on Romania.

The righteousness of the Decision of the Crown Council, of the Declaration of War on Austria-Hungary the just and liberation character of this Romanian action were clearly reflected by the press of the time. "We, the Romanians, wrote the *Viitorul* daily, do not covet for foreign land, neither do we aim, as our enemies do, to invade and submit other peoples. We only want to free our brothers from bondage, to be able, together with them, to live on our national life."<sup>5</sup>

At the moment when Austria-Hungary was forwarded the declaration of war in Vienna, the Romanian cover troops began the offensive penetrating Transylvania through the Carpathian passes, to the tune of the famous military march called "Forward Romanian battalions, march across the Carpathians" in an atmosphere of boundless enthusiasm, sprung from the lofty

Romanian troops marching toward combat dispositions to liberate the ancient Romanian land of Transylvania (August 1916).



cause for which the country had committed to war. Taking by surprise all the enemy's advanced posts, the soldiers had quickly occupied all the roads which connected Transylvania and the Banat to the motherland. Important battles were waged at Borsec—Toplița, Miercurea Ciuc and Oituz, Timișul de Sus, Bran, South of Sibiu, on the Jiu Valley and Cerna.

The troops of the Romanian North, 2nd and 1st Armies had arrived on the front lines set forth by the Romanian General Headquarters, by August 27/September 9, 1916, through heroic action and total patriotic devotion, beginning afterwards to consolidate their positions. Thousands of prisoners had been taken during the war, and a big quantity of ammunition, armament and other war materiel had been captured.

Though the offensive for the liberation of Transylvania and the Banat were successfully evolving, the Romanian High Command was forced to delay, in the beginning, and stop it altogether in the end. And this was first of all due to the fact that the Allies had not fulfilled their commitments under the Military Convention. By this we mean first of all the Russian offensive in Galicia and the Allied offensive on the Salonika front, which allowed for the launching of the German—Bulgarian offensive and, later on, for the Turkish offensive in Dobrudja, and the transfer of some units of the Central Powers from the Galician and French Fronts to the Transylvanian Front, the formation of the German 9th Army commanded by General Erick von Falkenhayn, as well as the re-organization of Austro-Hungarian 1st Army. It was with increased forces that the enemy stopped the Romanian offensive, passing then to counter-attack.

Concentrating its forces and taking advantage of Romania's difficult situation of fighting on two fronts, without an efficient support from the Allies, the enemy launched a decisive offensive. The Romanian troops were forced to give up gradually, after fierce battles, the liberated territories in Transylvania and to withdraw in the Carpathians, where they would wage heavy defence battles for each mountain peak, hill or valley, the enemy having to pay hard for each piece of land maimed from Romania.

The Romanian soldiers proved both bravery and heroism, as well as lofty civic and human feelings, during the battles waged in Transylvania and the Banat, which won them from the very beginning the confidence of the liberated population, irrespective of nationality.

Entering Transylvania, General Averescu addressed to the liberated population the following words: "Setting foot on the sacred land, on which for centuries on end the language of our misfortunate folk has been spoken, the Romanian Army did not come with heinous thoughts against the people of any religious faith or any nationality, who had stayed back home, but, on the contrary, we are animated by the most brotherly feelings for all this peace-loving people."<sup>6</sup> The liberated popular masses, in their turn, responded with the same feelings, receiving with enormous enthusiasm

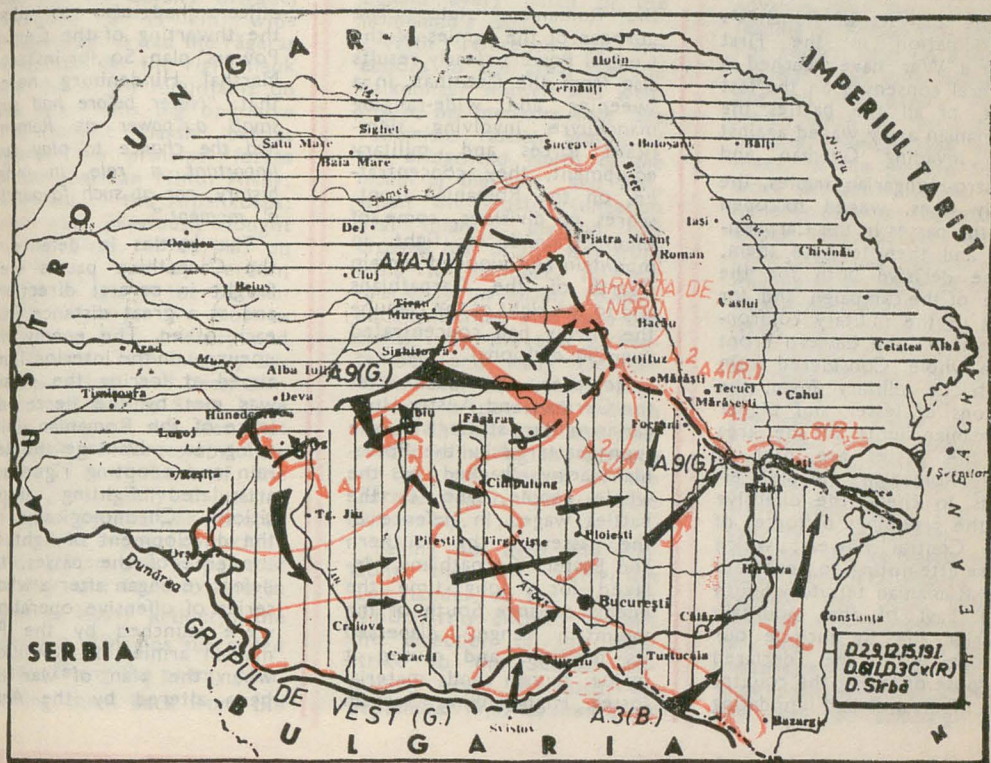


the liberating Romanian soldiers. Expressing their feelings, *Gazeta de Transilvania* wrote: "We are still overwhelmed and cannot find the proper words to express our joy, stifled by century-old sufferings!...! Our liberators and brothers have come!...! Welcome and go ahead in good health!"<sup>7</sup> Wishing to shake as soon as possible the foreign domination, the Transylvanian population granted all possible support to the Romanian Army. Under strained circumstances

soldier step into their land of their two-millennia-old slavery."<sup>8</sup>

As it had always happened during its multi-millennary history the Romanian people strengthened its ranks once more, increasing its efforts and proving its unshakable unity and solidarity in the heavy struggle waged with a well-armed enemy, specially trained for invading actions.

That was a just and fierce struggle, demanding sacrifices. But the Romanian people would be



the citizens from the liberated areas supplied food to the military units, enthusiastically taking part in defence engineering works where necessary; they carried ammunition with their own carts or even in hand, they guided the Romanian troops on secret paths to ambush the enemy, Maria Manciualea, later on awarded the Military Virtue Order, being only one of the numerous examples; they offered the Romanian commands precious information about the enemy or fought arm in hand, side by side, with the Romanian soldiers. Historian Nicolae Iorga, a keen observer of and involved in the events with all his mind and soul, wrote that in order to score successes in Transylvania, the Romanian Army "was assisted especially by the Romanian population, desiring for such a long time to see the Romanian foot

able to make them, to struggle and resist to defend its forefathers' land and its national entity, up to the final victory and the achievement of its great national-ideal: the Great Union of all Romanians under the national tricolour flag.

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7. *Universul*, August 30, 1916.
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# THE BATTLES

for the Carpathian passes  
(September — October 1916)

Colonel Dr GHEORGHE TUDOR

The analysts of Romania's participation in the First World War have reached a general consensus on the fact that, of all the battles the Romanian army waged against the invading German and Austro-Hungarian armies, the early ones, waged to open up the passes in the Carpathians and then to hold them, were decisive both for the fate of the campaign and for that of the military confrontations on the Eastern Front as a whole. Considered from a strictly military angle, the actions of lesser and bigger Romanian units in the area of the passes are part of the Romanian people's efforts to check the offensive of the groupings of forces of the Central Powers, which were attempting to penetrate the Romanian territory South and East of the mountain barrier and to encircle our troops with the declared purpose of taking the country out of the war and liquidating

the Romanian state. The purpose of the armies of the Central Powers clearly results also from the fact that, in a sweeping and wide-ranging manoeuvre, involving significant forces and military equipment, they concentrated, on the Romanian front, scores of divisions, some of them trained to fight in mountain and wooded terrain (North of the Carpathians and to the right of the Danube the enemy had concentrated over 50 divisions).

However, the illusions of the German and Austro-Hungarian military strategists were soon shattered by the Romanian army, backed by the whole people, who, in the battles waged in defence of the passes in the Southern and Eastern Carpathians, delayed for a long time the enemy advance South of the mountain range, dispersed its positions and caused it major human and material losses. High-ranking German

officers had also to admit the thwarting of the Central Powers' plan. So, for instance, Marshal Hindenburg noted that: "Never before had such small a power as Romania had the chance to play such important a role in world history, nor at such favourable a moment."

The battles in defence of the Carpathian passes were fought in several directions, and at a great distance from each other. The enemy manoeuvre on the interior lines, aimed at forcing the passes, was met by the fierce defence of the Romanian units, using to advantage the terrain and adopting rigorously articulated fighting dispositions. Chronologically, in the development of fights in the area of the passes, the defensive began after a whole series of offensive operations were launched by the Romanian armies, in conditions when the plan of war had been altered by the Army



## ROMANIA IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

— chronological reference points —

August 14/27, 1916. After two years of neutrality, fulfilling the Romanian people's wish, the Romanian Government decides upon Romania's joining the war on the side of the Entente, for accomplishing her national unity. The event is enthusiastically greeted throughout the areas inhabited by the Romanians and admirably received by international public opinion: "Romania has declared war on Austria-Hungary, her war being a national one," wrote at the time "Il Giornale d'Italia", while The Times appreciated that Romania's joining the Allied forces was important from all points of view; the allies were sharing now Romania's cause as if it had been their own and were looking forward at the time when all Romanians would be united owing to the victory of their Army and of the Allied troops.

August 14—15/27—28, 1916. Mobilization of the Romanian Army. The total number of mobilized people was 15 per cent of the whole country's population, that is 1,083, 000 people. The Romanian Army crosses the Carpathians to Transy-



Headquarters, as a result of the deteriorating situation on the Southern Front. The first battle for the passes took place in the area of Sibiu—Ciineni, where the I Army Corps, making up the right wing of the Romanian First Army (including the 13th and 23rd Infantry Divisions and the 1st Cavalry Brigade) defended a 45 km wide bridgehead. It had the Făgăraş mountains on the right flank and the Cibin mountains on the left. This big operative unit fought harsh battles against the principal forces of the German Ninth Army, made up of the Alpenkorps, who had previously fought in the Tirol, in Serbia, on the Meuse and at Verdun, as well as against the German 187th Infantry, the Austro-Hungarian 57th Infantry and the German 76th Infantry Divisions (that had been concentrated in the Seica Mare area). Despite the fact that the balance of forces obviously inclined in favour of the enemy, especially in terms of armament and war material (5.4 to one in point of machine guns, 2.3 to one in point of artillery and four to one in point of heavy artillery), the Romanian divisions succeeded in countering the enemy plan, pushing them back from the

gorges of the Olt and encircling them.

Launched on September 13, 1916, the offensive of the German XXXIX Corps, preceded by an encircling manoeuvre made four days before by the Alpenkorps, met with the resistance of the Romanian troops, resolved to fiercely defend every patch of the homeland's soil.

With reference to the actions in the area, General Falkenhayn himself was writing in his memoirs that *"the Romanians resisted bravely at the bridgehead North of the mouth of the pass"* and that, when the Austro-Hungarian 51st infantry division had crossed half of the way from Sibiu to Şelimbăr, it *"was struck by an enemy counter-attack mounted with force and ability"*. By the end of September and early October 1916, the Romanian troops set up a powerful defense inside the gorges, and succeeded in halting the advance of the main forces of the German Ninth Army on the Olt valley.

Failing to fight his way along the Olt valley, the Commander of the German Ninth Army decided to shift the direction of the main strike to the Second Romanian Army. As such, on September 19, 1916, the troops

on the left wing of the Romanian second Army engaged the enemy in heavy battles, resisting on successive positions extending back to the Perişani mountain range. In that area, the Romanian 6th, 3rd and 4th Infantry Divisions mounted the defense, their mission being to check the advance on the directions leading to Braşov and Rîşnov. For several days on end, the big Romanian units heroically engaged the enemy forces, which were by far superior in both number and equipment. In the general framework of these actions, prominence deserves the counter-attack launched by the 6th Light Cavalry and 24th Infantry Regiments in the area of the village of Vlădeni, at a time when the Austro-Hungarian 51st Infantry Division was emerging from the mountains, pushing back its forces inside the gorges. Later on, the Romanian Army Headquarters dispatched another two big units to support the second Army (the 10th and 2nd Infantry Divisions), who mounted the defensive in the passes South of Braşov. Moreover, the 22nd Infantry Division was ordered to hold the Bran Pass. Halted on the Southeastern Carpathians, the enemy was compelled to revise its plan of campaign and

vania starting the military operations. The appeal to the nation called for the soldiers *"to carry the flags across those frontiers where your brothers are waiting impatiently for you with hope kindling in their hearts."*

**August 15/28—September 6/19, 1916.** The offensive in Transylvania takes place. The Romanian army penetrated into Transylvania through 18 points, overthrowing the enemy's defence at the frontier, taking advantage of the ambush; by the end of August, it advances rapidly and deeply, over almost 120 kms, wide front freeing numerous localities, the city of Braşov among them, where the Romanian troops are received with great joy.

**August 17/30, 1916.** Germany declares war on Romania.

**August 18/31, — August 19/September 1, 1916.** Bulgarian troops attack the advanced posts of the Romanian army in Dobrudja.

**August 19—24/September 1—6, 1916.** The



Immediately after the ordaining of mobilization in the night of August 14 to 15, 1916, thousands of Romanian citizens enthusiastically went to the enlisting centres with the purpose of taking part in the war for liberating the Romanians subject to foreign sway.





In trenches, ready to start a new attack for the liberation of the ancient land of Transylvania.

rearrange its positions, and then to start fresh offensives. Indeed, the enemy "Archduke Charles" Army Group was ordered to strike, with its Ninth Army, across the Southeastern Carpathians toward Galați, focusing its principal forces through Brașov to Bucharest. In their turn, the big Romanian units staunchly fought on all the directions opened in the chain of the Carpathians. In this context, the defense of the Oituz Pass was credited entirely to the 2nd Cavalry Division, which engaged the Austro-Hungarian 71st Division on the remote access ways to the above Pass, and, starting September 30, 1916, the 15th Infantry Division,

dispatched from the front in Dobrudja, also joined the fight in the area. In point of method of action, the Romanian troops combined the defense of intermediate positions with powerful offensive ripostes. At a certain time, supported by a massive artillery barrage, the enemy succeeded in penetrating 6—7 km deep into the Romanian positions. At that decisive moment for the fate of the battle, General Eremia Grigorescu, Commander of the 15th Infantry Division, launched a vigorous counter-attack, which was momentous in wiping off the enemy breach. Eventually, the enemy was driven away from the

Oituz gorges, also suffering significant losses. In the space of a single day, on October 11, the Romanians took over 400 prisoners. "Fighting under the banner which proclaimed 'We shall not be passed by'", the Romanian military countered all the enemy attempts to penetrate the Oituz Pass, and that was why their big unit was dubbed "The Iron Division". With reference to the way in which the units of that division fought, General Prezan, Commander of the North Army, mentioned in an order of the day: "From commander to soldier, the 15th Division fought day by day for ten days against an enemy that was in full advance and by far superior in effectiveness it resisted with unparalleled courage, worthy of everybody's admiration for the ancestral bravery."

Honour to the Commander of the 15th Division.

The heroism and scorn for death he proved beyond doubt deserve my admiration and gratitude to him."

The troops of the Romanian Second Army, which, starting September 26, 1916, were placed under the orders of General Alexandru Averescu, fought equally harsh battles in defence of the direction opened by the Prahova valley.



Romanian military getting in trains in the Northern Station in Bucharest towards the front lines.

battle of Turtucaia. The bridgehead over the Danube is dismantled.

September 1/14—9/22, 1916. Strong offensive of the Romanian Army in South West Transylvania to clear the Jiu Valley of the German-Austro-Hungarian troops and to defend the Petroșani coal field. The fiercest battle takes place at the Merișor Gorges; after three days' effort, the enemy manages to hold the position, the Romanian Army in the area being forced to withdraw to the old frontier.

September 3/16—8/21, 1916. Powerful German-Bulgarian-Turkish offensive under the command of Field Marshal Mackensen, along the Rasova-Cobadin-Topraisar-Tuzla line is repelled by the Romanian—Russian troops.

September 13/26—September 15/28 1916. The Sibiu battle takes place, first big battle on the Northern front. The Romanian Army, facing the powerful German-Austro-Hungarian offensive commanded by General Falkenhayn, and



So, for instance, in early October, the big Romanian units defended, with a bravery deserving much admiration, the Predeluș, Bratocea, Tabla Buții Passes, as well as the Predeal Pass. Some of the enemy breaches on several directions were fought back through vigorous counter-offensives, such as that carried out by the 21st Infantry Division that engaged the troops of the Austro-Hungarian 51st Infantry Division that had penetrated the area of the Susai Mountain. Highlighting the dedication of the Romanian units, a foreign correspondent wrote: *"The Romanians made it a duty of*

*honour to use in their defence all the advantages offered by the mountain area, to gather their courage, their obstination and scorn for death to defend the gates of their homes I...! They valiantly fought for days on end, their eyes on Transylvania."*

The fights waged by the 22nd Infantry Division against the troops of the German I Reserve Corps, that had been assigned the mission to occupy the Bran Pass, were extremely fierce. The enemy mounted a frontal attack on Bran, with the German 78th Infantry Division, combined with an encircling action carried out by the Austro-Hungarian

8th Mountain Brigade along the Dîmbovița valley. In their turn, the Romanian units replied through fierce defensive actions on favourable positions, permanently watching the flanks to prevent being cut off from the gorges and being encircled by the two big enemy units. In the meantime, the Romanian 12th Infantry Division was dispatched from the Bran area so that, on October 5, the two big Romanian units made up the Nămăești Group. With reference to the way in which the Romanian military fought on the Bran direction, particularly in the areas of Dragoslavele and the Mateiaș mountain, a witness to those confrontations showed that, *"for each square metre of their precious land, the Romanians fought with surprising tenacity."*

The confrontations on the Jiu valley were equally harsh. The mission to defend the pass opened by the Jiu river was assigned to the 11th Infantry Division, so that, in early October, it was operating in a frontal deployment area stretching on 63 km., with its flanks protected by detachments with effectives totalling those of one to two companies. The big Romanian unit withheld the strike of the Group

Romanian military subunit in heroic fights while defending a slope in the Carpathian Mountains.



after a tough resistance is forced to withdraw to the Turnu Roșu pass.

September 18—20/October 1—3, 1916. The so-called manoeuvre of Flămînda takes place, an attempt to counter offensive on the Southern front, by the Romanian troops under the command of General Alexandru Averescu. After initial success, the action is stopped and the troops are transferred to the Carpathian front where the German-Austro-Hungarian offensive became ever more threatening.

September 28/October 11—October 14/27, 1916. The first battle of Oituz takes place triggered off by the offensive of the German-Austro-Hungarian Army against the 2nd Cavalry Division and 15th Infantry Division, commanded by General Eremia Grigorescu. The Romanian troops resist heroically, stopping the advance of the enemy armies and by a single counter offensive they re-establish the front on the heights of the frontier line.

October 10/23—November 2/15, 1916. Po-



General Eremia Grigorescu inspecting the front at Oituz (1916).



led by General von Kneusel, made up of the 11th Infantry and 6th Cavalry Divisions, both German, and the Austro-Hungarian 144th Infantry Brigade. In the tide of the struggle, each patch of land was disputed with obstinacy. Given the difficult situation in which the big unit was fighting, units of the 1st Infantry Division, that was fighting in the Cerna valley were dispatched to reinforce the big unit, the two Romanian Divisions being called the *Jiu Group*. However, the enemy, too, had sent to fight one of its big units, the 7th Cavalry Division. On October 14, something extremely rare in the history of modern war happened, namely that both adversaries launched the offensive concomitantly. Whilst part of the German-Austro-Hungarian group of forces was pushing on to Tg. Jiu, even achieving a small bridgehead on the eastern bank of the Jiu river, the main forces of the *Jiu Group* converged toward the gorges, forcing the enemy to fall back to avoid being caught in the tongues that were shaping out ever more clearly. The Romanian troops' advance on the gorges was made possible by the actions carried out in the Tg. Jiu area by a company of the



In the first fighting front line against the invading enemy in summer 1916.

Gorj Militia battalion against the enemy elements that had penetrated in a deep breach. The fights in defence of the bridge across the river Jiu and the town of Tg. Jiu, a document of the time reports, were marked by the participation, alongside the Romanian military, of "young and elderly people of the civilian population who, side by side with the militiamen of the Gorj battalion, fought to defend the town, while the women were bringing ammunition and dressing the wounded, helping the nurses."

The confrontations that took place over September and October 1916 for control over the East and South Carpathians Passes ended with the Romanian forces' victory. They engaged the enemy with great heroism, resolutely defending each patch of the Romanian land, whatever the sacrifice. "The spirit of sacrifice of the soldiers and officers who stopped short the invaders' advance," President Nicolae Ceaușescu pointed out, "expresses the Romanian people's will to shatter the yoke of foreign occupation and save the country from imperialist slavery."



Romanian military unit advancing to the front for taking part in the repelling of the Austro-German invading troops.

werful actions are performed in the Carpathian passes, the enemy troops aiming at breaking through the Romanian defence line at the Turnu Roșu, Bran, Predeal, Predeluș, Bratocea, Tabla Buții and Oituz passes. The Romanian armies, under the command of the brave generals Ion Dragalina, Alexandru Averescu and Eremia Grigorescu firmly resist in the Carpathians, managing to reject the offensive of the German-Austro-Hungarian armies, overturning thus the enemy's plan to invade the country.

November 16/29—November 20/December 1, 1916. The battle on the Neajlov takes place, the last effort of the Romanian army, under the command of General Constantin Prezan, to defend the country's Capital City. Lessened by previous actions, tired, poorly equipped, unsupported by the Allies, the Romanian Army could not resist and stop the enemy invading forces, by far superior both from the numerical point of view and from that of the equipment, despite all its enthusiasm and self-abnegation.



# THE ENTIRE PEOPLE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR DEFEATING AND CHASING AWAY THE INVADERS

1916

1918

Colonel CONSTANTIN CAZĂNIȘTEANU

In 1916—1918 the liberation struggle carried on by the Romanian people had various forms; first of all it involved the army, alongside which the entire people fought using most varied forms and means, the armed ones included, both in the free territory and in the area temporarily occupied. Nicolae Iorga, the greatest historian of the Romanians, was fully justified to characterize Romania's most difficult situation at that time in the following words said on December 19, 1916: "Under the present circumstances our army represents a whole people. Besides those who fight and those who help with whatever they can, besides those who accompany each battle with their suffering, with the deep vibration of their entire being, besides all these there is no Romanian people."<sup>1</sup>

The broad popular support enjoyed by the decision made by the Romanian leaders in August 1916 is explained by the ardent wish of the Romanian people to live united within the borders of one and the same state for whose national independence and territorial integrity they were determined to make any sacrifice.

The accomplishment of national unity was not the topic of public opinion in Romania alone; the Romanians everywhere, the Romanians who were under foreign domination for centuries were in perfect agreement with their brothers

living in the Romanian state and in the terrible years of the war they achieved a moral unity which preceded and prefigured the Great Union of 1918.

There are two directions to be followed when approaching the participation of the whole Romanian people in the effort made by Romania in the First World War. The first one is that of achieving a perfect moral and political unity of all Romanians, regardless of the territory they lived in — either the Romanian state or the provinces under foreign domination — or of their status — Romanian citizens or foreign citizens of Romanian origin. The second one is the wide popular basis which underlied Romania's military action; that was mainly manifest in the people's participation in the war effort, the patriotic feelings inspiring the men on the battlefield and at the back of the front as well as the resistance movement in the territories temporarily occupied by the enemy.

The mobilization orders in the summer of 1916 were answered with great enthusiasm. "The mobilization was carried out in strict order and an enthusiasm that cannot be described. Within five days the entire Romanian army was mobilized ... 800,000 men, namely 13 per cent of the whole population, a figure other belligerent states reached later, after they had entered the campaign."<sup>2</sup>

January—June 1917. The comprehensive and important action of remaking the Romanian Army. 15 infantry and two of cavalry divisions are organized, equipped at the level of the enemy big units; 4 independent heavy artillery regiments, various other artillery and AA units as well as two divisions of mountain cavalry re-equipped; aviation is endowed with proper, French-made aircraft. The overall combat strength of the rehabilitated Romanian Army goes up to almost 400,000 men, besides auxiliary services. The project is helped also by a French military mission, led by General Henry Mathias Berthelot.

June 8/21, 1917. The first detachment of Transylvanian and Bukovinian soldiers are sworn in at Iași; they join the re-habilitated Romanian Army. Among them there are Romanian volunteers organized in the Darnitsa (Kiev) camp, who "came to fight side by side the Romanian Army for "the liberation of our Romanian territories from Austro-Hungarian domination and for their integration to Romania."



Soldiers and civil population in Tg. Jiu facing enemy troops at the bridge across the Jiu river in October 1916 (reproduction by a painting by A.G. Verona).



Romania's entering the war was hailed by the popular masses as an event expressing the deepest feelings of the Romanian public opinion in all the territories inhabited by Romanians. The war was not regarded as war in itself, but as a means imposed by international circumstances to attain the desideratum of national unity. As President Nicolae Ceaușescu underlined, "in this war the Romanian people's participation was not prompted by intentions of invading or annexing other territories; under the pressures of the Entente Powers, the country's ruling circles decided Romania's joining the war alongside England, France and Russia which promised the fulfilment of national unity desideratum."<sup>3</sup> As early as 1915, Romanian military authorities received numerous applications by which refugees from Transylvania, Bukovina or the Banat asked to be enrolled as volunteers. The Romanian troops' entering the territory of Transylvania, from August 15, 1916, was a great joy for the Romanian population. *"In the villages inhabited by Romanians our arrival is a celebration"* wrote an officer of the 29th Infantry Regiment. *"They are our best guides in the mountain secret paths."*<sup>4</sup> In most diverse forms the population in Transylvania tried to help the liberation from foreign domination. Some 30,000 men welcomed the Romanian units and volunteered to be enrolled immediately. In keeping with the old tradition, representatives of towns and villages welcomed the liberating army with bread and salt. *"Gazeta Transilvaniei"* published in the liberated Brașov wrote: *"In the sacred land, where the language of our oppressed people has been heard for centuries, the Romanian army has come with no feeling of enmity against people of any other faith and any other nationality ... on the contrary, it has come animated with deepest brotherly feelings for all peaceful people."*<sup>5</sup>

The Romanian diaspora, from Siberia to the United States, from the Romanian soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian army kept prisoners in



Some of the members of the socialist circle in Cimpina who acted against the German occupation.

the Russian camps, to the Romanian emigrants in the United States, the Romanians all over the world were united under the single banner of national unity.

The proper operation of the Romanian army's logistic system during 1916—1917 would have been impossible without the broad support of the masses. The performances of the Romanian war economy in those years stand proof to the self-abnegation of the Romanian workers who secured the army's supply with ammunition and fuel under most difficult circumstances. Suffice it to mention that Moldavia's coal production increased from 14,122 tons in 1916 to 56,469 tons in 1917 and 93,403 tons in 1918. In its turn, oil extraction grew from 32,801 tons in 1916 to 57,380 tons in 1917. The figures are all the more significant when one takes into account the fact that after offensive of the Central Powers, Oltenia and Muntenia had come under foreign occupation so that the only sources of oil and coal were those in the East of the country, namely in Moldavia. The smooth running of the railway transport system also implied great efforts of coordination and operation, which would have been impossible to achieve without the active and conscious participation of the railway men.

The popular character of Romania's participation in the war also instilled a similar feature to the manifestations of patriotism.



Convoy of enemy prisoners taken by the Romanian soldiers in the victorious fights in the 1917 campaign.

July 11/24—July 19/August 1, 1917. The Mărăști battle takes place. The powerful offensive of the Romanian Second Army, commanded by General Alexandru Averescu, in cooperation with the Russian Fourth Army, scored a tremendous tactical success. After nine days of fierce battle, on a ground extremely favourable to the enemy in defence, the Romanian troops force it to successi-

vely leave its positions, up to the upper Putna River, where the allied offensive was stopped. The Romanian troops made a 20 km by 30 km salient, liberating some 500 sq km and 30 localities. The enemy lost 2,792 prisoners. The Romanians paid their victory with 1,469 dead, 3,052 wounded, this been considered as "the first victory in the true sense of the word, that is offensive and definitive victory."

July 24/August 6—August 6/19, 1917. The famous battle of Mărășești takes place. The po-



The preparation of aircraft for a new mission on the front in Moldavia (1917).



However strong the recovery of the army was in 1917, it would have been unable to face the offensive of the enemy in the summer of 1917 had the fighting technique and the training of the soldiers been not added the lofty patriotic feelings inspiring the fighters at Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz. "No Way through!" — the inspiring catchword under which the soldiers fought — was a mass commandment in the true sense of the word. The front and the back of the front merged into a perfect unity which turned the Romanian trenches into an insurmountable wall.

From the second half of 1916 until the end of the spring in 1917 a truly prodigious work of rebuilding the army was carried out: 15 infantry divisions and two cavalry divisions were set up,

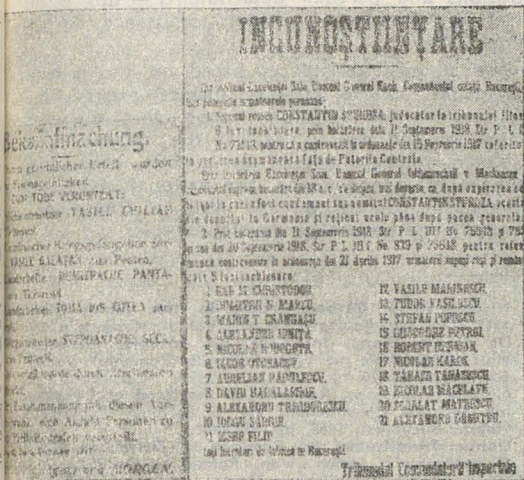
Reserve  
Sub-lieutenant  
Victor Popescu,  
commander of a  
partisan group  
which operated  
in the  
sub-Carpathian  
region of Oltenia  
against occupying  
troops.



which raised the army strength to 400,000 men, not taking into account the auxiliary services.

From every part of the country people sent gifts to the front — in kind and money. The most diverse segments of the population — workers, peasants, intelligentsia, professional people, retired — gave something from their sometimes very small income — money and objects, substantial in quantity and value, making a contribution, in this way too, to the Romanian army's training for driving away the invaders, to directly supporting the front and the fighters. In May 1917 the High Command expressed thanks "to the authorities, institutions and refugees who possessing only minimum of clothing have contributed with money which totalled a sum of 21,465 lei."<sup>6</sup>

The Romanian operational army — itself an expression of the nation — benefited by substantial support from the people, under various forms. A strong movement towards volunteering resulted in army's enriching with an important contingent of troops. In autumn 1916, when the clash became particularly grim because the German troops were approaching the capital, three hundred pupils from high schools in Bucharest went to a regiment "asking to ... be enrolled, to go with them and redden the battlefield with the young blood."<sup>7</sup>



Posters printed in German and Romanian whereby notice was given about the death sentence or hard years of jail upon some Romanian patriots, fighters against the occupants.

werful German-Austro-Hungarian offensive, known also as "the penetration battle on the Putna and Sushita" carried by 12 divisions, backed by 850 guns and over 1,100 machine-guns ended in a resounding defeat. During this battle, the greatest on the Romanian front throughout the war, the Romanian Army, led by General Constantin Christescu and then by General Eremia Grigorescu, won one of the most brilliant victories. The Romanian troops lost 450 officers and 21,000 soldiers, dead, wounded or missing. Praising the unmatched bravery of the Romanian soldiers, the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, wrote admiringly that "the Romanian peasant has proved the world that he is the bravest soldier in the world when he is given the chance to prove it", while General von Morgen, commander of German First Group asserted that the "August battles have proved that the Romanians were redoubtable adversaries."

July 26/August 8 — August 9/22, 1917. The third battle of Oituz. After the bloody battles



Soldiers belonging to the First Romanian Army when taking their oath.





June 9, 1917. A large "hora" of the union staged in the University's Square in Jassy on the occasion of the arrival of some Transylvanian volunteers from Russia, former prisoners from the Austro-Hungarian army who asked to fight for the liberation of the Romanian land from foreign occupation.

Moreover, there were moments during the operations when the combat troops were joined by civilians; young scouts, inhabitants of towns and villages, men and women. Significant in this context is the heroic resistance put up in the autumn of 1916 by the population of the Tirgu Jiu town which, fighting side by side with the standing army, caused considerable delay in the advance of the enemy forces, superior in point of number.

Another domain in which one can see the support given to the army by the people from towns and villages in the operation zones was the supply of information regarding the enemy disposition and movement of troops. Moreover, genuine intelligence networks were set up by the inhabitants living close to the enemy lines. A significant example is the group led by Vasile Chilian, from the Vrancea zone. He succeeded in organizing a network comprising peasants, teachers, priests, doctors etc. They were ultimately discovered by the Germans and their leaders were executed on August 17, 1917.

A proof of the whole Romanian people's adhesion to the fight against the enemy was the resistance put up by the population in the occupied

zones. A minute reconstruction of the forms it took, of the time and place in which the various actions were carried out shows that the temporarily occupied territory always proved to be unsafe ground for the enemy, a real theatre of fighting. The "pacification" of the occupied territories required the concentration of numerous enemy forces which established a regime of intimidation and terror; but none of the means used by the enemy could stop the resistance movement of the masses which was steadily growing. Insubordination to mobilization for forced labour, sabotage, extermination of isolated enemies, attack and setting the headquarters of units and subunits on fire, the setting up of intelligence networks, the destruction of enemy communication lines, open anti-German demonstrations and partisan detachments — this is in brief the Romanian people's resistance during World War I.

The staunch resistance, based on the ardent patriotism of the popular masses proved, by its very existence, by its scope, that the war waged by the people against the invaders was its own struggle guided by a lofty ideal: the defence of independence, the national unity and Romania's passing on the road of free, independent and sovereign development.

1. Nicolae Iorga, *Războiul nostru în note zilnice 1916-1917* (Our War in Daily Notes), Vol. II., Craiova, p. 97.
2. Dr. Vasile Bănu, *Insemnări din războiul României mari* (Notes from the War of Greater Romania), Vol. I, Cluj, 1926, p. 20.
3. Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Romania on the Road of Completing Socialist Construction*, Vol. 2, Political Publishing House, Bucharest, 1968, pp. 467-468.
4. *Unirea Transilvaniei cu România. 1 Decembrie 1918*. (Transylvania's Union with Romania. December 1, 1918), Political Publishing House, Bucharest, 1970, p. 475.
5. "Gazeta Transilvaniei", No. 185, September 7, 1916.
6. "Monitorul oastei", No. 44, May 7, 1917, p. 901.
7. "Viitorul", No. 3121, October 14, 1916.



Days and nights of watch and struggle on the front in Moldavia (1917).

from Cireșoia and Coșna, where the enemy's advance was blocked, the Romanian army came out victorious, the Oituz victory having a favourable influence on the actions of the First Army at Mărășești. Likewise, it helped to preserve the important energy deposits — coal and oil — in the Trotuș Valley, vital in case the Prahova Valley oil-field was lost. This would be the end of the Romanian Army's magnificent epic in the summer of 1917, when it fully proved its bravery and spirit of sacrifice.

March 27/April 9, 1918. The Country's Council of Chișinău (Kishinev) decides the union of Bessarabia to Romania.

April 17/30, 1918. The Peace Treaty between Romania, on the one hand, and Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey on the other, is signed in Bucharest. According to it, Romania is forced to cede Dobruja and important mountain areas (131 villages with 724,975 inhabitants) and to conclude enslaving economic conventions (agricultural, oil, forestry).



# MĂRĂȘTI, MĂRĂȘEȘTI, OITUZ

## Three memorable battles of the Romanians in the First World War

Colonel Dr GHEORGHE ROMANESCU

Late in 1916, the German and the Austro-Hungarian invading forces had taken two thirds of Romania's territory though they had not managed to mop up the Romanian Army. A terrible threat was hovering over the country's independence, over the very national being. And yet, the Romanian people never lost faith or strength in the face of this impending danger. The idea of defending the ancient soil and liberty, of achieving national unity instilled an incomparable staunchness and resolve to fight in the masses, in the whole army. The Romanian Army in the north-eastern part of the country, in Moldavia – haunted by hunger and disease early in 1917 – was reorganized at the cost of great sacrifices by the people, and equipped with new means of fight, as well as reinstructed according to the latest requirements of warfare.

The General Command of the Romanian Army in cooperation with the Russian Command developed an offensive plan providing for the carrying out of two coups: one by the Romanian 2nd Army and the troops on the right wing of the Russian 4th Army in the Mărăști area and a more powerful one, by the Romanian 1st Army and the right wing of the Russian 6th Army on the inland Siret, in the Nămolosa sector. After

the defeat of the main forces of the German 9th Army and of part of the Austrian-Hungarian 1st Army, the hardest operation whose brunt was to be borne by the Romanian troops had to be performed in the Rîmnicul Sărat area, with the subsequent chasing of the enemy across the Danube and the Carpathians.

The German generals had also devised an offensive plan. They envisaged to close the princers on the Romanian and Russian forces in Moldavia and then to carry on their offensive in the southern areas of Ukraine. In both cases the subsequent developments were to bring about changes and even basic modification in these projects. Basically, they lay at the foundations of the terrible clashes in the summer of 1917 on Romanian land. The victories of Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz, known in German historiography as the Șușița and Putna battles, scored by the Romanian troops alongside which Russian soldiers, officers and non-commissioned officers in the French military mission also fought, were decisive moments in the fight for the homeland's liberation, for the achievement of the Romanian people's ideal of national unity, and at the same time made an important contribution to the

**April 17/30, 1918.** The National Committee of the Romanians in Transylvania and Bukovina is created in Paris, chaired by Traian Vuia. Its main task is to struggle for the union of Transylvania with the motherland.

**November 15/28, 1918.** The Romanian National Committee of Bukovina, led by Iancu Flondor, decides the "union of all Bukovina with the other Romanian lands in one national independent state."

**November 18/December 1, 1918.** The Great National Assembly takes place in Alba Iulia, attended by over 100,000 delegates representing millions of Romanians all over Transylvania, who vote for Transylvania's Union to Romania. At the same time, the Grand National Assembly elects the Romanian Great National Council, made of 250 members. The Alba Iulia daily wrote on the occasion: "Great, sacred, overwhelming day, destined beforehand to be recorded among the red-letter days in our historic calendar! All centuries-old sufferings, all thoughts and longings towards light, any of our efforts and

sacrifices, for a thousand years, have yearned for this day of justice and freedom."

**December 27, 1918/January 9, 1919.** The National Assembly of the Transylvanian Saxons in Mediaș endorses a resolution expressing their adherence to the Great Union of December 1, 1918.

**July 28/August 10, 1919.** The meeting of Swabian representatives takes place in Timișoara, endorsing a resolution on Transylvania's Union to Romania.


**August 10/September 10, 1919.** The Peace Treaty between the Allied Powers and Austria is signed at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, whereby the Union of Bukovina to Romania is acknowledged.

**May 22/June 4, 1920.** The Trianon Treaty is signed between the Allied Powers and Hungary, an international acknowledgement of the union of Transylvania, Banat, Crișana and Maramureș to Romania.

**October 15/28, 1920.** Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan acknowledge the union of Bessarabia to Romania.

✠ Major COSTICA PRODAN  
✠ DORINA RUSU





Attack of the Romanian troops in the victorious offensive at Mărăști (July 1917).

defeat by the Entente forces of the armies of the Central Powers on European fronts.

**Mărăști.** In the morning of July 11, 1917, after a powerful artillery preparation by 292 guns, the troops of the Romanian 2nd Army put up an offensive in the Mărăști sector. The enemy front, lined with trenches and communication approaches, concrete pillboxes, various obstacles and barrages was impetuously attacked by the regiments of the 8th, 6th and 3rd Infantry Divisions in the first echelon of the army. On the left, the units of the 15th Division of the Russian 4th Army were also attacking. Taking advantage of the rough terrain partly covered by woods the enemy put up a fierce resistance. Through heavy automatic and artillery fire, and numerous counter-attacks the German and Austrian-Hungarian troops tried to maintain their positions. But the lunge of the Romanian infantry "was like a thunderbolt. Nothing could stop them", noted writer Mihail Sadoveanu on July 30 (at the time reserve lieutenant and war correspondent for the Romania newspaper issued in Iași). "They had long waited for that hour!...! They were coming down menacingly like unchecked waves!...! and all of a sudden, after days and nights of horrible bombings, after the moral suffering of waiting, this brisk move of our infantry hailed panic on the enemy!...! The battle of Mărăști will go down in our history as a serious and solid work of military art!..." In the battles for the liberation of Mărăști and taking the height with the same name, the Romanian units, through bayonet charges secured the enemy's main positions and captured much armament, as well as 1,500 missiles loaded with asphyxiating poisonous gas which the German artillery had not had the time to use. The troops of the German 217 and 218 Infantry divisions, 1st Cavalry and the Austrian-Hungarian 8th Mountain Brigade were pushed west so that archduke Joseph, commander of the Austrian-Hungarian 1st Army had to report to his superiors the following day: "...in desperate battle our falling-off line is rejected. On a very harsh terrain and under pressure by a most powerful enemy artillery fire, our counter-attacks did not amount to much. Our artillery was ploughed down and the infantry sustained heavy losses."

The following days the Romanian offensive scored the same success. On July 13, General Alexandru Averescu, commander of the 2nd Army threw into battle the 1st Infantry Division in reserve, on the main line of attack, in order to step up the advance. Under the uninterrupted assault of the four Romanian divisions, and the precise and continuous fire of the artillery, the enemy was compelled to abandon its defense positions in the Soveja basin and withdraw, covered by the rear guard, to the Vrancea Mountains and beyond the upper course of the river Putna, a tributary of the Siret. A considerable breach had been thus achieved in the junction between the Austrian-Hungarian 1st Army and the German 9th Army, and the German commander was thus forced to commit more forces to this sector, removed from the Nămolosa sector. Unfortunately, the important hit scored by the Romanian 2nd Army on the Mărăști front could not be fully capitalized. On July 17, owing to the fact that the Russian troops in Galicia and Bukovina were forced to withdraw by powerful offensive moves of the German and Austrian-Hungarian troops endangering thus the northern flank of the Romanian front, the Romanian High Command ordered a halt to the advance of the 2nd Army and the consolidation of the position attained.

During the Mărăști battle carried on a front over 30 km broad and 25 km deep, more than



Romanian soldiers in combat disposition in front of the station in Mărășești (August 1917).



30 localities and a territory of about 500 sq km were liberated. Extolling the heroism of the troops under command the No 1987 Order of the Day given by General Averescu at the end of this offensive operation, ran as follows: "You have measured yourselves against an enemy who thinks to be the best in the world and does not know what it means to withdraw. With your amazing élan, from the very first clash you actually routed the enemy. Proof to this, the thousands of prisoners, numberless guns and huge rounds of ammunition abandoned behind."

An important result of the battle was a change in the campaign plan by the German command. Field Marshal August von Mackensen decided to renounce the wide-scope offensive envisaged between the Siret and Prut rivers and to adopt a more modest plan providing for a main blow west of Siret in the Focșani-Mărășești direction, combined with a secondary operation on the Oituz valley, to Adjud.

In the village of Mărăști a beautiful mausoleum was erected after the war where the remains repose of thousands of soldiers who fought and came off victorious in the battle waged there in the hot summer of 1917.

**Mărășești.** In the morning of July 24, 1917, after an artillery bombing which lasted three hours, the German 9th Army, the most powerful army of the Central Powers on the eastern front — started an offensive in the direction Focșani—Mărășești—Adjud, drawing into battle the troops in the centre and left flank of the disposition of the Russian 4th Army, on the Putna and Siret valleys. Overwhelmed by the numerical superiority and technical advantage of the enemy the Russian units began to withdraw. Yet when the big German units believed themselves victorious they had to cope with a fresh, dauntless resistance. The commander of the Romanian 1st Army whose divisions were situated on the eastern bank of the Siret with a view to relieving the troops of the Russian 4th army, gradually threw into battle the 5th and 9th infantry divisions. The furious attacks of the enemy were opposed staunch resistance, counter-attacks, thus the Romanian front was gradually consolidated concomitantly with the depletion of the enemy's offensive capacity. General von Eben, commander of the German 9th Army admitted in a report to Mackensen that "the spirit of combat of the divisions which participated in the attack, in particular of the 76th, 89th and 115th Divisions against which the enemy counter-attacks had closed in, is low due to the numerous losses."

The German command committed to battle the Alpine Corps, switching the offensive effort to the left but advance was checked in that sector as well by the Romanian 13th and 10th infantry divisions thrown into battle on the right of the 9th Division which was defending the locality and railway station of Mărășești.

The battle of Mărășești reached a climax on August 6 when the German 9th Army concentrated its artillery and infantry in a decisive effort the Mărășești—Pădurea Răzoare sector. Although hard hit by the artillery and infantry fire of the Romanian units, von Eben's divisions were gain-

ing ground, making a dangerous breach in the junction between the 47th and 51st Regiments of the 13th Infantry Division. At that crucial moment, the attack columns were temporarily repulsed by the action and sacrifice of a Romanian machine-gun company taking up positions on the 100 height. When the outcome of the battle and maybe the country's fate even, were at stake, the commander of the 13th Infantry Division, General Ion Popescu sent a reserve to counter-attack. The two battalions plus other subunits struck concentrically in the thick of the German 115th Infantry Division. Overwhelmed by the vigour of the Romanian attack the remaining troops of this big units withdrew to the former jumping off position, pursued by the regiments and battalions of the 13th and 10th Infantry Divisions.

By the end of the day, the battle of Mărășești was a close chapter. The last pockets of enemy resistance, put up until August 21 in the Panciu-Muncel direction were utterly defeated. Under-



**Romanian infantrymen counterattacking in the battle at Oituz (July-August 1917).**

lining the heroism of the military in the Romanian 1st Army, the order of battle given on August 8, 1917 by General Eremia Grigorescu, commander of the Army was saying: "The day of August 6 was written by you with golden letters in the book of our nation's glory, asserting in the whole world its unvanquishable rights [...] From general to soldier, close ranks and be ready, when the hour of complete revenge comes, to chase across the frontiers the invading enemy. May you live long my brave soldiers, the unparalleled pride and shield of the Homeland."

The battle of Mărășești, a defensive operation of strategical significance lasted 29 days and ended with an incontestable victory of the Romanian forces. The goal pursued by Mackensen, "the frontbreaker", could not be attained as the offensive of the 11 divisions of the German 9th Army failed completely in the face of the front

(continued at 95 page)



# ROMANIA AND THE ENTENTE

(1916—1918)

Captain ALESANDRU DUȚU

Upon the outbreak of the First World War, the Romanian state, at the crossroads of the diverging interests of the great powers, had to take into account the intricate situation created, and accordingly, to act both with a view to securing its independence, sovereignty and integrity, and to achieving the Romanian people's millenary aspirations, the completion of Romanian's national state unity. Therefore, although bound to the Central Powers as early as 1883 through a defensive alliance treaty concluded by King Carol I without the knowledge and approval of public opinion, Romania adopted in August 1914 a position of neutrality.

In the years of neutrality (1914—1916), Romanian diplomacy was busily making endeavours for the creation of an international juridical framework to the alliance between Romania and the Entente constantly pursuing the guarantee of equal rights, observance of national interests, independence and sovereignty. During the negotiations, though the Romanian side insistently dwelt on its basic strategical option — the offensive for the liberation of Transylvania — the representatives of the Entente, by virtue of the interests of great powers, tried to impose the involvement of the Romanian Army in operations subordinated to their own strategical interests. Thus, France and Great Britain asked for a Romanian offensive south of the Danube meant to facilitate the moves of the allied army at Salonika.

Eventually, on August 17, 1916, the Treaty of alliance between Romania and Great Britain, France, Russia and Italy was concluded in Bucharest, as well as the Convention on their military collaboration. Through these documents, assessed by the contemporaries as an important success of the Romanian diplomacy the Entente was recognizing Romania's right to re-integrate to its national territory Transylvania, Banat, Crișana, Maramureș and Bukovina, Romanian historical provinces under Austrian-Hungarian domination. Concomitantly, the treaty guaranteed Romania a status of equal partner in the Peace Conference.

The military convention stipulated among others that the Romanian Army's entering the campaign till August 28, 1916, preceded by 8 days by the outbreak of the offensive of General Sarrail's Army in Salonika; Russia's pledge to facilitate the Romania Army's offensive through energetic moves on the Austro-Hungarian front, to provide with its fleet in the Black Sea the defence of the harbour of Constanța and to send

to Dobrudja two infantry divisions and a cavalry one.

Moreover, the military convention provided that *"the cooperation of the Allied Armies does not imply any subordination by one of the contracting parties to the other; it implies only a free acceptance of the dispositions required to attain the end pursued, and fellowship of arms"*. The Romanian and Russian troops were to maintain their own commands, distinct areas of operation, and complete independence in the running of operations. Only the big Russian units sent to cooperate with the Romanian Army in Dobrudja were to be placed *"under the Supreme Command of the Romanian Army."* The Entente committed itself to supply Romania daily with 300 tons of ammunition and war matériel.

Romania's military offensive move in Transylvania had as a first strategical effect a considerable improvement of the overall situation of the allied forces. But shortly after the Romanian Army's joining the war, the high commands of the Allies within the Entente, happy with the weakening pressure by the enemy on their own positions at Verdun, north Italy and in Galicia, surprisingly lost all interest in the events on the front in the Carpathians and at the Danube, already considered a *"secondary"* theatre of military action.

Thus, the French and the British commands, which on August 20, 1916 had given Romania an ultimatum to declare war on Austria-Hungary without delay, did not keep their pledge to put up the planned wide-scope offensive on the Salonika front in order to keep in place the mass of the Bulgarian—German—Ottoman units in the Balkans.

Moreover, on the front in the northern Carpathians the Russian troops did not deploy the energetic moves provided in the August 17 convention aimed at supporting the Romanian

Attachés of the Entente's military missions in Romania while visiting the Romanian Army General Headquarters (1917)





offensive for the liberation of Transylvania. Besides, General Alexeev, chief of the Russian High Command asked his liaison officers to persuade the I. I. C. Brătianu government of the necessity to withdraw the Romanian forces on the Siret line in order to achieve — with considerable losses implied by the abandoning of Oltenia and Walachia — a shortening of the eastern front.

Thus, following the unfulfilled pledges made by the allied commands, the enemy availed itself of this opportunity to concentrate north and west of the Carpathians, and on the right of the Danube as well forces amounting to about 50 divisions, effective and material, especially artillery and automated weapons, highly superior to the Romanian ones. Referring to the nonobservance of the pledges made by the allies in the Entente in the August 1916 Treaty, the Count of Saint Aulaire, French ambassador to Bucharest, noted: "All these stipulations, except those imposing obligations on Romania, were to be violated."

In the winter of 1916 and the spring of 1917 serious demarches were made with a view to expanding political and military collaboration with the Entente. During the talks with the allied military authorities carried on in Romania, Petrograd and Chantilly, the Romanian side explained the necessity for having the Moldavian front backed up through allied offensive moves put up in Galicia and the north of the Balkan peninsula, the delivery on time of the promised amounts of ammunition and weapons paid beforehand by the Romanian Government. Moreover, stress was laid on the fact that the allies could grant assistance with a view to the creation of volunteer units made up of Romanians coming from the Austrian-Hungarian Army and citizens who at the outbreak of hostilities on August 1914, were living in France, Italy, Great Britain, the United States etc.

Following the provisions of the interallied treaties, the Command of the Romanian front was set up, with King Ferdinand I, head of the Romanian state, at the lead, who was to exercise his right to command all the armed national forces and the allied troops on Romania's territory. The great Romanian and Russian units deployed on the front maintained their distinct organizations and own areas of operations. Upon the insistence of the Romanian side, the campaign plan for the year 1917 provided for continued resistance on the line of the Carpathians and between the Carpathians and the Danube, rejecting some suggestions by the allies to cede Moldavia without fight. Moreover, it was decided that two simultaneous offensive operations be carried on on the Eastern front: one in Galicia by the group of Russian forces led by General Brusilov and another on the Romanian front, by Romanian and Russian forces, with the main objective the annihilation of the Austrian-Hungarian group on the eastern Carpathians and Poarta Focșani and the liberation of the Romanian territories taken by the enemy in the previous campaign.



General Henri Mathias Berthelot, chief of the French military Mission on decorating with the "Legion of Honour" the Romanian officers distinguished themselves in the Mărășești battle (1917).

A notable contribution to the improvement of the fighting technique of the Romanian army during its recovery was made by the French Military Mission, containing 1,200 officers, non-commissioned officers, experts, led by General Henry Berthelot, arrived in the country upon the request of the Romanian Government. A real assistance to the Romanian army were the *matériel* — guns, machine-guns, grenades, gas masks, ammunition sent by the Allies in incomparable bigger amounts than in the previous campaign.

In the circumstances of the peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk (March 1918) between Soviet Russia and the Central Powers, Romania, totally isolated from its Entente Allies, was imposed the peace treaty of Bucharest of May 7, 1918 which seriously prejudiced its territorial integrity and national independence.

As a consequence of all these developments, between April and November 1918, significant changes were wrought in the political military Romanian-Allies relations. The Romanian and Russian joint command on the Moldavian front was dismantled just like the superior command of the East-European military theatre; the Allied Military Mission were compelled to withdraw from Russia and Romania. Under the circumstances, the Romanian High Command remained the only one in eastern Europe, hostile to the Central Powers, maintaining its own structures and control over the national military forces.

Notwithstanding serious difficulties, Romania continued to keep up relations, through its envoys to Paris, Rome and London, with the governments and allied high commands. These links were further expanded in the first half of November 1918 when the Romanian Army, remobilized upon order by King Ferdinand I, rejoined the fight against the German forces commanded by Field Marshal von Mackensen.

The end of the hostilities on the European fronts, marked by the military downfall of the Central Powers of November 1918, found the Romanian Army, just like in the summer of 1916, on the side of the Entente, in full march across the Carpathians for the accomplishment of the historic mission under which it had entered the First World War, namely the liberation of the Romanian territories under foreign rule and the completion of Romanian state unity.



# THE ROMANIAN MILITARY AND MATERIAL EFFORT IN WORLD WAR I

Reader Dr MIRCEA N. POPA

A correct appraisal of Romania's military effort during the 1916—1918 interval, as an ally of the Entente, and the emphasis placed on its significance are undoubtedly conditioned by the acknowledgement of a historic reality: the Romanians had waged a popular and national war, on Romanian territories, for defending the country's independence and sovereignty, for achieving its national unity and completion of the unitary national state<sup>1</sup>. Romania's participation in that war had nothing in common with the Great Powers' domination and expansion interests, Romania being at the time a small state (with a modest human potential and a reduced economic capacity), placed in a geographic area under the control, the area east of its frontier excepted, of the Austro-Germans and their allies; although leading political circles had pursued it and the greatest part of the public opinion had supported it with patriotic enthusiasm, Romania's joining the war in 1916 was made under the pressure of the Great Powers of the Entente<sup>2</sup>, which had dictated the Romanian Army's commitment to action exclusively according to their interests, to the detriment of their Romanian ally, at a very unfavourable moment, from a military point of view, when the offensive efforts of the Entente Allies had reached the limits and they were no longer favourable to or could no longer keep their promises to energetically act on the Salonika and Galicia theatres; the leading circles of the Entente were aware that Romania was not yet prepared for combat<sup>3</sup>. Under such circumstances, the Romanian Army was forced to fight on two fronts with enemies exceeding it from a military point of view. The length of the front was enormous, almost 1,500 km, while the forces Romania could muster during the summer of 1916 were insufficient, summing up about 1,200,000 soldiers and officers (reserves included), that is 30 per cent the country's male population. Or she should have had 6—8 million military, the equivalent of the country's entire population, to be able to ensure a force similar to those on the Russian and British-French fronts. Mention should be made of the fact that the armament and war matériel were unsatisfactory: there was no heavy artillery, machine-guns and the whole army had only 28 old fashioned aircraft. But Romania's joining the war did not really surprise Berlin and Vienna, the Austro-Germans being informed, quite in advance, on Romania's and Entente's plans<sup>4</sup>, in order to take some preventive measures and then, since the autumn

of 1916, to be able to concentrate all its reserves, making Romania the target of their main strikes;

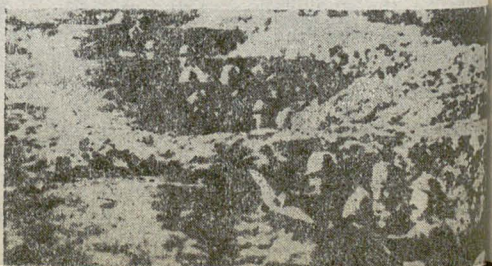
Although Romania had been put in an extremely difficult situation by her Allies during the 1916 campaign, the Romanian troops scoring some obvious insuccesses, the Romanian Army could not be defeated, although it had lost 250,000 people, 290,000 guns, 250 machine-guns, 450 cannons a.o. — and it went on fighting under extremely difficult conditions, with exemplary patriotism and heroism, similar to that of the Serbians and Belgians.

Even if it had not brought about the so much hoped for decisive change in the course of the war, Romania's total involvement in combat increased Entente's military potential, causing a decrease of Austro-German pressure on the other theatres, leaving bigger chances for victory to its allies. The rapid reorganization and recovery made possible the Romanian army's brilliant victories from Mărășești, Mărăști and Oltuz, during the 1917 campaign, to prevent, at the cost of great sacrifices, the achievement of the Austro-Germans' strategic targets on the Romanian front and on the Eastern one, as a whole. These successes of the Romanian Army ranked among the most important victories won in 1917 by the powers of the Entente, representing "an important contribution to the defeat of German militarism..."<sup>5</sup>

The balance sheet of the 52 months of war contains about 75 million mobilized people, 37,494,186 people taken out of combat — dead, wounded, prisoners or reported missing. The Romanians' contribution to the end of the war was remarkable.

Romania began the military operations on August 15/28, 1916 and, forced by circumstances, concluded the truce with its enemies — Austria-Hungary, Germany, Bulgaria and Turkey — on November 26/December 9, 1917. On October 28/November 10, 1918 the Romanian Government made known to Romania's allies her joining the war, and on October 29/November

1917. Romanian soldiers in trenches





11, 1918 she re-mobilized the Army. During the war, her military effort covered the mobilization of over a million people. The Romanian Army lost 339,117 lives, officially acknowledged, 200,000 severely wounded, an equivalent number at least, if not twofold or threefold, of other wounded and 116,000 prisoners or missing, that is a total number of 800,000—1 million people taken out of combat. A comparison of statistical data shows the fact that, related to the number of their inhabitants, some smaller countries, Yugoslavia and Romania included, lost much more people than greater powers, such as France, Italy a.o. Romania lost in this way 10 per cent of her entire population. These heavy losses placed Romania before Belgium, the USA, Bulgaria, Greece, Portugal, Japan, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, in respect of her blood toll to the world war.

These human losses were paralleled by enormous material sacrifices consciously and willingly made by all social strata for the cause of all Romanians. The big war had naturally put to hard, extremely painful, uneven and inequitable material tests millions of Romanians, according to their social status. The damages made to Romania by her enemies totalled over 31 thousand million lei in gold<sup>6</sup>. Adding the huge economic effort, taken to her potential, required by her active participation in the war, Romania's damages reached 33 thousand million lei in gold<sup>7</sup>.

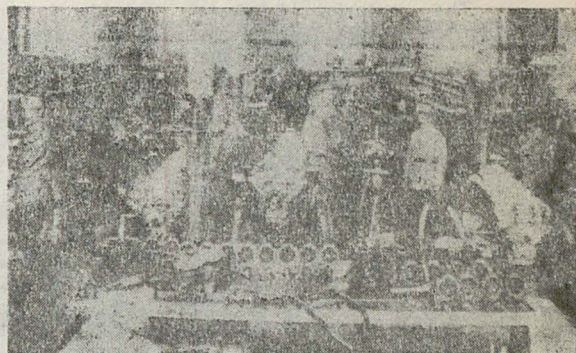
The temporary occupation of an important part of the Romanian territory for 23 months offered the Central Powers and their allies not only the chance of preparing to Romania "the same situation like in Egypt<sup>8</sup>" but also the possibility of organizing a systematic and vast plundering of the riches of the Romanian soil. Consequently, during the December 1916—November 1918 interval the Austro-Hungarian, German, Bulgarian and Turkish occupants had taken out of the country, under the form of a so-called "export": 1,140,809 ton oil, petrol and other oil products; 2,161,905 ton cereals and fodder and the examples can go on. Each soldier from the occupation troops had the "right" to send home to his family 5—25 kg food.

The population in the temporary occupied territory was forced to pay a "war contribution" worth 250 million lei, besides labour. Thus, the total value of damage produced by the occupation forces rose to 17,722,302,997 francs in gold<sup>9</sup>.

The unoccupied Romanian territory was inevitably exhausted from an economic point of view, as it had to supply not only the local population, but also two million Romanian and Russian soldiers and a few hundred thousands refugees. Therefore, Romania's effort during the war — which had produced important changes in the disposition of the Austro-German bloc, dissipating numerous forces, drawing some of its big units on those fronts where the fate of the world conflagration was to be decided — had become during the 1916—1917 interval a huge "lightning rod" for the Entente, defeating the enemy forces, despite the fact that the great allies had often carried out a duplicitous policy. It was not acci-

dentally that the British Prime Minister noticed in the summer of 1917 that the reconstruction of the Romanian army and the firm resistance — so precious for an allied cause — this army opposed at that moment to the enemy, under those exceptionally difficult conditions, were a magnificent example of the force liberty could confer to a free people.<sup>10</sup>

Despite that act of political and military violence represented by the Bucharest separate peace treaty concluded in May 1918, Romania had never given up her alliance with the Entente



All the citizens from the unoccupied territory of the country — workers, peasants, intellectuals, military etc. — made their contribution to the reorganization and remaking of the Romanian army (in photo: aspect from a workshop for assembling aircraft engines — Jassy 1917).

and her national ideal to become the homeland of all Romanians.<sup>11</sup> The last day of the great war found the Romanian army on the side of her allies.

1. See M. Mușat, I. Ardeleanu, *De la statul geto-dac la statul român unitar* (From the Geto-Dacian State to the Unitary Romanian State), Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1983, pp. 495—522.

2. Circles in Paris and London thought that "it is essential that the Romanians should go — to fight e.n. — The rest remains to be seen." (Joffre Mémoires. 1910—1917, Vol. 2, Paris, 1934, p. 310).

3. Apud M.S. Sazonov, *Les années fatales*, Payot, Paris, 1927, p. 285; Lloyd George, *Mémoires de guerre*, Vol. 2, Fayard, Paris, 1935, p. 366.

4. Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Bonn, I. A. Rumänien 6, Bd. 34, HJ. No. 11,049; Der Weltkrieg, Bd. 222, A. 20,753, No. 1695.

5. Nicolae Ceaușescu *România pe drumul construcției socialiste* (Romania on the way of Completing Socialist Construction), Vol. 2, Romanian edition, Publishing House for Political Literature, Bucharest, 1968, p. 469.

6. Cf. N. Titulescu, *Discursuri* (Speeches), Scientific Publishing House, Bucharest, 1967, p. 254.

7. Cf. M. Mușat, I. Ardeleanu, *Op. cit.*, p. 521.

8. The status of a "protectorate". Cf. Bundesarchiv Koblenz, Rumänien, No. 2, Wirtschaftliches, Frieden II, Bd. 1, zu No. 245.

9. Cf. V. Atanasiu, A. Iordache, M. Iosă, I. M. Oprea, P. Oprea *România în primul război mondial* (Romania during the First World War), Military Publishing House, Bucharest, 1979, pp. 347—359.

10. Cf. M. Djuvara, *La guerre roumaine. 1916—1918*, Paris, 1919, p. 130.

11. M. Mușat, I. Ardeleanu, *Op. cit.*, pp. 552—554.



# A SINGLE GOAL, A SINGLE WILL

the Romanians' struggle from  
abroad for the making up  
of the unitary national state

Dr FLORIN CONSTANTINIU

The centuries-old awareness of kin-appurtenance, that at the dawn of modern times had become national consciousness, took, under the dramatic circumstances of the First World War, new forms of manifestation, consistent with the specific political and military conditions, in the great struggle waged by the Romanian people for the completion of its national state unity. Romanians living in foreign countries, Romanians forced by the vicissitudes of history to follow the banner of the dual monarchy, and fallen prisoner to the Entente Powers, moreover, Romanians on official missions abroad, all conscious of their duty to serve their country, joined their efforts to their brethren, who lived in the country to make the national ideal come true. They contributed mainly to supporting — by setting up units of volunteers and raising subscriptions — the military effort carried out by Romania and her Allies and the activity of propaganda abroad.<sup>1</sup> Given the purpose of this magazine, the present paper will cover, in the main, military aspects.

The biggest share given by Romanians living abroad to the cause of national unity — expressing their lofty spirit of dedication up to the supreme sacrifice — was their enlisting in military units of volunteers committed in the struggles on the Romanian front or on other theatres of war against the Central Powers. Even before Romania's entering the war, the Romanians living abroad willfully expressed their desire to return to their homeland to be ready to serve her

under impending critical circumstances. For example, several Romanians, natives of Gorj—Jiu, who were in the United States applied to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and asked to be sustained to "return to our homes, to do our duty to the country".<sup>2</sup> In 1915, in summer, a Romanian official representative highlighted the surge of patriotism inspiring the Romanians in the United States — natives of Transylvania and Bukovina who had Austro-Hungarian citizenship included — to leave the United States and enlist in the Romanian Army.<sup>3</sup>

Romania's joining the war in defence of her independence and sovereignty, for the completion of her national state unity gave a strong impetus to the setting up of units of volunteers. At the news of Romania's becoming a co-belligerent power, about 40,000 Romanian prisoners, who had served in Austro-Hungarian army, and were in Russia by then, asked to be enlisted in the Romanian Army.<sup>4</sup>

After the Russian Revolution of February 1917, a group of Transylvanian patriots, led by Octavian Goga, were working side by side with the Romanian prisoners for the Darnitzia Draft Board (near Kiev). The activity bore fruit and a general meeting of volunteers attended by about 500 delegates, representing 13,000 prisoners in Russia, issued on April 26 a proclamation-manifesto that highlighted, besides the firm will to unite with the Mother-country, their determination to combine the completion of national state unity with a

deep-going renewal of social and political patterns: "...To-day when we, the Romanians, and all other oppressed peoples know definitely that we, as Romanians, cannot stand living within the confines of the Austro-Hungarian State we declare our adamant will for our incorporation into free Romania, to make together with her one and sole Romanian national state — which we shall elevate on the grounds of the loftiest democracy".

A genuine precursor to "Alba Iulia"<sup>5</sup>, the Darnitzia meeting ushered in the participation of the former Romanian prisoners in the struggles in the defence on the true fatherland.

On June 8, 1917 a first detachment, manned by about 1500 soldiers and officers from Transylvania and Bukovina were given a festive welcome in Iași in front of the statue of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, the Prince of the Union. In autumn Romania Mare newspaper edited by the Kiev Committee and whose title meaning Great Romania tellingly epitomized a whole programme stated that over 20,000 officers and soldiers from Transylvania, Banat and Bukovina had enlisted in units of volunteers.

In November 1917, all volunteers were mustered in the Volunteers' Corps, later on turned into the Romanian Volunteers' Brigade (two regiments). In the summer of 1917, they fought heroically in the Mărășești battles, foremost in the Zăbrăuți—Fîlțoșești sector, 129 volunteers being awarded decorations.

Likewise, attempts were made at organizing in the United States a corps of volunteers made up of the

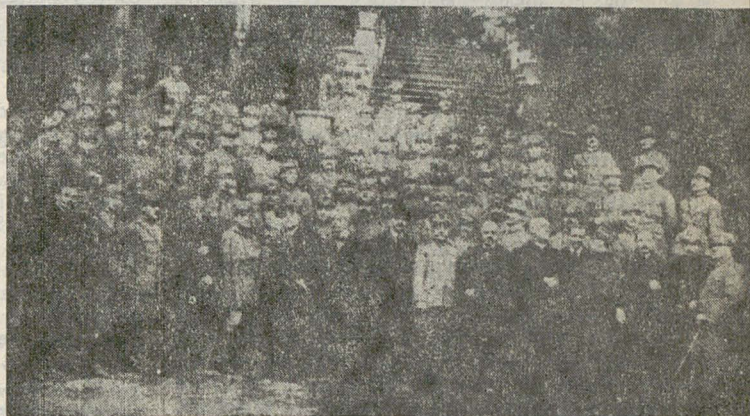


Americans of Romanian descent. The Romanian National Patriotic Mission sent by the Romanian Government to the United States and made up of the Transylvanians Vasile Lucaciu, Vasile Stoica and Ion Moța made démarches in June 1917, for the organization with the help of the United States and French Governments of several Romanian legions meant to fight on the western front. The American Government, hostile to the idea of creating national units within the American military forces, withheld its consent though willing to have the matter re-examined some other time. Nonetheless, the Romanians in the United States without waiting any more for the creation of that legion, enlisted as volunteers in the United States army. In Youngstown, Orthodox Archpriest Ion Podea had managed, as early as the summer of 1917, to set up a unit of volunteers for the expeditionary corps in France, later on become the 122 battery of trench mortars. Other 900 Romanian volunteers fought in the 37 Ohio Division. About 2000 Romanians who had not been admitted to the army or still had their enlisting application under examination crossed the border to Canada and volunteered in the British forces. At the end of the war, the number of Romanian volunteers in the American units fighting in France amounted to 3,500.<sup>6</sup>

In Italy, the idea of setting up a Romanian legion found ever more supporters among the Romanian prisoners taken from the Austro-Hungarian army. A letter sent on July 17, 1918 by a group of prisoners to Traian Vuia, perfectly renders their state of mind: "We all have come here animated by one and sole ideal: to fight arm in hand to liberate our parents, brothers, children... Our aim is to evince to the whole world that we are resolved to break away with the Habsburgs' bondage"<sup>7</sup>. As a consequence of the démarches made by the Committee of Action of the Romanians in Transylvania, Ba-



The Assembly in Vienna of the Romanian officers and soldiers native of Transylvania, from the Austro-Hungarian army while taking their loyalty oath to the Romanian Central National Council.



Rome. The famous diplomat Nicolae Titulescu (the front rank, in the middle) and other Romanian and Italian personalities amidst representatives of the Romanian Legion organized in Italy (1918).

nat and Bukovina — set up on June 19, 1918, under Professor Simion Mindrescu's chairmanship — the Italian General Staff granted the permission of organizing a legion made up of prisoners convicted in the camps of Mantua, Covanelle and Ostiglia and declared legal on October 15, 1918, under decree issued by the Italian Government, under the command of former Military Attaché to Bucharest, General Luciano Ferrigo, the legion, whose regiments were called Horia, Cloșca and Crișan, took part in the battle of Nervesa, Ponte della Priula and Asiago, one of the companies being mentioned with *L'Encomio Solenne* in the unit despatch, and 26 volunteers being awarded Italian war medals.

On October 3, 1918, the National Council of Romanian Unity was constituted in Paris with the view to coordinating the activity of the entire Romanian emigration in the

United States, France, Great Britain and Italy and whose platform was defined by Vasile Lucaciu: "We ought to be united in thoughts and feelings around the only political and national programme, to fulfil our ideal: the union of all Romanians into one Great Romania." Under the circumstances of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and the attempts at extenuating Hungary's guilt — presented as a victim of the German imperialism — the Council's activities proved particularly effective, at correctly explaining the historical realities that were as many proofs and arguments in support of Transylvania's union with Romania.

While the revolutionary and national movements were sinking the Dual Monarchy, the Romanians proved again to be an active and mature political force. Thus, in the

(continued at 55 page)



## "a day for all centuries"

Academician ȘTEFAN PASCU

The defining traits of Romania's war in 1916—1918 were the impetuous desire of union, the inspired and exemplary patriotic enthusiasm and by no means "annexation" or "invasion" drives as ill-willed persons, lacking any sense of objectivity, assert groundlessly.

The categorical refutation of all ill-willed assertions is given by the impetuous enthusiasm animating the whole Romanian people at the news of Romania's joining the war alongside the Entente, which in a treaty of alliance recognized the right of the Romanians in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy to unite with Romania.

It was for freedom, justice and unity that Romania entered the WW I, it was for justice, unity, freedom that hundreds of thousands of young and old people laid down their lives. And their sacrifice was not in vain. Their blood was not shed for nothing. The outcome fully matched the human toll and material efforts. But it came not as a gift of certain good-willed and generous foreign powers, nor of the diplomats met in Peace Conferences. On the contrary it was attained through efforts and sacrifices, through heroism and a heavy human toll on the battle-fronts in Transylvania and Dobrudja, in the Jiu Valley, at Mărășești, Mărăști and Oituz, in the Romanian towns and villages and the oppressed provinces, over 1916—1917.

Consequently, it can be rightly said that it was not the 1914—1918 war, that had led to the achievement of the Great Union in 1918, but the centuries of dreams and aspirations, of struggle and sacrifices made by the whole people, separated politically by historical vicissitudes, united, nonetheless, in spite of these vicissitudes. With or without the war, the union of the branches of the same nation, as was the situation of the Romanians, Poles, Yugoslavs and Czechoslovaks, would have been achieved as well. The multinational empires: Czarist, Ottoman, Habsburg — prisons of the peoples — as Lenin rightly put it — were shaking and with every passing day their foundations turned ever more unstable. Their coercive levers: the army, the police, and bureaucracy could not support any longer structures in dissolution and dismemberment. The right to self-determination was therefore included in the political programmes of the nations and nationalities in these multinational empires. And self-determination meant unity or the achievement of political unity of the dismembered nations.

When the principle of self-determination was proclaimed *urbi et orbi* by other countries and powers, the will to achieve it grew in intensity. For example, in autumn 1917, the young Soviet

State passed the decree on the right to self-determination of the peoples in Czarist Russia, a principle proclaimed in January 1918 by the United States of America as well.

The first to apply the principles of self-determination were the Romanians between the Prut and the Dniester. The first step, taken at the end of November 1917, when the territory between the Prut and the Dniester becomes the Moldavian Federative Democratic Republic is followed by the second, at the beginning of 1918, when Bessarabia declared itself The Moldavian Independent Republic. The third move on March 27/April 9, 1918, decided by the great majority of the votes by the deputies in the Country's Council in Chișinău (Kishinev), elected by universal equal, direct and secret suffrage meant the Union of Bessarabia to Romania, grounded on the desire and will of the absolute majority of the population.

Inspired by this decision, the Romanians kept on fighting with ever greater resolution in the summer and autumn of 1918 for the achievement of their unitary national state, in Romania, in Transylvania, in Bukovina and in the Allied Countries.

The setting up, in Paris, at the beginning of September 1918 of the Romanian National Council and its acknowledgement by the Allied Powers, as an official representative of all Romanians, actually meant the acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the Union of the territories under Austro-Hungarian domination, Transylvania and Bukovina with Romania.

With this national and international framework, representatives of the Romanian National Party met in Oradea, on October 12, 1918. Considering that times justified the centuries-old claims of the Romanian nation for full national freedom, on grounds of the natural right each nation has to be master of and decide, solely and freely, on its destiny declared that "*the Romanian nation in Hungary and Transylvania*" claimed the right to "*decide by itself its place among free nations*".

Denying the right of the Hungarian Parliament and Government to represent the Romanian nation and its interests at the Peace Congress, the Romanian nation declared that only the representatives elected by its own National Assembly had this right. All decisions and agreements reached without the approval of the bodies elected by the National Assembly were declared null and void, binding in no way the Romanian nation. The conclusion of the declaration actually meant the proclamation of the unflinching and indefeasible right of the Romanian nation to full national life.



Delegates of the Galtiu commune (Alba-county) who participated in the Grand National Assembly in Alba Iulia on December 1, 1918.



The decision of Oradea implying the proclamation of the right of the Romanian nation to self-determination, virtually amounted to a declaration by which Transylvania was separated from Hungary. Moreover, the declaration contained the historically significant idea of convening the National Assembly.

The setting up, in Oradea, of the Action Committee made up of the representatives of one party alone was impairing its character of national representative. Consequently, on the initiative of Romanian socialists, honest people, sincere champions of the achievement of national ideal, following the decision by the Romanian Central Committee of the Social Democratic Party, on September 25/October 8, 1918, relations with the representatives of the Romanian National Party were resumed with a view to creating a Romanian National Council. A similar stand was taken by the Romanian socialists on the occasion of the Congress of the Social Democratic Party held in Hungary, on September 30/October 13, 1918, proclaiming the principle of self-determination as a people's right to free decision. On that occasion, the workers' representatives asked for the organization of several revolutionary activities declaring that they were ready "any time, any moment for the greatest sacrifice, for any sacrifice."

The end of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was drawing ever closer, irremediably. No plan could save it any more. Not even the Emperor's negotiations with the representatives of the nationalities, or his manifesto of October 3/16: "To My Loyal Peoples" which announced that all peoples in the Empire would be secured the fulfilment of their aspirations, that Austria would become a federation, where every nationality would constitute a political community within the territory it inhabits.

The Appeal had an effect contrary to what the Imperial Court expected, since the peoples could not be lured any more with vain promises on the one hand, and what was offered to them was far from answering their expectations, on the other hand.

In this strained situation, the very day President Wilson's negative answer to the peace offer of

Austria-Hungary arrived, on October 18, 1918, the representative of the Executive Committee of the Romanian National Party, Alexandru Vaida, presented in the Budapest Parliament, the Romanians's point of view reading the Oradea Declaration of October 12, accompanied by an ample speech starting from the principle that there would no longer exist differences among nations, that small nations and big nations would enjoy equal rights, the Romanian deputy rejected the concept of nationality, claiming the status of nation for the non-Hungarian and non-German peoples in the Empire. Thus, the Romanian nation assumed the right to decide its own destiny, a right contained in the Oradea Declaration of October 12, 1918.

The Declaration of Self-determination, of separation from Hungary made by the Romanian nation — the first among the oppressed nations of the Monarchy — had a great impact on public opinion. It greatly enthused the Romanians everywhere, in Austria-Hungary, in Romania, in various countries of Europe where they served the nations' interests. It was "a great revolutionary deed that millions of Romanians looked forward to with staunch and triumphant faith".

The October 12/18 Declaration of Self-determination of the Romanian nation should be viewed as the historic moment of fundamental programmatic and practical value for the Romanian nation, for the completion of its political and state unity. It was on that basis and on behalf of the principles it includes that all the actions and decisions were taken late October and in November, crowned by the Great National Assembly of December 1, 1918, at Alba-Iulia, by the proclamation of the Union of Transylvania with Romania.

There were times of revolution. Radical movements and changes were occurring everywhere. "The people is the engine that propels the masses, inspires courage and knows no fetters."

The events in mid October and, in particular in its last decade, actually meant the dawn of the popular revolution in Transylvania and Bukovina. Great movements were staged in both provinces in late October and early November. The power of the revolution resided in mass



movements. The working class took the initiative. By late October and early November, ample worker strikes ravaged all cities: Arad, Timișoara, Oradea, Cluj, Brașov, Sibiu, Tîrgu Mureș etc., in the mining and metal-working units in: the Valea Jiului, Bocșa Montană, Bocșa Română, Dognecea, Reșița, Anina, Turda etc.

The workers' demonstrations and movements were generated by social, but also political issues: the raise of wages and betterment of living conditions, a shortened workday, organization of workers' councils, democratic running of society, Republican government, peace, the Union of Transylvania with Romania.

The peasantry found this to be a sufficient urge to follow the workers' example. Another urge came from the soldiers returned from the battlefields. But the decisive urge was the difficult situation, the unbearable social and national oppression. For all the reasons, the peasantry in various places rebelled, rose against the landlords, against economic, social and political institutions, against local authorities (first praetor, mayors, notaries) against the repressive forces (the gendarmes). The peasants attacked the mayoralties, the post office, the food stores, the granaries, the ammunition depots; they shared out cereals, livestock, wood and ammunition, in some places, the peasants even shared the land of the landlords chased away or run-away. In other words, the peasants took the law into their own hands, regaining what they had been stolen of, throughout the times, by legal and illegal violations and abuses, by people at the top holding power, under the protection of feudal and bourgeois laws.

The day of October 30, 1918, has a particular meaning and significance. That day, Romania re-entered the war alongside the Entente and against the Central Powers to erase that shameful page (the Buftea—Bucharest Peace — that eventually was not sanctioned by the King and hence did come into force) to regain through peace negotiations the international stands stipulated by the Treaty of alliance signed in August 1916 to secure the position she was entitled to by the material sacrifices and human toll. On the night of the same day after lengthy talks and negotiations between the representatives of the Social Democratic Party and the Romanian National Party the decision was made to set up the Central Romanian National Council in all-Transylvania and Banat.

After the creation of the council on an equal-footing basis (6 representatives of the Romanian National Party and 6 of the Social Democratic Party) it published a manifesto calling the people to fight. "*The revolution has triumphed!*", proclaimed the manifesto. The Romanian National Council was set up. Europe was in a great turmoil. The oppressed people had shaken off the yoke of class and racial oppression. The time of national domination was gone and all people became master of their destiny.

A new political era was ushered in for Transylvania. On the basis of the right to self-determination, the Romanian nation organized its own politic bodies.

The complex political questions had to be ironed out without delay. On November 2 came a settlement through the Appeal of the Romanian National Council that informed "the Romanian nation of the nations' right to free determination, of their equal righteousness." At the same time, it called the people and soldiers to have patience, love for their nation that was now standing among free nations, to prove worthy of the confidence of other nations to trust the National Council acknowledged by the great powers of the world and which represented the entire Romanian people in Transylvania and Hungary.

The soldiers were called to participate in the Romanian National Military Council, subject only to the Romanian National Council, to be the carriers of the symbol of national sovereignty, the Tricolour.

The imperatives of the time were delineated in five items: the union of all honest men, irrespective of nationality and tradition for keeping order, for the defence of life and wealth; abiding by the advice of the men sent by the National Council; the organization of local national guards which admitted any honest men irrespective of nationality and tradition; withholding from plunder and murder which compromise the sacred cause of the new democracy called to secure a new society where freedom, fraternity and equality should prevail. All Romanians were asked to assist the Council so that "*the young and beautiful Romanian nation*" could appear before the world "*in full purity, immaculate, in her full splendour.*"

The "military councils" fostered the same aspirations; the young were called to enlist in the "Romanian National Legion" or in the military councils for the fulfilment of the sacred Romanian ideals.

The Appeal of the Romanian National Council to the Romanian Nation and Transylvania's population and the Appeal of the military council to the Romanians were highly significant. They informed the nation of the creation of the Romanian Government in Transylvania, Banat, Crișana and Maramureș. They informed the public that the first Romanian government in the history of these provinces had taken over authority over the territories inhabited by the Romanians. The Appeal of the military council meant the organization of the first Romanian army within the same territories made up of Romanians under Romanian command.

Romanian government was enthroned officially throughout Transylvania. It was a right and necessary act; right since the majority nation was entitled to political and administrative authority; necessary since the old oppressive administrative authorities were replaced by the people's will or crumbled due to their incompatibility between what they stood for and their destination in modern times.

At the beginning of November 1918, "*all Romanian people lived the happiest moment in their national life: our eternal ideal, sought by every living soul from his cradle to his last breath, centuries on end, for which generations after generations have laid down their lives in glorifying it, has eventually come true today.*"



Under these circumstances on November 18, "the Great Council of the Romanian Nation in Hungary and Transylvania" as the Central Romanian National Council was also called addressed a manifesto to the peoples of the world, informing that the Romanian nation, "*the embodiment of the most accomplished democracy*" pledged not to oppress other peoples, to secure full national freedom for all, to organize a free and independent state on democratic bases, securing everyone equal opportunities in life. On these grounds, the Romanian nation let the peoples of the world know its decision to form "*on the territory it inhabited, the free and independent state*" to "better die than bear any longer slavery and dependency".

The plans were ripe materially, they had been achieved spiritually since long, the Great Council of the Romanian Nation in Hungary and Transylvania, published the convention of the Great National Assembly at Alba Iulia. The content of the convention reads as an anthological page of remarkable political ethics, a splendid conception of the notion of state. "*History calls us to deeds*" announced the appeal. The Romanian people want to live besides the nations of the world, free and independent, "*In the name of eternal justice and the principle of nations' free determination the Romanian nation in Hungary and Transylvania want to decide its own destiny and the whole world will observe this decision*".

This specification reveals the main aim of the National Assembly of the Romanian nation in Hungary and Transylvania convened at Alba Iulia, historical citadel of our people, at 10 a.m., on Sunday, November 18/December 1, 1918.

All social categories and layers, all cultural, economic and religious institutions were represented. The sponsors of the National Assembly at Alba Iulia were aware of how important the representation of all democratic layers was. Consequently, the Romanian leaders were certain that "*the honourable merchants, industrialists, front-ranking workers and peasants, decided on and dedicated to the great interests of the Romanian people will live like brethren*". The sponsors were convinced that "*the teachers of note*", of our educational establishments will be invited as well. And they were. Consequently this was a genuine national representation of a democratic nature. The democratic character of this "historical assembly" as its sponsors rightly defined it broadened ever more with the participation of "*the Romanian people itself come in a number worthy of this sacred and great cause*." Namely, the population in towns and villages, peasants, workers, handicraftsmen, intellectuals. "*Be strong in your faith, Romanian people, that the hour of your liberation is within your reach*" ended the prophetic call.

Once the principles and the action line settled it was highly necessary to have the concrete steps to implement them. On November 15, voicing the "*sovereign will of the Romanian nation*" from Transylvania, Hungary and the Timișan Banat, the Central Romanian National Council made known "*the regulation for the election of*

*representatives for the national assembly*" to all communal, district and county national councils.

After the settlement of the agreement between the representatives of the Romanian people, after the declared cooperation of the Transylvanian Saxons, after diversionist and hostile actions had been upset by the very people who were aimed at — the workers and the peasantry —, the Call of the Romanian National Council or the Great Council of the Romanian Nation stuck a deep echo far away to the most remote villages in Transylvania, Banat, Crișana and Maramureș.

The meeting for designating the delegates, attended by intellectuals, workers and craftsmen from towns, peasants and intellectuals from villages, workers and intellectuals from workers' centres, men and women, younger and older, were good opportunities to wonderfully express the solidarity of all social classes and strata with the greatest problem ever faced by the history of the Romanian people. In the villages with mixed population, the meetings for designating the delegates are attended by representatives of the other nationalities: Hungarians, Szecklers, Germans, Serbians.

Events take the same course in Bukovina as well. A big mass meeting is convened in Cernăuți on October 27 to decide upon the organization of a Constitutive assembly and the election of the National Council. The first decision of the Constitutive Assembly was "*the union of Bukovina to the other Romanian territories in an independent state in full solidarity with the Romanians from Transylvania and Hungary*". The Constitutive Assembly nominates the National Council vested with full powers to represent Bukovina to the Peace Conference.

Following the Transylvanians' example, the Bukovinian Romanians found it necessary to back the October 27 decision by a Congress, with a wide representation of all social categories and also of the nationalities living in the land, Poles and Germans. The Congress took place in Cernăuți, on November 28, 1918. Besides official representatives (deputies) elected in full legality, on November 28, huge crowds of peasants, town dwellers, intellectuals had gathered in Cernăuți, to participate in the great holiday of the Romanians in Bukovina. Official Romanian, German, Polish representatives delivered speeches, permeated by genuine feelings of brotherhood and by the unflinching thirst for union. Iancu Flondor, the last of the speakers declared that Bukovina is part of Moldavia from which it had been torn apart. After that, the General Congress of Bukovina unanimously decided "*the unconditioned union for ever of Bukovina to the Romanian Kingdom*". The representatives of the Poles and of the Germans from Bukovina express, on behalf of their nationalities, their full adhesion to the decisions of the Congress.

The world's attention was then focussed on the Transylvanian Romanians. Those who were to decide for ever upon Transylvania's fate were bound to have a dignified behaviour during the preparatives, on their way to the Assembly and during the session. And they had it indeed.



Three days before December 1, huge crowds from all over Transylvania were going to Alba-Iulia to fulfil the mandate their electors invested them with.

The 1,228 delegates *de jure* or elected (deputies) are coming: bishops, and episcopal vicars, arch-priests and delegates of the episcopal consistories and dioceses, delegates of different cultural societies, of teachers and schoolmasters, foundations, representatives of the press, of students' and pupils' associations, women's organizations, delegations of the Romanian Social Democratic Party, delegations of electoral constituencies, representatives of the national guards.

At ten o'clock in the Casino Hall, now called the Union Hall, the Grand National Assembly opened in vivid acclaim.

The first to address the assembly is Ștefan Cicio-Pop, Chairman of the Romanian National Central Council who in emotional words underlines the importance of the historical moment. Octogenarian George Pop de Băsești, Chairman of the Romanian National Party is elected Chairman of the Assembly, and he gives a brief yet well-thought speech.

The festive solemn speech was made by Vasile Goldiș. Addressing "the honoured National Assembly", the widely learnt man of advanced socio-political ideas presents the dramatic and heroic history of the Romanian people over the centuries, the human losses and material sacrifices during the war, the triumph of the idea of national unity. In the conclusion of his speech, Goldiș tables for approval by "the Grand National Assembly", the Resolution of Union: "*The National Assembly decrees the union of the Romanians in Transylvania, Banat with the territories inhabited by them in Romania.*" The entire audience broke in loud applause.

The territories united to Romania are given temporary autonomy until the meeting of the Constitutive Assembly, elected through universal suffrage; full national liberty and equal rights are recognized for all nationalities, to meet, govern and hold trials in their own language, to be part of law-making bodies and to participate in the country's government in proportion with their number; equal rights and full liberty for all religious faiths; the perfect achievement of

a clearly democratic régime in all fields of public life, direct universal suffrage, equal and secret for both sexes aged 21; perfect freedom of the press, of association and meeting; free circulation of ideas; complete agrarian reform giving the peasant the possibility to hold a property as big as possible to be tilled by him and his family; securing industrial workers with the same rights and advantages as legislated in the most advanced western states; the National Assembly expressed its wish that the Peace Congress should thus achieve the communion of free nations so that justice and freedom be guaranteed both for all the big and small nations alike, and that war as a means of regulating international affairs be banned; the Meeting welcomed the liberation of the nations until then under the domination of the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy (Czechoslovak, Yugoslav, Austrian, Polish and Ruthenian); the National Assembly honours the memory of the Romanians who shed their blood for the accomplishment of the national ideal; the National Assembly thanks all the allied powers that had fought for the safeguarding of civilization.

Other addresses came to round off and buttress up by new arguments the justness of the process of unity.

Thus, in a lofty atmosphere, in emotional ecstasy the most important act in the millenary history of the people was achieved through mature consideration by the Romanians called to decide their destiny. Casting aside all resentment and vexation stored along the centuries, the Romanian people strode before the world resolute and wise, forgetting the sufferings and the wrongs endured and calling to rejoice at those it had to live and work with.

During the festivity performed in the hall, on Horea's Field over 150,000 people were vividly acclaiming. From numerous stands, inspired speakers explained to the people the significance of the moment while in the Hall the official proceedings were in full process. Enthusiasm reached lofty peaks; people were hugging, crying for joy. A huge round dance concluded the momentous event.

While in Alba-Iulia Transylvania's unconditional union with Romania was being decided, throughout Transylvania all those who could not attend



The receiving of the Transylvanian delegation in Bucharest, which delegation handed the Romanian government the document of Transylvania's Union to Romania endorsed by the Grand National Assembly in Alba-Iulia — December 1, 1918.



the event were celebrating the history-making occasion. Masses were read everywhere. Festivals were held in all villages. Numberless letters and telegrams of approval and adhesion snowed under the Grand National Assembly in Alba Iulia from all over Transylvania.

On the same day and in the following ones "little Alba Iulia events" were staged throughout Romania. The Bucharest events gathered more impetus with the arrival of the Grand National Assembly from Alba Iulia, which bore Transylvania's message of eternal union to Romania. Upon the arrival of the train carrying the Transylvanian message to Romania's Capital, the railway station was decorated with tricolour flags and flowers. The entire Government were there, with I.I.C. Brătianu at the head, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, as well as Bucharest's Mayor and other officials, officers, pupils and a host of people.

The decisions of union of the Romanian territories were then gradually sanctioned through royal decrees. According to provisional organizational decrees, "public services" remained under the authority of province governments, the adminis-

tration of Romania's Government extending over foreign affairs, the Army, the railways, the post office, the telegraph, the telephones, financial circulation, customs, public loans and the state's general security service; the united Romanian provinces were represented in the Romanian central government by ministers without portfolio.

The deeply masswide character of the Great Union, the unanimous enthusiastic events, the whole Romanian people's staunch resolve to unite in a single state caused a profound impression. Under the circumstances, the nationalities: the German from Bessarabia, Poles and Germans from Bukovina, Transylvanian Saxons and Swabians, Szecklers, and part of the Magyars, passed realistic judgements of the situation and fought the attitude of some conservative circles. Under the pressure of the German, Polish, Magyar and Szeckler population isolation tendencies were annulled and a new attitude prevailed, in keeping with the logical evolution of society, with the objective character of historical processes. This translated into a constructive attitude in the matter of recognizing the union of Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transylvania to Romania.

## A single goal, a single will

(continued from 49 page)

mutiny of the Austrian fleet in Pola and Rijeka (Fiume), the Romanian sailors set up, on October 29, a Romanian National Council and a sailors' guard. The proclamation adopted on that occasion declared independent the Romanians in Austria-Hungary. The same day, at thousands of kilometres distance, the Romanian Volunteers' Corps, made up of former war prisoners, proclaimed at Cheliabinsk, in Siberia, their will to see the Romanian provinces still under Austro-Hungarian domination united to Romania. On October 31, 1918, a National Council of the Romanians of Transylvania was set up in Vienna, that created a Romanian Military Senate as well, meant to stand as the supreme authority and command for all the Romanian military from the former Austro-Hungarian army.

The activity carried out by the Romanians living abroad integrated thus into the strug-

gle of the Romanian people for the completion of national state unity. Its significance for the fulfilment of the Romanian people's aspiration is many-folded: by setting up the corps of volunteers and by supporting the military effort made by Romania and her Allies; by informing the political circles and public opinion in the allied and neutral countries on the righteousness of the Romanian claims; finally, by having translated into fact, in the heat of the battles, the union of all Romanians, long before it became a political and state reality, on December 1, 1918, when the making of the Romanian unitary national state was completed<sup>8</sup>.

The Romanian living abroad had been permanently attached to their homeland; they lived with the same intensity, like their brethren at home, all the great moments of the war — triumphs and hardships — they shared the same joys and sufferings. The activity carried by the Romanians living abroad has thus earned for itself the right to be recorded in the decisive and glorious page of history made by the Romanian people in the struggle for unity and independence.

1. For details, cf. Fl. Constantiniu and Ion Stanciu *Sprijinul și lupta românilor din străinătate pentru cauza unității românești 1914-1918* (The Support and Struggle of the Romanians Living Abroad for the Cause of Romanian Unity (1914-1918), in *Revista de istorie*, 29/12, pp. 1873-1882.
2. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Issues 75, vol. 48, p. 188.
3. Ibidem, p. 182.
4. P. Nemoianu — *Corpul voluntarilor români în Rusia*. (The Romanian Volunteers' Corps in Russia), Lugoj, 1921, p. 5.
5. Idem, *Prima Alba Iulia. Voluntarii români și războiul pentru întregirea neamului*. (The First Alba Iulia. Romanian Volunteers in the War for National Recompletion), Timișoara, 1922.
6. Ilie Pirvu, *Voluntarii români din America* (The Romanian Volunteers in the United States), Sibiu, 1937, p. 13.
7. Lt. Col. C. Toderășcu, *Evoluția voluntariatului în anii 1916-1918*. (The Evolution of the Volunteers' Drive in the 1916-1918 Years), in *Oastea cea mare* (The Big Army), Military Publishing House, Bucharest, 1972, p. 231.
8. Cf. the ample survey of this contribution written by Micaela Mușat and Ion Ardeleanu in *De la statul geto-dac la statul român unitar* (From the Geta-Dacian state to the Romanian Unity State), Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1983, pp 539 et seqq.



— International Reverberations —

The Romanians' heroism in the struggle for the completion of the national and state unity was appreciated and eulogized by Allied leaders and political figures. So, on November 6, 1918, Robert Lansing, US Secretary of State Department would write to Take Ionescu in Paris that the United States government deeply sympathizes with you and will not neglect — as soon as the high time comes — to make the best of its influence so as the just political and territorial rights of the Romanian people to be acquired and secured against any foreign aggression. Some days later, S. Pichon, in the name of French government would assure Take Ionescu that when the victories of the Allied armies herald the imminent triumph of the principles of justice that will ensure Romania's liberation and recognition, those, who like you have never driven to despair and those who are ceaselessly coming, in ever increasing number, to enrol for fighting on our side, making the national colours of the Romanian Lands wave again on the battlefields, will prepare together with us through a loyal collaboration, a future in which our two countries will be more closely united by their common endeavours also. On his turn, Arthur Balfour, Great Britain's Foreign Secretary gave fine appreciations to Romania's efforts and sacrifices and assured that at the Peace Conference she would enjoy his government's sympathy.

Mai 1904

PARIS. — NEW YORK, MILAN, LONDRES,  
Constantinople, Palermo,  
Tientsin, etc.

Portrait du jour

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Signature :

LE PROCÈS DE KLAUSSENBOURG

Klausenbourg, il mai.

Lundi a commencé le monstreux procès de Klausenbourg intenté par le gouvernement magyar aux vingt-cinq membres des sections exécutif du parti national des Roumains de Transylvanie et de Hongrie. On connaît les faits : à la suite de la conférence qu'avait eue tous à Hermannstadt les délégués du parti, les 10 et 21 janvier 1897, il fut convenu que l'on adresserait dans la plus brève délai une Résolution au Empereur et roi, pour signaler les revendications de ces sujets roumains ainsi que leurs plaintes contre le gouvernement de Buda-Pesth. Une commission fut élue au sein de la conférence pour rédiger ce Manifeste.

Au mois de mars l'acte était prêt, et le 28 mai, le comité exécutif se rendait à Vienne à la tête d'une délégation de 10 Roumains pour le remettre au souverain. Naturellement, le gouvernement hongrois fit tout pour empêcher la délégation d'être reçue. N'étant pas autorisé à rencontrer François-Joseph, par la voie de la presse, on lui donna à entendre, à travers les journalistes qu'on présentait les faits suivants : le mouvement était et les délégués furent renvoyés sans avoir été reçus. C'est



and support as regarded the common cause.

The fact that the Entente's big powers acknowledged time and again the principle on the peoples' self-determination as well as the Romanian people's legitimate right to national and state unity, the assertion of the lofty principles of equity and justice on which the world's post-war organization was to be grounded made increase Romania's trust, and of other small and medium-sized countries as well, in the work that the Peace Conference was to build. Specifically, since Romania wanted the international forum to officially acknowledge the Romanian people's historic resolutions solemnly and definitively proclaimed in assemblies of popular masses' representatives. That is why, the Paris Peace Conference was not in a position for it to make a completed Romanian state. This was achieved through the work of the Romanian people. The Conference was asked for juridically sanction the new territorial and political status through the acknowledgement of the principle of national self-determination. By its deed the Romanian people confronted the world community with a fait accompli, as it happened in 1859 too.

Hence, the Peace Conference was not to offer Romania a gift, but it should sanction a basic demand of the historical right so strongly unveiled in front of the whole world that the most fierce foes of the Romanian people had to grasp that fundamental demand of history. The Peace Conference was in a position of ascertaining the end of the big empires the integrity of which was practically impossible to be any more preserved and the successors of which were generally recognized: Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia, Austria and Hungary. Thus, the mission of the Conference would be limited to the establishment of the frontiers that, as a



Aspect from the proceedings of the Paris Peace Conference whereby the Romanians' inalienable rights on the national territories reunited with the Motherland following the plebiscitary meeting in 1918 were acknowledged.

matter of fact, had been mapped out through the struggle and will of the popular masses. In fact — as American historian J.A.S. Grenville asserted —, the allies and the United States came to Paris to confirm the newly set up states, successors of the Austro-Hungarian empire that caved in following its defeat.

On June, 28, 1919 the Versailles Treaty would be signed by representatives of the Allied and joined powers on the one hand, and of the vanquished Germany, on the other. That treaty stood for the basis and framework of the special following treaties: the Treaty of Saint Germain signed with Austria on September 10, 1919, the Treaty of Trianon of June 4, 1920 with Hungary, the Treaty of Sèvres signed with Turkey on August 10, 1920 and the Paris Treaty on October 28, 1920. Those peace treaties recognized the resolutions of the plebiscitary acts endorsed by broad popular masses on March 27, 1918 at Chişinău (Kishinev), on November 28, 1918 at Cernăuţi (Chernowitz) and on December 1, 1918 at Alba Iulia.

The peace treaty with Hungary, signed at Trianon on June 4, 1920 by Dr I. Cantacuzino and N. Titulescu, acknowledged Transylvania's union to Romania. The Deputies' Assembly of Romania approved the Treaty of Trianon on August 26, 1920 and the Senate on August 27, respectively.

The peace treaties concluded over 1919—1920 sanctioned the peoples' will to make their national states or to complete their state unity, as it was the case of Romania, Poland, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia.

Looking in history's perspective, the great achievements of the Romanian people carried out in 1918 and their sanctioning through the Peace Conference's resolutions bring out in bolder relief that Romania did not rank among profiteers of a peace achieved through the victors' benevolence or profits brought about by hazards of a victory won in a war, but it was the strong, dynamic expression of the Romanian nation, of the centuries-old aspirations of a people firmly resolved to live united, free and independently in the ancestors' hearth where it was born. These co-ordinates of asserting and defending the country's unity and integrity, of preserving the national independence and sovereignty which identified themselves with the Romanian people's ideals, would map out the guidelines of the Romanian foreign policy in interwar period, for all the limits specific to the class interests of the bourgeoisie's and landowners' quarters.

History has evinced that the making of the unitary national state was not the fruit of some conjecture. Laying stress on the historical circumstances of the completion of that proces,

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# Against fascism and revisionism, for the defence of the integrity of Romania's natural borders

Major Dr IOAN TALPEȘ

An outcome of the struggle carried on by the entire Romanian people, by the broad popular masses, of the other social categories, the Romanian unitary national state saw, in the subsequent years, an ample programme for broadening and improving the political, administrative and economic structures. Translated into life, that programme was another proof of the full support and the option of all social classes and categories. An analysis of the Romanian internal political life in the interwar period reveals the fact that the discussions and confrontations taking place in internal political life mainly approached the nature and scope of the economic, political and social transformations and only insignificantly, as echoes of external interference, the national question. As a matter of fact, it was precisely the absence of confrontations conducive to the division of the Romanian people and the weakening of the state that was the main feature of the Romanian internal political life. The Romanian citizens of other nationalities, enjoying equal rights with the Romanians, manifested themselves for and took solid action with the latter for the consolidation of the Romanian state which they considered as their own homeland — an exception making the big Magyar landlords who were discontented with the land reform and, in the fourth decade, from among the German nationality, the sympathizers with the German Nazi Party.

While internally the consolidation of the unitary Romanian national state followed a smooth course, without contradictions, convulsions and confrontations, being a platform of joint action for all democratic political forces, from the Communist Party to the governing bourgeois parties, externally the evolution of the risk factors in the very period when the peace treaties were being concluded showed that Romania continued to be an object of revisionist and imperialist dispute.

To thwart external dangers, all Romanian governments made efforts toward strengthening and consolidating the relations with the neighbouring countries, with all states, on the basis of and according to international juridical and moral acts, especially the Covenant of the League of Nations, for the establishment of a climate of peace and collaboration, for broadening and developing the means of mutual assistance. In this spirit, regional political-military alliance of a defensive character were concluded — the Little Entente (1921), the Balkan Entente (1934) — and the treaties with Poland (1921) and France

(1926) and actions were taken for the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

To the same end, measures were taken at home for the building of a national military system able to correspond to the political strategic international circumstances, the main function of it being that of defending the country's independence, sovereignty and integrity.

With Hitler's seizing the power in Germany (January 1933), the advent of fascism in world area meant an intensification of the imperialist and revisionist threat and mankind was plunged into political-military confrontations that ultimately led to the outburst of the Second World War.

While in other countries the imperialist and revisionist tendencies of the ruling circles derived their theoretical basis from the aggressiveness of various forms of Fascism, in a relationship of interconditioning and mutual support which helped them reach the well-known political-governmental syntheses, in Romania, concrete facts condemned fascism, sensed as a current aiming at the overthrow of the international political order, revision of frontiers and enslavement of peoples, and condemned to remain at the periphery of political life. A consensus of opinions which strongly revealed the general option, regarded fascism, from the very beginning, as an expression of outdated and alien interests, opposed to the country's major ones. To the entire Romanian people, to the great majority of the internal political forces, the decision-making factors included, fascism — both the international one represented by the group of fascist and revisionist states — and the internal one materialized in the Iron Guard — was considered as the main threat to the fate and future of the country.

It is the merit of the Romanian Communist Party that, in those hard years for the very destiny of the people from which it was born and whom it represented, it understood that the defence of national independence and sovereignty, of territorial integrity required the collaboration of all patriotic political forces within a broad antifascist front apt to mobilize the forces of the entire nation. The well-known letter-appeal addressed by the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party to Ion Mihalache, one of the leaders of the National Peasant Party, in December 1935, after exposing the imperialist tendencies of annexation manifest in the policies





Aspects from the big demonstrations staged against fascism and revizionism, for peace (up and down) attended by Romanian citizens of Magyar origin too.

of Hitler's Germany, fascist Italy and Horthy's Hungary, read: "The existence of the Romanian people as a nation, Romania's existence as an independent country are at stake. The Romanian people should decide if it is determined to defend its existence and independence. And there is only one answer the Romanian people can give. With all its strength, arm in hand if necessary, the Romanian people will defend its existence against the Hitlerite gangsters who want to rob us of our national independence."<sup>1</sup> Making a just appraisal of the realities of the Romanian political life which revealed the fact that "the workers, peasants, intelligentsia, artisans, merchants, petty bourgeoisie, civil servants, the majority of the students...are not fascists", the communists took action for the mobilization of the broad people's masses with a view to promoting a foreign policy "alongside the great democratic states at head with the Soviet Union, France, the United States and England, which fight for peace; the policy of supporting the League of Nations and the struggle to turn it into a body of implementing the policy of collective security and of thwarting any aggressor; the policy of strengthening the Little Entente and the Balkan Entente."<sup>2</sup>

Along these lines and in many of the questions regarding the organization of the internal political life, especially in combating and counteracting the Iron Guard, was unanimously approved by

all the patriotic political forces in Romania, being concretely materialized in the official policy promoted by the Romanian state. In March 1939, when in response to the pressures exerted by Hitler's Germany and Horthy's Hungary the Romanian government ordered partial mobilization of the army, the Romanian Communist Party decided that "the Party members should actively participate in the concentration of troops where they should fight to strengthen the political and moral forces of the army against Hitler's Germany and the revisionist states."<sup>3</sup>

A political-strategical directive drawn up on April 14, 1939, namely several months before the outbreak of the Second World War and expressing the feelings of the population, reached the conclusion that whatever course the international political situation might take, Romania's major interests, at that moment and in the long run, imposed her collaboration and alliance with England, France and the Soviet Union: "No matter the difficulties Romania might face at the beginning, as a victor alongside the coalition (the planned Anglo-French-Soviet alliance, — a. n.) — she would have nothing to lose, both as regards her internal progress and her subsequent assertion in the concert of the other states. But a victory alongside the Central Powers (Germany and Italy, — a. n.), would make her a vassal state to Germany from the economic,





political and cultural point of view."<sup>4</sup> A lucid appraisal which makes any comment superfluous. Therefore the only chance for the free and independent progress of the Romanian people within its national territory was the defeat of fascism, of its promoters and supporters, Nazi Germany and fascist Italy.

The great popular demonstration which took place in Bucharest, on May Day 1939, in whose preparation and organization young communist Nicolae Ceaușescu played an outstanding role, expressed the resolution of the working class, of the broad masses of people to fight arm in hand for the defence of national independence and sovereignty, of the country's territorial integrity. "Let us defend Romania's national independence", "We will not surrender even an inch of our forefathers' land" — those were the slogans under which tens of thousands of working people marched. The World Conference in Defence of Peace and Democracy, held in Paris on May 12—14, 1939 considered that "the May Day demonstrations in Bucharest had a strong antifascist and antiwar character, which is a proof that the Romanian people is joining the antifascist movement and its determination is really to struggle against the aggressor and fascism."<sup>5</sup>

Twenty years after the making of the unitary national state, the Romanian people was again

the target of the imperialist tendencies and interests of great powers. The confrontation between the great imperialist powers engaged in the struggle for the redivision of the spheres of influence and domination gave new interpretation, according to the harsh terms of the "Right of force", to the people's right to be independent and sovereign within the territorial limits determined by their national development. In the summer of 1940, with the fascist and revisionist states holding political and military supremacy on the Continent, Romania's national territory was maimed through force and threat of force. But the Romanian people did not stop its struggle. Engaged in the national antifascist resistance movement led by the communists, it organized and launched, on August 23, 1944, the antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution of social and national liberation which was to ensure true national independence.

1. "Scinteia", 5th year, no. 27—28, December 1935.
2. I.S.I.S.P. Archives, Ab XII-9, inventory no. 1011.
3. "Lupta de clasă", 20th year, no. 6, June 7, 1939.
4. Archives of the Ministry of National Defence.
5. "File din istorie. Comitetul național antifascist din România" (Pages of History. The National Antifascist Committee in Romania), Political Publishing House, Bucharest, 1973, p. 77.

## The Romanians' place and role

(continued from 18 page)

thent", according to formulae in use in European chancellories' documents of the 15th—16th centuries. The Danubian Principalities' engagement in campaigns for defending the continent took in turn various forms, from alliances negotiated by Mircea the Old, Stephen the Great, Michael the Brave and Dimitrie Cantemir, in case of brutal occupations or annexation attempts reiterated by neighbouring empires in the 18th and 19th centuries. At the dawn of the modern age, the 1599—1600 union of the Romanian lands under Voivode Michael the Brave, materialized the Romanian aspirations.

On the other side, Romanian culture proved to be in the 16th—19th centuries a real bridge between trends of ideas born in western and central Europe and the societies of Levant, of the Near East. Humanism, the Enlightenment, the revolutionary and literary doctrines of the 18th—19th centuries which nourished the Balkan intelligentsia were first received, selected and integrated in the Romanian spirituality and thus conveyed further on.

The age of the "nationalities' revival" afforded the Romanian people to impose itself on a European scale through activities of general history and politics. The Romanians adopted a daring and, at the same time, nuanced strategy, whose

aim was the fulfilment of their fundamental aspirations through a judicious capitalization on the international conjuncture associated with firm political demarches supported by a high consciousness of their historical rights, based on the principle of the peoples' right and on world public opinion.

The outstanding results were the Union of the Danubian Principalities in 1859 and the winning of state independence, proclaimed on May 9, 1877 and recognized the next year by the Congress of Berlin. Its far-reaching significance was consecrated by the Romanian soldiers' sacrifice in the fight against the Ottoman Empire.

The same national programme, pursued tenaciously, led to the completion of national unity, in 1918, through the reintegration of the Romanian provinces which were still lying under foreign domination.

After the First World War, Romania was one of the most active members of the international community, a dedicated contributor to the work of the League of Nations, an always present factor when it came to action whose aim was peace, disarmament, prevention of aggression, promotion of law in international relations, regional, European cooperations.

Nowadays, socialist Romania is following the same road, that of a country that has pronounced worldwide for sovereignty, independence, non-interference in internal affairs, in other words, for observance of the integrity and way of existence of every people, for cooperation, mutual knowledge and respect, for friendship.



# THE ANTIFASCIST AND ANTI-IMPERIALIST REVOLUTION FOR SOCIAL AND NATIONAL LIBERATION IN AUGUST 1944 — AN ACT OF NATIONAL DIGNITY

Major Dr MIHAIL E. IONESCU

Under highly complex international circumstances in summer 1940 Romania found herself alone, without any outside support, subject to some powerful foreign converging pressures. It was then, in those conditions that the national territory would be painfully cut off through the fascist Vienna Diktat of August 30, 1940 which tore the unity of the ancient Romanian land of Transylvania, of which an area of about 43 000 sq.km. were annexed by Horthyst Hungary. In September 1940, following the Hitler Germany's brutal interference, a military-fascist dictatorship was set up at the country's helm under the protection of which the Wehrmacht occupying troops would enter the country not later than the ensuing month.

Thus the evolution of the Romanian state and nation would reach a historical decisive time. The national unity, independence and sovereignty were seriously wronged and fundamental national interests decisively imperilled. The involvement of the Romanian army — against the entire people's will — in Hitler's aggression against the Soviet Union unleashed on June 22, 1941 stood for an aggravating factor too.

Yet, confronted with that real "national disaster", the Romanian nation would not remain passively waiting for her fate to be decided by other ones; stick to its glorious fighting traditions for independence and liberty, the Romanian people firmly rose to arms, and immediately organized a powerful resistance movement. It would ceaselessly amplify involving ever larger social categories of the Romanian society: namely, the working class, the peasantry, intelligentsia, the army, categories of the bourgeoisie.

The general strategy of unfolding the resistance movement in Romania was elaborated by the communist party in a high sense of responsibility as regarded the Romanian people's interests.

As early as the first days of the setting up of the military-fascist dictatorship, of Romania's driving into the Hitlerite war, the RCP, making a profound and thorough analysis of the home and world context, would conclude that the Romanian nation could be rescued only through the own forces of the nation which should take action within a national front in order to overthrow Antonescu's régime, to get Romania out of the war against the United Nations and to turn weapons on the Nazi Reich.

Under given historical circumstances marked by an unprecedented aggravation of Romania's domestic and external situation, the Romanian Communist Party, the leader of national resistance, speeded up political preparations with a view of making up the United Workers' Front of the Romanian people, of making a decisive switcheover in the country's home and foreign policy.

After the making up of the United Workers' Front on May 1, 1944, which meant the achieving of the working class' unity of action, the communists would achieve the convergence of the democratic, anti-fascist political forces interested in rescuing the country from a genuine national disaster into a wide-scope national front of patriotic struggle by making up, in June 1944 of the Democratic National Front which embodied the Romanian Communist Party, the Social Democratic Party, the National Peasant Party and the National Liberal Party. At the same time they minutely worked out the military and political framework of the liberating revolution by developing and strengthening the collaboration with the army, higher command officers included and by getting into direct touch with the royal quarters as well. The original way used by the RCP in setting up the National United Front was, in fact, a première in the international communist movement, since it was for the first time that a communist party achieved such a wide-scope political alliance — from democratic organizations to bourgeois parties, the royal quarters and military chiefs — on a joint platform of struggle.

The Romanian people's liberating struggle reached unprecedented proportions in summer 1944. Against the background of fully developed home conditions for starting the revolutionary action and under the circumstances of the successful Soviet offensive started on August 20, 1944 on the Jassy-Kishinev front in Moldavia, the Romanian Communist Party, in collaboration with the other forces in the system of alliances it had wrought, decided upon the launching of the antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution for social and national liberation of August 23, 1944, a historic act of national sovereignty and dignity, a unique event through its development and consequences in the history of World War II. That day in the afternoon, Ion Antonescu, received in audience by the king, as well as his close col-

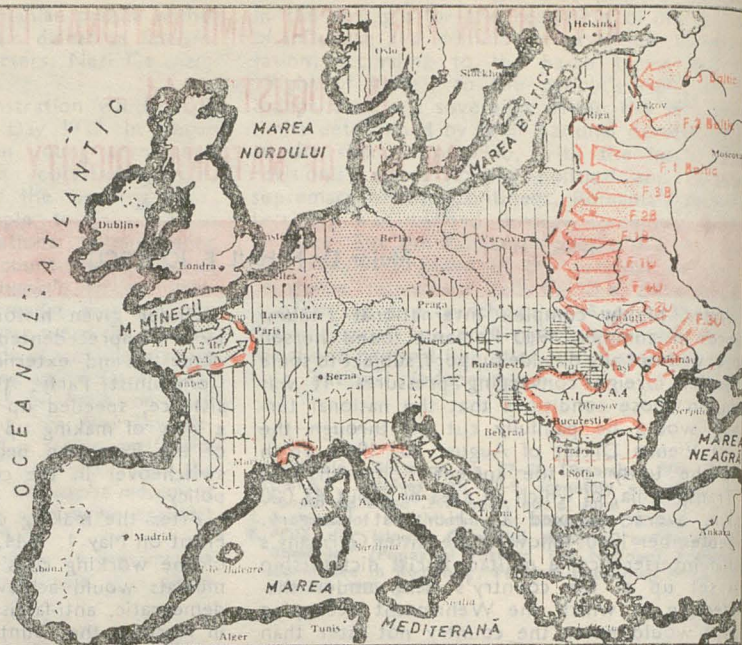


## CONVENTIONAL SIGNS

- The situation of the fronts on 08.23.44
- The line of the front in north-western and southern Romania opened by the Romanian insurrection in August 1944
- The demarcation line in Transylvania imposed on Romania through the Vienna Diktat on August 30, 1940
- Offensive directions of the Soviet fronts
- Offensive directions of the American, British, Canadian armies
- Territories occupied or controlled by Hitlerite troops
- Territories occupied by Horthyst troops

## ABBREVIATIONS

- F.2B. — The 2nd Belorussian Front
- F.2U. — The 2nd Ukrainian Front
- A.1. — The Romanian First Army
- A.3. — The American Third Army
- A.2. — The British Second Army
- A.1.C. — The Canadian First Army



laborators were arrested by a group of military; later on, they would be taken over and guarded by a patriotic fight formation in a conspirative house of the Communist Party.

The entire insurrectional mechanism, thoroughly prepared by the Romanian Communist Party in the previous period, was promptly and faultlessly set to motion. A new government was set up under the aegis of the National Democratic Bloc, with the participation, for the first time in Romania's history, of one representative of the Romanian Communist Party. Starting with p.m.22.20 fundamental political documents — in beforehand worked out — would be broadcast and printed in a large number of copies, namely the Statement of the CC of the RCP, the Proclamation to the country of the Romanian State's head and the government's Statement which outlined Romania's new political and military stand both internally and internationally: the immediate conclusion of the armistice, Romania's getting out of the Axis and the mopping up of the national territory of Hitlerite occupants, the liberation of Transylvania's northern part, the setting up of a democratic régime, Romania's joining the United Nations coalition.

The antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution for social and national liberation triggered off on August 23, 1944 which also marked Romania's joining the anti-Hitler war also signified an act of full and legitimate national sovereignty, was the expression of the unflinching will of the Romanian people for safeguarding the independence of its own state, for building its future freely.

The Romanian people's decision was in full harmony with the fundamental interests of the State and nation, in compliance with the world historical evolution that revealed the defeat of fascism as a sine qua non condition of ensuring progress, of maintaining the civilization on our planet.

Concomitantly with the first political steps, previously planned military actions would be carried on. The Romanian army, on its whole, without any defection, turned weapons on Nazi Germany and entirely committed itself to the liberating struggles alongside the United Nations' forces. The swift "volte-face" of the Romanian commands and troops under highly complex military circumstances — they had unilaterally to cease hostilities with the Soviet army, to disentangle from the German troops and immediately start the fight against the latter — represents a unique case in the history of World War II and a source of valuable military lessons.

Everywhere the Hitlerite troops were strongly taken by storms and crushed. The military confrontation got peculiar traits of the popular war in point of both the entire people's rising to arms and the combat forms employed, i.e. ambushes, barricades, concentric deployments in "hotbeds", simultaneously assuming offensive and defensive in distinct sectors, harassing operations etc. Through the entire people's revolutionary struggle during those eight days of the revolution in August 1944 remarkable military results would be recorded for the evolution of the World War II. With minimum losses the Romanian army inflicted on the Wehrmacht big



ces, this resolute deed of national sovereignty triggered off on August 23, 1944 Romania shortened the second world conflagration of the 20th century with about 200 days, what had unavoidable consequences upon "sparing" of human lives and material assets.

The triggering off of the antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution for social and national liberation also marked the beginning of Romania's war against Nazi Germany and Horthy's Hungary under the circumstances in which there was no preliminary agreement, written or orally, with the anti-Hitler coalition's states. Thus Romania, by its own will as a State, joined the United Nations making a great contribution to the great victory won by the world's peoples over the fascist coalition. All this naturally placed objectively Romania, in accordance with the international law, in the unequivocal position of a co-belligerent State within the anti-Hitler coalition.

At the same time, the revolution triggered off by the Romanian people on August 23, 1944, signified a resolute rejection of any foreign, imperialist domination, the unflinching resolve of the Romanian nation to defend, at any cost, the homeland's independence and sovereignty, its territorial integrity.

In Romania's contemporary history, the act carried through on August 23, 1944, marked the beginning of a new era, the era of the permanent development of the Romanian people on the road of a better and righter life.



# THE ROMANIAN MILITARY AND ECONOMIC EFFORT TO THE DEFEAT OF THE THIRD REICH

Reader Dr GHEORGHE ZAHARIA

On May 9, the Romanian people, together with the peoples all over the world, celebrated forty years since the end of the Second World War in Europe, through the unconditional surrender of the Third Reich. The May 9, 1945 victory was the outcome of the joint efforts and blows dealt by the peoples in the anti-Hitler coalition, by the peoples of the Soviet Union first of all, who had carried the brunt of the war and had given the greatest blood toll, by the resistance forces of the countries occupied or dominated by Nazi Germany. The bloodiest scourge of mankind, Nazi fascism, had been defeated by the forces of socialism, progress and democracy it had tried to suppress.

On Victory Day, the Romanian people sided with the victors, to its great satisfaction, as a consequence of its struggle waged during the forties, of its toll of blood and economic efforts made during the last nine months of the war in Europe; it put all its military and economic potential to the service of the anti-Hitler war, making an important contribution to the defeat of the Third Reich.

Romania's participation in the anti-Hitler War began with the August 1944 national insurrection, carried out over August 23—31 under the favourable circumstances created by the Soviet offensive launched on August 20 in the north-eastern territory of the country. The insurrectional struggles of the Romanian forces mopped up the German forces from two thirds of the then territory of the country. They could, at the same time, open for the Soviet Armies the fortified Focșani "gate", between the bent of the Carpathians and the maritime Danube, the passes in the Eastern and Southern Carpathians, the strategic line of the Danube, leading to Belgrade, Budapest, Bratislava, Vienna. Further on, joining the Soviet forces, the Romanian Army who had made possible the victory of the insur-

rection, fought on for the liberation of the north-western part of the country from Horthy-Hitler occupation, — actions concluded on October 25, 1944 with the liberation of the territory annexed by Hungary — under the Fascist Diktat from August 30, 1940. During the fights, from August 23 to October 25, the Romanian troops forming two armies, one air corps, two AA brigades, navy troops, totalled almost 526,000 men, their losses running to 58,330 killed wounded and missing. The enemy's losses were of almost 6,700 killed left on the battlefield and 76,275 prisoners.

The Romanian troops crossed the border to Hungarian territory during the night of October 7—8, 1944, continuing to fight side by side with the Soviet armies belonging to the Ukrainian 2nd Front. They totalled over 210,000 men and lost in the struggles for freeing Hungary almost 43,000 (killed, wounded and missing); they freed and contributed to the liberation of about 1,240 localities and other settlements, among which Budapest, Debrecen, Miskolc, Győr and other 10 cities.

Between December 18, 1944 and May 12, 1945, the Romanian forces, totalling almost over 240,000 people fought in Czechoslovakia, under hard conditions of land disposition and weather, against a fierce enemy who, feeling the end was drawing closer, clung to each height, forest, locality. At the cost of about 66,500 lives (soldiers, non-commissioned officers and officers, killed, wounded or missing), the Romanian troops fought hard, advancing some 80 km south-east of Prague, freeing or contributing to the liberation of 1,722 localities and other settlements, out of which 31 cities, like Rožňava, Kremnica, Bánovce, Kroměříž, Lučenec, Banská-Bystrica, Bratislava, Slin (the present-day Godwaldov) and others.

During the operations in Czechoslovakia, the Romanian tank regiment, endowed with the force of a brigade, as well as some railway units, operated, since early April, within some big Soviet units on Austria's territory as well, around Hohenrappersdorf (30 km north-west of Vienna), Schrick, Wilfersdorf, Mistelbach, Eibenthal, Poyzdorf, Laa, Stockerau, Ziersdorf, Zellendorf, Leopoldau, Absdorf a.o.

During the military operations in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Austria, the Romanian soldiers and officers performed numerous heroic deeds similarly to the struggle for the liberation of Romania, proving inexhaustible energy and a high spirit of sacrifice. Appreciating the behaviour of Romanian soldiers, R.J. Malinovsky, Marshal of the Soviet Union, Commander of the

Romanian tankmen advancing to a new alignment on the front in Transylvania, for the liberation of the last furrow of Romanian land temporarily subject to the Hitlerite-Horthyst occupation





Ukrainian 2nd Front, where the Romanian troops had fought, wrote in an article published in *Voenna istoriceskii zhurnal* No 2/1959 that they proved "high qualities in combat and a great courage," that "some Romanian divisions roused our admiration through their enthusiasm in fighting as well as through their spirit of sacrifice. They could resist during the heaviest fights."

Numerous monuments and obelisks were erected to the memory of the heroic and noble sacrifice of the Romanian soldiers fallen during the fights for the liberation of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. They are in Hungary at Budapest, Debrecen, Füzesgyarmat, Győr, Hajdú-böszörmény, Megyaszó, Méhkerék, Miskolc, Nagy-körös, Nyiergyháza, Orosháza, Tápiosuly, Tiszakécske, Tiszaalök, Vállaj a.o., and in Czechoslovakia at Bánov, Bohunice, Brno, Havlíčkův, Brod, Humpolec, Javorníky, Kremnica, Kroměříž, Lučenec, Michalova, Moravské, Knínice, Orbovka, Piešťany, Pliešovce, Stará Turá, Strání, Valašské Klobouky, Velká, Vel. Čepčín, Vracov, Zvolen a.o.

During the 263 days of fights, the Romanian Army had covered the distance between the Black Sea and the Bohemian Plateau, climbed 20 mountain massifs, stormed 12 important river courses, liberated 3,831 localities and other settlements, of which 53 cities, producing damages to the enemy, that is over 118,000 prisoners and about 20,000 killed left behind, which means the effective number of almost 14 divisions.

By the end of the war, there were committed in combat 16 Romanian divisions, an air force corps, a tank regiment and other military units and formations, totalling almost 196,000 people. The overall losses of the Romanian Army during the anti-Hitler war were about 167,000 people (killed, wounded and missing), i.e. over 31 per cent of the combatant forces or, approximately, about 3 per cent of the active population. Between November 1, 1944 and May 10, 1945, 140,000 people were sent to fill in the numbers of those fallen in struggle. The total contribution in fighting numbers directly involved in to operative services spiralled to almost 540,000 men.

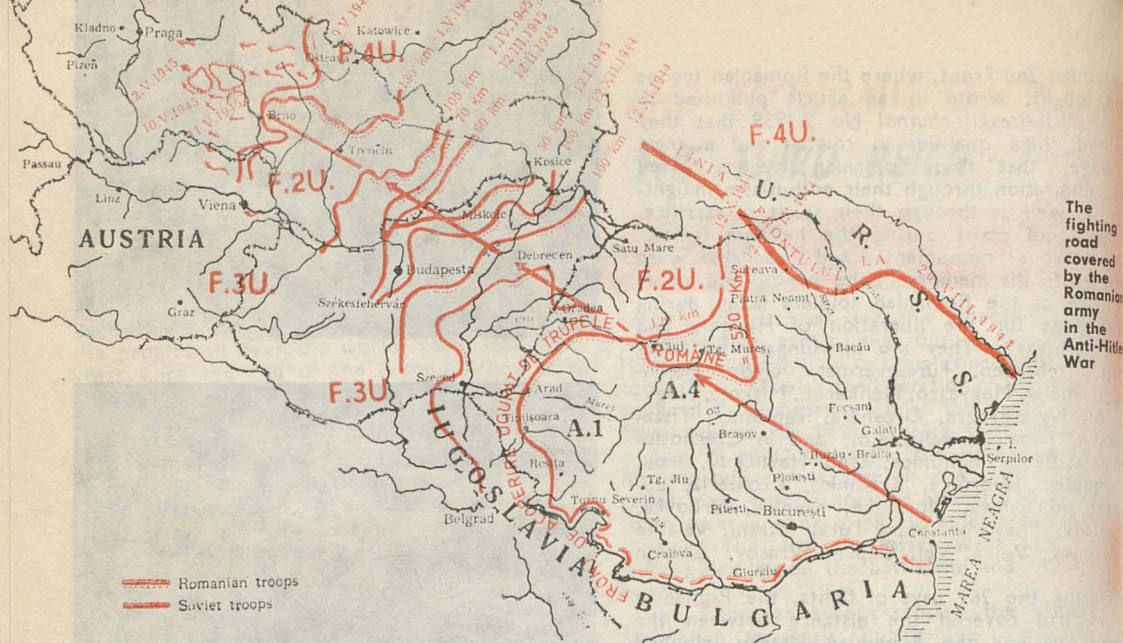
The economic contribution is appraised, calculated on incomplete data, to much over a thousand million dollars, 1938 currency, a sum four times bigger than the budget expenses for the 1937-1938 financial year. Facing, in a great spirit of sacrifice, extremely hard conditions, the Romanian people firmly answered the call of the patriotic and progressive forces, led by the Romanian Communist Party, "Everything for the front, everything for victory!" The economic effort made by the Romanian people was outstanding, taking into account the fact that at the moment of switching the arms over against Nazi Germany the national income had been almost reduced to a half as compared to 1940 due to the systematic plunder made by the Hitlerites and to the destructions caused by military operations performed on the national territory. Staunch and confident in its own forces, the Romanian people overcame all these difficulties and servitudes and made a valuable



Dedicated to the right cause of crushing fascism, the Romanian army uninterruptedly carried on military operations against Hitlerite and Horthyst troops for the liberation of Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Austria. (Photos: 1. Romanian soldiers fighting in the streets of Budapest; 2. Romanian soldiers fighting for the liberation of Czechoslovakia; 3. Romanian military in Vienna).



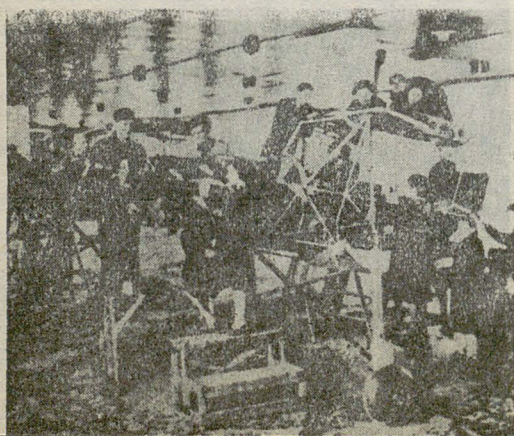




contribution to the increase of the military and economic potential of anti-Hitler coalition.

The importance of Romania's politic and military contribution to the victory over fascism was fully appreciated by the state leadership of the Soviet Union on the occasion of awarding the Romanian Head of State in July 1945, the highest Soviet war distinction conferred upon him — as mentioned in the decree that initiated it — "for the successful fulfilment of those military operations (on one or several fronts), whose result brought about a change of situation in the favour of the Soviet Army." The decree also mentions: "His Majesty, Mihai I, King of Romania is awarded the Victoria Order, for the courageous act of decisively changing over Romania's policy towards breaking off with Hitler Germany and siding with the United Nations, at a moment when Germany's defeat was not yet so clearly previsible." This high distinction had been given abroad to Marshal Josip Broz Tito, the Polish Marshal Michal Zymerki-Rola, British Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery and the US General Dwight Eisenhower.

Men and women self-denially working for repairing the damaged aircraft in the struggle against the Hitlerites.



Among the numerous praises at the time, mention should be made of that of the official French radio station which, on January 1946, showed that "France estimates that Romania's contribution had shortened the war with at least 6 months."

Such recognitions of undoubted realities suggested sensible proposals on ranking Romania among the victors, in the sense of granting her cobelligerent status. Although fully legitimated, these proposals sustained at the Paris Peace Conference by the Byelorussian, Czechoslovak, French and Ukrainian delegations were not accepted by the British, American, Soviet delegations which voted against them.

Romania's difficulties in post-war recovery were increased by the fact that she had not been given cobelligerent status. Romania had to face as she did so many times during her multi-millenary history, unimaginable hardships caused by the war, by two consecutive years of drought, by the freezing of the country's currency in the West, by the war damages she had to pay on fixed terms. But the Romanian people managed to find once more the moral and material resources and means to preserve its existence and identity and to pave the way for the country's prosperity.

Referring to the Romanian people's contribution to the May 9, 1945 Victory, President Nicolae Ceausescu said on the fortieth anniversary of the August 1944 revolutionary act: "Romania's participation with her whole force, the heavy fights waged by the Romanian soldiers, the huge sacrifices made by the whole people for the final victory over fascism fully demonstrated the Romanian people's determination to fight up to the complete defeat of fascism and for the liquidation of the imperialist policy of domination and exploitation, for democracy, for the cause of the peoples' independence and freedom, of understanding and cooperation the world over."



# FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS OF NATIONAL HISTORY

## THE ARMY WITH THE ROMANIANS: 2000 YEARS OF STRUGGLES FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE ANCIENT LAND, OF THE PEOPLE'S LIBERTY AND INDEPENDENCE

Lieutenant General Dr ILIE CEAUȘESCU

A basic truth clearly illustrated by the whole historical evolution of the Romanian people is that according to which one of its principal institutions — with a permanent existence — has been the army.

The Romanian military institution has always played a decisive role in ensuring the people's self-standing existence, in defending the ancestors' land in the face of often repeated foreign invasions, in preserving freedom and independence.

Placed "*in the way of all evil*", as the chronicler put it, the Romanian people unrelentingly fought, over the millennia, to defend its freedom, independence and the native land, being compelled to make a broad military effort, to wage innumerable battles against the invaders, against all those who attempted to encroach on the homeland's sovereignty.

The Romanian military power has permanently stemmed from the people. It has been the loftiest expression of its foremost interests, blending with its aspirations for unity, freedom and independence.

The military institution characteristic of the Romanian people's historical evolution has acquired, during its multi-millennial existence, various structures and forms, in concordance with the socio-political development stage, and with the requirements deriving from the vastness and permanence of the external threats that had to be eliminated in order to ensure a free and self-standing development of the people of this land. Historical records convey valuable information on "*the assembly of the armed people*", back to the time of Dromichaetes, (3rd century BC) about the 200,000-strong Dacian army led by king Buerebista in the 1st century BC, the organization and the qualities of the army led by Decebalus during the long war against the Roman empire (85—106), the defensive role performed by the Romanian armies after Aurelian's withdrawal, — the guarantee of their survival

and historical development —, the armies of the Romanian Voivodships of the 9th—14th centuries, or on the mediaeval armies of the Romanian principalities. By and large, these records shape the authentic image of the historical truth, according to which the military power has permanently been a defining element of the Romanian people's development throughout the millennia, the main arm of its uninterrupted effort to preserve its ethnical identity and the liberty of the native land.

Just as the people to which it belonged and through the will and sacrifice of which it existed, the Romanian army never nurtured aggressive aims, always fighting for the country's independence alone, to ensure national unity. "As is well known," socialist Romania's President underscores, "*all through the centuries, the Romanian army has fought only and only in defence of the people's being, of national independence.*"

A salient feature of the uninterrupted existence of the Romanian armed forces, under various forms, — the principle of non-aggression has moulded the very structure of the army, it has shaped the pattern and composition of its components, the nature and quality of its equipment with war matériel, the major ways used in engaging the enemy, the basic doctrinal orientations of the national military power.

Historical records undeniably attest to the fact that the Romanian army's existence is as long as that of the Romanian people. Formed 2000 years ago through the assimilation by the Dacian people — who had an army that confronted the Roman legions on an equal footing — of Latin as a language, as well as the assimilation of elements of Roman civilization, the Romanian people was compelled all through its existence, to fight numerous heroic battles to safeguard its own being, to keep the ancestors' land unaltered, to ensure its free economic, social, political and cultural





**"Our forefathers"**  
(painting by Aurel Nedel).

development. All through this bi-millennial existence in various forms and with a different status from one age to another, the army has been the principal instrument for the defence of the people's foremost interests', the specialized body in the confrontations with foreign invaders. Romania's whole historical evolution clearly attests to the truth of what was said above.

Indeed, since the first written document about our ancestors, dating back to 514 B.C., when the Getae bravely opposed Darius I, king of Persia, history has always portrayed the people inhabiting since immemorial times the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area as fighting with dedication in defence of its being and of the ancestors' land. Antique documents have preserved for us the words of great beauty, expressing a truth that has been a permanence in our history, addressed by the Getic king Dromichaetes to the Macedonian invader, in 291, B.C.: "Why did you try, against

nature, to bring your soldiers to lands where no foreign army can remain unharmed under the clear sky?"<sup>2</sup>

An equally dignified and wise answer was given 1,200 years later by Romanian voivode Menemurut to the Hungarian invaders, lured by the beauty and fertility of the Romanian land: "Yet, the territory you asked for to Our goodwill shall never be yielded, as long as We live (...). However, neither out of love nor out of fear shall We yield Our land, not even a bit of it..."<sup>3</sup> In 1683, Romanian chronicler Miron Costin boldly expressed the same unbounded love of the ancestors' land which has always been cherished by the Romanian people and army: "Let us not give away the land, for this land is laboured with the blood of our ancestors and of their fathers."

The Romanian army has always guarded, shouldered to shoulder with the people's masses, the dear and lofty ideals of unity, independence and sovereignty of the homeland, the people's freedom and the integrity of the ancestors' land. The Romanian soldiers have always placed above everything else the homeland's foremost interests and have never hesitated in sacrificing their lives to fulfil the lofty mission assigned to them by the people.

In its bi-millennial history, the Romanian army has entwined its existence — in times of peace as well as in times of foreign invasions — with the people from which it had emerged, and which it served with unbounded faithfulness. "In the respite between two dangers" as a poet beautifully put it, the Romanian soldiers would change the sword for the plough and actively participate in the assertion of our people's constructive vocation, in the building of the wonderful edifices that are a glory to the ancestors' land. And when the drums of war, the horns and trumpets of threat were heard, when foreign aggression was pouring like as many waves of invaders, the

Infantrymen in times of Stephen the Great (reproduction by a painting by C. Petrescu).

Preda Buzescu, one of the Michael the Brave's captains fighting against the Tatars (reproduction by a painting by O. Obedeanu).

The fight on Spirei Hill when the Romanian military firemen fought against the Ottoman army which entered into Bucharest for quelling the 1848 revolution (reproduction by a contemporary stamp).





country's army would become "the big army", enrolling all those apt to carry arms and cause losses to the enemy. The idea and practice of the whole people's war in defence of the homeland are deeply rooted in the Romanian history, justifying their necessity and usefulness from ancient times. They were permanently improved in the course of history, being today one of the live sources of the strength of socialist Romania's defensive national system.

Like the country's army, the idea and practice of the whole people's struggle in defence of the homeland are more than 2000-year-old with the Romanians, and make up the original modality adopted by our forebears — from Dromichaetes', Buerebista's or Decebalus' Geto-Dacians, to the fighters of the antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution of social and national liberation of August 1944 — to push back foreign invaders. Here is how Nicolae Bălcescu described the Romanians' original way of defeating foreign invasions: "Whenever a powerful enemy invaded the country, all the inhabitants of the plains would flee from the cities and villages and gather their livestock and food supplies in the mountains... Old men, women and children would remain in the mountains, while younger men would rise in arms, set up larger groups and harass the enemy. The country's army was hidden in the forests, avoiding direct confrontation with the enemy's armies in a general battle, just harassing the enemy, cutting its communication lines and seizing its supplies... and forcing it to leave the country without having achieved anything at all, or luring it to difficult spots, unknown to it, where it had to pay for its insolence to tread on the Romanian soil."<sup>5</sup>

That is how the prominent leaders of the Romanian people and army — Buerebista, Decebalus, Gelu and Glad, Menumorut and Dobrotici, Mircea the Old and Stephen the Great, Vlad the Impaler and Ioan of Hunedoara, Petru Rareș, Michael the Brave and so many others won the brilliant victories written in the golden book of our military history.

Reflecting the laws of dialectical and historical materialism, the Romanian military body — an integral part of the Romanian society — has gone through all the stages of evolution in human society as recorded by history. After the victorious revolution of August 1944, a deep-going process of transformation of the Romanian army into a new-type, revolutionary army was initiated. During more than 2,000-year history there were also recorded instances when the Romanian armed



Romanian soldiers assaulting a redoubt during the Independence War in 1877-1878.

Romanian artillerists during the Mărășești battle (1917) when the Romanian army scored a resounding victory against the Central Powers' armies.

Patriotic fighting formations fought alongside of the entire Romanian army on the barricades of the antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution for social and national liberation triggered off on August 23, 1944.

Romanian artillerists during the fights for the liberation of Transylvania's northwestern part subject to Hitlerite-Horthyst occupation (October 1944).







Thanks to the care of our party and government, the army of the Socialist Republic of Romania is equipped with modern armament and combat equipment, mostly made in Romania (in photo: aspect from military parade - August 23, 1984).

forces survived under various forms: local defence military groups in the period following Aurelian's withdrawal until the setting up of the first feudal States, which organized their own armies; volunteer and mercenary detachments, frontier guard units etc.; during the Phanariot regime, border guard units in Transylvania and Banat, a.o.; besides the regular army, in Romanian modern history there were also people's combat and defensive groups. Therefore, one may rightly say that the Romanian armed forces are more than 2000 year old. Our socialist army has emerged through a deep-going process of transformation of the old army, which was initiated and brilliantly led by the Romanian Communist Party, taking the Romanian people's advanced military traditions, wrought over the millenia, to higher stages. This fact deserves emphasis as there are people who, without any ground at all, hence, distorting the truth, consider that our present-day army was set up only recently, starting with the "Tudor Vladimirescu" Division (a big unit set up in 1943 on the territory of the Soviet Union and made up of Romanians that had been taken prisoners in that country). Nothing could be more wrong and far from reality. In 1945, when this big unit was integrated into the Romanian military body, the country's army as a whole, had undergone irreversible, revolutionary transformations. Organically integrated with the organizational structures of the entire army and taking part alongside it in the wide-ranging and complex revolutionary process at work in Romania, the "Tudor Vladimirescu" Division itself underwent deep-going transformations, both in point of its structure, and as concerns the instruction and training of

its effectives. Distorting the process of changing the Romanian army into a revolutionary, socialist army, and limiting it to the existence of a single unit is tantamount to a denial of the revolutionary activity carried out by the Romanian socialists, and then by the Communist party, over whole decades, to turn the Romanian army into a new-type, socialist military body, it is an attempt to lessen the significance of the whole army's participation in achieving the social and national liberation revolution, in the anti-fascist war, until the victory over Nazi Germany.

The army of socialist Romania is the direct and brilliant descendant of the Romanian army, with an uninterrupted existence spanning two millenia. Just as during its past of fights and victories, it is now the reliable defender of the homeland's foremost interests, of the country's borders and the people's revolutionary accomplishments. Just as in its glorious 2000-year history, today's Romanian army conceives of no other mission than that of defending the homeland's independence and sovereignty, the people's freedom and peace. And the same as in its millenium-old existence and struggle, socialist Romania's army shall be, in times of trouble, the mainstay of the whole people's defensive effort to push back aggression. Today just as always in its glorious history, the army of socialist Romania fulfils its constructive vocation, building, alongside the whole people, the marvellous edifices of the homeland's present and future.

In the current historical conditions, socialist Romania's army is a modern, powerful military body, entirely devoted to the people, for more than 2000 years the shield of the ancestors' land, of our freedom and independence.

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2. Diodorus Siculus, *Biblioteca istorică* (Historical Library), in *Izvoare privind istoria României* (Sources on Romania's History), tome 1, Bucharest, 1964, p. 199.
3. Anonymus, *Gesta Hungarorum*, in G. Popa-Lissancu, *Izvoarele istoriei românilor* (Sources of the Romanian History), tome 1, Bucharest, 1924, p. 91.
4. Ion Neculce, *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei* (The Chronicle of Moldavia), Minerva Publishing House, Bucharest, 1975, p. 71.
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# Great army commanders

**BUREBISTA** (born before 82 BC — died in 44 BC). Described by the ancient sources as "the greatest and the most powerful of all kings who had ever ruled Thrace", Burebista was the founder of the centralized and independent state of the Dacians, the forefathers of the Romanian people. Initially the leader of a tribal confederation, he gradually united the Geto-Dacians state formations, so that, as ancient geographer mentioned, "within a few years" he succeeded in founding a "large dominion". His authority extended over a vast territory, which spread toward West and North-West up to the Middle Danube and the Morava, on the North it touched the Mountains of Slovakia, on the East it reached Olbia and included Dobruđia, while the southern frontier lay on the Haemus Mountains. To consolidate and defend his state, he successfully fought against the Taurisci, Boii, Scordisci, Bastarnae, Sarmatians, as well as against the Greek cities from Olbia to Apollonia and against the Romans, interfering in the conflict between Pompey and Julius Caesar, taking the side of the former. In this huge military effort, Burebista had under his command an army of over 200,000 men, adopted an incisive strategy, consistently applied the principle of concentrating the forces and the means on the decisive directions of attack and minutely prepared his campaigns, from the military as well as political points of view. Thus, for instance, he correlated the blows dealt at the Celtic Taurisci and Boii with the aggravation of the Roman-German rivalry on the Rhine. Also, in order to better ensure the defence of his state against the forays of numerous

adversaries, he built a complex system of fortifications with its centre in Transylvania, employing specific indigenous technique, known as *murus dacicus*. The Dacian king Burebista was the one who crystallized and gave individuality to the military art of the Geto-Dacians, raised their tactics and strategy to the highest level attained by the military art of the ancient world.

**DECEBALUS** (?—106 AD). The greatest king of the Geto-Dacians came to the helm of the country at a time when the Roman Empire posed maximum threat to Dacia. After making a preventive attack against some Roman garrisons South of the Danube in the year 86, Decebalus had to face the repressive operations undertaken by Emperor Domitian; first in 86, when his forces destroyed the legions of General Cornelius Fuscus, and then in 88, when he was defeated at Tapae by the units of General Tettius Julianus, after which he nevertheless succeeded to conclude a peace that allowed him to continue the preparations for defence. Therefore, when Emperor Trajan resumed Rome's policy of expansion toward the Danube and the Carpathians, Decebalus opposed a fiery and well-organized resistance, which reached its acme in the two defence wars waged by the Dacians against the Romans in 101–102 and 105–106, during which the Roman forces that had invaded the territory of Dacia found themselves in difficulty many a time. In the almost two decades of resistance against the strongest army of the ancient world, led by one of the greatest army commanders of that time, Decebalus showed traits worthy of a remarkable strategist: outstand-

ing organizational spirit, firmness and mobility in decision-making, intuition, ability in manoeuvring. Thanks to them, the Dacians, who took to arms in their majority, succeeded in preserving their freedom for a long time. Overwhelmed by the numbers and the fighting means of the enemies, Decebalus was forced to redeploy his forces and prepare new ones. He committed suicide lest he might be taken prisoner. His dignified soldierly behaviour made a deep impression on his contemporaries and his successors, the ancient writers considering him a symbol of the love for freedom. "A quick mind in drawing up war plans and carrying them out, knew how to choose the right time to attack the enemy, as well as the right moment when he should withdraw. He was skilful in laying traps and brave in battle, knowing how to make a wise use of a victory and get out well from a lost battle. For all this, he was for long a dreaded enemy of the Romans." This is how historian Dio Cassius described him. At the same time, the experience of the Dacians' defence war, conceived and led by Decebalus would be taken over and carried further by the Romanian military art.

**GELU** (9th–10th centuries). Voivode of the Romanians, the leader of the Romanian voivodate lying within the Carpathian arch, between the Gates of the Mureş and the sources of the Someş rivers. His residence was at Dăbica, where a well fortified stronghold was discovered and where archaeological digging brought to light numerous imported objects, Byzantine coins and weapons. In the first half of the 10th century, Gelu put up firm resistance to the aggressive tendencies of



the Hungarians from the Pannonic Plain toward the Romanian land of Transylvania. According to *Gesta Hungarorum*, the chronicle compiled by King Bella's Anonymous Notary toward the close of the 12th century, bloody clashes took place on the rivers Almaş and Căpuş, tributaries of the Someş. Although Voivode Gelu fell in the battle, near the residential fortress, the Hungarians had to conclude an understanding with the chiefs of the local population, a fact that illustrates the outstanding military force of that Romanian political state formation. The bulk of Gelu's army comprised contingents of village communities, led by knyazes and judes and armed with bows and arrows. He also ordered a system of fortifications to be built, consisting of strongholds and light fortification works by which the enemy was denied the roads and the access through the river valleys leading to the interior of the country. In the battles, Gelu combined the permanent harassment of the enemy by group of archers (*saggitarius suis*) with firm resistance along successive alignments, based on natural obstacles. This tactics is to be found in many of the difficult battles fought by the Romanians in the Middle Ages until late in the 17th century.

**STEPHEN THE GREAT** (born about 1435—died on July 2, 1504 at Suceava). Prince of Moldavia (1457—1504), he was described by Romanian chronicler Grigore Ureche as "a well-balanced man, not in the least lazy, who knew how to cope with his work and could be found where you least expected him to be. Master of the craft of war, he went wherever he was needed so that seeing him his men would not disperse and for that reason there was seldom a war that he did not win. And when others defeated him, he did not lose hope, for, when vanquished, he would rise above his vanquishers." He gave Moldavia a sound political and military consolida-



Burebista



Decebal



Gelu

tion, firmly defended its independence and turned it into one of the main political and military forces of East Europe. In the almost fifty years of his reign, Stephen the Great gave proof of superior political thinking, masterly knowledge of the military art and unflinching will, all this integrated into a unitary whole, which gave broad scope to his actions

and ensured their success. By these means Stephen resisted the expansionist tendencies of the neighbouring great powers — Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, Poland — and brought Moldavia to the zenith of its international assertion. In 1467, defeating the king of Hungary, Matthias Corvinus, at Baia, Stephen rejected the former's attempt to bring Moldavia under Hungary's suzerainty; in 1497, John Albert, the king of Poland, suffered a serious defeat in the Cosmin Woods and his plans to subordinate Moldavia failed; finally, from 1473 till almost the end of his reign, Stephen carried on a long and exhausting war in defence of his country's independence and integrity against the policy of expansion promoted by one of the greatest powers of the mediaeval world, i.e. the Ottoman Empire. The struggle against the Ottoman danger — which reached its climax in the battles of Vaslui (January 10, 1475), where the Ottoman army suffered one of its severest defeats, and Valea Albă (July 26, 1476), the latter commanded by Mehmet II himself, integrated Moldavia in one of the dominant issues of the 15th century and conferred European significance on Stephen's actions, which explains both the wide connections established by the Romanian prince and the deep echo of his feats of arms. The Polish chronicler Cromerus describes Stephen as follows: "He was a man who, for his great heart, military wisdom, knowledge of war matters and lucky deeds against the Turks, Hungarians, Poles and Tartars would be remembered for ever." That is why he — whom the contemporaries considered as "most subtle and skillful in the art of war" — and who had defended his country in no less than 36 battles, wrote down one of the most beautiful and glorious pages in the history of the Romanian people and of its multi-millenary past. To all his successors he was the symbol of justice and independence.



**IANCU (IOAN) CORVIN OF HUNEDOARA** (1407 — August 11, 1456, Zemun). Voivode of Transylvania (1441 — 1446, 1448), Governor of Hungary (1446 — 1453) and Captain-in-Chief of Hungary and Transylvania (1453 — 1456). Son of Voicu, a Romanian nobleman, he learned the skill of arms at the court of Filippo Visconti, Duke of Milan. In the fifth decade of the 15th century, when the pressure of the Porte on the Carpathian — Danubian — Pontic space increased, it was Transylvania, under this great "army commander" that played an important part in leading the Romanian countries' struggle against the Ottomans, a struggle which led to their military alliance. Alert to the changes in military tactics and technique, *lancu* laid the basis of a system in which the majority of the army consisted in the popular elements, introduced the Husite technique of camps comprising carts closely tied together, tried and succeeded in creating a broad system of alliances with the neighbouring countries which supported his endeavours against the Ottomans. After several victories over plundering Ottoman groups, *lancu* attempted to liberate the Balkan Peninsula from the Ottoman yoke. In 1443, he organized a great campaign against the Ottomans, the so-called "long campaign", succeeding in crossing the Balkan Mountains and reaching Sofia. In 1444, after a failure at Varna, *lancu*, using military means from all Romanian countries, made another attempt to strike at the Ottoman possessions south of the Danube, at Kossovopolje, in 1448. The determination of Sultan Mehmet II, the conqueror of Constantinople, to crush *lancu's* resistance, offered the illustrious Romanian commander the opportunity for his last great victory. On July 21 — 22, 1456, the Ottoman army, besieging Belgrade, "the Gate of Europe", suffered a crushing defeat and was compelled to postpone its plans of advancing toward centre of Europe.



Stephen the Great



Iancu of Hunedoara



Michael the Brave

Shortly after the victory, *lancu* died of the plague. The firm resistance organized by the Romanian countries during his time, united in a genuine and strong military bloc delayed the Ottoman expansion toward the centre of Europe for more than half a century.

**MICHAEL THE BRAVE** (born about 1550 — died 19 August 1601, Cimpia Turzii). Prince of Wallachia (1593 — 1601), Transylvania (1599 — 1601) and Moldavia (1600), the maker, in 1600, of the first union of the Romanians under one single sceptre. "Michael is first of all, a soldier in the fullest and best sense of the word," as Nicolae Iorga, the greatest historian of the Romanians, characterized the voivode whom he considered as "the bravest of his people." The military genius of *Michael the Brave* stems from his deep understanding of the ways whereby the Romanian countries could redeem their independence and withstand the aggression of one of the most expansionist powers of those times — the Ottoman Empire. In the autumn of 1594, when he started the great struggle against the Ottomans, he was joining a broad coalition against the Porte, adhered to by both Transylvania and Moldavia. From the autumn of 1594 to the summer of 1595, *Michael the Brave's* strategy is guided first and foremost by two principles: the carrying out of a vigorous offensive and taking the enemy by surprise. The same idea of the offensive is also underlying the two stages in achieving the unity of the Romanians. From the moment when Andrew Bathory in Transylvania and Ieremia Movilă in Moldavia carry out a policy hostile to the anti-Ottoman orientation of the Walachian prince, *Michael the Brave's* determination is identical to that in the autumn of 1594: to chase away the adversary through an impetuous offensive. The solution met with such la success because *Michael the Brave* employed it for a just cause: the emancipation and unification of his people. When the enemy, as a result of the changes in the balance of forces, launched in his turn an offensive, *Michael the Brave* proved himself master of the military art of defense too. To the Ottoman invasion of the summer of 1595, which climaxed in the battle of



Călugăreni against the numerous forces under Sinan Pasha's command, he opposed the classical tactics of the Romanian princes — withdrawing from the enemy, leaving before it a land deserted of people and lacking food resources, while scattered enemy units were decimated by the lightning attacks of harassing detachments.

The man who awoke the admiration of both his contemporaries and of his successors by his military deeds achieved in fact a harmonious synthesis between the heritage of the Romanian military thinking and practice of the 14th and 15th centuries and the new elements brought by what one can call the revolution in the military technique in the 16th century. A follower of tradition and, at the same time, a daring innovator, *Michael the Brave* places the Romanian military art among the most brilliant European military arts at the end of the 16th century.

HOREA (VASILE URSU NICULA, born about 1730 at Albac, died on 28 February 1785, at Alba Iulia, by wheel strokes), the leader of the 1784 uprising of the Romanians in Transylvania. Together with Cloșca and Crișan he prepared the great rise to struggle of 1784, a form of Romanian peasants' protest against the national and social exploitation to which they were subjected by the Magyar nobles and the Habsburg administration. In his heroic struggle for emancipation, Horea succeeded in mobilizing and organizing on military lines impressive peasant forces. Thus, he divided the entire insurgent territory into administrative-military districts; he confirmed in office the captains of the groups elected by villages, and appointed to key posts people who were devoted to the cause. During the uprising he proved that he was master of both offensive and defensive actions. In an early stage (November 1784), his armed forces attacked



Horea



Avram Iancu



Alexandru Ioan Cuza

localities and castles, occupied strategic points and communication routes; subsequently, they carried out operations in the Apuseni Mountains and Zarand for the defence of the territory liberated by the revolted peasants. He created at the same time an ingenious system of alarm and warning — by fire and by the sound of alpen horns — which enabled him to closely watch his troops and

the movements of the enemy forces. Finally, he employed various other means — barricades, the blocking of access roads, make-shift fortifications, etc. — specific to a genuine popular war of harassing, and wearing out the adversary, as the sole solution to resist an adversary superior in point of numbers and arms. The army created by Horea in 1784 is a revolutionary, exclusively and typically peasant army, from organisation to action. A daring commander, full of initiative and ingenuity, endowed with the force of mastering and leading important armed masses, Horea was one of the most representative leaders of the peasant war of liberation in Central and South-East Europe.

IANCU AVRAM (born 1824, Vidra de Sus — died on 10 September 1872, Baia de Cris). Trained for the Bar, Iancu asserted himself since his youth as an ardent participant in the struggle of the Romanians in Transylvania for national and social emancipation, becoming in a short time one of the leaders of the Romanian revolution of 1848—1849. He carried out an intensive activity for preparing the revolution; he also contributed to the proceedings of the three national assemblies of the Romanians in Transylvania, held in Blaj, in April, May and September 1848, which formulate the claims of the Romanian nation. From the autumn of 1848 he was appointed the prefect of *Auraria Gemina* Legion, one of the 15 legions organized at the initiative of the Romanian National Council in defence of the Revolution. When the Hungarian counter-revolutionary forces led by General J. Bem fell on Transylvania (December 1848—January 1849), Iancu took over the command of the Romanian peasants in the Apuseni Mountains, who had risen to defence struggle and, together with the local prefects, launched against the repressive troops a genuine national and popular war.



This war, in which the invading troops suffered a number of drastic defeats, ended in the summer of 1849, following the conclusion of an armistice with general J. Bem. After the stifling of the Romanian 1848—1849 revolution in Transylvania, *lançu* continued to militate for "Romanians' equal rights." The victories scored by the peasant army of the Apuseni Mountains brought to light *lançu*'s organizational and command qualities, as well as the unusual force of resistance of the popular war. The words of eye witnesses are relevant in this respect: "Everywhere, the peasants skilfully carried out this guerrilla war. Such a people is almost impossible to defeat when it defends itself desperately in its mountains, taking full advantage of the terrain." *lançu*, who prepared and led this revolutionary war of the Romanians in Transylvania, ranks among the most representative personalities of the national and social liberation struggle of the 19th century.

ALEXANDRU IOAN CUZA (born 20 March 1820, at Birlad — died 15 May, 1873, at Heidelberg in Germany). The first prince of partially united Romania, by his double election on 24 January 1859 to the supreme state office both in Moldavia and in Walachia. In his seven years of rule (24 January 1859 — 11 February 1866), he carried out an ample and fruitful activity of unification and renewal of the country's economic, social, cultural and military structures, which ensured the modernization and the general progress of the Romanian nation. In the military field, he was preoccupied to create in the shortest possible time a single army, under national command, called upon to support the process of renewal that had engulfed all bodies of the Romanian state, as well as the achievement of the desideratum of national independence, when need rose, to defend the country's autonomy and territorial in-



Mihail Christodulo Cercez



General Eremia Grigorescu



General Gheorghe Mihail

tegrity. Concomitantly with the unification of the army, Cuza started its modernization, by introducing in the Romanian Army's organization new types of arms, such as engineering, by endowing the troops with better infantry and artillery armament, qualitatively superior to the existing one, by substantially improving the equipment and quartering, by changing the principles of training and adopting training rules correspond-

ing to the Romanian military tradition, by developing military education at all levels. But the most important achievement in the military field of the prince of Union was the organization — through the 1864 Law on the Organization of Armed Forces in Romania — for the first time in this country of a national defence system based on the principle of "armed nation." In this way, Cuza laid the basis for the development of the Romanian modern army till the beginning of the contemporary epoch. At the same time, however, Cuza, whenever circumstances demanded it, showed his determination to oppose by armed force all attempts of any foreign power at occupying Romania's national territory or to prejudice the country's rights and dignity.

GENERAL MIHAIL CRISTODULO CERCEZ (born 8 June 1839, Birlad — died 12 July 1885, Iași). Joining the Army in 1856, he becomes second lieutenant in the following year; he was promoted a major in 1863, a colonel in 1870 and a brigadier general in 1877. He held important offices such as commander of the 4th Infantry Regiment of the 2nd Infantry Brigade, of the 1st and 2nd Infantry and Reserve Divisions, of the 1st and 4th Territorial Military Divisions; he was a member of the General Staff and of the Superior Council of the Army. A division commander in the war for Romania's state independence of 1877—1878, he led the troops under his command, in a first stage (May—June 1877) in the operations for rejecting the plundering and intimidation raids undertaken by the Ottoman forces North of the Danube. From August 1877 he took part in the operations for conquering and, later on, blocking the strong fortified centre of Plevna, manned

■ MIRCEA COCIU  
■ CORNEL I. SCAFEȘ

(continued at 96 page)



By mid-August 1916, the Romanian Government, after having formed the opinion about the attitude of the two coalitions towards the righteous claims of the Romanians, after having obtained certain guarantees, but also as a result of insistent requests, decided to enter the war alongside the Entente, for the liberation of the territories under the domination of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and for the achievement of the ideal of union of the Romanian provinces with the Motherland.

*The Treaty concluded with the Allied and Associated Powers on August 4/17 1916* was a pledge of her contribution to the final victory, an obvious proof of the concern of Romania's statesmen toward the future of our nation and the necessity to unite it into one country. For the first time in our history, the great signatory powers recognized Romania's right of sovereignty over Transylvania, Banat and the other Romanian lands under foreign domination. The concluded treaty answered not only the Romanian people's claims, the correctness of its cause, but it also meant the achievement of an objective necessity required by historical evolution. The correctness of the measure taken, its necessity were confirmed by the international forum at the Peace Conference, by the treaties signed in 1919—1920. *"We have not entered the war — stated Romania's Prime Minister, I.I.C. Brătianu — like some uninvited petitioners. We have entered the war like desired and invited allies! We have entered the war with manly determination, when the French Ambassador at Petersburg stated: 'Would Romanian not enter the war, the entire western front might be compromised!' We have joined the war when the Russians were telling us: It's now or never"*.

*The Military Convention* annexed to the Treaty settled the nature of the command relations between the Romanian Army and the Allies and the strategic and operational conditions under which the launching and development of Romanian operations were to be conjoined with those of the Allies.

The achievement of the Great Union on 1st of December 1918, the making of the unitary Romanian national state was the outcome of a long-standing process, of a succession of battles waged by generations upon generations, of the endeavours and toil of the whole Romanian people. The representative assemblies in 1918 and their bodies set up under the conditions obtaining by then, the decisions made by free consent, voiced the aspirations of the people's mass after union with Romania of all Romanian territories under foreign domination.

The re-union of the three Romanian provinces to the Motherland, although declared by each province, in turn, was the accomplishment of the Romanians through acts of free will, in the Romanian territory and not outside it. The Romanians asked neither permission nor help from the Great Powers to fulfil their ideal, they did not wait for the diplomacy or the Peace Conference to decide their destiny, and acted by themselves, they achieved what was only but natural and had to be done.

The correctness of this epoch-making achievement was, is and will be evinced by its lastingness. And this because an objective necessity of historical development has come true.

We reproduce here after fragments of basic documents from the years 1916—1918 concerning the making of the unitary Romanian national state.

The Treaty of Alliance of August 4/17, 1916 between Romania and Russia, France, Great Britain and Italy

"[...]"

I. Russia, France, Great Britain and Italy guarantee the territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Romania within all its present State borders.

II. Austria-Hungary under the terms of the Military Convention; Romania also pledges to discontinue, as of the declaration of war, any trade relations and commercial exchanges with all the enemies of the Allied and Associated Powers.

III. Russia, France, Great Britain and Italy recognize Romania's right to unite to her own the territories under Austro-Hungarian monarchy as provided and decided upon under Article IV.

IV. The borders of the territories mentioned hereabove are decided as follows:

The borderline will start from the Prut river from a point of the present frontiers between Russia and Romania near Novosulitz and will go upstream as far as the frontier with Galitia, at the junction of the Prut and the Cheremush. Henceforward, it will go along the frontier between Galitia and Hungary up to the point called Steag, altitude 1,655. Further, it will go along the separation line between the Tisa and the Vizo rivers to reach Tisa, at Trebuza village, upriver of the junction with the Vizo. Henceforward, it will descend along the banks of the Tisa to 4 km downward the junction with the Someş, leaving the village Vasares — Nămeş to Romania. Then, it will follow a SSE direction



to a point within 6 km east of the town of Debreceen. From this point it will reach the Criş river at 3 km from the junction of its two tributaries, then it will join the Tisa at the level of the village Algyö, north of Seghedin, passing west of the villages of Croshaza and Bekessamson, and within 3 km of the latter it will make a small bent. From the Alg, the border line will go down the Tisa banks up to its outlet into the Danube and, eventually, it will go along the Danube as far as Romania's present frontiers. (...)

V. Russia, France, Great Britain and Italy, on the one hand and Romania on the other, pledge not to conclude separate peace or general peace otherwise, than jointly and simultaneously.

Russia, France, Great Britain and Italy also pledge, that in the peace treaty the territories under Austro-Hungarian monarchy, stipulated under Article 4, be united to the Crown of Romania.

VI. Romania will enjoy equal rights with her Allies in all matters relating to preliminaries, peace negotiations and the negotiation of all questions to be submitted to approval by the Peace Conference."

*România în primul război mondial, 1916—1919 (Romania in the First World War, 1916—1919), Vol. 1, Documents-Annexes, Bucharest 1934, p. 194.*

The Military Convention of August 4/17, 1916 signed by France, Great Britain, Italy, Russia and Romania

"Article 1. As provided by the Treaty of Alliance signed on August 4/17, 1916 by France, Great Britain, Italy, Russia and Romania, Romania pledges, mustering all her land and sea forces, to attack Austria-Hungary on August 15/28, 1916 at the latest (eight days after the offensive at Salonika). The offensive operations of the Romanian Army will start the very day of the declaration of war.

Article 2. As of the signing of the present convention and all along the mobilization and concentration of the Romanian Army, the Russian Army pledges to act with a view to secure the Romanian operations mentioned hereabove. This action will be offensive and vigorous in Bukovina in particular, where the Russian troops will have to keep at least their positions, as well as their present manpower.

Starting August 12/25, 1916, the Russian fleet shall provide security to Constantza Harbour, prevent any landing of enemy troops on Romanian Coasts and any inrush on the Danube, upstream the months of this great river.

In her turn, Romania will recognize the Russian fleet in the Black Sea the right to use Constantza Harbour and to take the necessary measures against the enemy submarine fleet.

Article 3. Russia pledges to send to Dobrudja, upon the mobilization of the Romanian Army, two infantry divisions and a cavalry division to cooperate with the Romanian Army against the Bulgarian Army.

The Allies pledge to proceed by, at least eight days, through offensive operations of the armies at Salonika, Romania's entry into the war, with a view to facilitating the mobilization and concentration of all Romanian military forces. This offensive will start on August 7/20, 1916 (...).

Article 4. France, Great Britain, Italy and Russia pledge to supply to Romania ammunition and war matériel to be conveyed by Romanian or Allied ships via Russia.

These deliveries and transportations shall be done so as to secure their arrival in Romania, as fluently as possible, of 300 tons a day at minimum, reckoned on a monthly transportation basis.

In case the Allies have at their disposal new ways of access, facilitating the ammunition transportation, Romania shall be entitled to benefit of them.

Article 5. The Allies also pledge to supply to Romania, as far as possible, with horses, tyres, medicine, means of subsistence and equipment she would ask for in quantities and categories to be mutually agreed upon.

Article 6. The Allies will supply Romania with the necessary technical staff for manufacturing at home the ammunition and war matériel (...).

Article 8. The cooperation of the Allied Armies does not imply the subordination of a contracting party to the other; it implies only the free acceptance of the provisions and alterations due to general situation, to necessities required by circumstance and comradeship in arms.

Article 9. In principle, the Romanian Royal Armies and Russian Imperial Armies will keep their own command, their distinct zone of operations and a full independence of conduct

The last page of the political convention concluded at Bucharest between Romania and the Entente-member countries on August 4/17, 1916.

politi. Le Souverainement Royal Roumain s'engage à reconnaître les  
Sécher de la région du Danube, qui, abandonnant leurs propriétés  
roumaines, s'engage dans l'espace de douze mois à partir de la conclusion de la  
Article V

La Roumanie et, d'autre part, la France, la Grande-Bretagne,  
l'Italie et la Russie, d'autre part, s'engagent à ne pas conclure de  
paix séparée ou la paix générale que comporterait et mutuellement.  
La France, la Grande-Bretagne, l'Italie et la Russie s'engagent  
également à ce que, au traité de paix, les intérêts de la Roumanie  
et, d'autre part, les intérêts de la Roumanie, soient réunis à la  
convention de Roumanie

Article VI  
La Roumanie jouira des mêmes droits que les Alliés  
pour tout ce qui a trait aux propositions aux négociations  
de la paix, aussi qu'à la discussion des questions qui seront  
soumises aux décisions de la conférence de la paix.

Article VII  
Les Puissances Contractantes s'engagent à garder secrète  
la présente Convention jusqu'à la conclusion de la paix  
générale

Fait en cinq exemplaires à Bucarest le 4 août 1916.

Le Président du Conseil  
des Ministres de Roumanie  
Le Ministre de France  
Le Ministre de Grande-Bretagne  
Le Ministre de l'Italie  
Le Ministre de la Russie



of operations. The line of demarcation between the two Armies will start from Vatra Dornei heading for Debreczen via Bistrița and along the Șieu and Someș rivers. The main direction of the Romanian operation, as much as the military situation south of the Danube would allow it, will be through Transylvania heading for Budapest.

The Russian troops, stipulated under Article 3, meant to cooperate with the Romanian Army will be under the chief command of the Romanian Army. (...)"

*Idem*, pp. 195—196.

#### Romania's Declaration of War on Austria-Hungary, on August 14, 1916, for the Achievement of National State Unity

"[...] At the outbreak of the present war, Romania, in the same way as Italy, declined to associate in the declaration of war of Austria-Hungary, about which she had not been warned by the Vienna Cabinet. In the spring of 1915, Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary: The Triple Alliance was discontinued. Therefore, the reasons determining Romania's adjunction to this political system came to naught.

At present, the de facto situation can lead to great territorial alterations and political changes, liable to seriously endanger Romania's security and future. Therefore, the peaceful endeavours made by Romania—loyal to the spirit of the Triple Alliance—were made ineffectual by those called upon to support and defend it.

Adhering, in 1883, to the Central Powers group, Romania, far from forgetting her blood ties that unite the population in the Romanian Kingdom and the Romanians under the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, saw in the relationships of friendship and alliance settled among the three great Powers a precious guarantee of her domestic quiet, and also the improvement of the life of the Romanians in Austria-Hungary. Actually, Germany and Italy that had reconstituted their states on the basis of the principle of nationality could not but recognize the legitimacy of the principle grounding their own being. As for Austria-Hungary, it found in its friendly relationships with the Kingdom of Romania the warrants of its quiet both within and at our

common frontiers; for it could not be unaware of the fact that the dissatisfactions of the Romanian population were finding response here, permanently threatening to trouble the good relationships between the two states.

The hopes cherished when adhering to the Triple Alliance have been deceived. In more than thirty years, the Romanians living under the Dual Monarchy, have not witnessed the introduction of any reform likely to give the Romanians even the semblance of a satisfaction and, on the contrary, they have been treated like an inferior race and condemned to suffer the oppression exerted by an alien element that makes up only a minority within the various nationalities that compose the Austro-Hungarian State. All injustices suffered by our brethren have kindled continuously animosity between our country and the Monarchy which the Governments in the Romanian Kingdom have been able to appease only at the cost of great difficulties and many sacrifices.

At the outbreak of the present war we hoped that the Austro-Hungarian Government would be, at the last moment at least, aware of the urgent need to put a stop to this injustice that jeopardized not only our relations of friendship but the very normal relationships between two neighbour states.

Two years of war, in which Romania has kept its neutrality, have demonstrated that Austria-Hungary, hostile to any internal reforms likely to improve the life of the peoples under its authority, has been as prompt in sacrificing them as unable to defend them against foreign attacks.

The war committing almost all Europe raises the most serious questions on the national development and the very existence of states; Romania, prompted by the desire to contribute to the shortening of this war and under the imperative necessity to safeguard her race interests is obliged to align with those that can secure the achievement of her national unity.

For these reasons, she considers herself entitled, as of now, to declare war on Austria-Hungary."

*Idem* pp. 3—5

#### The Resolution of the Grand National Assembly at Alba-Iulia, on December 1, 1918

I. The National Assembly of all Romanians in Transylvania, Banat and the Hungarian Land gathered through their rightful representatives empowered at Alba-Iulia, on December 1, 1918, decrees the union of such Romanians and of all territories they inhabit to Romania. (...).

II. The National Assembly grants all territories aforementioned, provisional autonomy until the convention of the Constituency, elected by universal suffrage.

III. With reference to these matters, as fundamental principles grounding the constitution of the new Romanian State, the National Assembly proclaims the following:

1) Full national freedom for all the peoples inhabiting this territory. Each people shall be

1918. Iuliu Hosu, leader of the Romanian National Party in Transylvania reading in front of the people the resolutions passed by the Grand National Assembly in Alba Iulia.





trained, administered and judged in its own tongue by individuals from their own kin, and each people shall enjoy the right of representation in the law making bodies and in the government of the country in due proportion to the number of individuals in its composition.

2) Equal access to and full, autonomous freedom to profess a religious belief for all state denominations.

3) The full achievement of a genuine democratic system in all fields of public life. The public, direct, equal secret suffrage, by communes, apportioned to their respective numbers, for both sexes, for all citizens being twenty-one years of age, and the right to representation in communes, counties or Parliament.

4) Full freedom of the press, association and assembly; free dissemination of all human thoughts.

5) Radical land reform. Enrollment of all properties, mainly the big estates shall be done. Upon such enrollment which discontinues the fiducial committees on the grounds of the right to have the great landed estates reduced function of individual needs offers the peasant the opportunity to have a property of his own (arable, pasture, forest land) great enough, at least, to be worked by himself and his family.

The guiding principle of this agrarian policy is, on the one hand, promotion, of social levelling, and on the other, the invigoration of production.

6) Industrial workers are granted the same rights and privileges, as lawfully acknowledged in the most advanced Western industrialized States.

IV. The National Assembly voices its wish for the Peace Congress to achieve the Community of free nations the effect that justice and liberty shall be secured for all the big and small nations alike, and in the future the war shall be eliminated as a means of regulating international relations.

V. The Romanians gathered in the present national assembly salute their brethren in Bukovina, delivered from the yoke of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and united to the Mother Country, Romania.

VIII. The National Assembly expresses its gratitude to and admiration for the Allied Powers,



Facsimiles including the Resolution of the National Assembly in Alba Iulia on December 1, 1918 whereby Transylvania's Union to the Motherland was decided.

which through their brilliant struggles, tenaciously waged against enemy thoroughly prepared for long decades of war, liberated civilization from the claws of savagery.

IX. For the further conduct of the affairs of the Romanian nation in Transylvania, Banat and the Hungarian Land, the National Assembly decides upon the convenion of a great National Romanian Council, fully entitled to represent the Romanian nation, whenever necessary and everywhere, to all the nations in the world, and to make any decision at deems necessary in the interest and to the benefit of the nation.

*The Grand National Assembly, gathered in Alba-Iulia, on December 1, 1918 (Acts and Documents), Bucharest, 1982, pp. 10—11.*

News group by  
■ Captain IOAN VLAD

## The Romanians' Great Union

(continued from 57 page)

comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu, General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, the country's President points out that: The formation of the unitary Romanian national state is not a gift, it is not the

result of international conferences; it is the result of the tireless struggle for unity waged by the most progressive force of society, by the broad masses of the people, a natural outcome of the historical, social and national development of the Romanian people. The Paris Peace Conference made but to sanction a fait accompli, a situation created by the Romanian people's struggle.

The achievement of the Romanian state's unity wrought the national and socio-economic framework for the development of modern Romania, had a positive impact on the entire economic, political and social evolution of the country, for her international assertion as a unitary and sovereign state, animated by the desire for maintaining peace and collaboration among peoples.



Colonel Dr. FLORIAN TUCA

*"Monuments" — said the Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga — "are the living history of the nation". They can help reconstruct, evoke and glorify reference moments in the history of a people.*

*Erecting monuments has always been with the Romanians an act of reverent homage to the great deeds and blood toll given by those who at times of tribulation laid higher than anything the lofty ideals of faithfully and devotedly serving the supreme interests of the country and the Romanian people.*

*Both tradition and some sources point to the fact that Voivode Stephen the Great (1457—1504) who had to wage 36 wars during his reign and won 34 of them, used to mark each victory over the powerful invading armies by erecting monuments of cult that actually extolled the valiance, staunchness and spirit of sacrifice of his soldiers. This is how the Putna and Voronej monasteries were built, among others, two masterpieces of Romanian medieval and world art. The tradition of the outstanding voivode was taken over and continued by his followers, and, during Romania's modern and contemporary development the art of erecting monuments has expanded and gained impetus. Consequently, throughout Romania, at present there stand over 3,000 mausoleums, monuments and monumental groups, busts or other memorials of historic interest. To some of them we shall refer in the following pages.*

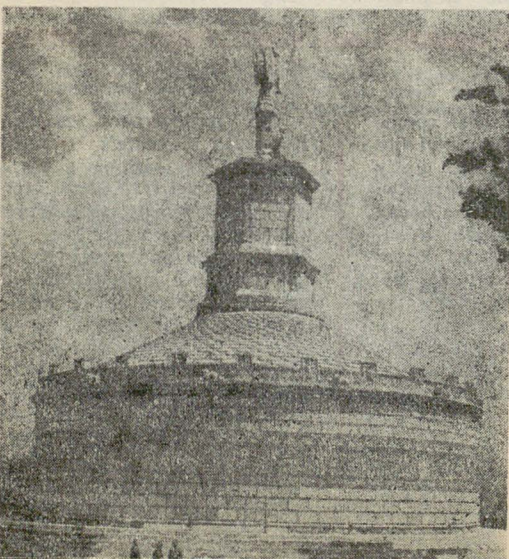
## THE TROPAEUM TRAJANI MONUMENT.

It is situated in the locality of Adamclisi, Constanța County and was erected by the Romans in A.D. 108—109. It evokes the fights waged between 101 and 102, by the Romans and Geto-Dacians. For the Romanians, the Adamclisi monument is a symbol of the staunchness, valiance and spirit of sacrifice, of the unity in thought and action of our ancestors, the Geto-Dacians in their struggle to defend the forefathers' land, their

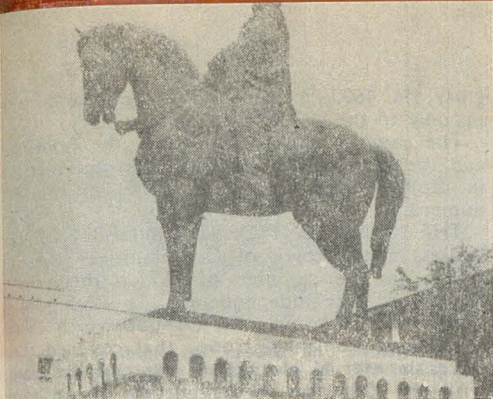
native places, the assets accumulated through toil and sweat.

In its initial form, the TROPAEUM TRAJANI monument rose to about 40 m and was made up of several architectural elements. Its base was a 30 m diameter and 11 m high cylinder, continued with a 6 m high frustum, covered with fishscale-shaped stone slabs. On the summit was the statue of the emperor, placed on a massive pedestal. The cylindrical shaft of the monument featured 54 metopes mainly containing figures of men at times of quiet and at times of tribulation, significant scenes from the clashes between the Romans and the Geto-Dacians in A.D. 102. Some of these scenes were given names by the experts: *Marching towards the Great Battle, Cavalry's Attack and Fight, The Battle around the Chariots, Acclaim* etc. In its current form, the monument of Adamclisi is made according to the data provided by the archaeological digs carried on in the area first by historian Grigore Tocilescu and continued later by other experts, sponsored by the Romanian Academy. Restoration jobs lasted several years, ending in 1977, on the celebration of the centennial of the country's full state independence. The festivity was attended by the Head of the Romanian State. On the occasion, a white marble plaque was mounted on the monument, reading: "In the presence of the President of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Nicolae Ceaușescu, the Tropaeum Trajani monument, rebuilt on the foundation

Monument Tropaeum Trajani in Adamclisi.







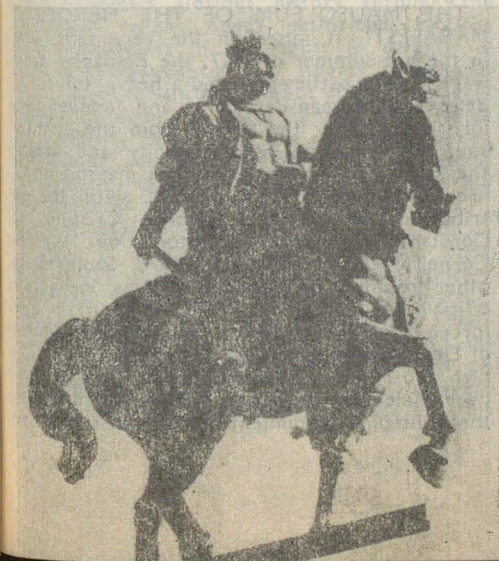
Monument of the Voivode Mircea the Old erected in Tulcea.

of the edifice erected by the Romans in A.D. 109 was restored to the national cultural thesaurus as a token over the millennia of the Romanian people's glorious history"

**THE EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF MIRCEA THE OLD.** It is dedicated to one of the Romanians' illustrious voivodes who ruled in Walachia between 1386 and 1418 and whose name is connected to the struggles waged by the Romanian armies to safeguard and strengthen the state's independence. The victories scored by his armies in the battles against the armies of the Ottoman Empire, in particular at the Rovine battle (October 10, 1394) struck a broad echo in Europe. During his glorious reign, Mircea the Old restored the natural boundaries of Walachia, titling himself: *"We, Mircea, great voivode and Prince of the whole Land of Ungro-Walachia, of the territories over the mountains, the land of Almaş and Făgăraş. Duke and Prince of Banat, Severin and on both sides of the Danube up to the great Sea and ruler of the citadel of Dirstor."*

The equestrian statue of Mircea the Old is placed in the Republicii Square in Tulcea Municipality and is the creation of the reputed sculptor Ion Jalea. It was inaugurated on December 1, 1972. The majestic statue of the great voivode of the Romanians rises on a 4 m high pedestal, made of reinforced concrete coated in white

Monument of the Stephen the Great erected near the place of the battle at Podul Inalt — Vaslui 1475.



marble and decorated on the upper side with an ingeniously decorated band. The statue, cast in bronze, is 5 m high. Mircea the Old is featured in a dignified attitude, the princely crown on his head, his right hand on the hilt of the sword, his left hand on the rein. The composition is impressive through its grandeur and beauty. A white marble plaque on the frontispiece of the pedestal reads: *Mircea the Old, Prince of Walachia—1386—1418.*

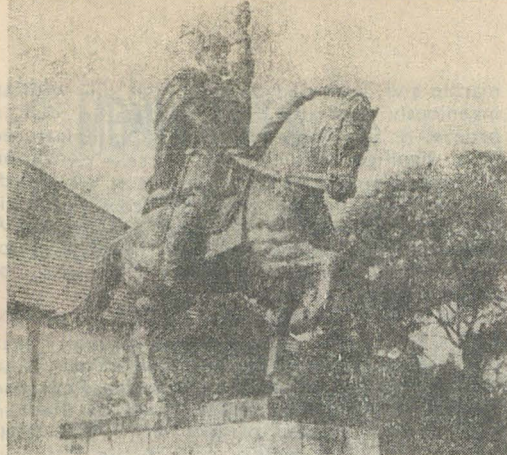
**THE EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF STEPHEN THE GREAT.** It is situated on a promontory near the locality of Vaslui, on the spot called Podul Inalt where on January 10, 1475, the Romanian soldiers, skillfully and masterly led by Stephen the Great, Prince of Moldavia (1457—1504) scored a brilliant victory against the Ottoman army.

The monument pays homage to one of the most outstanding voivodes of the Romanians. An advanced politician, a crafty organizer and deft diplomat, a peerless commander of army, in his 47 year rule Stephen the Great raised Moldavia unto peaks of glory. With a view to defending the country's independence, the prince gathered a powerful army made up of soldiers mostly coming from the ranks of the free peasantry. In order to oppose successfully all foreign invaders he had the system of fortifications expanded and improved and equipped his army with guns. To counterpoise the almost crushing superiority of the enemy, the Prince resorted to the traditional tactics of the Geto-Dacians and of the Romanians and innovated it. He used the tactics of "laying waste the land", drew the enemy army to places where it could not unfold and take action, harassed it according to a well-thought plan and he dealt it heavy unsuspected blows at the most suitable time. That is how he went about the Vaslui battle. His equestrian statue was inaugurated on December 25, 1975, on the 500th anniversary since the victory scored by the Romanian army. The statue of the brilliant prince is placed on a massive 8 m high pedestal made of reinforced concrete coated in travertine; it is cast in bronze and about 7 m high. The prince is featured mounted in a very dignified and proud attitude, with the princely crown on his head and a sword in his right hand, a token of power, bravery and glory. The main facet of the pedestal is inscribed in relief with the following text: *Stephen the Great, Prince of Moldavia 1457—1504.*

Through his qualities and virtues, through everything he did for the country's well-being and the defence of her independence Stephen the Great went down in legends and poems: *"Stephen, Stephen, thou art one! In the world, like thee, there's none! Maybe just the mighty Sun."*

**THE EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF MICHAEL THE BRAVE.** It rises in Alba Iulia, where in 1600, through the struggle and will of the whole Romanian kin and the valiance of the great voivode Michael the Brave (1593—1601) the grandiose act of the three Romanian Lands's political union — Walachia, Moldavia and Transylvania — was achieved as a symbol of the Romanian people's historical right to live united, free and inde-





Monument of the Voivode Michael the Brave erected in Alba Iulia in memory of the first political union of the Romanians (1599–1601).

pendent. The union carried out by the honourable prince, correctly assessed as the most brilliant act of the Romanian Middle Ages is a token of the struggle for state unity, liberty and independence of all the Romanians. "From 1600 on — Nicolae Iorga wrote — no Romanian could ever conceive of the union outside his grandiose personality, his sword or ax raised to the sky of freedom, his figure of immaculate and consummate tragical poetry."

Michael the Brave's Equestrian Statue is the work of sculptor Oscar Han and was unveiled on November 18, 1968 on the 50th anniversary since Transylvania's Union to the Motherland. Attending the inauguration of the monument, Nicolae Ceaușescu, President of the Socialist Republic of Romania said: "The statue of Michael the Brave is a symbol of our people's will to maintain its independence and national sovereignty."

Placed on a massive pedestal made of concrete coated with marble slabs, the 6 m statue features Michael the Brave at the apex of his

glory, in 1600, a mace in his left hand raised proudly to the sky, as a token of victory.

The name of the voivode of all the Romanians and the glorious years of his reign are inscribed in capital letters on the pedestal of the monument.

#### THE MONUMENT OF THE INDEPENDENCE

It lies in the town of Corabia, near the spot where in the summer of 1877 — the year of Romania's state independence — a solid pontoon bridge was built over the Danube which carried the valiant Romanian troops that covered themselves in eternal glory after the terrible clashes with the Ottoman forces putting up resistance in the redoubts of Grivitsa, Plevna, Oryahovo and in other areas of the battlefield across the river. Created, like numerous other monuments paying homage and extolling the most significant moments in the Romanian people's bimillennary history, upon President Nicolae Ceaușescu's initiative, this memorial is the work of a group of fine artists, headed by sculptor Mircăa Ștefănescu. It is made up of two separate elements: a pedestal covered with bas-reliefs representing the pontoon bridge built in the summer of 1877, episodes of the 'Romanian troops' crossing the bridge to fight against the Ottoman forces as well as sequences of the fierce assaults given on the enemy redoubts; the second element is a sculptural piece featuring a 15 m group statue.

The monument was inaugurated this year, on May 23, in the presence of the Romanian head of state. On the occasion, President Nicolae Ceaușescu said, among others: "I should like warmly to congratulate the creators of this monument which will always remind of the heroic fight of the soldiers, of the Romanian people for independence, liberty, for the creation of the Romanian nation and national state."

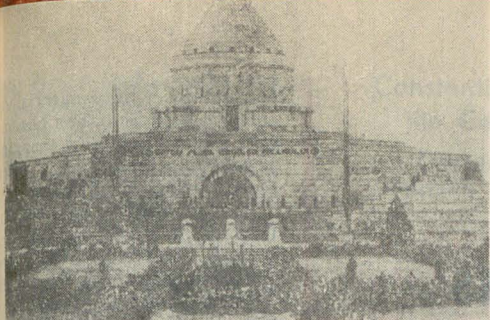
A marble plaque attached to the façade of the pedestal supporting the group statue is inscribed with the following highly emotional and reverential words in the memory of the 1877–1878 heroes, words belonging to President Nicolae Ceaușescu: "The work achieved with their blood with the blood of the 1877–1878 generations will always shine in our national history as one of the greatest victories on the road of liberty, progress and independence."

THE MAUSOLEUM OF THE HEROES OF MĂRĂȘEȘTI. It raises on the very spot where in the hot summer of 1917, the Romanian troops waged fierce battles and paid a heavy toll for the defence of Romania's liberty and independence for chasing away the enemy from the country's soil, for achieving national unity and creating the Romanian national state. The mausoleum was erected between 1923 and 1938, with the contribution of architects George Cristinel and Constantin Pompoiu, sculptors Ion Jalea and Cornel Medrea, painter Eduard Săulescu and other reputed fine artists. It was inaugurated officially on September 18, 1938. Built in reinforced concrete coated with blocks of andesite of Deva, the memorial is circular in form (30 m high and 40 m in diameter), and is a counterpart over millennia to Trajan's Column in Rome and the triumphal monument of Adamclisi. It resembles



Monument of "Independence" erected in the locality of Corabia, near the place where the Romanian troops crossed the Danube in 1877.





Mausoleum at Mărășești erected in memory of the Nation's Heroes fallen in the war of 1916-1918.

bles very much the Tropaeum Traiani monument.

The upper part of the mausoleum ends in a cupola called The Cupola of Glory whose base is flanked by four vultures moulded in granite of Deva. On the groundfloor of the memorial there is a number of vaults where the mortal remains of about 6,000 Romanian military who laid down their lives in the fierce Mărășești battle are reposing. In front of the crypts, hundreds and thousands of names of identified heroes are inscribed on white marble plaques. On the main façade of the mausoleum the following inscription can be read: *"To the glory of the nation's heroes"* and the focal areas and localities where the Romanian armies waged harsh battles are also mentioned: Jiu, Olt, Sibiu, Coșna, Cireșoiaia, Robănești, Neajlov, Dragoslavele, Predeal, Cîmpulung, Panciu, Răzoare, Brașov, Porumbacu, Mărășești, Oituz, Doaga, Muscel, Argeș, Bărcuț, Amzacea, Purnaru, Cerna, Cașin, Valea Uzului and Sticlăria.

In front of the Mausoleum of Mărășești there is the tomb of *The Unknown Hero*, marked by a white slab in which these highly significant words were carved: *"Here rests in felicity the unknown soldier ... On His mortal remains Romania's soil is resting."*

In 1967, on the 50th anniversary of the heroic battles of Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz, Nicolae Ceaușescu, President of the Socialist Republic of Romania visited the historic battlefield of Mărășești and wrote down the following in the book of the mausoleum: *"I have trodden with deep emotion this land whose name went down in our people's glorious history through the numberless valiant deeds performed by the Romanian soldiers in the fights in defence of national independence and liberty. Mărășești will for ever remain the symbol of the Romanian people's heroism — a lofty moral trait which it is brilliantly asserting in the enthusiastic work the working people in our homeland are carrying out under the guidance of the Party, on the ample front of socialist construction."*

THE MEMORIAL TO THE MOTHERLAND'S HEROES. It is an imposing, grandiose work placed in the open space in front of the Military Academy in the Romanian Capital-city, Bucharest. It was created by a reputed team of fine artists made of Marius Butunoiu, Zoe Băicoianu, T.N. Ionescu and Ion Dăinăceanu and inaugurated on August 17, 1957. The monument is mainly devoted to the glorification of the grand deeds of arms

performed by the Romanian Army broadly supported by the whole people, in the antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution of social and national liberation of August 1944, in the fights for the homeland's liberation from fascist domination, and further on, in the clashes waged on the territories of Hungary, Czechoslovakia and part of Austria, and the toll given by the Romanian people, by its army in the fierce battle for the defeat of fascism.

The memorial is made up of two essential elements. The first is a statuary in ronde-bosse, cast in bronze and featuring three characters: an infantryman (middle) holding above his head an oak branch, a symbol of the soldiers' valour and glory, a pilot (on the right) and a sailor (on the left). The three personages embody the three basic departments of the Romanian Army during its participation in the insurrectional battles of August 1944 and in the anti-Hitler war. The majestic statuary, 9 metres in height, which a bulky 6 m high pedestal in rusty granite is added, bestow a majestic air to the whole monument. The second element, part and parcel of the first, is an ample bas-relief disposed in two hemicycles on one and the other side of the pedestal. Carved in stone and stretching on about 150 sq m the bas-reliefs evoke reference moments in the twice millenary battles of the Romanian people and its army for safeguarding the forefathers' land, for unity, liberty and independence. Among others there are sequences referring to: the battle of Tapae (A.D. 105), the battle of Rovine (1394), the Bobilna revolt (1437), the battle of Vaslui (1475), Michael the Brave, the Prince who in 1600 achieved the Union, entering Alba Iulia, the 1784 uprising led by Horea, Cloșca and Crișan, the revolution of 1821 led by Tudor Vladimirescu, the 1848-1849 bourgeois-democratic revolution in the Romanian Lands, the 1877-1878 War of Independence, the great uprising of 1907, the battle of Mărășești (1917), the revolutionary fights of the railway workers and oilmen in 1933, the antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution of social and national liberation of August 1944, the victorious return to the homeland of the Romanian troops participating in the anti-Hitler war after the capitulation of Nazi Germany.

A text is inscribed with golden letters on the main façade of the pedestal on which the statuary is placed: *"Glory to the Romanian soldiers, inheritors of ancient heroic traditions, fearless fighters against fascism, for the homeland's liberty and independence"*.

Monument of the Motherland's Heroes in Bucharest.





# HISTORY BOOK AND MAGAZINE REVIEWS

## THE MILITARY HISTORY OF THE ROMANIAN PEOPLE

Military Publishing  
House, 1984,  
Bucharest, 438 p.

The history of the Romanian people contains wonderful pages dedicated to the heroic struggle for the defence of the forefathers' land, of the country's unity, independence and sovereignty. The interest in writing the military history of the Romanians — present in the works of Nicolae Bălcescu, A.D. Xenopol, Nicolae Iorga and more recently of Radu Rosetti — has been furthered during the last twenty years at a higher level, through the research work made by complex teams. This hard work was materialized in vast studies and, since last year, in the first volume of *The Military History of the Romanian People*, conceived to be issued in 10 volumes.



Published under the aegis of the Romanian Commission of Military History, the Centre for Studies and Research in Military History and Theory and edited by a collective body led by General Colonel Dr Constantin Olteanu and chief coordinator General Lieutenant Dr Ilie Ceaușescu, the volume presents the military history since the earliest times to the 14th century. The authors present military art and strategy in a unitary outlook, as an integral and inseparable part of the Romanian people's history, in one and the same territory — the area between the Carpathians, the Danube and the Black Sea.

The authors corroborate the conclusions of older research with recent results of archaeology and historiography, emphasizing the originality of the Geto-Dacian civilization; the genesis of the Romanian people, pointing out its existence in the area round the Carpathians, the Danube and the Black Sea as early as the 3rd century AD. The evolution of the state with the Romanians benefits of an outstanding scientific introduction. Doubtless data demonstrate the fact that the ancestors of our people had a known statehood for over 2000 years, emphasis being placed on the uninterrupted continuity of the material, cultural, state-organization throughout the surveyed interval.

The first chapter proves that the earliest history of our people's forefathers is closely connected to the evolution of North Thracian

populations, whose material cultural assertion had become part of the sweeping change processes that had taken place during the Bronze Age.

Military history of the Geto-Dacians is given a wide coverage starting with the individualization of the North Thracian peoples group, the growth of the Geto-Dacian the Romanian people's ancestors" the book points out "was made in the vast Thracian space stretching northward from the Haemus Mountains to the Wooded Carpathians and was of major importance in the history of the whole South-Eastern part of the European Continent. The armed resistance of the Geto-Dacian people against numerous invaders and especially against certain big states and empires of the Antiquity — the Persians, Macedonians, Romans — are glorious events of our military past which make up at the same time concentrated pages of European and world history.

After more than a century and-a-half-long fights between the Dacians and the Romans with successive victories and defeats on both sides, the portion of Dacia was subjected to Roman domination. But the Dacian people could not be liquidated and the Dacian state continued to exist in the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic space.

Dacia could not be wiped away from the map of the ancient world. Making use of scientific arguments, archaeological proofs, the authors demonstrate the Dacian force and influence in the territory which was not occupied by the Roman Empire.

The volume shows that after the withdrawal of the Roman Army and administration south of the Danube, favourable conditions were created for restoring the social and political unity of the ancient Dacian lands.

Centuries on end, the Romanian people has permanently developed its own material and cultural civilization, traditional forms of social and political organization.



the direct clashes with the migratory peoples was, side by side with other forms of resistance, a main factor of preserving the national identity of our people and of directly asserting it socially, economically and politically. This struggle was crowned, by the appearance of the self-dependent feudal Romanian states, during the 14th century: Walachia, Moldavia and Transylvania, and though somewhat belated in their transition to a superior organization, their growth took place during the struggle for the union into a powerful state, capable of repelling foreign invasions, of ensuring a selfreliant development, exerting a strong influence in South-Eastern Europe.

The authors of the book did not forget the fact that the military phenomena had been decisively marked in time by the social and economic systems.

A rich documentary material — maps, charts, photographs of some valuable treasures, archaeological evidence and sites — illustrate the text, enriching it.

This first volume has a high scientific value, opening new paths in Romanian historiography; its authors managed to meet the fundamental requirement formulated by Romania's President, Nicolae Ceaușescu, according to which "the historians' highest duty and responsibility is, by studying the development of society, the historic events, to select the huge treasury of experience gained for millennia on end and to enrich the present and future activity with teachings and conclusions for the peoples' advancement on the road of civilization, for the peace and the progress of all mankind."

A Military History of the Romanian People, Vol. 1, is a successful beginning in the series of synthesis preceding the Treatise of Romanian History, as a reference work in Romanian historiography.

Reader Dr  
ION ARDELEANU

Constantin Olteanu,  
Ilie Ceaușescu,  
Florian Tucă,  
Vasile Mocanu,

## ROMANIAN ARMY IN THE REVOLUTION OF AUGUST, 1944

Political Publishing  
House, 1984,  
Bucharest

Expression of the ever increasing demands for studying of the most important events in the Romanian people's history with four-fold millenary roots, this wide-scope

Constantin Olteanu, Ilie Ceaușescu,  
Florian Tucă, Vasile Mocanu

## ARMATA ROMANA IN REVOLUTIA DIN AUGUST 1944



politica

monograph by the very problems approached happily add to more than 3000 titles printed in the jubilee year of our liberty standing for a brilliant revealing of the scientific and cultural creation.

Counted among the great values of the Romanian historiography, this monograph encompasses six chapters which light the reader's way to themes of paramount importance that permit their thoroughly studying. Each chapter, but especially all of them altogether confirm the aphorism according to which the lapse of time brings out in ever stronger relief the great and unshakable truths of history, the fact that the

act of August 23, 1944 was the expression of the entire Romanian people's will and conscience, firmly resolved to write down a new and glorious page in the history of its fighting traditions for liberty and dignity, for national independence and sovereignty.

Through a thinking and methodology of first-class professionalism, the authors point out the motive forces of the revolution on their whole and the role and place of each of them. There is proved by strong arguments and well-grounded informations that the Revolution in August 1944 has deep historical roots, being the corollary of profound revolutionary processes incessantly unfolded in the Romanian society, that both its character and consequences are naturally stemming from the reality according to which the Romanian Communist Party prepared with science and conscience the great rise to arms of the Romanian people because from the very first moments of carrying through the historic act of August 23 — as President Nicolae Ceaușescu pointed out — it was the organizer, the soul of the actions carried out by the people and the army. In that context, the participation in the carrying through of the grandiose act of August 23, 1944 reveals itself as a historic destiny of the Romanian army, the great teachings of history that the Romanian army fully understood having been in consensus with its entire past of struggle and glory. While reading this book, the reader fully lives and is feeling the thrills of those clashes fought by the insurrectional forces against German troops in various regions of the country, in particular in Bucharest and in the Prahova Valley. By highly tellingly presenting those battles and clashes which were to yield the liberation of the central, south-eastern, southern and south-western parts of the country inflicting on the enemy losses amounting to more than 61,000



military, which was tantamount to the strength of six divisions, the authors also reveal the European impact of the great Romanian deed carried through four decades ago, it belonging to both the national and world history.

We are in face of a Romanian scientific performance that has reached the value quotas of the great epopee in August 1944 in which the army wrote down new and significant pages on the huge Column of its multimillenary traditions; we are in face of a book that should be not only read but conclusions should be also drawn, which are offered in abundance by those battles for a future which now is bright, socialist.

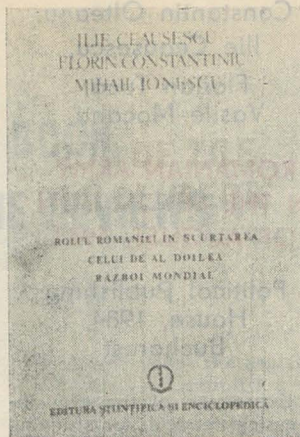
■ Colonel Dr  
GHEORGHE TUDOR

Ilie Ceaușescu,  
Florin Constantiniu,  
Mihail Ionescu,

## 200 DAYS SPARED FROM WORLD WAR II

Scientific and  
Enciclopaedic  
Publishing House,  
1984, Bucharest, 217 p.

The volume published on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Romanian Revolution of August 1944, rapidly sold out from bookshops, impresses the reader through the huge amount of new historic sources which it introduces to the scientific circuit, information which is meant either to complete or to explain unknown or less known aspects of the political and military events that took place in Romania forty years ago. The study of some local and foreign archives, of some recently published valuable books, of the memoirs of certain com-



batants, or political personalities involved in the events that took place in Romania, during the summer of 1944, made it possible for the authors to perfectly analyse the extremely vast military and strategic implications the August 23, 1944 act had on the end of World War II. The whole Romanian people's insurgence against fascism was one of the strongest blows dealt to Nazi Reich, which accelerated the disintegration and fall of the Hitler war machine, shortening the military operation with at least six months. Minutely and competently gathering the most suggestive evidence, comparing facts, making analogies, bringing forth doubtless proofs or putting forward possible hypothesis, the authors of this book made a solid body of theses and arguments shedding light on the strong influence exerted by Romania's changeover and her joining the war (with all her potential) on the side of the United Nations' coalition, during the last world conflagration. What was formerly qualified vaguely as "an extraordinary act", an "astonishing event", "a fatal blow dealt to the German Reich", incalculable "consequences" when referring to the military, economic and political upshots of the historic act of August 23, 1944, is finding now the proper qualification in this highly scientific historiographic survey. The chapter dealing with

the political consequences of the Romanian revolution of the summer of 1944 is very significant from this point of view, as it shows the influences the August revolution had on the political situation of some countries member of Hitler coalition like Hungary, Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, easing the withdrawal of some of them from the coalition or deepening the governmental crisis of others.

*200 Days Spared from World War II* ranks among the most valuable Romanian history books published during the last twenty years, as it definitely contributes to elucidating some very important historical events.

■ Colonel  
C. CAZANIȘTEANU

Lieutenant General Dr  
Ilie Ceaulescu,  
Colonel Dr  
Florian Tucă,  
Major Dr  
Mihail M. Ionescu,  
Captain  
Alesandru Duțu,

## ROMANIA AND THE GREAT VICTORY AUGUST 23, 1944- MAY 12, 1945

Military Publishing  
House, 1985,  
Bucharest, 312 p.

The volume brings to the fore the commitment of the advanced forces of the Romanian society — with the Romanian Communist Party in the vanguard — to the great battle for the advancement of the country on the road of progress, in defence of liberty, independence and national unity. A reading of



this book will reveal the opposition encountered in this country by fascism — an absurd political phenomenon aimed at enslaving peoples, at ethnic genocide, the stifling of freedom and democracy, aggression and diktat. Stress is laid on the causes leading to Romania's subjection by Nazi Germany, the programme and actions suggested by the Romanian Communist Party for saving the country from disaster and its joining the righteous fight waged by the front of the United Nations



within which the Soviet Union had made the most substantive contribution.

Ample room is devoted to Romania's entering the war against the Third Reich on August 23, 1944, a moment marked by the outbreak of the antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution of social and national liberation. That crucial moment for the country's victory expressed the whole people's act of will to be the master of its own destiny. The basic political documents issued by the authorized state and political bodies evidence Romania's resolve to commit itself arm in hand against Nazi Germany. "Whoever opposed our free decision which does not violate anybody's rights is a foe to our nation," showed the declaration of the Head of State which fully conveyed the standpoint

of the Romanian Communist Party. The highest political bodies of the nations declared for the assertion of state independence and sovereignty over the whole Romanian territory. Consequently, the armed move against the German troops begun in the afternoon of August 23, 1944 was a legitimate act coming at a time when Germany's defeat was not yet clearly outlined, when it still boasted a powerful military potential to continue the war. Capitalizing a rich—already known or unknown—material, the authors managed to establish most rigorously the area of deployment and the location of the Romanian and German troops in the territory under the administration of Romanian state bodies, as well as the ratio of forces, and the conclusions arrived at by the decision-makers of the Romanian Army. Pertinent analyses are made of: the strategic impact of Romania's entering the war on the military developments in Europe; the breaking up of the German defensive in the southern wing of the Soviet-German front; the downfall of the Balkan disposition; the maintenance by the Romanian troops of the battlefield in Transylvania and Banat; the tipping of the scales in favour of the United Nations coalition through Romania's joining the anti-Hitler war.

The war effort of the Romanian troops is measured exactly through the military structures of all types of arms—land, air, sea and special units. A synthetic annex presents most conclusively the unfolding of operations in time, areas and the settlements liberated. A picture of the enemy strength in the battles waged for the liberation of north-western Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and part of Austria illustrate the scope and significance of the tasks fulfilled by the big Romanian units independently or in cooperation with the big Soviet units.

The effectives committed to battle, the depth of the

disposition covered, the areas liberated as well as conclusions detached from the study of archives documents underscore the truth that Romania, in point of manpower and military effort, ranked fourth among the states which contributed to the defeat of Nazi Germany and the historic Victory of May 9, 1945.

Moreover, a presentation is made of the big economic effort made by Romania in the antifascist war; the commitment of all her industrial, agricultural potential and other economic branches and sub-branches to the war effort is also highlighted by the fact that during the battles military units of all types were secured the necessary armament, ammunition, food and equipment to be able to fulfill their missions.

The merit of the authors of this volume also lies in the ingenious solutions found for the cartographic illustration of certain ideas. The maps appended throw light on the development of the operational-strategical framework in Europe with Romania's joining the anti-Hitler war.

The volume *Romania and the Great Victory* is a publishing event fully meeting the imperatives of historical truth.

■ Colonel  
CONSTANTIN ZAMFIR

## THE ROMANIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY ON ROMANIA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The First World War is one of the pinnacles of the centuries-long struggle waged by the Romanians for justice, freedom and unity, deep-rooted in the memory and



hearts of the inhabitants of the Romanian lands. Great historians, politicians, military writers and journalists, many of them contemporary with the events, have written a rich and varied literature ever since — from official memoirs and histories to studies on various aspects of the first world conflagration, from selections of documents to press articles and brochures (their list alone makes up a whole book) — as, perhaps, no other historical moment has been surveyed.

We must point out, in the first place, that, on the whole, Romanian historiography that dealt with that turning-point, has the merit of underlying the historical grounds, the irrefutably just character of the war waged by the whole Romanian people for the liberation of the territories still under foreign occupation and its constitution in its own state entity, a war actually has become for all "the war for the national recompletion". Moreover, the pertinent analysis, the opinions stated on the progress and significance of events the lessons drawn, and the wonderful examples of abnegation, will and dedication spotlighted, impart to historiography outstanding educational scope, contributing to the strengthening of patriotic feelings, of national pride, to determining generations upon generations to place all their creative powers in the service of the lofty aspirations enlivening our people since the dawn of its history. Furthermore, the Romanians experience that evinced again the stamina and daringness of a people that had never given up its freedom and unity, not even when invaded by foreign armies, could be known and acknowledged worldwide for its symbolic value.

In the seven decades elapsed from the outbreak of the First World War, Romanian historiography on the 1914—1918 events has acquired new qualities and dimensions. It resulted into an

impressive file replete with information and enriched with every passing year, after 1945 in the main, with the gains of the searches in Romanian and foreign archives besides studies on the most varied aspects and fields related to the preparation and progress of the war. Among these, two works tackle the topic in its main traits and developments synthetically. First, we shall mention the most popular monography *Istoria războiului pentru întregirea României, 1916—1919* (The History of the War for Romania's Completion, 1916—1919), by Constantin Kirițescu, about which Professor Mihail Dragomirescu said that "everyone must have this book in his library". The book had two editions and abridged French, Polish and Serbian versions, and marked a major cultural event. Written with remarkable talent and based on a vast documentation, "the work — General Constantin Prezan, former Chief of Romanian General Headquarters, states — tallies with historical truth, and serves as a guide for the generations to come."

The second book, issued in 1979 *România în primul război mondial* (Romania in the First World War) is written by a team of researchers made of Colonel Dr. Victor Atanasie, Dr. Anastase Iordache, Dr. Mircea Iosa, Dr. Ion M. Oprea and Dr. Paul Oprescu. This is the first book that approaches synthetically and comprehensibly the events, the main developments and their implications from the standpoint of historical materialism. Therefore, the authors have used a vast array of information — mostly unpublished yet — that they submitted to a thorough critical examination, providing rigorously scientific evidence that Romania's fundamental goal spurring her going in the war was "the fulfilment of our national ideal, namely the completion of our unity". They placed Romania's situation against the general background of the people's struggle for national libera-

tion, and gave a reply as well to those driven by interests alien to science, who tried and are still trying to accredit the idea according to which Romania's participation in the war followed her plans of invasion and territorial annexation, pursued in fact by the great imperialist powers: "It would be a serious mistake — the work underlines — to consider that the righteousness, or more precisely, the grandeur of the progressive goal pursued by Romania in her participation in the WW1 could have been impaired by the imperialist character of the war. The more grounded and legitimate is the rejection of this mistake, as it was not only the Romanians who took advantage of the opportunities offered by the WW1 to answer their national demands, but this was done by the Serbians, Croates, Slovenes, Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Italians and French as well, as far as the latter had fought for the union of Alsace and Lorraine to the Motherland".

The work highlights, in keeping with historical reality, the role of the large popular masses — of the peasantry, workers, intelligentsia — of the socialist movement, and the stand of the leading political circles and personalities in Romania confronted with the imperative issues of the historical moment, emphasizing that the making of Great Union of 1918 was the historical work of the Romanian people which expressed democratically through its representatives the will to unite within the borders of one country, a right acknowledged and explicitly worded in the international documents of the time.

This work of reference in our historical literature is an accurate account written with the rigour of the scientist, and the elevated and well-balanced style of a distinguished author.

The works issued between 1913—1944, that attempted at conveying an overall picture of the events, appro-



ched mainly military aspects. They present the conditions of Romania's participation in the war on the side of the Entente Powers, the training of the army, the development of military operations with relevant conclusions and teachings as well as the heroism of Romanian soldiers and officers in the great battles of 1916—1917. We mention here only the most important, in chronological order: *Epopeea română. Războiul nostru pentru întregirea neamului (august 1916—aprilie 1918)* (The Romanian Epos. Our War for National Completion August 1916—April 1918) by General C. Găvănescu, issued in Iași 1918, Lieutenant Colonel Alexandru Ioanițiu — *Războiul României (1916—1918)* (Romania's War), two volumes, Bucharest, 1928, Lieutenant Colonel Radu Băldescu — *Războiul național (The National War)*, two volumes, Sibiu (1933—1934), General Ion Anastasiu — *Războiul pentru întregirea neamului. Studiu critic* (The War for National Completion. A Critical Survey) Bucharest, 1936, and General Gh. A. Dabija's work *Armata română în războiul mondial (1916—1918)* (The Romanian Army in the World War 1916—1918) four volumes, Bucharest, 1936—1937, a reference work unparalleled by any other similar study. Of great help for its sound and competent judgements on the development of operations and the training of the Romanian Army on Romania's entering the war is C. N. Herjeu's *Din învățămintele războaielor din 1913 și 1916—1918. Studii și critice militare* (From the Teachings of the Wars of 1913 and 1916—1918. Military Studies and Critical Surveys), two volumes, Bucharest, 1921.

Mircea Vulcănescu successfully compiled a synthetic survey of the Romanian people's policy and efforts to fulfill its national operations in his entry "*Războiul pentru reîntregirea României*" (The War for Romania's Re-completion) in the first volume

of *Romania's Encyclopaedia*, Bucharest, 1938, pp. 885—936.

A monumental work by its contents and scope, *România în războiul mondial 1916—1918* (Romania in the World War 1916—1918), of which four volumes were published plus four volumes of documents, has remained unfinished unfortunately. Written by the specialists at the Historical Department of the Romanian General Staff between 1934—1946, the work makes a minute presentation and analysis of the Romanian Army's campaign in 1916, with references to the main aspects of the relations with the French and Russian General Staff in the complex of the general evolution of military developments on the Eastern fronts and in the Balkans.

After 1965, under the impetus of the scientific thinking of President Nicolae Ceaușescu the Romanian historiography on the WW1 has known a considerable development, with remarkable successes in the investigation of new internal and foreign sources, and of probing certain social, economic, diplomatic and cultural aspects less studied until now. We shall mention, in chronological order, the following: *Armata română în campaniile din anii 1916—1917* (The Romanian Army in the Campaigns of 1916—1917), Military Publishing House, Bucharest, 1967, by Colonel I. Cupșa, *România în anii neutralității 1914—1916* (Romania in the Years of Neutrality 1914—1916), Scientific Publishing House, Bucharest, 1972, by C. Nuțu, *Relațiile româno-americane în perioada primului război mondial 1916—1920* (Romanian-American Relationships during the WW1. 1916—1920), Dacia Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 1975, by B. Rangheț, *Lupta poporului român împotriva cuceritorilor 1916—1918* (The Romanian People's Struggle against the Invaders 1916—1918), Military Publishing House, Bucharest, 1978, one of the first synthesis

dedicated to Romanian resistance by A. Deac and I. Toacă, *România și Conferința de pace de la Paris* (Romania at the Paris Peace Conference), Publishing House for Political Literature, Bucharest, 1984, by Viorica Moisuc, Ion Calafeteanu, a.s.o. We must mention also two important volumes of foreign documents published by the General Directorate of the State Archives, entitled *1918 la români, Mărturiile 1918* at the Romanians. Testimonies), Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1983, and the syntheses dedicated to the making of the Romanian unitary national-state: *Unirea Transilvaniei cu România. 1 Decembrie 1918* (Transylvania's Union with Romania. December 1, 1918) editors I. Popescu-Puțuri and A. Deac, third edition, Publishing House for Political Literature, Bucharest, 1978, *De la statul geto-dac la statul român unitar* (From the Geto-Dacian State to the Romanian Unitary State), Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1983, by M. Mușat and I. Ardeleanu, *Făurirea statului național unitar român* (The Making of the Unitary Romanian National-State), two volumes, Academy Publishing House of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Bucharest, 1983, by Ștefan Pascu. The first Romanian work on the First World War (*Primul război mondial 1914—1918*, Bucharest, 1979 by Dr. Mircea M. Popa) has recently come out of the press.

These praiseworthy enterprises, completed by scores of articles and studies that shed a new light on the documents of the time in the Romanian and foreign archives, are a real basis for a great synthetic work. We hope that, by the corroborated effort of the military and civil researchers under the competent guidance of the Romanian Commission of Military History, this work will be published in a near future.

■ DUMITRU PREDĂ



# INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF MILITARY HISTORY Nr. 60/1984

The prestigious publication *Revue internationale d'histoire mili aire* No 63 was issued to the end of 1984; it is a scientific periodical sponsored by the International Commission of Military History. This issue was edited by the Institute of Military History of Sofia and is the first ever published by Bulgarian historians since they joined the above-mentioned international forum. It is entirely written in Russian.

The twenty studies included deal with various aspects of modern and contemporary Bulgarian military history (the 19th—20th centuries), except for the first article which also refers to the more remote times (the 7th—14th centuries). Most studies published in this issue reveal the Bulgarian people's struggle for liberty, state independence and unity, during the national revival, the masses' revolutionary struggle against fascism, the Bulgarian Army's participation in the anti-Hitler war. Some articles mention the Romanian people's support given to the Bulgarian struggle of national liberation and sometimes remind the readers of the numerous Bulgarian emigrés in Romania in the 19th century, of the setting up of certain Bulgarian secret political societies and committees in Romanian territory and of the military cooperation between the two countries during WW II.

When carefully reading this volume, any objective reader is surprised with good reason. Accustomed to the previous issues of the review, published by other national commissions for military history, which comprised texts of high scientific value, written in the spirit of the respect for the historical truth and guided by the wish to place the deeds

of the past at the service of some noble aims of friendship, cooperation and neighbourhood among peoples, he who peruses this collection carefully and without preconceived ideas is bitterly disappointed.

Many of the Bulgarian military historians' texts contain glaringly false things, inaccurate information, obviously subjectivistic interpretations, deliberate omissions. If the somewhat exaggerated presentation of the historical role played by the Bulgarian people in the Balkan Peninsula and the ignoring and diminution of other peoples' contribution to the socio-political and cultural progress in this part of Europe can be overlooked more easily, we cannot stay indifferent to those assertions referring to Bulgaria's "historical rights" to some territories belonging now to the neighbouring countries, Romanian Dobrudja included.

The frequent complaints about the "wrongs" inflicted on the Bulgarian people by the neighbouring peoples in the modern and contemporary age of our common history are sometimes accompanied by broad hints to the necessity to continue efforts for the revision of the present state frontiers.

To illustrate, even partially, the unscientific, biased and even ill-intentioned outlook one can derive from the texts of the present volume, we shall describe a few of the ideas which, unfortunately, are very popular with contemporary Bulgarian historiography. Thus, the opening article "Bulgaria's 1,300 Years", written by Colonel Mladenov and Lieutenant-Colonel Petrov, states that, simultaneously with the development of capitalist relations, "the Bulgarian nation, the original culture in the main regions of the subjected Bulgarian State — Moesia (northern Bulgaria), Dobrudja, Thrace and Macedonia" came into being and were consolidated. As a matter of fact, the idea of Dobrudja's [territory] alleged belonging to Bulgaria at the

time of the Ottoman Empire is to be found elsewhere in this volume too. But it is known that, for almost five hundred years, from 1396 to 1878, there was no Bulgarian body-politic; the south-Danubian territory was a province within the Ottoman Empire, to which Dobrudja had belonged too since 1417, an ancestral Romanian land that had not yet been liberated from under the foreign domination.

Gratuitous statements, ungrounded on reliable documentary sources can also be found in the article signed by Colonel Vylkov, Doctor of History, and titled "The Bulgarian People's Participation in the Liberation Russian-Turkish War of 1877—1878." Almost completely ignoring the Romanian Army's contribution to Bulgaria's liberation from the Ottoman yoke, mentioning in passing only the "failure of the Russian-Romanian Offensive of Pleven", the author writes, in exchange, about "dozens of groups, details and detachments of volunteers, part of whom fought in the ranks of the allied Romanian Army." In his and other Bulgarian researchers' opinion, the number of Bulgarian volunteers — soldiers, officers, physicians — having taken part, in the ranks of the Romanian Army, in the battles of Grivitsa, Smyrdan, Lom, Oryahovo, etc. would amount to 2,800. The author says that 118 men were decorated for bravery, "some of them being bestowed high ranks and honours, becoming commanders of battalions and regiments," in the Romanian Army naturally. Unless possible discoveries are made, we want to make it clear that neither the Romanian documentary sources nor the Russian ones (archives, memoirs, monographs, studies, etc.) provide any information of the alleged existence of these 2,800 Bulgarian volunteers in the Romanian Army. Even if, let us say, the Romanian units attacking Pleven had also included military belonging to the Bulgarian minority living in Romania,



the way the question is expounded is incorrect. They could not possibly be "volunteers," but soldiers recruited in the Romanian Army in their capacity as citizens of the Romanian State.

The same distortions of the historical truth and undisguised references to the so-called "historical rights" of Bulgaria to some Romanian territories are also to be found in the article "The Bulgarian People's Struggle for Unity (1878-1918)" by Ivan Aleksandrov and Dimitar Gontsev. The authors say that along the centuries and especially in the course of the struggle during the national revival, for getting the independence of the Bulgarian Church, "the Bulgarian people established by itself the geographic and ethnic borders in the Balkan Peninsula — Moesia (with Dobrudja), Thrace and Macedonia — a territory of over 200,000 sq km, with a population of almost 6.5 million, accepted and recognized as Bulgarian without any objections, both by the neighbours and the other states of the world". Further, "proofs" are supplied in support of this false statement. One of them is the firman of March 12, 1870, by which Sultan Abdul-Aziz approved of the Bulgarian exarchate. This document actually meant the acceptance of the autonomy of the Bulgarian Church from the ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and the exertion of Metropolitan Antim's authority over the Orthodox Christians in the territories inhabited by Bulgarians. Dobrudja included, where, besides Romanians, there were Bulgarians and other nationalities. Therefore, the firman of 1870 did not mean at all the recognition by the Sultan of a Bulgarian state within the borders of the Ottoman Empire, as the authors of the article try to convince readers.

The Bulgarian historians' attempts at assimilating the ecclesiastical authority with the state one, as one can

infer both from the text and the maps appended to this article (which include Dobrudja, Macedonia, northern Greece, etc. in the alleged Bulgarian "state" of 1870) is completed by the erroneous statement according to which the Peace Treaty of San Stefano (March 1878) "integrated the Bulgarian State almost into the same geographic and ethnic borders established by the firman of the Sultan of 1870."

This act helped "to achieve almost all national programmes and ideals of the militants for the Bulgarian national revival."

By further reference to the Treaty of Berlin (1878), which, among other things, stipulated that the Morava zone should go to Serbia and Dobrudja to Romania, the authors of the article unequivocally declare: "By these unfair decisions, the diplomacy of the Western Powers made the Bulgarian people choose one single straight way — the struggle for the liberation of the subdued Bulgarian territories and national unification." What are we Romanians to understand from what our Bulgarian colleagues said?

But what are we to gather from the sentence in which, speaking of the Bulgarian Army's bravery in WW I, the authors write that, in those years, "with the exception of Macedonia and Dobrudja, the Bulgarian troops also penetrated some foreign territories from geographic and ethnic point of view"? The conclusion of the article is quite clear: "To say that Bulgaria's participation in the war of alliance [the Balkan War] and WW I was of a plundering, unjust character and that in this way she struggled for domination in the Balkans would mean declaring that Macedonia and Dobrudja, lands for which she bitterly fought, are not Bulgarian and have a foreign ethnic composition." This would mean, in the Bulgarian authors' mind, "nihilism and taking the stand of antihistoricism."

One last remark on the seven maps at the end of the review. On all of them, those referring to the 1878-1918 period included, the Romanian city of Constanța is marked under the Turkish name of Kiustendja. How might one interpret the mentioning on maps drawn at present of a Romanian city which is so well-known not only in the Balkans, in Europe, but also in the whole world?

Taking into account the world circulation of this review, which is meant not only to exchange information in the field of military history, but also to contribute to the strengthening of the friendship among scientists everywhere, and not only among them, we regret not being able to welcome with a sincere "bravo," as we would have liked to, this first presence of Bulgarian military historians in the joint endeavour to issue this famous international publication.

\*

## "HISTORIA"

### against the truths of history

In recent times historians of the Hungarian People's Republic tackle the question of the Romanian-Hungarian political-military relationships at the end of WWI, describing the nature of these relationships in a distorted and tendentious manner. The retrospect of the past is often marred by the misrepresentation of facts, by the lack of objectivity and the ungrounded assessments, by deliberately ignoring genuine historical documents. As a rule, the Romanian State at that time is considered the only one



to be blamed for the tension having generated the military conflict of 1919 and the Romanian Army is seriously charged for its behaviour during the conflict.

Two years ago *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, a Hungarian periodical written in English, reported on the plunderings and terror exerted by the Romanian Army in Hungary, on the abuses perpetrated by the Romanian invaders. More recently, in issue No. 5—6/1984 of the Hungarian publication *Historia*, a polemic article on a study, signed by the Romanian historians Mircea Muşat and Florian Tănăsescu and published in *Anale de istorie*, mentions the "incidents of a terrorist nature" that accompanied the Romanian Army's entering Hungary in 1919, the interference of the Romanian troops in that country's political life, the "execution of the Hungarian political prisoners and red Magyar soldiers" etc. In the opinion of Kénde János and Sipós Peter, the authors of the article, the Romanian authorities' attempts at recovering a small part at least of the goods pillaged by the Austro-Hungarian troops, together with the German ones, during the two-year occupation, from Oltenia, Muntenia and Dobrudja (1916—1918), were "concerns for spoils of war," which allegedly brought about the worsening of Hungary's economic situation. Is it really so?

Without entering into details, we remind our readers again that the outbreak of the Romanian-Hungarian military conflict of 1919 was triggered by the Budapest Government's hostile attitude to the union of Transylvania to Romania, decided upon at Alba Iulia on December 1, 1918, as an expression of the Romanian nation's unanimous will. The refusal to recognize the act of the Great Union was followed by intense military preparations and the attempt of the Army to occupy Transylvania, a part of the Romanian State. As this danger threa-

tened the integrity of the national territory, the retort could be but of a military character too. This is what generated the bitter confrontations in the area of the Apuseni Mountains (April 1919) and on the Tisa (July 1919).

Crushing the last offensive of the Hungarian troops, the Romanian Army vigorously chased the enemy and, on August 4, 1919, entered the capital of Hungary. The next day General Mărdărescu, the commander of the Romanian troops operating in that zone, announced — by a proclamation — the Budapest population that: "1. The Romanian Army does not wage war against the inhabitants, but against the troops that had attacked it; 2. The Romanian soldier guarantees the citizens' quiet, property and life." It is to be noted that the proclamation asked the population to keep order and "observe the country's laws," meaning that the Romanian troops did not intend to impose other laws or interfere in the political life of the defeated country.

The purely military aims of the Romanian actions in Hungary and the Romanian Army's non-interference in that country's domestic political life, the wish to re-establish as soon as possible the normal relations of good neighbourhood among the Romanian and Hungarian States were often emphasized by the Romanian authorities operating in Hungary. Thus, the proclamation of August 10, 1919 mentioned: "The commander of the troops of Transylvania informed that the Romanian military authorities did not and would not interfere in Hungary's domestic questions... Romania's wish is that, once deciding, in agreement with the others, on all questions resulting from the present war, to resume normal peaceful relations with the neighbouring Hungarian people, from whom she asks loyal conduct only and the fulfilment of the pledges it had taken. Under these circumstances we are ready to help and faci-

litate as much as possible the improvement of the Hungarian people's economic situation." Further, informing that in one single day the Romanian Military Command placed at the population's disposal over 70,000 rations of bread of 400 grams each, the proclamation ran as follows: Any spirit of revenge is alien to "the Romanian Army, which started the military action after it had been provoked by the enemy army on the Tisza." Ten days later General Mărdărescu announced by a new proclamation: "With a view to helping the city dwellers [the command] organized trains with foodstuffs and let all warships navigate on the Danube to fetch foodstuffs to the city. The command wants to declare once again that the political life and the press of Budapest are completely free and does not censor domestic questions."

The support given by the Romanian operative troops to the Hungarian population, which was terribly suffering in those days because of famine and the disorganization of economic and social life, was acknowledged by the Hungarian authorities and appreciated for the Romanians' humane attitude under those hard circumstances. On August 30, 1919, the Mayor of Budapest, Dr. Bódy Theodor, wrote to Lieutenant-Colonel D. Poenaru, commander of the 5th Cavalry Regiment, whose officers distributed food for the poor children in Hungary's capital: "We are extremely thankful to you for your kindness to the children in the city as, in these hard times, the poor population of the capital suffers a lot and we, the authorities, in spite of our endeavour, are not able to help it at all. Even from this point of view we are for ever grateful to you and to the other officers."

Reading the Hungarian press of those campaign days, we can picture the real conduct of the Romanian Army. Here are a few excerpts from the



newspapers of the time. On September 27, 1919, the *Magyar Pólgár* newspaper wrote: "The village council of Rakospálotá thanks again [our emphasis] the Romanian 7th Division for its daily distributing food free of charge to 250 poor children of this village and to the 15 members of the national guard. By this generous act of charity the serious problem of nourishment becomes easier." On October 1, 1919, the *Kereszteni Szocialismus* newspaper noted: "We must gratefully remember neighbouring Romania, whose Army gave us the first effective aid." The *Déli Expressz* gazette, of October 2, rendered the declaration of Erkely Karoly, Minister of Food Supply. Here is an excerpt: "To supply the capital with the necessary potatoes, I contacted the Romanian Military Command, where, as is to be seen, I found the greatest kindness and support. The Romanian command ensured the transport of the 10,000 waggons of potatoes, a quantity entirely meeting the necessities of Budapest... The population of the capital is deeply grateful to the Romanian Command for this new kindness." The same day another Budapest newspaper, *Nemzeti Ujság*, published an article titled "The Sensational Changeover in the Question of Nourishment," which said: "At the most critical moments, with praiseworthy ardour and noble humanism, the Romanian Military Command hastened to help the capital inhabitants who were starving." On October 5, 1919, the *Az Ujság* newspaper appreciated: "Romanian kindness gives us potatoes, English kindness helps us to get coal for thrashing and grinding. Thank them and thank God!" *Neues Politisches Volksblatt*, the Hungarian publication written in German, mentioned on October 11, 1919: "We say it once again: the Romanian Command is concerned about all branches of administration. Romanians not only keep perfect order, but they

also are concerned for and support the poor. For a few days Romanian soldiers have been giving hot meals to the poor children of Budapest." The article was accompanied by a photograph showing Romanian soldiers giving out food in a street of the Hungarian capital. On October 28, 1919, the *Az Est* gazette reported: "We must admit that the Romanians and the Entente missions here do their best and have greatly helped us. We are hopeful to buy flour and meat from Romania later." The hopes were to be confirmed in a few days. On November 4, 1919, the high commissar of the Romanian Government in Budapest, Constantin Diamandi, informed the Hungarian Government that, for the Hungarian population's food, the transport of 1,000 waggons of wheat from Romania had begun.

Even this brief survey of the comments of the Hungarian press, which was free to express its opinions the more so as the Military Interallied Commission was in Budapest at the time, generates a natural question: where are the "abuses, plunderings and terror" perpetrated by the Romanian operative army the present-day Hungarian historians write about? When studying the past, how can they ignore the declarations and assessments of their own forerunners and not only theirs? Even the members of the above-mentioned Military Interallied Commission, which

were not in the least favourably inclined to Romania, had to admit the more than correct attitude of the Romanian operative troops. On November 12, 1919, the Italian General Grazziani wrote to the Romanian High Command referring to the distribution of food to the Budapest population: "The Commission can but hail this humanitarian deed."

A thorough research into the documents of that time would make it possible to reconsider those opinions expressed in certain present Hungarian writings concerning the alleged role played by Romania in the setting up a reactionary political régime in Hungary. It is known that in 1919 the conflict between the Hungarian domestic political forces reached its acme. The extreme left, represented by Bela Kuhn, was overthrown as it had not managed to consolidate the political position it had come to and had turned out to be unable to put an end to the internal anarchy and to re-establish the country's economic situation. Another cause was the complete failure of the military campaign into which it had ventured. The extreme right made efforts to come to rule the

General Gh. D. Mărdărescu, commander of the Romanian troops cordially welcomed by the Hungarian notabilities in locality of Nyiregyháza.







Romanian troops distributing aliments to the poor peoples in Budapest.

State whereas the Military Interallied Commission did its utmost to create a democratic coalition government.

On September 30, 1919, a delegation of the Hungarian Social-Democratic Party, made of the socialist leaders Gáramy and Payer, went to the high commissar of the Romanian Government to thank him for the permission to hold public meetings in Budapest and the surroundings. "During a conversation," reported C. Diamandi in a telegram to the Prime Minister of Bucharest, "they expressed their fear that, if our troops left the capital suddenly, the white guard and the reactionary elements might take to excesses and social persecutions. In their opinion, the hasty departure of our troops... would be unfavourable to Romania if we left behind an unhealthy domestic political situation and a dangerous instability."

Many documents released in those days by the Romanian authorities expressed Romania's wish to shorten the duration of their presence in Budapest and to withdraw immediately the troops from Hungary, mentioning that the coming winter "would make it even more difficult to feed and warm the troops, thus rendering the situation of

the population more difficult." On November 12, 1919, General Mărdărescu signed the last proclamation running as follows: "The Romanian Army retreats; Budapest will be evacuated. Leaving Hungary's capital, Romania insists on saying once again that after the attack on the Tisa, which motivated her military action, she was guided only by self-defence and military requirements. Any thought of oppression or revenge was alien to her. The Romanian Army tried to make the presence of the troops in Hungary as easy to bear as possible and no effort was spared to sooth the afflicted population... Once again the Romanian Army wants to state that it has always considered the domestic affairs of Hungary as belonging only to the Hungarian people, to which it wishes peace again without any political, social or religious persecutions."

The Romanians' non-interference in Hungary's domestic political life is confirmed by other foreign sources too. We shall present one of them only. On December 19, 1919, the head of the Romanian Legation in London reported the following things to the Prime Minister of Bucharest by a radiogram: "During the

meeting of [December] 13 [Britain's] Prime Minister, being interpellated by Colonel Hoare in connection with Romania's relations to the Allies, answered: Romania signed the treaty and the Romanian Government takes the advice of the Supreme Council and withdraws its troops from Hungary, where Sir George Clerk's intervention succeeded in setting up a government of the Hungarian people's representatives." Therefore, it was Sir George Clerk's intervention, Britain's special envoy to Budapest, and not the Romanian occupation army that brought a coalition government to rule Hungary. In the spring of 1920, a few months after the Romanian Army's withdrawal from Hungary, Admiral Miklós Horthy came to power. He had become regent of Hungary and, for more than twenty years, he was to promote a fascist and revanchist policy.

These were the historical facts, confirmed by archival documents whose objectivity cannot be doubted. The deliberate distortion or falsification of the truth about the past does not serve history and the natural relationship between the neighbouring friendly peoples. Sooner or later this truth has to be said and acknowledged as such.

✱ Colonel Dr  
VASILE ALEXANDRESCU

Note: The fragments that were quoted were taken from the documents in the Archives of the Ministry of National Defence and the Archives of Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



# The European size

(continued from 20 page)

the liberation struggle of the peoples in the Balkans. Representatives of the Greek culture praised him in poems and saw him as a possible restorer of the Byzantine glory. The Romanian countries — Walachia, Transylvania and Moldavia — united under his leadership, were an important factor of the European alliance joining the German Empire, Papacy and certain Italian states, an alliance which, just as that which had led to the famous victory won at Lepanto (1571), spelled the beginning of a change in the balance of power between the Ottoman Porte and the European states, in favour of the latter. Michael the Brave anticipated not only the rewinning of Romania's independence in 1877 but also the long struggle for the liberation and setting up of national states by the Balkan peoples during 1804—1913.

It is not vainglory that prompts the Romanian history to speak about the European dimensions of the deeds of its people, but the desire to reestablish historical truth, often blurred or

ignored by other historiographies. While it recognizes the merits of every people in the great struggle for the defence of European civilization, and culture, it firmly asserts that the Romanian people's significant contribution to that struggle and, generally to the progress of society on the Continent and throughout the world should also be recognized.

1. N. Iorga, *Istoria Românilor* (The History of the Romanians), Vol. III, București, 1937, p. 326: "So, from the great power of Murad and Bayazid, they reached the stage when Mircea appointed a sultan...". C. C. Giurescu, *Istoria Românilor* (The History of the Romanians), second edition, Vol. I, București, 1938, p. 468; "The Walachian ruled, in fact, the entire European Orient at that time".
2. Arhiv Marx i Engelsa, Vol. VI, Moscow, 1939, p. 198.
3. Ioan Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan cel Mare* (Documents on Stephen the Great), Vol. II, București, 1913, pp. 330—336 and 370—378.
4. \* Chilia and Cetatea Albă.
5. Ioan Bogdan, *op. cit.*, p. 350.
6. Ibidem, pp. 318—319; Uzun Hassan, also called Hassan Bey (1467—1478), third Persian emir of the Turkoman dynasty Ak Kojunlu ("white sheep" — after an emblem on the banner). Cf. Mas-Latrie, *Trésor de Chronologie*, Paris, 1889.
7. Ioan Bogdan, *op. cit.*, pp. 383—403 and 409—452.

## Mărăști, Mărășești, Oituz

(continued from 43 page)

defended by only 4 Romanian divisions. It can be said that through its duration, intensity and scope the battle of Mărășești was one of the amplest and most terrible clashes of the First World War.

On the spot of gory fights waged by the Romanian people an impressive mausoleum was erected "to the glory of the nation's heroes."

As an acknowledgement of the role held in the summer of 1917 by the battles on the Romanian front for the operations on the whole European theatre of war, of the sacrifices, and Romania's contribution to the victory of the Entente powers, in 1920 France sent one of its most brilliant military commanders, Marshal Joseph Joffre, to bestow the high order "The War Cross" on the heroic town of Mărășești.

Oituz. On July 26, 1917, while the desperate attacks by the troops of the German 9th Army were stopped or repulsed in the Siret Valley, a gory battle began in the Oituz pass, held almost concomitantly with the Mărășești one. This was to lead to the final crumbling of the famous plan devised by the German command to pierce the front from southern Moldavia and get Romania out of the war. Six infantry divisions, two cavalry and a mountains corps from the Austrian-Hungarian 1st Army, supported by more than 200 artillery guns set out to the positions defended by the big units of the right wing of the Romanian 2nd Army. Artillery preparation was extremely violent. Thousands of shells ploughed the land, ravaged the trenches, and spread death amid the defenders. The enemy forces pressed forward trying to attain the Trotuș Valley. The resistance of the Romanian troops, the counter-

attacks mounted fiercely gradually crushed the offensive capacity of the enemy forces at the Coșna (height 789), Cireșoaia, Ungureanu (height 773) positions, as well as northern and southern points maintaining penetration into the Oituz Valley. To brace up the hard-hit infantry divisions General Alexandru Averescu, Commander of the Romanian 2nd Army, always present in the thick of the operations, threw into battle on the move the 1st Cavalry Division handed over by the Romanians High Command. Alongside the cavalry, a mountain corps battalion, arrived in forced march from Piatra Neamț, and a frontier guards brigade fought valiantly. Bayonet counter-attacks by the Romanian soldiers in cooperation with some battalions of the Russian 2nd Division on the right wing stopped the advance of the enemy and regained the positions lost in the previous battles. Archive documents note that on the Cireșoaia Hill, the Austrian-Hungarian 70th Infantry Division was routed and lost more than 1,500 men.

A first drive to pierce the Romanian front had been foiled after several days of gory fights. On August 6, after regroupings and reinforcement, the enemy divisions resumed attacks on Oituz. They could not overrun the Romanian troops and the minutely-planned offensive, furiously carried out, had to cease. The same to what happened at Mărășești. The heroic resistance of the soldiers in the Romanian 2nd Army locked for ever the Oituz pass.

The victorious defence operation of Oituz, together with the Mărăști and Mărășești successes, were highly significant moments in the Romanian people's fight for the safeguarding of its national existence, for the accomplishment of state unity, a century-old dream, come true on December 1, 1918, through the will of the whole nation.



# Great army commanders

(continued from 75 page)

by some 50,000 Ottoman troops and against which the Russian forces had launched two unsuccessful attacks. Thanks to the tactics employed, in whose elaboration General Cerchez also played a role, the Ottoman forces capitulated on 28 November 1877, an event to which the troops under his command also contributed; in fact, according to historical tradition, it is said that Osman Pasha, the commander of the Ottoman garrison in Plevna, came to General Cerchez stating that he surrendered *"in the hands of the young and brave Romanian Army."* Included with the 2nd Infantry Division in the West Corps, he took part in the liquidation of the last Ottoman resistances at Belogradchik and Vidin (December 1877—January 1878). General Cerchez was one of the commanding officers having great merits in the military successes won by the Romanian and Russian forces in the Balkan operation theatre during the Romanian-Russian—Turkish War of 1877—1878.

GENERAL EREMIA GRIGORESCU (born 28 November 1863, Tîrgu Bujor — died 21 July 1919, Bucharest). A graduate from the Officers' School (1884) and from the School of Artillery and Engineering of Bucharest (1886). Attaining the rank of Brigadier General in 1915, he was quickly promoted general in command of a division (1917) and then general in command of an Army Corps (1918). He was successively in command of the 3rd Artillery Brigade (1906), of the School of Artillery and Engineering of Bucharest (1907), of the 14th and 15th Infantry Divisions (1915—1916), of the "Oituz-Vrancea Group" (1916—1917), of the IV and VI Army Corps and of the First Army (1917), inspector general of the Army (1918),

War Minister (1918). On Romania's joining the First World War (1916), he was in command of the 15th Infantry Division on the Dobruja front. (August—September). Urgently transferred, at the command of the same division on the Carpathian front, he took part in the first battle of Oituz (11—17 October 1916), preventing the forces of the Central Powers to penetrate South Moldavia. For the tenacity with which it defended itself — under the catchword *"No Way Through"* — the great unit under the command of General Grigorescu was known as the *Iron Division*. From December 1916 to January 1917, at the head of the *Oituz—Vrancea Group* (two Romanian Infantry Divisions, one Russian Infantry Division, one Romanian Cavalry Brigade and one mixed Romanian Brigade) he put up a heroic resistance to the attacks of *"von Gerock"* Group. He won the laurels of immortality in the battle of Mărășești (6—19 August 1917), when the troops under his command rejected the insistent attacks of the *"von Mackensen"* Group of Armies preventing the enemies from occupying Moldavia and advancing to the South of Russia. In 1917 Mărășești is the only important victory obtained by the allies on the Eastern Front. General von Morgen, the commander of the German I Reserve Corps wrote in his memoirs: *"the battles of August (of Mărășești — ed. n.) proved that the Romanians had become a strong enemy. They were fighting better, they were led more skilfully and, especially artillery and infantry cooperated more coordinately"*. The victories of the Romanian Army in World War I stem, therefore, from the outstanding qualities of the command corps, lively illustrated by General Eremia Grigorescu.

DIVISION GENERAL MIHAIL GHEORGHE (born 13 March 1887, Brăila — died 31 January 1982, Sinaia). Division General. He pursued military studies in Romania,

successively graduating Military's Sons School of (1905), the School of Infantry Officers of Bucharest (1906) and the Superior War School of Bucharest (1921) becoming an officer holding a college certificate. He held important posts such as chief of staff of the 10th Infantry Division and 1st Mountain Corps Division, commander of the 11 Mountain Corps, the Special Infantry School of the 1st Mountain Corps Brigade, chief of the General Staff, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers. He participated in World War and was wounded in the Battle of Mărășești (6—August, 1917), the biggest battle of the Romanian front in which the German military forces suffered a serious defeat. In his capacity of Chief of the General Staff during the antifascist and anti-imperialist revolution of 1940 and national liberation of August 1944 — prepared, organized and led by the Romanian Communist Party — he led during the intervention the operations of Romanian troops for mopping up the German resistance in Bucharest and in the West of the Romanian territory over 23—31 August 1944. At the same time, he coordinated the operations for covering the national front and the temporary demarcation line in north-western Romania, arbitrarily fixed under the fascist Vienna Dictat of 30 August 1940. During the same interval of time, masterminded the mopping out of the operations of the liberation of the Romanian land of the North-Western Transylvania from Hitler's Horthy occupation. An officer of high professional competence and organizational capacity, General Mihail distinguished himself during the heavy battles waged in Romania in August—September 1944, that directly influenced the course of military operations and tipped the scales in favour of the United Nations coalition against the Axis. The decisive stage of the last phase of World War II.



## COVER I:

In the battle at Mărășești the Romanian troops fought with utmost valiancy thus impeding the enemy to seize on Moldavia and ensuring Romania's national being ("1917. The attack at Mărășești". Reproduction by a fresco by D. Stoica).

## COVER IV:

(up) The entrance of Michael the Brave in Alba Iulia — symbol of the first political union of Walachia, Transylvania and Moldavia 1599–1601. (Painting by Doru Rotaru).

The Grand National Assembly in Alba Iulia — December 1, 1918 when Transylvania's Union to Romania was decided thus having been accomplished a century-old desideratum of the Romanian people (contemporary photo).

L'indépendance de la patrie — idéal sacré du peuple roumain ● L'unité nationale — suprême valeur de l'histoire des Roumains ● Le peuple roumain — deux millénaires d'existence historique dans l'espace carpatodanubien-pontique ● La place et le rôle des Roumains dans l'histoire universelle ● La dimension européenne de la lutte du peuple roumain pour l'indépendance au cours du Moyen-Âge ● „Le drapeau... c'est l'histoire toute entière de la Roumanie” ● La neutralité de la Roumanie (1914–1916), une option historique ● „Passez, bataillons roumains, les Carpates” ● Combats livrés dans les défilés des Carpates (septembre-octobre 1916) ● La Roumanie dans la première guerre mondiale — repères chronologiques ● Le peuple tout entier dans le combat mené pour l'anéantissement et le bannissement des envahisseurs (1916–1918) ● 1917: Mărăști, Mărășești, Oituz — trois mémorables combats des Roumains pendant la première guerre mondiale ● La Roumanie et l'Entente (1916–1918) ● L'effort militaire et matériel roumain dans la première guerre mondiale ● Un seul but, une seule volonté — la lutte menée par les Roumains de l'étranger pour l'édification de l'Etat national unitaire ● 1er Décembre 1918 — „un jour pour tous les siècles” ● La grande union des Roumains de 1918 — échos internationaux ● Contre le fascisme, contre le révisionnisme, pour la défense de l'intégrité des frontières naturelles de la Roumanie ● La révolution de libération sociale et nationale, antifasciste et antiimperialiste d'Août 1944 — un acte de la dignité nationale ● L'effort militaire et économique roumain dans la défaite du III-ème Reich ● Des vérités fondamentales de l'histoire nationale. L'armée chez les Roumains: 2000 ans de combats pour la défense de la terre des ancêtres, de la liberté et de l'indépendance du peuple ● Grands chefs militaires ● La mémoire des documents ● Les monuments du combat ● Le livre et la revue d'histoire

Независимость Родины — нерушимый идеал румынского народа ● Национальное единство — высшая ценность румынов ● Румынскому народу — два тысячелетия истории в карпатах — дунавском — черноморском пространстве ● Место и роль румынов в универсальной истории ● Европейский размер борьбы румынского народа за независимость в средневековом периоде ● Флаг — это целая история Румынии ● Нейтралитет Румынии (1914–1916 гг.) — исторический выбор ● Переходите, румынские батальоны, через Карпаты! ● Сражения для карпатских перевалов ● Румыния в первой мировой войне ● Весь народ в бою для поражения и устранения захватчиков (1916–1918 гг.) ● Мэрэшть, Мэрэшешть и Ойтуз — три из знаменитых сражений румынов в первой мировой войне ● Румыния и Антанта (1916–1918) ● Военное и материальное усилие Румынии в первой мировой войне ● Единая цель, единая воля — борьба румынов, находящиеся за границу для создания единого национального государства ● 1-ое декабря 1918 г. «день за веков» ● Большое соединение румынов в 1918 г. Международные отклики ● Против фашизма и ревизионизма, за защиту целостности границ Румынии ● Антифашистская и антиимпериалистическая революция социального и национального освобождения 23-го Августа 1944 г. — акт национального достоинства ● Военный и экономический вклад Румынии в поражение III-его Рейха ● Коренные правды национальной истории. Румынское войско у румын — 2000 лет сражений за защиту родной земли, свободы и независимости народа ● Достойные военачальники ● Памятники борьбы ● Историческая книга и исторический журнал

Die Unabhängigkeit des Landes — heiliges Ideal des rumänischen Volkes ● Die nationale Einheit — höchstes Bestreben der Geschichte Rumäniens ● Das rumänische Volk — zwei Jahrtausende des historischen Bestehens im Karpaten-Donau-Pontischen ● Die Bedeutung und die Rolle der Rumänen in der Weltgeschichte ● Die europäischen Ausmasse des Kampfes des rumänischen Volkes für Unabhängigkeit im Mittelalter ● Die Flagge... ist die ganze Geschichte Rumäniens ● Die Neutralität Rumäniens (1914–1916) — eine historische Wahl ● Rumänische Bataillons, fährt über die Karpaten ● Die Schlachten an den Karpaten-Pässen (September — Oktober 1916) ● Rumänien im Ersten Weltkrieg — chronologische Anhaltspunkte ● Das ganze Volk im Kampf für die Besiegung und Vertreibung der Eroberer ● 1917. Mărăști, Mărășești, Oituz — drei denkwürdige Schlachten der Rumänen im Ersten Weltkrieg ● Rumänien und die Entente (1916–1918) ● Militärische und materielle Bestrebungen Rumäniens im Ersten Weltkrieg ● Ein einziges Ziel, ein einziger Wille — der Kampf der Rumänen aus dem Ausland für die Errichtung des einheitlichen Nationalstaates ● 1. Dezember 1918 — „ein Tag für die Ewigkeit“ ● Die grosse Vereinigung der Rumänen von 1918 — internationaler Nachhall ● Gegen den Faschismus, Revisionismus, für die Verteidigung der Integrität der natürlichen Grenzen Rumäniens ● Die antifaschistische und antiimperialistische Revolution der sozialen und nationalen Befreiung von August 1944 — Akt der nationalen Würde ● Die rumänischen und ökonomischen Beiträge zu der Niederlage des III. Reiches ● Grundlegende Wahrheiten der nationalen Geschichte. Das Heer in der Auffassung der Rumänen: 2000 Jahre Kämpfe für die Verteidigung des uralten Bodens, der Unabhängigkeit und der Freiheit des Volkes ● Grosse Befehlshaber ● Die Denkmäler des Kampfes ● Das historische Buch und die historische Zeitschrift





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