



THE ENTIRE PEOPLE STRUGGLE



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THE FIRST WORLD WAR TROUBLES WORLD PEACE

Prof. GHEORGHE PLATON, D. Hist.

The 19th century — the century of nationalities — rounded-off the legacy of the great Age of Enlightenment on a political, scientific and cultural plane. Nation-states were set up and developed, technical progress took huge and quick strides, changing the face of Europe and the world; yet, the bourgeoisie concentrated opulence and welfare in the hands of a small part of mankind, with most of the humankind confined to a state of moral and material poverty, under the yoke of national oppression. The contradictions between wealth and misery, progress and ignorance, liberty and servitude were running deeper in the Dual Monarchy and Tsarist Russia, as well as in the colonial empires, where pent-up social and political tension heightened the potential danger of revolutionary uprisings.

Indeed, as an authority on world history pointed out, the *Proud Tower*, erected and founded on the age's progress and civilization, was a glittering edifice built on magnificence and passion, wealth and beauty; however, murky dens were concealed in its structure¹. The old aristocracy was on the decline, while the new class of upstarts vested little interest in the former's professed code of honour, yet enthusiastically adopted its vices and imitated its arrogance. Most of the ideals that had uplifted the generations of the great revolutions of 1789 and 1848 had become no more than a blurred, almost mortifying, memory. "Nations and empires, bedecked with princes and potentates, majestically soared from

everywhere, covered with the treasures hoarded during the long period of peace", W. Churchill wrote in his book titled *The World Crisis*. "Everything seemed tightly fitted into a huge construction. The decline of the old world was a fascinating sight to watch."²

The sinking of the *Titanic*, a paragon of the time's naval engineering — during her maiden voyage — came as an omen. The proud ship was engulfed by the ocean waves as the brass band played its last tune in the glittering lounge on the first-class deck. While a large number of the first-class passengers saved their lives by fleeing the scene in half-empty lifeboats, the children travelling third class, with their parents, were lost to the waves — as no more lifeboats were left —, to drown with the sinking ship.³

Europe and the world had lived a century of relative peace. True, there were still other wars after the Vienna Peace Congress; yet, they were isolated and confined to limited areas; they did not shatter the consensus based on legitimacy. The tacit observance of the big powers' allegedly legitimate interests constantly removed the threat of a general confrontation.⁴ The way in which that consensus operated was clearly outlined, for instance, at the Berlin Peace Congress (1878). Conflicts were always avoided through prompt intervention and negotiations. As far as the Balkans were concerned, Bismarck had stated, as early as 1878, that the realities there were not

even worth the bones of an old Pomeranian grenadier.⁵ Yet, in 1914, the gunshots fired in Sarajevo were enough reason to cause the outbreak of a war that turned the world upside down.

"All of a sudden, the big states started to mutually trade declarations of war, showing such a complacency and aloofness as if they were exchanging shallow courtesies. The peoples and states rush one upon the other; they all draw out their swords, load their cannons, they all appeal to the powers of destruction, as though in a hurry to quickly dismantle the whole edifice which had taken long centuries of labour to raise", A. D. Xenopol pointed out⁶. After Austria-Hungary declared war to Serbia, on July 28, 1914, there was an outpouring of similar declarations. In the "tragic week" that followed, (July 28—August 4), the other big powers on the two sides also entered the conflict. By the end of August, the conflict had turned into a world war, a maelstrom that engulfed 28 countries with a total population of one and a half billion.

It might well be that, in August 1914, stunned by the blow dealt by the crisis, the peoples and their leaders had the feeling — legitimately or not — that they entered the war to safeguard their rights, for their honour and security; the annexationist drives did not emerge in the weeks that preceded the declaration of war, nor in the following weeks; they emerged later on."⁸ The socialists were the only ones to sound the alarm from the very beginning. So, for instance, "România muncitoare", the Romanian socialists' mouthpiece, pointed out that that madness — "the greatest and most preposterous of all the bellicose follies that have been inflicted on mankind so far... is the offshot of the capitalist imperialism of the anarchic and intrinsically predatory regime. The frenzy of territorial conquests, economic expansion, of the colonial policy, of the competition between the capitalists in each country has led to arming the

peoples to the teeth, to sowing discord among them... to group alliances... *Today's war is the explosion of that policy of tension and competition.*"⁹

At the end of the 19th century and in the first decades of the 20th century, radical changes were wrought in the world that had entered the stage of monopolistic imperialism. The momentous growth of industrial production and the tremendous accumulation of capital, the development of monopolistic capitalism were matched by a fierce competition for the penetration of new investment and raw materials markets. The foundations of the colonial empires were laid, in an atmosphere of high political tension, through many devastating wars, against the background of recurrent, virulent crises (1900, 1907, a.o.). In the lifetime of one generation, the British empire extended its boundaries by 4,754,000 sq. miles, and its population grew by 88 million. In 1900, the British Crown colonies and dominions stretched on 13,142,708 sq. miles, with a population of 366,793,919, whereas the metropolis proper (the British isles) had an area of 120,000 sq. miles and a population of only 44 million. Over 1880—1895, the French overseas territories expanded from one million, to 9.5 million sq. km., with the population growing from five to fifty million. It took just 15 years to Germany — a late-comer to the imperialist banquet, after 1884. — to carve its own share, leaner though it was, of colonies, with an area of one million sq. km. and a population of 14 million, while, on the eve of the war, Tsarist Russia boasted among its possessions territories sprawling over 17.7 million sq. km., with a population of 33.2 million. The imperial annexations were more than three times as large as Russia's territory.

The conflicts between the powers had become so frequent, the contradictions so complex and their points of interference so numerous that it was virtually quite impossible to draw a line and separate the various groups and sides into two camps. The logic underlying the two systems of alliances that emerged at the dawn of the century was linked with the unequal development of the big powers, as well as with the rivalry deriving from that disparity.¹⁰ The world war itself, however, that is, the explosion of pent-up tensions, was not the result of lucid calculations. Like always, its beginning rested upon an inaccurate assessment of one's own chances of success and of the others' reactions.

The best army is the one whose each and every officer knows what he has to do in given circumstances. In its totality, war is art and creation.

NAPOLEON I BONAPARTE,
French general and emperor (1769—1821)

Blurred by national or partisan feelings, the question of responsibilities is still open today. Its elucidation is related to the specific way in which the problem is formulated.¹¹ It is difficult to assume that one imperialism was less dangerous than another, or that the blame for the war lies only with the side that started the conflict. An analysis of the circumstances that preceded and governed the war leads to the obvious conclusion that both sides did everything they could to prevent a settlement or an easing-down of the conflict.¹² Although Austria-Hungary declared it, the other powers contributed to its outbreak and helped its expansion, pursuing interests that had nothing in common with the professed national and patriotic goals. Nevertheless, the act of aggression was carried out by the imperialist power whose existence was most endangered by the crisis of its own reactionary political system, which was opposed by the fight of the political and social forces of the oppressed peoples. In the case of Austria-Hungary, the crisis was aggravated by the divergent trends displayed by the ruling circles in Vienna and Budapest.¹³

Besides the big powers' aggressiveness, which was generated, fuelled and amplified by uneven development, by the fight to re-divide the world, the First World War was also a breaking point caused by the strong contradictions that were tearing that world apart: poverty and wealth, progress and ignorance, the democratic and egalitarian drive of the *grass roots* vs. the exclusivistic, reactionary and myopic drives of the ruling elites. In countries boasting revolutionary and liberal traditions, such as Great Britain and France, most of all, the fight for democracy had gained momentum under the impact of socialism, whereas a slightly corrected absolutism reigned in Europe's big empires (even in Germany), tempered only by formal constitutions and pliable parliaments.¹⁴ The Austro-Hungarian, German, Tsarist and Ottoman empires, which stretched from the Vosges to Vladivostok and from the Arctic Ocean to the Persian Gulf, ruled over more than 400 million subjects of many and different races. A diplomat's warning on the concessions required to appease the spirits was parried by a monarch's following rejoinder: "Do you mean, Mr. Ambassador, that it is I who should win back my people's confidence, or rather that my people is the one who should win back my confidence?" The reply, similar to Marie Antoinette's famous remark on

Future wars, whatever their nature, will be wars of armed nations which will throw into action all their human and material resources.

I. SICHITIU, Romanian general

the eve of the French Revolution, belongs to Czar Nicholas II, who uttered it on the eve of the Russian Revolution.¹⁵ In a world where changes were occurring with the speed of light, the sovereigns of the four big empires (Nicholas II, William II, Franz Joseph, Abdul Hamid) were unable to adapt and reacted as people of a former age, precipitating the course of events towards the known outcome.

The world could also be driven to the war due to the fact that the forces of peace still lacked the organization and the numbers apt to check that course. "The failure of the Second International", caused by the compromise between the leadership of the socialist parties in the big countries and the national bourgeoisie, considerably weakened the front that could have opposed the war.

Unlike the big powers, whose expansionist goals imparted an imperialist character to the war, the small-sized countries and the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe, who supported the Entente, used the First World War to reassert their will to rebuild their nation-states or to fulfil their unity. The fact that contradictory goals were promoted within the same coalition of states generated a wide range of complex problems which should be accurately assessed in order to understand the interests and the role of each belligerent country; these problems cannot be evaluated according to preconceived criteria, but in keeping with the specific development of each problem. It is in this complex and contradictory context that Romania's situation and attitude should be placed and assessed.

Lying at a major strategical crossroads, where the interests of the two principal rivals — Russia and Austria-Hungary — met, interfered and clashed, Romania was steering its political course in an intricate and dangerous context; however, it never departed from the legitimate process of fulfilling the union of the nation-state, the paramount goal of the fight waged by the peoples of Central and South-Eastern Europe. Amidst those adverse circumstances, its concerns focussed on the national ques-

tion — and considering above all the plight of the Romanians living in Transylvania under the Dual Monarchy, — Romania could not opt for neutrality (or at least it could not remain neutral for a long time). Just like in many other instances in the 19th century (1821, 1848, and especially in 1877), its geographical position did not allow of a perpetual neutrality.

Romania's political option (to join the war alongside the Entente, with a view to achieving the union) could by no means be explained by a favourable turn of events; it was circumscribed to an obvious pattern of steadfast defence and promotion of the *national interests*. Naturally, as Engels had underscored, as early as 1888, in his famous letter to I. Nădejde, the national goals of the Romanians did not suit the imperialist interests of Tsarist Russia and Austria-Hungary, the main adversaries in the two rival camps. In this respect, Engels pointed out that, in the event of a war, Romania's interest would be that both imperialist powers should be defeated.¹⁸ Agreeing with the general options, the socialists consistently upheld the national position, subsequently endorsing the line of the Second International Congress in Basle (1912) and, later on, Lenin's stand, set forth at the Zimmerwald Conference (viz., to declare war to the war and to fight the bourgeoisie in one's own country). At the beginning of the war, Ottoi Călin, a prominent socialist, made the following remark, which is quite significant to that effect: "...Both sides need our help. Yet neither wishes to see us greater. Thus, they would be all the more opposed to our country's becoming greater without exacting great sacrifice from it. If Tsarist Russia were crushed, then Austria would not hesitate for a moment because, just as it did not tolerate a greater Serbia, it will not tolerate a greater Romania, not even at the expense of a country that is its enemy. If Austria were to lose, we are sure that Russia would oppose even more fiercely the union of Transylvania and Bu-

kovina to our country, because although Russia pursues the destruction of Austria, it has been pursuing for a longer time to smooth out its path along the Black Sea, to the Balkans and the Bosphorus — hence, it would oppose even more resolutely the creation of a Greater Romania, which would raise a perpetual barrier in its way to Constantinople. Therefore," he concluded, "there is no alternative: *either an absolute, categorical and officially declared neutrality*, as long as our territorial integrity is not violated, or the hardships of a war — which, should we wage it now, later, or at the end of the European conflict, entails the highly probable risk of our being crushed in the end and swallowed up by one of the two huge powers at war."¹⁹

That principled theoretical stance was validated by the subsequent course of events; nevertheless, it did not take into consideration the fact that Romania was placed in a political and strategical context where the interests at play and the values in operation were different from socialist interests and values. The Ramanian interests, the achievement of national unity included, had to be fulfilled in that context, with the means and according to the logic of the age.

Promoted by Romania's leading political circles, *the line of participation in the war*, with a view to achieving national unity, was therefore imposed by internal and international circumstances, being a categorical imperative of that historical moment. Thus, it can be arguably said that the leading political circles "*did not have the choice between two solutions, so they embarked on the only realistic, practical, hence viable, path* which was afforded by the historical circumstances generated by the outbreak of the First World War. Ever since the beginning of hostilities, it was obvious to any keen observer of events that the resort to that path was imminent."²⁰

Romania's unification within its natural borders, as sanctioned by the peace treaties that followed the war, was achieved through the Romanian people's heroic fight and sacrifice. To use O. Goga's words, the war propelled the people's masses to the surface with an elemental power, restoring their prevailing role in state affairs. The war again made the democratic ideals prevail, "it heralded a purification of minds, a novel approach to public affairs, broader horizons and, more particularly, a reconsideration of moral values."²¹ "The confession at Mără-

Both morally and from the material point of view, a good defense should always develop offensively.

T. R. BUGEAUD, French marshal
(1784—1849)

sești," the poet wrote before the end of the battle, "the days of glory of that Moldavian village must be the heydays of national education with a view to shaping the future."²²

When the conflict had barely begun, Take Ionescu predicted its transformation into a protracted world war and expressed his confidence in the achievement of Greater Romania, projecting the following eventual consequences: a sweeping tumbling-down of thrones, the preponderance of the Anglo-Saxons, the accession of the United States to a status of world hegemony (anticipating it by half a century), "a rush to extreme-left, socialist ideas."²³ He was not far from the truth. The old world collapsed, the thrones tumbled down, multinational empires were dismantled, the Socialist October Revolution, and other revolutions ushered in a new era, democracy triumphed. Greater Romania, in its new, democratic organization, was an expression of the new relationships emerging after WWI. However, imperialism had in no way blunted its edge, generating new crises and conflicts. To use the words of an authoritative historian, doubled by a keen connoisseur of collective psychology, — the allies did not realize that they had lost the peace at the very moment when they won the war.²⁴

France and England, which had thrived before 1914, were ruined by the war effort, unable as they were to recover their capital invested in Russia and the Ottoman Empire; moreover, they had also lost their advantage over Germany and over other countries. France, which had suffered great human loss, was partly destroyed, and was compelled to spend part of its national energies to reconstruct its economy. Germany, which had suffered no damage, had only to reconvert its economy. France and England were also losers on a strategic plane. Japan outstripped them of their monopoly in the Far Eastern market, while the Asian peoples contested their authority. The USA may be reckoned as the true victor in that war, having become the creditor to all the other belligerents.

The collapse of the Tsarist and Austro-Hungarian Empires resulted in the setting up of a large number of states. Consequently, a new, radically different situation emerged in Central and South-Eastern Europe. "History proves the undeniable correctness of the peoples' fight for liberation and for their organization within their own entities, within unitary and independent nation-

Military service is a school in peacetime and a duty in wartime.

N. MARSELLI, Italian general (1832—1899)

states. This is the path leading to each people's quick economic and social development, as well as to the establishment of new relations worldwide, based on equal collaboration among all nations," President Nicolae Ceaușescu underscored.²⁵

1. Barbara W. Tuchman, *Trufașa citadelă ("The Proud Tower")*, Editura Politică, Bucharest, 1977, p. 604.

2. Edmond Taylor, *La chute des empires 1914—1918, traduit de l'anglais par Albert Vulliez, Paris, Fayard, 1964, p. 32.*

3. Ibidem, pp. 35—36, p. 39.

4. Maurice Ferro, Kissinger et Brzezinski. *Destinées et pensées parallèles, Paris, 1978, pp. 19—22.*

5. Marc Ferro, *La grande guerre 1914—1918, Paris, Gallimard, 1969, p. 41.*

6. "Noua Revistă Română", 28 Sept., 1914. Apud Ion Bulei, *Arcul așteptării 1914—1915—1916, Editura Eminescu, București, 1981, pp. 35—36.*

7. "Flacăra", of July 27, 1914, commented as follows on the outbreak of the world war: "For two years the war has knocked on the door of Europe and nobody let it in. Paris sent it away, Vienna, Berlin and Petersburg sent it away, too. At last, today the bloody God of war is avenged. Count Berchtold bade him for a waltz in Serbia. And once out of control, the winds can no longer be abated." Ibidem, pp. 26—27.

8. Marc Ferro, op. cit., p. 53.

9. "România muncitoare", July 27, 1914. Apud I. Bulei, op. cit., p. 39.

10. Marc Ferro, op. cit., p. 42.

11. Ibidem, p. 87.

12. Ibid., p. 42 and foll.

13. Victor Atanasie, Anastasie Iordache, Mircea Iosa, Ion M. Oprea, Paul Oprea, *România în primul război mondial, Editura Militară, Bucharest, 1979, p. 21.*

14. Edmond Taylor, op. cit., p. 34.

15. Ibid., pp. 32—33.

16. Ibid.

17. România în primul război mondial, pp. 461—463.

18. *Presa muncitorească și socialistă din România, vol. I, 1865—1900, Section I, 1865—1889, Editura Politică, Bucharest, 1964, p. 190.*

19. Apud Dr. Augustin Deac, *Caracterul participării României la primul război mondial, Editura Politică, Bucharest, 1973, pp. 24—25.*

20. România în primul război mondial, pp. 461—463 (our italics).

21. Octavian Goga, *Ne învăță Mărășeștii, Edition, introductory study and notes by Stelian Neagoe, Editura Junimea, Iași, 1983, p. 120.*

22. Ibid., pp. 125—129.

23. Take Ionescu, *Amintiri, Bucharest, 1923, pp. 45—50, and C. Xeni, Take Ionescu 1858—1922, 3rd Edition, Editura Universul, 1933, pp. 264—266.*

24. Marc Ferro, op. cit., p. 375.

25. Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Romania on the Way of Building Up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society, vol. 17, Bucharest, Meridiane Publishing House, 1979, p. 374.*

ROMANIA

during the first world war

Dr. FLORIN CONSTANTINIU, D. Hist.

Romania's participation in WW1 was determined by the Romanian people's will to get reunited within the frontiers of the unitary nation-state. An expression of the collective awareness of an objective historic process, this determination fused and dynamized the Romanian society, fully involved in liberating the Romanians living under the anachronistic domination of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The wish to see all Romanians united within the boundaries of a single state was unanimous. The diverging points concerned the priority of the stages of achieving the unitary Romanian state and the means to be used.

The poet Octavian Goga had informed the public opinion on the Transylvanian Romanians' suffering imposed by the Hungarian authorities to an oppressive régime that pursued their Magyarization (as a consequence of the 1867 compromise, Transylvania had been incorporated to Hungary). The public opinion's frame of mind had an important share in devising the battle plan. Instead of an easier defensive over the Carpathians and of an offensive south of the Danube, in order to join the General Sarrail's Salonika army, they preferred an offensive in Transylvania that fully met the desideratum of the public opinion of sooner liberating the Romanian territories from under the domination of the double monarchy.

As pointed out by I. G. Duca, the former Prime Minister: "Romania's joining the action offered the Allies a wonderful occasion of shortening the war and even winning the decisive victory. They did not know to make use of this opportunity and lost the chance so easily, allowing thus Germany to turn it into new string of successes in her favour."¹

The fact that Germany broke off engagements undertaken by the Entente Powers in respect of military assistance (front operations and ammunitions supply) made it easier for Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey to attack Romania from

the north and south and outnumber her forces. The Romanian army put up an admirable resistance, but the disproportion of forces ultimately had its say. Oltenia, Wallachia and Dobrudja had to be abandoned, the Government and the Army withdrawing to Moldavia. I. G. Duca made an impressive description of his memories of the horrendous withdrawal: "men, women, children, sick people, old men, disabled, were going on foot, by carriages, carts, on horseback, in rain, wind, cold, snow. Some had managed to hurriedly gather a few belongings and were dragging them behind. Others had no longer force to go on and were lying limp and starving by the roadside. Others were dying in ditches and their corpses were prey to ravens /.../ the enemy's shooting was heard in the distance, kids were crying, women weeping, men shouting, the rain was pouring endlessly, the cold became bitter and bitter, the village was being bombed in the distance, the horizon was reddened by flames. It looked worse than hell!"²

The incredible great sufferings of the civil population, compelled to either flee from or stay under foreign domination, did not bent its faith in righteousness of the cause

In the trenches



for which Romania had entered the war.³ The royal speech of Răcăciuni, on March 1917, had a strong mobilizing effort as it promised new agrarian and electoral reforms (universal suffrage). Both the House and the Senate voted for the two reforms with a great majority.⁴ We have to point out that both reforms had been part of the liberal party's platform even before the outbreak of the war and properly studied, but the beginning of the great conflagration postponed their passing. It is therefore a mistake to say that events in Russia had determined passing the agrarian and the electoral reforms. Both had been devised long before, and the peasantry's sacrifices, their efforts deployed during the war, required the urgent implementation of those projects.

A powerful and conclusive manifestation of the population's adhesion to the war for the homeland's reintegration was the resistance movement put up within the territory occupied by the enemy. The resistance to the enemy forces that had invaded the country had various forms, ranging from spreading of leaflets (the Romanian socialists edited for instance a leaflet titled. *An Unpleasant Visit*, condemning the visit of Kaiser William II to the occupied territory, and another one, called *For the Workers*, calling to arms for driving away the occupation troops and acquiring democratic freedoms)⁵ to genuine partisan actions (like the courageous actions in the Cringulești and Gîrbovăț Mountains, that had brought great damages and prejudices to the enemy) organized by the detachment commanded by reserve Second Lieutenant Victor Popescu, a school master by his trade, and the network organized in Vrancea by Vasile Chilian, that helped fugitive prisoners and lost soldiers cross the front to Moldavia, offering precious information on the enemy.⁶

The brilliant victories won by the Romanian Army in the battles of Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz prevented the enemy occupy Moldavia, but the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk peace forced Romania, new in a very critical geo-strategical and political situation, to conclude peace with the Central

Powers. The stipulations of the Bucharest treaty were really Draconian, but as it was not sanctioned by the king, it was considered by the huge majority of the Romanian people as a painful provisional state, required by some prerequisites above Romania's forces. The Marghiloman Government did not enjoy any authority and was in fact an attempt of a part of the adherents to the Germanophile trend of making use of the divergences between Vienna and Berlin in order to ease the hard peace conditions. Deprived of a popular support, this government fell as soon as the armies of the Central Powers had to leave Romania, as a consequence of the defeats on the theatre of war.

It is worth mentioning the fact that though in a most difficult situation, Romania had neither "mutineries" (rebellions) like those of the French soldiers in 1917, nor a fall of the "inner front" as it had happened in Russia, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Germany. The ideal of the national unity proved to be a strong tie between the social classes and categories—despite antagonisms and tension—under the slogan of the struggle for the creation of the unitary Romanian state.

After the downfall of Czarism and of the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy the Romanians living in all territories dominated by the two empires, proclaimed their will to get united to their berthern in Romania, in keeping with the right to self determination within some representative gatherings which functioned democratically. The union of Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transylvania to Romania was voted in an atmosphere of great enthusiasm in Kishinev (March 27/April 9), Chernovtsy (November 15/28) and Alba Iulia (November 18/December 1), thus achieving the century-old dream of the Romanian unitary state.⁷

A preponderantly agrarian country, with a poorly developed industry, Romania had to suffer the burden of some unprecedented expenditure during the war. The 1916—1920 budgets were highly deficient, as follows:

Lei (Romanian currency)	1916—1917	1917—1918	1918—1919	1919—1920
War Expenditure	543,661,928.41	580,736,867.14	953,250,243.74	
Deficit	467,505,890.40	715,590,420.80	1,273,171,693.45	3,202,517,756

THE SYSTEM OF POLITICAL-MILITARY ALLIANCES IN EUROPE

Late 19th Century and Early 20th Century

MIRCEA N. POPA, D. Hist.

Against the background of the greatest supremacy Europe had ever gained in the world and of the relative economic decline which was beginning to take shape on the old continent, international relations acquired notable peculiarities, ever more marked late in the 19th century and early in the 20th century by the continuous worsening of contradictions among the big powers. They were dominated by the process of establishment of political-military alliances, in keeping with the changes in the ratio of forces worldwide at a time when the developed states entered the second stages of industrial capitalism. A decisive role was played by the immense economic development, by the unprecedented and increasingly unequal growth rates. Over a short historical span of time, the developed capitalist world that was heading towards monopolies and imperialism felt ever more strongly and faster than anytime in the past the consequences of the transition from competition to rivalry, which inevitably led to conflicts. Competition and rivalry no longer covered just a local, regional or continental area, but extended world-wide.

Beginning with the 1870's, the situation in Europe was marked by the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine by Germany, by the growing preponderance of Wilhelm's Reich on the continent and by the policy of tsarist Russia aimed at conquering Constantinople. But soon after that, as the capitalism of free competition made room for monopolies and imperialism, a number of factors emerged which gradually divided Europe into two rival military-political groups. Those factors were of a political, strategic nature, too, but above all they were economic, taking on various forms, including the colonial one, because the struggle to carry through the division of the world and, later

on, beginning with 1900, to redivide it, became one of the decisive factors in the policy of the big powers. The increasingly tough economic competition directly and considerably affected political relations, the colonialist adventures stepped up "the race" towards confrontation. Within that context, between 1871 and 1914, notable changes occurred in the "pattern" of the contradictions: if until the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries the European and, inevitably, the world relations were dominated by the Anglo-French rivalry, which was prevailingly colonial, and in the background by the French-German and the Austro-Russian rivalries, in the early years of the imperialist epoch the Anglo-German contradictions came to overshadow the rivalries between the other big powers. Those changes, expressing the developments in the ratio of economic and military forces, brought about political regroupings worldwide. They took place against the background of the temporary, relative and precarious "British peace" in the extra-European world — as an expression of the domination exerted by the industrialized Europe, under British hegemony, over that world — and of the "German peace" on the old continent — as a result of the economic-political and military preponderance of the young Wilhelm's Reich. The former implied a permanent colonialist war, while the latter an ever sharper arms race among the European states. In the confrontations of various natures, the initiative often came from Wilhelm's Reich, which was characterized by an extremely fast industrial development, militarism, expansionism and imperialism, without that altering the basically imperialist nature of the policy of its opponents. No doubt, France was entertaining revanchist plans but, at least two de-

cade after the 1870/71 defeat, it was not able to wage war upon Germany. So, the German diplomat Max von Lichnowsky was right when saying that "no one wanted to make war upon us, but we (the Germans — n.n.) sowed distrust everywhere", or that "the Entente was our work, an association of mutual insurance against the danger of war". Even if the latter statement is just partially true, nothing can disprove the thesis on the decisive role played by German initiatives. Because for years on end Bismarck's policy prepared the "pre-emptive war" and threatened France and later on Russia with it, and Berlin's initiatives in building railway lines towards Constantinople-Baghdad-Basra, or those in Palestine, Latin America, Morocco or the Far East hastened Germany's encircling by a system of hostile alliances. The same Wilhelm's Reich, through Otto von Bismarck, its chancellor until 1890, initiated the first political-military alliance in Europe after 1871. Paying attention above all to the problems of the European continent, Bismarck pursued the establishment of a system of political alliances which should deter a possible revanchist attempt of France, by stalemating the French efforts to enter into an alliance with any of the big European powers and which should make it possible for Germany, as historian H. Hantsch wrote, "to harmonize oppositions on an intermediate line and make Germany play a mediating role..." between its allies, thus gaining "control" over their policy. Consequently, on October 23, 1873, the "Alliance of the Three Emperors" — Wilhelm II of Germany, Alexander II of Russia and Franz Joseph I of Austria and King of Hungary — was established. It provided for the adoption of a "common line of conduct" in the event of an attack by another power. Although renewed on June 18, 1881, the signatory parties binding themselves to neutrality in case of war with a fourth power, the Austro-German-Russian alliance was rather precarious because of the maintenance and deepening of the Austro-Russian contradictions in the Balkans and of the worsening of the German-Russian relations beginning with 1875, on grounds of opposed economic and political interests. And yet, the alliance was a success scored by the skillful diplomat

Albert Thomas reviewing the front; General H. M. Berthelot (left); King Ferdinand (right)

Bismarck and proved even more the decisive role played by Wilhelm's Reich in Europe.

But the time had necessarily come for political-military alliances grounded on the two big contradictions in Europe: the French-German and the Austro-Russian contradictions. F. Engels noted that "...the danger of Constantinople's being conquered by tsarist Russia turned Austria and even Italy into allies of Germany". On the other hand, as Petersburg realized ever more that on their way to the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, the Russian armies had to pass through Berlin and Vienna, and that the source of financial loans was Paris and not Berlin, the French-Russian cooperation and alliance became inevitable. The oriental crisis of 1877—1878 hastened Berlin's and Vienna's option for the establishment of a new "Bismarck's system": the provisional and formal maintenance of the "Alliance of the Three Emperors"; the conclusion of a Treaty of German-Austro-Hungarian Alliance against France and the Russian "ally" in October 1879; the extension of the alliance between Berlin and Vienna by co-opting Italy in May 1882. Rome's decision, a "historic paradox", was grounded on colonialist, financial and domestic policy reasons. And so the foundation was laid for the Triple Alliance, the "armour" of the German policy until 1914, a defensive and offensive political-military grouping, which was to acquire an increasingly imperialist character as imperialism was growing into a historical, socio-economic and political reality. Europe's division was considerably deepening and the danger of war — permanent after 1871 — was growing.

The complex nature of the international situation generated however an apparently surprising political action: under a secret Treaty, concluded in 1883, the Triple Alliance was joined by Romania — a poorly developed capitalist country, alien from any expansionist dreams, itself subjected to the expansionist policy of the big powers. Romania's foreign policy in the years following the winning of state independence had a complex and most realistic motivation behind it. In the international conjuncture following 1877—1878, the country was in a situation of unacceptable isolation, extremely dangerous to its independence and integrity, given the expansionist policy promoted by tsarist Russia in south-eastern Europe. National recovery after the 1877—1878 war could be achieved only under conditions of political stability, provided only by an alliance with a group of big powers which was aimed, among other things, at containing Russian expansion. The economic interests of the great Romanian landowners and bourgeoisie called for growing economic, trade and financial relations with Germany and Austria-Hungary. On the other hand King Carol I, of German descent, and in-



fluent political circles were favouring a pro-German policy. Consequently, the only solution Romania could choose at that historical time was the conclusion of a secret Treaty with Austria-Hungary on October 18/30, 1883, which was immediately joined also by Germany, one of the most vigorous political-military and economic powers of the world. The Treaty of alliance with the Austro-Germans was of an *entirely defensive nature* as far as Romania was concerned, a country lacking any imperialist political ambitions. On the other hand, the foreign policy option of the ruling Romanian circles did not signify in the least, not even to the Austro-German allies, the giving up of the ideal of our national and state unity. Quite significantly, the Romanian socialist expressed their opinion with regard to the Treaty. On their behalf, C. Dobrogeanu-Gherea stated the following in December 1891: "...The present circumstances call for Romania's entering into an alliance with Austria and all the more with all the other powers at feud with Russia, therefore Romania's joining the Triple Alliance is a necessity". For more than a decade, there was no other counter-weight to the Triple Alliance than isolated powers which in many cases were engaged in disputes between them. Great Britain had reached the acme of its economic, colonial and maritime power, although its industry had receded from the top position held in the world. Its long-lasting policy of "splendid isolation" held out, Great Britain having not felt the need to enter into any political-military alliance for another 20 years or so as no one decisively threatened its dominant positions in the world. Tsarist Russia was "backing out" in the context of a ratio of forces in the industrialized world whose evolution put it at disadvantage, leaving it behind other economically developed states. Its financial and industrial weakness made it vulnerable. In the 80's tsarism began acutely feeling the need for an alliance to counterpoise the Triple Alliance, as well as Great Britain, given the growing political rivalries with Austria-Hungary in the Balkans, with Great Britain in Asia and the economic-financial divergencies with Germany. From among the big continental powers, France was in the most difficult position: defeated in the 1870/71 war, isolated politically, engaged in colonialist disputes with Great Britain.

In order to lead a war skilfully, one should not remain behind the events, but prevent them and act ahead of them.

DEMOSTHENES, Greek politician
(384—322 B.C.)

Defense should not be only passive... it must draw its sap from the capacity of manoeuvring and act offensively whenever the opportunity arises.

F. ENGELS (1820—1895)

threatened by Germany with the "pre-emptive war". And yet it remained the second biggest financial power in the world, a fact which helped its diplomatic attempts — so long unsuccessful — to establish a political-military alliance opposed to Wilhelm's Reich, as part of which it longed especially for cooperation from Russia. Around 1890, tsarist Russia gave up its policy of monarchic solidarity and eventually preferred an alliance with France to the alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary, given the growing anti-Russian policy promoted by Berlin and Vienna and their aggressiveness, the worsening of the Anglo-Russian contradictions in Asia, the absence of any substantial contradictions between the Russian and the French bourgeoisie, the adoption of a "Russian line" by France in its foreign policy, the concordance between the trends in the French-Russian financial and economic relations and the French attempts at political rapprochement towards Russia. Consequently, a French-Russian military convention opposed to the Triple Alliance was concluded on August 5/17, 1892. Europe was thus divided into two large military groups. The new alliance was no less dangerous to European peace than the Austro-German was. France was finally getting out of its political isolation and could embark on a new stage in its preparations of war on Germany.

The deepening division of Europe into hostile blocs was taking place at a time when Great Britain gave up its "splendid isolation" and attempted a political rapprochement towards France. Taking into account that Germany was growing into the most fearful commercial, colonial and maritime competitor which was seeking the re-division of the existing markets and colonial empires and was striving for hegemony, realizing the impossibility of a compromise and meeting half-way the French political "advances", the British government consented, on April 8, 1904, to concluding the Cordial Entente with France. In that way, a strategy of understanding and collaboration was established against the most dangerous rival, some older colonial disputes — in Egypt, Morocco, Madagascar, Siam, Terra Nova, the New Hebrides a.o. — were settled and all

that paved the way to political cooperation and to a future military-political alliance. Therefore taking advantage of older and newer contradictions, of imperialist rivalries, the French diplomacy achieved a "counterpoise combination" with Russia in 1892/93 and a "cordial reconciliation" with its old colonial and commercial British rival in 1904. Its immediate goal afterwards was the mediation of an Anglo-Russian rapprochement, which became possible following the transformation of the Anglo-German rivalry into a decisive factor in international relations, the decline of tsarism because of the military defeat suffered in the war with Japan in 1904—1905, of the democratic-bourgeois revolution of 1905—1907 and Russia's becoming the biggest debtor of modern times. The need to ease contradictions with secondary opponents, after 1900, the "conciliatory" spirit evinced by tsarism, the German threats and the French pressures contributed to the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian Convention of August 18/31, 1907, over Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet. The settlement of older problems which had actually been engendered by colonial rivalries enabled the establishment of a common

Anglo—French—Russian front against the Austro—Germans and announced the future Triple Agreement as a political-military alliance hostile to the Central Powers. By 1914 these regroupings of forces of the great powers were gradually added other bilateral agreements — Anglo-Japanese, French-Italian — paving the way to future alliances — Austro-Bulgarian, German-Turkish, French—Russian—Romanian a.o. —, which together were to give rise to the two belligerent blocs in 1914/18. All these developments, resulting from ever stronger confrontations among the imperialist powers, were the prelude to the biggest military conflagration in modern times. On the other hand, the experience of the international relations of the 1871—1914 period, Europe's splitting up into rival military-political blocs constitute a historical warning to the late 20th century world. The "automatism" of the military reactions implied by the alliance systems, the optimistic illusions, the political and military errors generated by them, confirmed by the great war which broke out in 1914, are major problems calling for responsible consideration and reflection at present.

BELLIGERENT FORCES FIELD-SERVICE PLANS STATE OF WAR

Reader VASILE CRISTIAN, D. Hist.

The arms race, a characteristic feature of the decades prior to 1914, was anticipating the outbreak of war. In spite of the progress made in military organization and in industrial development, it was difficult to foresee the scope of the conflagration. Its dimensions left a powerful impression, even when compared with other big confrontations in history¹. The effectives of the two camps engaged in conflict exceeded by far, after mobilization, those registered in previous conflicts. Although the data provided by various works are not the same maybe also because of the different sources used, it is quite certain that in the beginning the troops

engaged together by the Entente and by the Triple Alliance exceeded 15 million. In spite of the huge casualties (over 10 million dead, 22 million wounded), the number of combatants gradually increased either by getting new recruits and massively appealing to reservists or by attracting new countries into the conflict (Italy and Romania joined the Entente, Bulgaria and Turkey joined the Central Powers) or by the engagement in fighting of states (Japan and, especially, the U.S.A.) and military units from outside Europe. As the well known military theoretician Lieutenant-Colonel Alexe Anastasiu noted already in November 1914,

"the colossal effectiveness employed by belligerents" appeared to be "a new and extraordinary feature of the present war", as "the armies have thus become whole nations of combatants" who "encircle frontiers with living walls", "turning the former tactical exercises into a huge field combat, with the entire warfare machinery deployed on long lines like the frontiers"³, a situation which explains and casts light on the great effort of war made by Romania.

Belligerent forces grew not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively. The former conflicts, too, had benefitted from technological progress; but the one which broke out in 1914 was not only the first World War, but also the first war of the industrial era. Of course, a large part of the traditional armament was further kept in use, but substantial changes had been brought to it, like in the case of artillery and navy. Likewise certain inventions essentially altered the essence of fighting; part of them developed or were designed before 1914, but it was only the war that brought out their real significance⁴ — the machine gun, the grenade, the submarine, the tank, the aircraft (even if the contribution of the last one is not felt so much in direct combat). Their use called for changes in tactics and, partly, in strategy. On the other hand, the progress in military technique and the improvement of army organization called for a better training of both the cadres and the troops; the superiority of Germany in the first phase of the war was largely due to the good training received by reservists.

All these elements had to be taken into account in working out the field operation plans. Naturally, each command paid the attention also to the specific geographical-military data. But as a French general put it, the idea was that "to make war means to always be on the offensive"⁵. It was this idea that various plans were grounded on, in an optimism which practice was to put to the test severely and, often, to disprove.

Of all field operation plans, the most minutely worked out and apparently the best was the one advanced by field marshal Alfred von Schlieffen, Chief of Staff between 1891 and 1905, a plan accepted with small alterations by the German military circles in 1914. It set out from the need to avoid simultaneous fighting on two fronts, consequently the battle was going to be successively fought on the western and then on the eastern front. The beginning was to be the invasion of Belgium, disregarding its neutrality, so as to avoid any resistance from the French defence lines. The German armies then had to get into north-eastern France, proceed with an outflanking movement the result of which was to be the

encircling of Paris and its occupation, which was thought to make the opponent surrender. According to estimates, the entire operation would have been through in about six weeks' time, after which a new offensive could have been directed against Russia, counting on its difficulties in mobilizing the army because of the scarce communication means, while Germany had a thoroughly organized strategic railway network in the east. But even in the case of a successful first phase, the plan revealed a major inconvenience, noted by several contemporaries — the Russian troops could be amassed on the border, and if not, an offensive on the Russian territory would have deprived the German armies of the possibilities of manoeuvres they had on their own territory⁶.

The Austro-Hungarian Command had set out from a similar idea in the case of fighting going on two fronts. It also considered the possibility of making war on Serbia alone, but that was quite unlikely; that is why the essential variant included fighting with Russia, too, regarded as the main adversary and much being counted on its difficulties of mobilization. Anyhow, as a smaller replica to von Schlieffen's plan, war was conceived offensively on two successive fronts.

In France, after the 1870—1871 war, there prevailed a plan which, in a first phase, had to be defensive, and that materialized in a line of fortifications along the borderline with Alsace and Lorraine. An offensive action was envisaged for the second phase. The offensive had to be decisive, given the massive mobilization against those provinces and the neutrality of the northern frontier. In the decade preceding 1914 the conception changed, materializing into the so-called "Plan XVII", championed by General Joffre. The new plan envisaged a powerful offensive in Alsace and Lorraine, the target of the French national claims. The disadvantage of this plan, which was supported by the military and political circles, lay in the fact that it facilitated the German intentions on the northern front⁷, which was less covered. The possible result could have been that of the "revolving doors", the French advance in the south would have stepped up the German advance in the north, with the outflanking of Paris, the goal pursued by Germany⁸.

The British field operation plan was more complex. Giving up the older, rarely broken, tradition of not interfering directly in the continental clashes, Britain planned to send an expeditionary corps beyond the English Channel, which should include colonial troops, to protect the coast regions. Another

goal pursued by it was to protect its colonies. Priority was given to naval fighting; the British navy had to defend the access routes to the raw material sources, to put up, in this way, a blockade on Germany and, the essential goal, to destroy the German fleet in the North Sea.

Quite offensive was also the Russian field operation plan, which provided for simultaneous operations against both Germany and Austria-Hungary. But it was difficult to carry out, because of the above mentioned difficulties of mobilization and manoeuvre and also because of the front length, which totalled over 1,600 km. Under the circumstances, the Central Powers paid smaller attention to the operations in the east as compared to those in the west.

The field operation plans of the belligerent forces which made up the two camps in the first phase of the war could only partially be carried out, not only because they were contradictory, but also because they generally set out from an overrating of one's own forces and consequently an underrating of the adversary. A most eloquent expression along this line was offered by the western front where, after a few German successes, there followed a position warfare as from late 1914: "when winter fell upon the weary soldiers, that front froze into trench warfare"⁹. The situation was the same on the other theatres of war where, it's true, mobile warfare played a more important role, but no decisive results could be obtained, with the only exception of the occupation of Serbia after a long and fierce resistance (its army actually continued fighting, even if forced to leave the country). New attempts were made to influence the developments of events, by the opening of secondary fronts (like those of the Dardanelles or in the Middle East) and especially by bringing in new allies, and that brought about changes in the initial field operation plans.

In this latter category were the efforts made by both camps to attract Romania. In case it entered the war, this country offered several undisputable advantages — a rather strategical position, a fairly good communication network, considerable agricultural resources as well as a crude oil production which could be extremely useful under the new warfare conditions (in 1913 Romania produced 3.19 per cent of the world output). And finally, one could not ignore the Romanian army, even if its effectives were smaller in number compared with those of the big powers. In 1891, chancellor Caprivi noted that the Romanian troops had not been inferior to the Russian ones in the 1877—1878 war and that ever since they had not grown any weaker or worse, and so for the first part of a campaign they constituted a considerable factor¹⁰.

In the conditions of a destructive war getting closer to its borders, the Romanian

government had just one single option left — that of joining the fighting for the liberation of the national territories under foreign domination. As underlined, without downplaying some older deficiencies in the supply and training of our troops, the army with which Romania was preparing to enter the war for the liberation of the national territories was a rather well-structured, homogeneous body, with an adequate combat capacity, based on an excellent fighting morale, generated by the liberation ideal and goal¹¹. The essential target of the Romanian field operation plan was, as only natural, the crossing of the Carpathians into Transylvania. Consequently, the government conditioned any collaboration on receiving guarantees as to the fulfilment of its legitimate territorial claims as well as clear pledges from the future allies on the granting of material support and the correlation of actions against the Central Powers. The failure on their part to observe their military obligations contributed to the well known fighting vicissitudes suffered by the Romanian troops, but even so they found the strength to resist, thwarting the German plans, as a reputed military historian¹² and numerous contemporary observers and, later on, researchers noted. The merit was, first of all, of the army, but that received support from the entire population.

As a matter of fact, the First World War, as part of which the Romanian case was most eloquent, all the more so as it illustrated the struggle of peoples for a righteous cause, was not a mere confrontation among armies, as most previous wars had been. The colossal size of the armies and the various types of requirements they presupposed turned it into a real confrontation among nations. Warfare acquired unprecedented dimensions. Practically the entire social life was subordinated to war¹³. "The internal front" became at least as important as the "external front". And that was even more obvious when people realized that the war would last for a long time yet and when the initial illusions entertained by some leaders in a "Blitzkrieg" were shattered. In a way or another the entire population was drawn in supporting military operations. For the most part, industry, especially the heavy one, though the light industry made no exception, was militarized. And so were the communication means and the telecommunication network. A considerable part of the farm output was channelled to the front. Women and children worked in the places left vacant by the mobilized men. The intellectual potential, too, was used for the front. The scientists were mobilized for technical-military research, while the writers used their talent to back the struggle of the entire people. It is true however that

in this respect numerous exaggerations were committed, especially by art creators belonging to the imperialist powers. In addition to the war of arms there was a war waged by historians, who looked in the past for justifications of the present actions, bringing interpretations often alien from reality. All the more commendable is the action of the Romanian intellectuals, who found most adequate means to serve the noble cause of the war for re-establishing the Romanians' unity — like Nicolae Iorga who in his numerous writings demonstrated the necessity of the political-military fighting, George Enescu who appeased the suffering of the wounded with his masterly violin playing, Mihail Sadoveanu who wrote about the bravery of the soldiers in his admirable short stories, Octavian Goga who, in his poems, expressed never-dying hope in the liberation of the Romanians living across the mountains or the delegation of academics that left for Western Europe to campaign for the Romanian cause in some of the most difficult moments. And those are just several examples, because the action was rather collective. To it we should add the example set by a large number of scholars who put on the military uniform, many of them having died in defence of the country. It was an action of the entire people, because all the social categories contributed with their specific means, along with the army, to the triumph of the national cause. In the conditions of the great world conflagration, that action was most significant, throwing light on the Romanians' great energies. In a confrontation of the "total war" type, in a dispute which involved by far superior powers, the Romanians were able to defend their national

being and to make it complete again. Their great deeds of valour, culminating with the Mărășești battles, prove what can be accomplished by a people inspired by lofty ideals even when forced to act in the conditions of a wide-scope conflict, provoked by belligerent forces with an extremely powerful potential, with thorough field operation plans, which brought about an almost general state of war. Because in the face of death and of the destruction caused by war, the Romanians demonstrated that there was a still stronger element — national life.

1. B. H. Liddell Hart, *Les guerres décisives de l'histoire*, Paris, 1933, p. 187 and the following.
2. In Deutschland im Ersten Weltkrieg, I, Berlin, 1968, p. 306, the Entente armies are estimated at 9,330,000 people, and those of the Central Powers at 6,323,000; in J. E. Valluy, *La première guerre mondiale*, I, Paris, 1968, pp. 72–74, they are estimated at 9,220,000 and 5,750,000, respectively; in *Istoria pervaio mirovoi voini 1914–1918*, I, Moskva, 1975, p. 236, they are estimated at 10,532,000 and 6,122,000, respectively.
3. Al. Anastasiu, Verified Views on the "Armed Nation" Principle, "Revista militară", LI, January 1915, pp. 61–62.
4. *Maréchal Montgomery, Histoire de la guerre*, Paris, 1970, p. 477 and the following.
5. Ibidem, p. 497.
6. B. H. Liddell Hart, op. cit., pp. 206–207.
7. Ibidem, pp. 190–191.
8. Montgomery, op. cit., p. 500.
9. Ibidem, pp. 502–503.
10. Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871–1914, VII, p. 159.
11. *Ilie Ceaușescu, The Romanian Army in World War I, in War and Society in East Central Europe*, vol. XIX, East Central European Society in World War I, New York, 1985, p. 513 and the following.
12. B. H. Liddell Hart, op. cit., p. 220.
13. Mircea D. Popa, *World War I 1914–1918*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 1979, p. 310 and the following.
14. Harry Elmer Barnes, *A History of Historical Writing*, New York, 1962, p. 277 and the following.

Romania during the first World War

(continued from page 7)

"When general peace was concluded, our public finances were in a disastrous situation", said an expert⁸ Great efforts were made mainly for loans and big credits given by the state in order to re-establish the situation.

The whole people's real struggle, the Romanians' popular and national war for the reintegration of the homeland, united in a perfect ensemble the military and the inner front, the civilians' and the soldiers' efforts. According to President Nicolae Ceaușescu, "The making of the unitary nation-state was the crowing of the centuries-old struggle, of the aspirations of the Romanians everywhere, to have their own independent, unitary state, to live in freedom, in peace, and cooperation with their neighbours, with other peoples."⁹ The Romanian unitary state

was achieved, like all great achievements in our history through the Romanian people's forces and own possibilities, animated by the ideal of national unity.

1. I. G. Duca, *Political Memoirs*, vol. II, Munich, 1982, p. 13.
2. Ibidem, p. 666.
3. Ibidem, p. 181.
4. Romania in the first world war, (cf. hereunder Romania), Bucharest, Military Publishers, 1979, p. 264; I. G. Duca, op. cit., p. 162 & ff.
5. Romania, p. 362.
6. Cf. for details, Augustin Deac and Ion Toacă, *The Romanian People's Struggle against the Invaders (1916–1918)*, Bucharest, 1978, pp. 56–66, 185–188; Major-General Ilie Ceaușescu, *D. Hist., The Entire People's Struggle for the Defence of the Homeland with the Romanians*, Bucharest, Military Publishers, 1980.
7. Cf. for details, Mircea Mușat and Ion Ardeleanu, *From the Geto-Dacian State to the Unitary Romanian State*, Bucharest, Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishers, 1983, pp. 514 & ff.
8. Romania's Encyclopaedia, vol. IV, Bucharest, 1943, pp. 774–775.
9. Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Romania on the Road of Building the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society*, vol. 24, *The Publishing House for Political Literature*, Bucharest, 1983, p. 13.

Two historic decisions for the Romanians

JULY 21 / AUGUST 3 1914

AND AUGUST 14 / 27 1916

Acad. ȘTEFAN PASCU

The pretext romped home. The assassination, at Sarajevo, on June 28, 1914, of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir-presumptive to the throne of Austria-Hungary, triggered the biggest conflagration until then, World War 1. The main cause was not the prince's death, who was not, in fact, too much to the liking of war perpetrators in Germany and Austria-Hungary which for decades laid the ground for the slaughter. Nevertheless, the death of a man was used as a pretense for the killing of many million of people. The warlike parties in Austria-Hungary and Germany drew out their swords, put their guns in operation and lay in wait ready to seize the long-awaited opportunity to conquer and invade other peoples and countries. The ultimatum sent to Serbia in the morning of July 24 evidenced it to excess. Serbia's sovereignty was seriously threatened. The satisfactions which Serbia pledged to pay for the Sarajevo happening were, therefore, rejected. Likewise, all the attempts made by Russia, Italy, Romania, to mediate that dispute were turned down. A mere, ordinary sentence, uttered by the Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Leopold Berchtold, on July 28: "Austria-Hungary considers itself to be, from now on, in a state of war with Serbia" launched the most disastrous war waged in the history of mankind until then. Russia mobilized, Germany declared war on Russia and France and violated Belgium's territory, and, consequently, Great Britain, in its turn, declared war against Germany. "The great states mutually declared war with suchlike quiet and indifference as if they exchanged some vain civilities", wrote A. D. Xenopol. And continued the great historian, in vocables pervaded by his deep sorrow and indigna-

TESTIMONIES

The battle of Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz, in the summer of 1917, have been enshrined for ever in the golden book of the Romanian people's heroic traditions. In those fierce fights, the Romanian soldiers, actuated by a lofty patriotic enthusiasm, put up a formidable barrier thwarting the attempt made by the German and Austro-Hungarian troops to invade the whole national territory, highlighting, once more, that "there is no trespassing" over the unflinching will of a people that defends its right to life and freedom. The atmosphere surrounding the great events that happened 70 years ago, the tensions, emotions, expectations, disillusionings, joys, as well as the deep admiration aroused by the Romanian soldiers' bravery are disclosed in the pages of the memoirs written by those who fought in the trenches or held senior military positions, in the front records kept by various units and commands during the war years, as well as in the columns of Romanian and foreign newspapers, preserving all the impact of real-life experience recorded on the spot. They are as many proofs attesting to the fact that the Great Union of 1918 was craved and achieved through the fight and sacrifice of the whole Romanian people, it being the Great Justice of national history.

● Major
GHEORGHE VARTIC

The Offensive at Mărășești "OUR SOLDIERS PENETRATE THE ENEMY POSITION"

July 10

The bombing went on all day long. The reports from all sectors are satisfactory.

I ordered that a launching infantry attack be simulated during the afternoon bombing ceasefire, sending ahead large patrol units. The scheme fully succeeded, as the enemy exposed the nests of their machine-guns, which were immediately located by our artillery.

I asked the Russian 4th Army whether they were ready for the attack, and they said they were.

The First Army requested a one day prolonging of the bombing.

However, we shall launch the attack tomorrow at dawn. We shall sleep to the blast of cannons — if we do sleep at all, since there's a 120-mm battery 200 meters away from my tent! I am perfectly calm. The victory shall be ours!

July 11

...At 4 a.m. sharp I went to the watch post; it was still dark, but the left side of the sector of attack was lit by the village of Mărăști, ablaze. The blasts of our cannons covered the whole area of attack, from Mărăști included, to Încărcătoarea. Grandiose, overwhelming sight. Little by little the day breaks and the eye can steal a faint glimpse, only with the help of binoculars, of our columns. I hear the infantry blasts first, then the machine-guns and, at last, the grenades; the hand-to-hand fight must have begun.

tion: "Peoples and states tumble down one upon the other; all of them draw the sword, all of them test their guns, all of them appeal to the powers of destruction, as if rushing down to topple, as soon as possible, the entire establishment gradually built up throughout centuries of sustained work."¹

The "blitzkrieg" envisaged by Germany at the outset of the war dragged on and showed signs of a long war, the armies of German and Austro-Hungarian "allied" powers were defeated on various fronts. Emperor Wilhelm's dramatic premonition, a few days after his own government launched the conflagration, came true with every passing day: "the string which will throttle and bring about our political and economic downfall."²

The two coalitions mercilessly clenched in the great conflagration — the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente — made efforts, put pressure, proffer menaces in order to drive on their side other countries too. Italy left the Triple Alliance and declared itself neutral. Romania's strategical position, her granary and oilfields were deemed salutary to war developments. Romania thought it unfit to enter the war when it ran counter to her fundamental interests: the liberation of the Romanian territories under foreign domination and their reintegration to the motherland. The government did not want to assume by itself a responsibility of historical significance. The Crown Council had to decide. *The Crown Council, of July 21/August 3, 1914.* Public opinion, the Romanian people like one were openly against the alliance with Austria-Hungary which occupied Romanian territories and savagely oppressed millions of Romanians.

The Crown Council was attended by King Carol I and the heir-presumptive Ferdinand, the former prime-ministers, Th. Rosetti and P. P. Carp, conservatives, I. I. C. Brătianu, prime minister in office, and members of the Government; the head of the Conservative Party, Al. Marghiloman, Take Ionescu, the head of the Conservative-Democratic Party and certain members of note in the two parties. "A deep silence. I had the impression that a great burden weighs upon us and stifles us. After a tacit exchange of glances King Carol broke the silence. He turned purple and was visibly excited". I. Gh. Duca depicted thus the atmosphere, present at the Council as a member of the Government.³ From the onset, the King upheld Romania's entry into the war on the side of the Central Powers, calling forth the treaty with the Triple Alliance, held in secret because of the opposition from public opinion; when disclosed, the entire attendance, with a few exceptions, was taken aback since, except three or four persons, none knew its contents "all the eyes were riveted with a curiosity blended with spite on the indifferent documents." The king's pleading on the entry into the war on the side of the Central Powers, motivated by the "undeniable advantages" Romania would have in the wake of this treaty, rounded off by "the formidable military power" of the Triple Alliance which would be the victors⁴ could persuade but P. P. Carp. All the others were for neutrality. The head of the Conservative Party, Al. Marghiloman, justified his choice by public opinion's will which ran counter to joining the Triple Alliance and "if we wage suchlike war today, we'll deeply hurt the national feeling." I. I. C. Brătianu, representing the government's point of view, backed the idea of neutrality, with powerful, convincing arguments: "Austria-Hungary and Germany have not informed Romania of their intentions; Romania cannot take up arms in a war which aims to destroy a small nation; public feeling, almost unanimously, opposes this war; the

Today the fame of Romanian and the name of Romania, as a nation and a state, are known in all corners of the civilized world and any son of the homeland bears it proudly.

I. GHICA, Romanian politician and writer (1818—1897)

question of the Romanians in Transylvania is central to entire public opinion; the fate of the Romanians from over the mountains, the national ideal are matters which the Romanian Government could not ignore; "if in small matters public opinion can be overlooked, in great matters it cannot", and "the sufferings of the Romanians in Transylvania are felt in the Romanian hearts on this side of the Carpathians, therefore, national consciousness raises again a war on the side of the Central Powers."⁵

The decision of the Crown Council of July 21/August 3, 1914 was termed as a policy of "the national instinct". A period of neutrality and then of collaboration with the powers which recognized Romania's rights over the Romanian territories under Austro-Hungarian domination. "Romania will be anytime ready to enter the war when she deems essential and fit to her interests." Hence, at Sinaia, according to competent opinions, the Crown Council of August 3, 1914 really laid, by its vote, another stone to the foundation of "the national unity of all Romanians."⁶

*

Romania deemed "essential and fit to her interest" to enter the war in the summer of 1916, when the allied armies were in a critical situation, both on the Western and the Eastern front, forcing the Russian Military Command to accept the conditions of Romania's joining the war. Hence, the two conventions with the Entente were signed on August 4/17, 1916: the political and military conventions, thereupon Romania entered the war. Another Crown Council was held after 10 days, on August 14/27 at Cotroceni, with a view to finally settling Romania's stand vis-à-vis the war. It was attended by the entire Government, headed by prime-minister I. I. C. Brătianu, the speaker of the Chamber (M. Pherdyke), the vice-chairman of the Senate (C. F. Robescu), former prime-ministers (P. P. Carp, Th. Rosetti and T. Maiorescu), heads of parties (Al. Marghiloman, Take Ionescu and N. Filipescu) and former speakers of the Chamber (C. Olănescu and C. Cantacuzino Pașcani). Opening the proceedings of the Council, the new king, Ferdinand, excited, said that he called together the "country's big wigs" to ask not for an advice but for "support", because the country could no more afford to remain neutral under the circumstances. To checkmate those likely to oppose Romania's joining the war on the side of the Entente or advocate her further neutrality, the king went to the heart of the attendance, by saying that he "suffered much pain", that he mastered his own feelings, and "the victory" thus gained was "the proof that he took the best solution".

P. P. Carp, whom the king asked to express his opinion on that matter, refused to take any stand, even questioning the purpose of the Council, after the final decision was reached.

Favourable reports come from all sectors; our soldiers penetrate the enemy positions and start evacuating their trenches. In some areas I can actually see our men running along the trenches and throwing down grenades.

By 8 o'clock, the whole line is ours! The enemy is routed in disorder, especially in the center. The prisoners are gathered in large numbers. Reports that cannons were captured.

On the left flank, that is, at Mănăstioara, the enemy puts up strong resistance.

I do not worry about it; yesterday evening we had already decided that the area south of Mărăști should be only the theatre of a demonstrative action. What I do worry about is the news that Regiment 11, who had penetrated the first line at Încărcătorea, were driven back by a counter-attack and that all the attempts to penetrate the enemy position once again were of no avail.

I ordered the Sixth Division (General Arghirescu) to halt the offensive and to resume them-

Engineering works



self, in that point, to an active, fixed-front action. I ordered the First Division (General Strătilescu) to dispatch Regiment 17 to support the Sixth Division, heading from south to north on Mărăști hill, to outflank Incărcătoarea. I also ordered fire on Incărcătoarea, by all heavy-artillery units which are at the right distance.

The infantry attack will have to start tomorrow morning, after a short artillery barrage...

July 12

The enemy are on the run everywhere. We did not even have to attack at Incărcătoarea; the simple menace of Regiment 17, turning back, from the south, routed the enemy last night. The menace from the north, at Mănăstioara, also yielded results.

Last night already, I brought the troops to a halt on the Șușița line, ordering them to put forward the field artillery and to mount it on the newly conquered grounds before one o'clock. The order to resume action will come in due time...

Marshal Alexandru Averescu, *Notițe zilnice din războiul (1916—1918)* Daily Notes from the War (1916—1918), pp. 171—176

FORWARD MARCH!

"...The light infantry (the 2nd Light Infantry Regiment) had been well drilled in advance, so that, when the time came, the men should live up to the hopes the country had placed in the Regiment that had won immortal laurels in the battle of Grivița, in 1877. The intense training used new

Prime-minister I. I. C. Brătianu, after outlining the international situation at that time, declared that Romania, if she wished to achieve her national aspirations, could no longer remain neutral without jeopardizing her future irremediably. On the contrary, she was in duty bound to strive to fulfil her ideal of unity, since the time was ripe and in order to fulfil that ideal Romania had to join Entente. "Even if we fail — the Prime Minister stated — the fact that four of the great powers of the world have acknowledged the justness of our national claims and sanctioned by a solemn act the ethnic borders of the Romanians over the Carpathians, means a greater and more important step than ever for the Romanians' cause."

The declaration of the prime-minister was backed by most of the attendance (with the exception of P. P. Carp, Al. Marghiloman and Titu Maiorescu), everyone supplying new arguments and highlighting the superior interests of the nation; Take Ionescu, calling forth the Romanians' sufferings in Transylvania, stated that "if we do not fight now to liberate them, the Carpathians will be for ever a frontier and the Romanianism will be annihilated" and that "if we do not strike the iron while it is hot" we would lose an opportunity waited for millennia by the Romanians, which "would be a dreadful mistake."⁸

The die was cast. The king's proclamations, made the same day, one to the nation, the other to the army and that made by the Minister of Education to the schools announced the nation that the day waited for centuries by national consciousness had come; the day of the union after long centuries of vicissitudes and hardships; the day to achieve once for all Michael the Brave's accomplishment, the union of the Romanians on the two sides of the Carpathians, and the army's duty was to carry the flag over the borders "where our brethren" were "looking forward and in full hopes."⁹

Truths sanctioned on the battlefields by the valiant Romanian Army, faithfully served by the entire Romanian nation, at home and abroad, substantiated by the great sacrifices made by the entire people.

1. In "Noua revistă română" of September 28, 1914.

2. J. F. Valley, P. Dufourcq, La première guerre mondiale, vol. 1, Paris, 1968, p. 44; I. Bulei, Arcul așteptării (The Arch of Expectancy), Bucharest, 1981, p. 34.

3. See I. G. Duca, Amintiri (1914—1916) — (Recollections, 1914—1916) cf. I. Bulei, op. cit., pp. 42—43, and Șt. Pascu, Făurirea statului național unitar român (The Reintegration of the Unitary Romanian Nation-State), vol. 1, Bucharest, 1983, p. 347.

4. România în primul război mondial (Romania in the World War I), Bucharest, 1979, p. 36.

5. Șt. Pascu, op. cit., pp. 347—348.

6. Însemnările lui N. Filipescu din 1914—1916, (N. Filipescu's Notes in 1914—1916), edited by N. Polizu Micșunești, Bucharest, 1936, p. 27; I. G. Duca, 3 august 1914. Consiliul de Coroană de la Sinaia (August 3, 1914. The Crown Council at Sinaia) in "Magazin istoric", X, 1976, I, pp. 38—44.

7. It refers to the alliance treaty signed on August 4/17, 1916, between Romania on one hand and Russia, France, Great Britain, Italy on the other, by which the Entente recognized Romania's right to unite all the territories inhabited by the Romanians in Austria-Hungary and the acknowledgement of the union through peace treaties.

8. Al. Marghiloman, Note politice (Political Notes), vol. 11, 1916—1917, Bucharest, 1927, pp. 148—157; I. G. Duca, Regele Ferdinand și Consiliul de Coroană de la Cotroceni (King Ferdinand and the Crown Council at Cotroceni), in "Generația Unirii", no. 10, Dec. 10/27, 1928; România în primul război mondial, (Romania in the First World War), pp. 138—139.

9. Șt. Pascu, op. cit., pp. 330—331.

THE ROMANIAN ARMY'S CAMPAIGN PLAN

In matters of national defence, we'd first show that along with combat preparedness, adequate supplies of weapons and combat gear, up-to-the-mark training of the ranks, a great deal of heed was paid to conceptual activity at the General Staff, that is drafting of operational and hypothetic war scenarios providing answers to any situation Romania might have been dragged into.

Its geographical position at the crossroads of the expansionist ambitions of the Austro-Hungarian and Tsarist Empires (Bulgaria, cherishing supremacist dreams over the Balkans and displeased at what it had got from the peace treaty of the second Balkan War, was seen as a potential ally of either empire), brought the Romanian political and military decision-makers into reckoning three strategic directions of actions — north-westwards, southwards and eastwards — in case of military confrontation with Austro-Hungary, Bulgaria and Russia. In order to thwart the Tsarist Empire's annexionist schemes in South-East Europe, they drew up a so-called "Scenario C" stipulating the conditions of warfare against a Russia allied with Bulgaria on two — eastern and southern — fronts. At the same time, the harshening policy of denationalization in Transylvania that was targeted against the Romanian population there together with the Dual Monarchy's hostility toward Romania during the second Balkan War and after the peace treaty of Bucharest (1913), made the Romanian government look with increased preoccupation at the situation in which Austria-Hungary might have attacked Romania.

That being the backdrop, in 1913 in fall the strategic studies which the Romanian General Staff had compiled as far back as 1888 for the situation in which the country would have come under attack from north-westwards were revised and updated. That undertaking gave birth to two scenarios — B and B 1 — under which Romania would have come to be clashing with Central Powers' forces. According to Scenario B¹, the war was to be fought on two fronts: a northwestern front opened against Austria-Hungary, along the Bukovina borderline and farther, along the Carpathians in the region between Vatra Dornei and Vîrciorova, the purpose being liberation of the historical Romanian provinces that the Austro-Hungarian Empire had annexed, and a southern front, along the Danube (from Gruia to Căscioare, west of Oltenița) and farther at the southern Dobruđjan frontier to the Black Sea and the maritime boundary, the objective being in this case to dam any offensive action the foe could have been started there. For the case in which Bulgaria would not have been inimical to us, the Romanian General Staff readied Scenario B 1² according to which Romania would have been to marshall all its military effort to one single

methods of combat. Groups of grenadiers and riflemen were set up, and the roles of each group of soldiers were assigned by companies: those who should attack in waves, those who should go down to the trenches, a.o. The soldiers who had held their positions throughout the winter were sent in reserve behind the front, where they industriously followed their theoretical and practical training, getting ready for the big fight to come, to liberate the country from the enemy.

The planes hovered all day long over the enemy positions, taking pictures of their fortifications, of their strongholds built on top of the hills, of the places where the German artillery was hidden, a.o... Our cannons, following those instructions, had located all their targets: the enemy's concrete-lined trenches, hidden behind networks of barbed wire, nests of machine-guns, observation posts, a.o. All the paths leading to the German trenches had been reconnoitered in advance, as the regimental sergeant-major made everyday reconnaissance incursions accompanied by the liaison officers and, sometimes, by all the officers.

At 11 o'clock, on July 9, 1917, a formidable artillery barrage was launched on the whole front. Hundreds of guns, of all sizes, blasted without respite. Everything was drowned in a deafening, uninterrupted rattle that filled the whole valley of the Zăbrău with its echo reverberating deep into the core of Moldavia, announcing the refugees that we were opening up the roads back to the homes they had fled. Whenever the gunners became too exhausted to be able to take aim any longer, other gunners came to replace them and the bombing continued its un-

perturbed death-and-destruction concert. After dark, the cannons abated their blast, but the fire continued, more subdued, all through the night, concentrated on the targets that had been located in advance, to prevent the Germans from making any change in their front; the next day, however, the shell storm exploded with still greater fury, shattering everything in its way.

In the night of July 10 to 11, the 2nd Light Infantry Regiment, whose mission was to break the German front, started the climb towards the top of Mărăști Hill, preceded by the scouts who had been sent to reconnoiter the way in advance, led by Private Boboc, who knew even the trees on the hill; eventually, they conquered a position one hundred metres below the enemy lines. Thousands of shells were flying over the soldiers' heads, like as many deafening, deadly reminders; whole sections of the concrete-lined trenches and portions of the barbed-wire fences were blown up, the observation posts and the nests of machine-guns were crumbling down, while the defenders were buried under the debris of the exploding shells! In that ghastly death dance, the soldiers of the 2nd Light Infantry Regiment were frantically waiting to bolt like thunder at the Germans that would be still alive after the bombing...

By four in the morning, the trumpeters sounded the "attack"!

The soldiers stormed ahead in an irresistible drive, reached the barbed-wire nets, which our artillery had partly destroyed, and crawled through the gaps, taking hold of the German trench that had been completely smashed in the bombing...

The riflemen continued their frantic advance, the bayonet became the queen of the battle and it took

front — i.e. the northwestern front, to repel the Austro-Hungarian aggressor and free Transylvania, the Banat and Bukovina from under foreign rule.

Romania's increasingly firm orientation toward the Allied Powers that had recognized the Romanians' historical rights over the historical Romanian provinces under the Dual Monarchy's sway was suggesting that by almost any account it would cease being a neutral country and join in the war on the anti-Austro-Hungarian side. Such were the circumstances in which Scenario B turned, after its revision in the light of the political-diplomatic and military realities of 1916, into the Romanian Campaign Plan. Its full title was *Operation Blueprint in Case of War Against the Central Powers and Bulgaria? Romania Ally of the Quadruple Entente*. Known as Scenario Z, it spelled out the tasks the Romanian First, Second, Third and the Northern Armies were to discharge, the disposition of forces on the two (northwestern and southern) fronts, cover and concentration operations, operations to be gradually staged in the campaign for Transylvania's liberation, operations on the southern front, etc.

The major goal in the name of which Romania entered World War One was laid down in the first chapter of the Campaign Plan — viz. liberation "of the Romanian-inhabited territories which now are part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy" and "attainment of our national ideal, that it reintegration of the homeland and its people".⁴ As a result, it was decided that the bulk of the Romanian forces (the Northern Army, the 2nd Army and the 1st Army or three-fourths of the total troop-strength) should be deployed in the major, more-than-950 km.-long northwestern front, its mission being to stage offensive operations against Austria-Hungary and liberate Transylvania, whereas the 3rd Army (one-fourth of the total troop-strength) was to be deployed in the second, nearly 650 km.-long southern front with an eye to checking a possible enemy offensive and assuring freedom of action to the Romanian troops along the Carpathian front.



In a march to the age-old Romanian land of Transylvania

With a view to those missions, Scenario Z calculated a total 562,847-combatant strength; a 420,324-strong army (107,948 military persons in the Northern Army 126,808 in the 2nd Army, 134,403 in the 1st Army and 51,165 military of the V Army Corps and the heavy-artillery forces at the disposal of the General Staff) was assigned to the northwestern front; 142,523 military — the 3rd Army — were assigned to the southern front.

Notwithstanding the fact that the conception underlying the Campaign Plan considered Romania's participation in a coalition war, the nation's policy-makers and military leadership made a strong point of preserving the Romanian army's individuality and freedom of choice in deciding the offensive strategic line. For all the suggestions that the Russian Chief of Staff, Gen. M. V. Alexeev, and the French Chief of Staff, Gen. J. Joffre, were making on Romania in the first half of 1916 to the effect of its directing the major attack upon Bulgaria⁵, the Government in Bucharest could not be talked out of what it had firmly decided: offensive action engaging the largest part of its forces in battle against Austria-Hungary, for ridding Transylvania from its yoke, and defensive action on the southern front. It was a line of action that was entirely attuned to the Romanian national interest.

The view was held that a lightening forced crossing of the Carpathians so as to take the foe off guard and prevent him from "gathering his forces and holding up in easy-to-defend parts in front of passes"⁶ was among the basic conditions for a successful campaign in Transylvania.

Even though military regulations at that time read to the contrary, cover groups had been entrusted the offensive mission to force a crossover of the Carpathians in the 17 passes of the mountain range. After that feat which they accomplished, the Northern, the 2nd and the 1st Romanian armies were to launch a three-stage advance for Transylvania's liberation. The line that was to be reached in the first stage (8 days' fighting to move forward for between 60 and 200 km.) was the Mureş river. That would be cutting the front by nearly 500 km. short. The immediate objective the Romanian High Command had assigned the army showed to be realistic also from the angle of troop-deployment in the battlefield according to the set schedule: tactical regulations for offensive action at the same were pointing to a daily average of between 7 and 25 km. which was not beyond the Romanians. So did the Campaign Plan tasks for the second and third stages — the Romanian troops were to reach the line from Dej to Cluj and afterwards, Debrecen, Oradea and Békéscsaba at a daily average of offensive advance of 13 to 24 km.

Banking on the fact, such as the truce concluded with the Allied Powers stipulated, that once Romania joined in the war they would be starting offensive actions in the Galicia and Thessaloniki fronts, the Romanian General Staff overlooked the likelihood that the Central Powers might have rapidly sent fresh and very large forces into Transylvania.

Defensive actions to safeguard the country's territory had been envisaged for the first stage on the southern front where the 3rd Romanian Army had been deployed. Under the terms of the Military Convention concluded by Romania with the Allied Powers, a Rus-

barely a quarter of an hour to the soldiers to climb down into the enemy trenches! The Germans tried to put up resistance in vain, for our soldiers started to bomb them with grenades, which turned the stubborn defenders into a mass of bones, mingled with the earth of the trenches. The attack was pursued with frenzy. The Germans were fleeing, abandoning hundreds of rounds to the riflemen, as well as loading belts and grenades, and they even left behind their raincoats...

After about four hours of fiery clashes, by eight o'clock in the morning, the whole hill of Mărăşti, with the German trenches and fortifications, fell in the hands of the Romanians! The riflemen rush on, alongside the infantry regiments, towards Dealul Mare. On the hill slope, scattered groups of Germans were routed in total confusion, running for their life and throwing down their weapons and ammunition. In a few strides, the Romanians caught them and nearly one thousand prisoners were sent back to the valley of Zăbrăuţ. About ten cannons were lying idle on the slope: three of them were still loaded with shells and ready to fire.

Riflet, bayonets, thousands of loading belts were scattered on the ground, in a rubble of grenades, gas-masks, sheets of canvas, rounds of ammunition. Above this mess, the dead were lying side by side, all over the slope, and the ditches were heaped with corpses, frozen by death in different positions: some firing their rifle or machine-gun, others covering in their shelters.

Now that we had taken hold of Dealul Mare, the

2nd Light Infantry Regiment continued to chase the Germans all day long on July 12, but the latter had learnt their lesson and no longer stopped in their flight to attack us. Around 11 o'clock the regiment had reached the village of Cîmpurile — the former headquarters of General Gerock, the commander of the Division in front of Mărăști.

Old men, women and children came to greet the soldiers, making the sign of the cross and crying. Some of them would kneel down and bury their face in the dust, lying prostrate for a few minutes, as if in adoration before a miraculous icon: they had lost all hope to be liberated from the enemy's cruel yoke...

For five days we chased the Germans, who were swarming on the steep paths near the Transylvanian border, getting lost in the thick Romanian mountain woods...

Had we pushed on with the offensive, with the help of a good ally, we would have driven the enemy out of the country, over the mountains, and the First Army would have routed them towards the Danube; then, who knows if our fate would have been as harsh as it was in that bleak 1918...

George Cornea, *Simfonia morții* (The Symphony of Death), Bucharest, 1920, pp. 149—160.

On the Mărășești Front DAY AND NIGHT ATTACKS AND COUNTER-ATTACKS

"...A track of hell, fire and smoke, drowned in deafening cannon blasts, stretched from Mărășești to Măgura Odobeștilor.

sian army corps was going to be shipped in addition to the Romanian forces there. After the Russian troops (two infantry divisions and one cavalry division) reached the disposition line, ready to fight, the second stage of southern front operations was to open — practically in its eastern zone, that is southern Dobrudja — which was tantamount to offensive action up to the line from Ruschuk to Sumla, to Varna in order to provide for a more stable defence. It was thought that those operations, planned to begin within ten days of the mobilization order, would "guarantee — if successful — full freedom of action to the Romanian armies in their fighting in Transylvania and Hungary"⁸.

As far as the southern theatre was concerned, also in this case the Romanian High Command generally made a correct judgement. Yet the deployment of the three Romanian divisions (no. 17, 9 and 19) between the Danube and the Black Sea, at Turtucaia, Silistra and Bazargic, that is three locations separated by big distances, was annihilating the opportunity for cooperation between them while the enemy could attack them by turns, which they really did, and this way achieve numerical superiority when they wanted to deal a deadly blow.

Brainchild of the national command, the Campaign Plan or Scenario Z on the basis of which Romania entered the war on August 14/27, 1916 was judiciously and realistically drawn up. It was on a par with the specific conditions in which the Romanian army was to act, with the general strategic situation in the European fronts and with the provisions contained in Romania's Alliance Treaty and Military Convention of August 4/17, 1916, clearly reflecting by the solutions recommended for the various military problems the goal in the name of which Romania entered the war — liberation of Transylvania, the Banat and Bukovina from Austria-Hungary's rule and reintegration of these ancient Romanian lands into the free homeland.

● Major COSTICĂ PRODAN

1. Arhiva MAN (National Defence Ministry Archives), General Staff holding, file no. 302, f. 1.
2. Ibidem, file no. 377, f. 1.
3. România în războiul mondial 1916—1919. Documente-Anexe România în World War One 1916—1919. Documents — Annexes), vol. I, Bucharest, 1934, pp. 111—112.
4. Ibidem, p. 111.
5. Col. Victor Atanasiu, Unele considerații asupra angajării României în primul război mondial. Ipoteza Z (Considerations on Romania's Joining World War One. Scenario Z), in Studii. Revistă de istorie, no. 6/1971, p. 1213.
6. România în primul război mondial. 1916—1919. Documente-Anexe (Romania in World War One. 1916—1919. Documents — Annexes), vol. I, p. 113.
7. Ibidem, p. 120.
8. Ibidem, p. 121.

THE 1917 CAMPAIGN OF THE ROMANIAN BATTLE FRONT

Colonel VASILE ALEXANDRESCU, D. Hist.

After halting, together with the Russian military forces, the enemy's invading troops at the Gates of Moldavia, along the line of the Eastern Carpathians, of the Lower Siret and of the maritime Danube, Romania began a huge work of reconstruction and consolidation of its fighting capacity. The supreme effort of the internal national forces, the steadfast conviction in the final success of the just war waged by the whole Romanian people, the mass tenacity and heroism of all the homeland's sons proved decisive factors in overcoming the great difficulties of rebuilding the country's economic and military structures.

At the end of the period of recovery the country's fighting force had been restructured in two armies (the 1st Army and the 2nd Army), totalling: 15 divisions of infantry, two divisions and four independent brigades of cavalry, a brigade of frontier guards, 36 regiments of artillery of which four of heavy artillery, 12 air squadrons, as well as other units and formations. The troops prepared for the campaign of 1917 amounted to 700,000 men, of whom 460,000 made up the operative army.¹

The whole people's effort to rebuild the national army was crowned by full success. Poet Octavian Goga, who was in Iași at that time wrote in July 1917 that: "A new army, stronger than the previous one, checkered by war and with its arms full of revenge, an army which is the pride of the country, waits passionately for the advance order. Never before has the Romanian soul been more confident and hardened than it is now"². A foreign observer, French colonel Bujac noted in his turn that: "In the hands of its commanders, the Romanian army has become an efficient instrument ready to accomplish great things"³.

The operations plan worked out by the Romanian High Command and finished by the end of May 1917, foresaw a general offensive with a view to completely immobilizing the main enemy groupings operating in the Focșani-Nămoloasa sector (the German Ninth Army). In its turn, the General Head quarters of the Central Powers, which had shifted the centre of weight of their military operations on the eastern front, aiming at winning the victory here by putting Romania out of ac-

The night was shattered by machine-gun fire which added to the ripple of infantry fire. The Siret valley was an inferno of light and of gnashing, deadly, clattering weapons, which filled the soul with unspeakable terror.

The regiment had withstood countless attacks and counter-attacks, and on July 30, when it climbed out of the trenches, flanked by the 10th Division and the Russian 7th Army Corps, it made a swift attack, succeeding in advancing and even in gaining ground.

The first ones to dive into that fierce counter-attack had been the soldiers in the company led by Lieutenant Iftimie Novac, the same brave men and valiant commander who had pushed back the enemy invasion from the Cirstea valley, in a previous fight, at Dragosla-vele.

They rushed out of the trenches with a wonderful enthusiasm. The commotion of bombs and thundering shells was overpowered by a formidable choir, singing a war song, "Up In Arms"! That is how Novac's soldiers and officers led the charge. In a few minutes' time the company was torn apart by a machine-gun barrage, and fifty men fell in the battle. Novac was wounded once, but he would not give up. he fought on until dark, when another bullet stopped him. He was carried to the hospital in a state of unconsciousness.

Day and night, attacks and counter-attacks were succeeding each other, with increasing fury. On August 6 their fierceness exceeded all limits.

The German army commanders tried the most violent and last blow, on which the result of the efforts and sacrifice they had made of the last few days depended...

In the afternoon, on the most glowering heat, when



Fierce struggle in the mountains, at Oituz

nobody was expecting the resumption of fight their infantry exceptionally launched the attack, without any artillery preparation, which took our soldiers by surprise, for a while. The clash was so violent that our first lines fell. In that commotion the moment was critical. It seemed that the gates of Moldavia would be crushed and that the enemy would invade the country. The commands of many units were abandoned, communications lost, and the Higher Commands crossed the Siret fearing that they would eventually be taken prisoners.

When all control seemed to be lost, the first battalion of our Regiment, under the command of reserve Captain I. Miclescu, launched a violent counter-attack in the Răzoare area, along a brigade front. The battalion fell on the flank of a Prussian regiment. Their move was decisive. The enemy were stunned, and took to their heels. Our soldiers run in their pursuit and in the meanwhile, the heavy artillery at Ionăsești and the 23rd

tion and making peace with Russia, had prepared the execution of a wide-scope offensive in southern Moldavia, simultaneously with another offensive operation in Galicia and Bucovina, for this end bringing new reinforcements from the other fronts.

At the beginning of July 1917, on the Romanian front covering a relatively short space line armies were face to face in a concentration of forces and means never seen before by World War I: 80 divisions of infantry, 19 divisions of cavalry, with 974 battalions and 550 squadrons, 923 artillery batteries involving some 800,000 military, another million being ready to join in the action.

Launched during July 1917, the great battles of Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz, called thus after the localities and areas in which they took place, went down in the history of the war of reunification as decisive moments for the destiny of the Romanian nation, at the same time influencing to a considerable extent the political and military developments of the 1917 campaign on a continental scale.

According to the plan established by the High Command of the Romanian front, on the morning of 11/24 July, 1917, after a powerful preparation of artillery which had lasted two days, the Romanian 2nd Army launched the liberation offensive of the mountainous region of Vrancea, attacking positions held by the great units of the Gerok Group of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army. Being quite a surprise, the Romanian attack carried out by three Romanian divisions, was crowned by success from the very first day. At the price of important sacrifices the troops led by

General Alexandru Averescu — the commander of the Romanian 2nd Army — penetrated deeply into the enemy's defensive system, liberating several localities, of which some had been turned into strong "centres of resistance", supplied with a large quantity of cannons and machine guns, with underground shelters, defended by lines of barbed wire.

The offensive elan of the Romanian soldiers was irresistible. After months of feverish waiting, during which they had completed their material equipment and improved their military training, they resumed the fight with unbridled upsurge for driving away the enemy that had invaded the national territory. Neither the killing fire of the enemy's cannons and machine guns, nor the lines of barbed wire could hold back the waves of attack of the Romanian foot soldiers, mountain corps, frontier guards or cavalry soldiers. Frequently they resorted to bayonet charges in which they proved matchless, coercing the enemy in defence to leave their positions and fall back in disorder. Pages of legendary braveness were written by the Romanian soldiers in the chronicle of the great war of national liberation and reunification during the battles of the Încărcătoare clearing, Dealul Mare and Muntele Războiului, as well as in the battles for the liberation of the localities of Mărăști (where the frontal attack was combined with the double outflanking manoeuvre), Cîmpurile, Vizantea, Soveja and Dragoslavele.

With equal impetuosity halted and then destroyed were the counter-attacks launched by the enemy in various sectors of the offensive strip of the

Romanian Army, 2nd Army. On its left wing, concomitantly attacking with the Romanians were the Russian units of the 8th Army Corps which managed, through hard battles, to conquer the Momia height (630 m) and to capture prisoners and war materiel.

After the first days of the battle of Mărăști, the enemy troops continued to withdraw on all directions towards the west, looking for favourable positions to rebuild their defence. A witticism of that period expressed suggestively the state of confusion which had overcome the German and Austro-Hungarian troops operating in the offensive area of the Romanian 2nd Army. Constantin Brown, a war correspondent of the British *Times* who was on the Romanian front, asked a German prisoner "Where are your troops?". The latter answered: "If ours keep on running the way they have run over the last three days and if yours continue to chase them with the same fastness, now they must be near Budapest"⁴.

Romanian officers have always proved their excellence in both military theory and practice

The general strategic context on the east front brought to a halt the offensive of Mărăști before reaching the objectives established in the operation plan. In the wake of the defections suffered by the Russian army in Galicia and Bucovina, through a resolution adopted unilaterally, without consulting the Romanian partner of coalition, the Russian High Command gave up any offensive action in Moldavia. Some of the allied forces stationed here were to be withdrawn and sent to the north, in order to close the breach created by the enemy and halt their advance into Bucovina.

This decision changed essentially the character of the military operations on the Romanian front. Instead of the planned offensives meant to determine the withdrawal of the enemy forces westward and the liberation of the national territory that had been invaded, Romania, continuing its cooperation with the Russian troops, was forced to engage great and extremely difficult defensive battles. This is how the

artillery (Regiment, Ed.n.) adjust the fire-range, wreaking havoc among the frightened Germans on the run.

The pursuit ends near Susița, where the Germans took shelter again in the trenches. Captain Miculescu was among the first heavily wounded; Second-Lieutenants Rașcu and Pruncu died in the midst of the fight. All the officers of the battalion fell wounded, except for Second-Lieutenant N. Pușcă and Lieutenant D. Tigoianu, who carried on Captain Miculescu's inspired operation.

Our units were quickly reorganized and the front set up again, so that the Germans' last and most violent attempt on the Romanian front died away, crumbling down, together with the glory of German might, in the dust of Romanian land, at Mărășești."

I. M. Dimitrescu, *Jerife și biruinți* (In război cu Regimentul 50 infanterie) [Sacrifice and Victories (In War with the 50th Infantry Regiment)], Focșani, ms. pp. 129—131.

NOTHING MISSING FROM THE HUGE BATTLE ORCHESTRA (Oituz: Artillery Preparation for the Attack on Peak Coșna, August 1, 1917)

"...At three in the afternoon, preparations will start for the attack on the slopes of the Cindea, towering above us, and barring our advance. Hidden by the thick trees, the soldiers place the shells near the cannons, stealing quick glances through the underbrushes to the enemy on top of the hill. Down in the val-



ley, in the gullies, the infantry men are waiting for the signal. The afternoon heat weighs heavy over the armies prepared for battle.

Suddenly, a red flame tears through the brushes near us and a thundering explosion deafens us, shaking the earth. With a savage roar, the shell bolts through the sky, flying over the enemy heights. The first cannon has fired. Deafening explosions signal us that the other three cannons have also joined the saraband. The shells, fired at regular intervals, pierce our ears, shaking the bottom of the hills. We hear the hissing sound of our shells fired over the top of the Cindea, towards the invisible valleys.

The riposte is not late to come either. With rending noise, the German shells bite into the ground, sending big lumps of earth and splinters flying into the air. Humming like bees, the shrapnels tear through the air, hitting the compact earth with short thuds. The machine-guns have also joined the action on the Cindea; among explosions and thundering outbursts the ears catches their shrill noise, like metal sheets rattling in the wind. In a slower, ominous and muted tempo, the enemy keeps the beat. Like angry, swarming flies, their pointed bullets buzz through the brushes. On top of the Coşna, the 305-mm dragon belches a volcano of flames and dust into the air, with a quivering noise. A few steps away, our cannon sputters its shells, ripping our ears six times a minute. We are in hell, in an inferno of noise, crossed by the red flames of fires and immersed in the dusty mist of the explosions. To complete the huge battle orchestra, the shrill and monotonous sound of trumpets creeps

Romanian army had to wage two great battles, which took place almost concomitantly in the areas of Mărăşeşti and Oituz.

On July 24/August 6, 1917, the enemy started the application of their own offensive plan, trying to carry out a large outflanking manoeuvre by the advance of strong German forces on the Siret valley and of other, Austro-Hungarian ones, on the Trotuş valley, which were to join hands at Adjud, closing the Romanian 2nd Army and the Russian 4th Army in a huge pincers. The troops of the German 9th Army, led by Field Marshal August von Mackensen launched the offensive along the general direction of Focşani, Mărăşeşti, Adjud. They managed to take the Russian forces out of their defensive positions, compelling them to fall back under a strong pressure. The prompt and firm intervention in that area of the Romanian 1st Army commanded by General Constantin Christescu, then by General Eremia Grigorescu, the extremely fierce battles waged for almost one month, finally stopped the German offensive for good, thwarting the ambitious enemy plan to penetrate the heart of Moldavia through the gate of Focşani.

The battle of Mărăşeşti, as the biggest clash of forces in the summer of 1917 on the Romanian front was later to go down in the history of World War I; it was — according to General Eremia Grigorescu's words — "the grave of all German illusions". The assesment held true also for the other confrontation, the one which took place on the Trotuş valley, in which the offensive of the Austro-Hungarian troops, launched two days later than that of Mărăşeşti, was to crush against the



Watch and ward

defensive heroic wall of the Romanian 2nd Army of the Oituz area. The catchphrase under which the Romanian soldiers fought during those days which were decisive for the fate of their homeland, "No trespassing here, either!", animated both the fighters led by General Eremia Grigorescu in the decisive confrontation of Mărăşeşti, and the ones commanded by General Alexandru Averescu during the bloody clashes of Oituz, Coşna and Cireşoia.

A peremptory expression of the firmness of an entire people defending its right to live a free life in its own, independent state this catchphrase was given effect by the Romanian soldiers. The enemy could advance no further. It was definitively stopped and forced to give up its plans of an imperialist essence with which it had started the campaign. The failure of its project to crush the Romanian and Russian armies, to conquer the whole Romanian territory and push Romania out of the war through the force of weapons meant a severe political and military defeat.

The Romanian army's victory in the campaign of 1917 had beneficial consequences on various planes. Through its heroic resistance, the Romanian army surrounded with love and supported morally and materially by

the entire people, ensured the further existence of the sovereign Romanian state, as a prestigious partner within the coalition of the Entente. The success scored in the great battles of Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz considerably enhanced the confidence of all Romanians, especially those inhabiting the territories conquered by the enemy, at the moment when the decisive battles for driving the occupiers away and freeing the entire Romanian ethnical space were resumed. Also, the success of the Romanian front was a valuable contribution to the Entente's military effort drawing closer the day of the victory of this coalition over the Central Powers.

The powerful echo elicited all over the world by the Romanians' victories shed light on the global political-strategic importance of the great battles waged on the Romanian front in the summer of 1917. British Premier Lloyd George said that the regrouping of the Romanian army and the staunch resistance — so precious to the allied cause — which this army opposed at that moment to the enemy in condi-

tions of exceptional difficulty were a magnificent example of the force conferred by freedom on a free people. The same British politician paid homage to the exceptional braveness of the Romanian peasant who proved to the world that he was the bravest soldier in the world when he was given the opportunity to show his valiance.

Along the seven decades which have elapsed since the great battles waged in the summer of 1917 the Romanian people has preserved unaltered its full, deep gratitude to those who made the supreme sacrifice on the battlefields of the First World War, in the name of the sacred ideal of national unity and freedom. Referring to the memorable battles of Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz, to all those who shed their blood for the prosperity of their people, President Nicolae Ceaușescu said: "We bow with veneration before the the heroes of the nation, before those who did not spare their lives to secure the liberty and progress of the Romanian people, who, in their days, helped to build foundation of the grand edifice we are now raising on the soil of Socialist Romania"⁶.

Machine-gunners ready to repel any attack from the skies

1. Lt. Col. Ioanițiu Alexandru, *Războiul României (Romania's War 1916-1918)*, Vol. II, Bucharest, p. 283.

2. *The România*, year 1, No. 172 of July 27, 1917.

3. Colonel Bujac, *Campagnes de l'Armée roumaine, 1916-1918*, Paris, 1933, p. 101.

4. Constantin Kirifescu, *Istoria războiului pentru întregirea României (The History of the War for Romania's Reunification)*, 1916-1919, Vol. II, pp. 481-482.

5. Apud Mircea Djuvara, *La guerre roumaine 1916-1918*, Paris, 1919, p. 115, 130.

6. Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Romania on the Way of Completing Socialist Construction*, Vol. 2, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1969, pp. 435-436.

up from the valley, signalling the assault, while the rocket flares light up the top of the hill, in their mad dance. In the blue skies above, spotted with milky patches left by the flying shrapnels, two enemy planes hover like hawks over the hills. Then, the heavy, muted thuds of hand grenades add to the rattling of rifles and to the artillery thundering down, in the valley. A pandemonium of destructive and deadly forces surrounds us. You can feel the blind wheel of fate coming down on you, crushing you; you are no more than a toy, a withering leaf blown by the wind of death...

Yet I look at the people around us. Mechanically, like automats, the gunners load, take aim, fire and load again. The lieutenant coolly looks around, sizes up the situation, thinks over, commands. The young and small second-lieutenant runs up and down through the battery, shouting the orders, trying to raise his voice over the deafening, uninterrupted din. One thought keeps them all going: the action must never stop, not even for a moment..."

Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *File rupte din cartea războiului* (Pages Torn out of the Book of War), Bucharest, ms., pp. 95-98.

AUGUST 24, 1916 THE CUSUI OSTROV

Upon entering World War I, the Romanian navy had a powerful Danube flotilla. To the four Romanian monitors of 650 tons each and to the eight modern motor torpedo-boats the Austro-Hungarian navy opposed nine monitors, eight motor gun



boats and numerous other vessels.

Considering the inestimable risks the loss of control over the Danube river would have caused for both camps following a direct naval confrontation of large dimensions, both commands tried to protect their units and to use them to support the land forces. To stop the Austrians' access on to the lower Danube, the Romanian flotilla was always on alert and backed its own troops with both the efficient board artillery and by incursions behind the front. The first fierce fighting and the first sacrifices were registered on the Cusui isle. Twenty years after those events, the gun boat "Nicolae Grigore Ioan" which participated in the fighting there, was awarded the order "Mihai Viteazul".

*

At the beginning of August 1916, the four monitors and the eight gun boats of the Danube Division were concentrated at Turtucaia-Oltenița. The ships had been there already since 1915, their mission being to cover the right flank of the Dobrujan front in case of mobilization. The monitors *Lahovary* and *Kogălniceanu* made up a division, and *Brătianu* and *Catargiu* — another division. One monitor and two gun boats made up one single operative unit bearing the name of the monitor. Each gun boat* had a displacement of 45 tons and was equipped with an unprotected cannon of 47 mm, a machine gun of 6.5 mm and two self-propelled torpedoes.

On August 14, 1916, at 3 o'clock p.m., by order transmitted to the navy, various officers were promoted to higher ranks. Among them the squadron commander Nicolae Negrescu was promoted to

CRONOLOGICAL FACTS (II)

(1 July 1917—1 December 1918)

The period between the summer of 1917 and the end of the following year is recorded in golden letters in the great book of the war waged by Romania for achieving the unitary nation-state.

The Romanian army, reorganized and better trained, went into action again, determined to defend the only free area of the national territory, to liberate the ancient land occupied by enemy forces and then to contribute to achieving the objective for which Romania had joined the war in August 1916: the liberation of the fellow Romanians who were under the rule of the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy.

The battles waged in July-August 1917 at Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz — undying examples of love for one's nation and country, of the legendary heroism of soldiers and officers — had an outstanding importance for the subsequent evolution of the events, not only on the Moldavian front, but on the other allied fronts too.

In the autumn of 1917, the debacle of the Russian front placed Romania in an extremely critical position: abandoned or neglected by its allies, especially concerned with the situation on other fronts or in Soviet Russia, this country was forced to conclude with the Central Powers first the armistice of Focșani, on November, 26/December 9, 1917, and then the "peace" of Bucharest of April 24/May 7, 1918. Even in those particularly dramatic conditions for Romania, the Romanian people, in its entirety, did not cease to struggle for attaining the ideal of freedom and national unity.

Concomitantly, the actions were intensified for fulfilling the supreme dream for unity of all Romanians. The progressive forces in the country, as well as in the temporarily occupied territories or in those that were still under foreign rule, the Romanian emigrants to various states of the world made serious efforts in order to prepare the act of the great union. The plebiscite decisions of March, November and December 1918, from Chișinău, Cernăuți and Alba Iulia, turned into reality a desideratum for whose achievement numberless generations contributed by struggle and sacrifices; the work achieved by them follows the laws and logic of history: a single people brought together in a single country, within the normal boundaries inherited from the forefathers.

2/15 July 1917 Professor Simion Mândrescu was elected chairman of the "Society of the Romanians from Transylvania and Bucovina", with the central office in Bucharest, which aimed at intensifying the action with a view to achieving Greater Romania.

9/22 July—19 July/1 August 1917 The great offensive of Mărăști took place. The 2nd Army, under the command of General Alexandru Averescu, in co-operation with the Russian 4th Army, under the command of General Aleksandr Iosifovich Ragoza, obtained a brilliant tactical success, following which the front of the Romanian army was established and consolidated on the valley of river Putna, while the German offensive in the Nămo-loasa sector was postponed; a territory of about 500 sq. km. and 30 localities were liberated; heavy losses were inflicted on the enemy: 2,793 prisoners, 69 artillery pieces, 27 machineguns, 2,500 rifles and a great quantity of ammunition and other war material captured or destroyed. The Romanian units left on the battlefield 1,469 dead and 3,052 wounded.

10/23 July 1917 The Ministry for War Material is set up for coordinating the manufacturing and import of war material.

11/24 July 1917 212,266 gas masks were distributed to the military of the 2nd Army.

18 July/1 August, 1917 The French minister of war, Paul Painlevé, sent a telegram to his Romanian counterpart in which he underlined that "the French army received with joy the news of the brilliant successes of the Romanian army, reorganized and anxious to liberate the occupied part of its homeland" and addressed "warm congratulations and the most cordial wishes of the French soldiers to their Romanian brothers-in-arms".

24 July/6 August—21 August/3 September, 1917 The battle of Mărășești takes place, the greatest confrontation of forces on the Romanian front throughout the war. Aiming at making a breach in the Romanian front, at occupying Moldavia and taking Romania out of the war, the German-Austrian-Hungarian forces — under the command of Field Marshal August von Mackensen, also called "the front breaker" — with a strength of 12 divisions, supported by the fire of over 850 cannons and more than 1,100 machine guns, unleashed a powerful offensive, which was however vigorously rejected by the units of the Romanian 1st Army, under the command of General Eremia Grigorescu. The fights on 25 July/7 August for the liberation of Doaga and Străjescu villages were extremely bitter, and the 32nd Infantry Regiment "Mircea" especially distinguished itself; its soldiers, only in their shirt-sleeves, impetuously launched a bayonet counter-attack, forcing the enemy to withdraw on the initial positions. The losses suffered by the Romanian troops amounted to 610 officers and 26,800 soldiers, dead, wounded and missing, while the enemy lost 65,000 men, dead, wounded and missing.

26 July/8 August—9/22 August, 1917 The third battle of Oituz takes place, during which the units of the 2nd Romanian Army heroically resisted to the German-Austrian-Hungarian offensive, which aimed at conquering the Oituz sector and penetrating in the Trotuș Valley. The plan of the enemy was to engage on this sector of the front the reserves of the adversary, taking them away from the main place of action — Mărășești — and, at the same time, to intercept the line of communication on the Trotuș Valley and to get thus hold of Moldavia's oil and coal region. The units of the 2nd Romanian Army, under the command of General Alexandru Averescu, put up a firm resistance, writing pages of matchless heroism in the conquest of Coșnei and Cîrșoiaiei hills — important strategic points which denied to the enemy the possibility to penetrate in the Trotuș Valley. The losses suffered by the Romanian troops in the battle of Oituz amounted to more than



Commander of the high-speed boat, Captain Constantin Dumitrescu



The crew of the high-speed boat No. 6 awarded the high order "Mihai Viteazul" two decades after the battles of Ostrovl Cusui

the rank of Rear-Admiral and the commander of the gun boat No. 6, Constantin Dumitrescu, to the rank of Captain. Modest, conscientious, firm and energetic in action, the former Lieutenant Constantin Dumitrescu was known in the whole squadron as the best trained officer (together with the whole crew) in launching torpedoes. First mate on gun boats No. 6 was pilot

* 1. Maior Ene commanded by Lieutenant C. Pogoanatu. 2. Căpitan Nicolae Lăscăr Bogdan commanded by Lieutenant Andonie Calistrat. 3. Căpitan Nicolae Romano commanded by Lieutenant Ion Alexandrescu. 4. Maior Giurescu commanded by Lieutenant G. Niculescu. 5. Maior Sontu commanded by Lieutenant G. Dumitrescu. 6. Maior Nicolae Grigore Ioan commanded by Lieutenant C. Dumitrescu. 7. Locotenent Călinescu commanded by Lieutenant Aurel Schiffelers. 8. Căpitan Valter Mărăcineanu commanded by Lieutenant G. Constantinescu.

officer Ioan Ghiculescu, who had just finished school.

In full fighting to keep the Turtucaia bridge head, the gun boat *Nicolae Grigore Ioan* was assigned various missions of transportation, liaison and even shelling of the enemy positions. Running out of fuel, the gun boat was sent to Oltenița for supplies, early at dawn break. At noon, with fuel supplies and with the mail on board as well as with news from the Transylvanian front, the gun boat No. 6 was approaching the monitor *Alexandru Lahovary*, commanded by Colonel Vasile Toescu. The monitor was slowly sailing against the current, so as to change its position of shelling, closely followed by the *Kogălniceanu*. But here is an eye witness telling what happened on board, on the river and in its immediate vicinity:

"The gun boat was heading towards the Cusui Canal, to carry out the order given by the commander of the 2nd Division of monitors: "Get on the Cusui Canal and cover the retreat of our troops towards Siliștră".

Hardly had it reached the mouth of the canal, when the gun boat No. 3, commanded by Lieutenant Ioan Alexandrescu, received a similar order and proceeded at full speed after the gun boat No. 6.

High up on the hill crest, a place where we suspected enemy machine guns to have been installed, a group was trying to get into position as near as possible to the Danube. Now we knew for sure where the machine guns were firing from. We measured the distance and conveyed the information to the shell firer, Virgil (Lt. Dragalina), who started firing.

The first shell hit the crest, the second hit the target and the entire crest

12,000 people, dead, wounded and missing.

31 July/13 August, 1917 Corporal Constantin Mușat, from the border guards, died heroically in the battle of Coșna. Having an arm cut off due to wounds received during the first stage of the campaign, he refused to be discharged and fought on, throwing grenades, until the supreme sacrifice.

4/17 August, 1917 For "the bravery and exemplary gallantry with which the officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers of 18 "Gorj" Regiment fought in the fierce battles of 11/24 to 14/27 July, 1917 (in defence of Mărăști village — editor's note), thus reenacting the brilliant feats of arms they had achieved in the Jiu Valley in the 1916 battles", the regiment is awarded the order "Mihai Viteazul", the highest military war decoration.

6/19 August, 1917 Captain Grigore Ignat of the 51/52 Infantry Regiment falls, at the head of the machine gunners group he commanded, in the battle fought south of Mărășești locality.

21 August/3 September, 1917 During the fights of Muncelul, in the last stage of the Mărășești battle, Second Lieutenant Ecaterina Teodoroiu died heroically while urging the soldiers to attack for chasing away the enemy from the ancient land of Moldavia.

31 August/13 September, 1917 The commander of the 1st Army, General Eremia Grigorescu, mentions the soldiers of the subordinated units for "the bitter resistance put up at Mărășești and Muncelul against the onrush of the invading enemy".

4/17 September, 1917 The first contingent of Transylvanian Romanians, formed in the U.S.A., arrived on the French front.

10/23 September, 1917 A new contingent of 600 soldiers and 37 officers from Transylvania, set up in Russia, solemnly took the oath of allegiance at Șorogari, near Iași.

25 September/7 October, 1917 The newspaper "Opinia" (The Opinion) from Iași publishes the appreciation made by the chief of the French military mission to Romania General Henri Mathias Berthelot, with regard to the Romanian army which, during the great battles of July-August "gave wonderful proof of heroism. The Romanian soldiers fight admirably. They are equal to the bravest defenders. They are the best soldiers in the world".

1/14 October, 1917 The former battalion of mountain troops is turned into a regiment, a measure required by Romania's geographical situation which called for "troops specially drilled and trained, that could be used for reconnaissance, incursions, resistance in certain points in all weather conditions and in the most difficult terrain".

9/22 October, 1917 The order of "Mihai Viteazul" is awarded on the colours of the 32nd Infantry Regiment "Mircea" for "the bravery and remarkable gallantry with which the officers and the troop of this glorious regiment fought", and on the colours of the 3rd Mountain Troop Regiment, the soldiers of which "rejected all the fierce attacks which the German troops mounted against the positions of the regiment".

13/26 October, 1917 8 submarines, 20 motor gunboats and 2 squadrons of sea planes are ordered to American firms.

20 October/2 November, 1917 The main Romanian dailies publish the appreciations made by the British newspaper "Westminster Gazette" with regard to the behaviour of the Romanian troops in the summer of 1917, when they gave "a splendid proof of their qualities",

the defence of "the front on the Siret" entering the military annals as "one of the most beautiful war operations".

25 October/7 November, 1917 The armed insurrection takes place in Petrograd, the Red Guards occupy the main objectives, the provisional government is overthrown, the Council of the People's Commissars headed by V. I. Lenin is set up as the organ of state power. The victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution opened in the history of mankind the epoch of proletarian revolutions, of passing from capitalism to socialism, an event which had a powerful echo in Romania too.

26 October/8 November, 1917 The Second General Congress of the soviet of deputies of workers and soldiers of Russia approves the "Decree on Peace", whereby all the belligerent states were urged to open negotiations with a view to concluding a democratic and just peace, considering that "the continuation of this war waged for dividing among the powerful and rich nations the weak nations occupied by them is the greatest crime against mankind".

1/14 November, 1917 The anti-aircraft battalion is set up to replace the anti-aircraft defence corps.

25 November/8 December, 1917 The United States of America declare war on Austria-Hungary.

26 November/9 December, 1917 The armistice between Romania and the Central Powers is concluded at Focșani, a direct result of the situation created following the Russian-German armistice of Brest-Litovsk (22 November/5 December, 1917).

26 December, 1917/8 January, 1918 W. Wilson, President of the U.S.A., submits to the Senate his programme entitled "The 14 Points" whereby it was demanded that "the world become a surer place for any nation that wants to freely dispose of its life, to decide upon its own institutions". At the same time, he underlined that "the peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the other nations we want to see safeguarded and ensured, must be granted the broadest self-government".

1/14 January, 1918 A convention is concluded between the representatives of the Romanian-Russian armies on the Romanian front and those of the Supreme Command of the Central Powers — completing the armistice of Focșani of 26 November/9 December, 1917 — which provided for the cessation of all military operations in the Black Sea for the duration of the armistice and established an imaginary demarcation line which started from the mouth of Sfintu Gheorghe branch of the Danube and continued up of the mid-distance between the Russian Black Sea shore and the Turkish shore of Asia Minor (Anatolia).

2/15 January, 1918 The members of the first Romanian Legation in the U.S.A. — Dr. C. Angelescu, N. Lahovary, Al. Rubin, Major L. Teiușanu and V. Stoica — pay an official visit of presentation to the White House, an occasion on which it is underlined that Romania entered "in a war that threatened the independence of small states (...) to liberté the brothers oppressed by a yoke difficult to suffer".

13/26 January, 1918 The Paris Academy of moral and political sciences sends a telegram to the Romanian Academy whereby it expresses "the deep admiration for the heroism of Romania" and the confidence that "after the war (Romania — editor's note) remains in eastern Europe the sentinel of Latin civilization".

was ablaze. Behind us, the *Kogălniceanu* had discovered an enemy unit and shelled it violently, tearing it to pieces.

But other machine guns, scattered throughout the hill which dominated the Danube, kept on firing at the stream of people that were trying to reach Siliștră...

All of a sudden, Lieutenant Dorin Iacomi shouted in the speaking trumpet: "Gun boat No. 6 has turned to left and it's coming towards us. Gun boat No. 3 is sailing on the canal at full speed and is firing with the cannon and with the machine gun".

The commander was on deck, near the shell firer. He took the binoculars and looked at the two gun boats, then ordered the artillery to support the gun boat No. 3 with full fire.

Gun boat No. 6 was coming downstream at full speed. But no member of the crew could be seen on deck. But as the boat approached the monitor, from behind the cannon stood out the pilot-officer Mihai Hurmuzescu who conveyed us the tragic news about the death of the commander, the first mate and of the seamen who were on deck operating the cannon, the machine gun and the signals.

The gunners had fallen down around the cannon of 47 mm; near them, Constantin Dumitrescu, face upwards, with his hands gripping the binoculars, and with the new cap with the captain's stripes, he had worn for so short a time, covering his face.

What had happened? Our land forces were withdrawing below the river bank, towards Siliștră. But the machine guns installed on the crest started sowing death. Gun boat No. 6, according to

orders, was to cover with the fire arms on board the withdrawal of its own infantry. But it came under the sweeping fire of no fewer than ten enemy machine guns. Steerman Dumitru Niță was wounded and the boat, sailing almost 18 nautical miles an hour, was left without control. Engineman Loghin slowed down and the stem touched the sandy bank. The commander was busy correcting the artillery fire range. The gun boat, immobilized for the moment and turned into a fixed target, was swept by the cross fire of the machine guns. Upon orders from Constantin Dumitrescu, a signal was put out, repeated by the gun boat No. 3: "Enemy artillery is firing on us. Protect us". Right after that, the commander and the gunners dropped dead under the machine gun fire. Engineman Loghin made the boat move off again. Under the command of pilot officer Hurmuzescu, the gun boat came back with half the crew alive. The intervention of the artillery on gun boat No. 3 and monitors destroyed the enemy machine guns on the bank of the Cusui canal. The action of the crews was energetic and efficient: at 2.30 hours P.M., therefore 20 minutes after gun boat No. 6 set out to fulfill the mission, the enemy was annihilated.

• Cristian CRĂCIUNOIU

1. Vlădescu Constantin (Rear-Admiral), Under the Monitor Armour. Notes from the War for National Unity (manuscript), vol. I.

3. Negrescu Nicolae (Rear Admiral), The Role of Navy in the War for National Unity, Bucharest, 1920.

3. Negrescu Nicolae (Rear-Admiral), Comment on fit la guerre sur le Danube, Bucharest, 1938.

4. Bardescu Nicolae, Com-modore, Log-Based Memories, No. 7-8, July-August 1936, in the review "Our Sea", p. 123.

The soldier finds in history the best and most truthful things about strategy.

M. KOGALNICEANU, Romanian politician, historian and writer (1817-1871)

17/30 January, 1918 The first issue of the weekly "La Roumanie", organ of "Romanian claims and interests" comes out in Paris.

27 January/9 February, 1918 The peace treaty between the Austria-Hungary and Ukraine is signed in Brest-Litovsk.

20 February/5 March, 1918 The preliminary peace treaty between Romania and the Central Powers is concluded at Buftea, near Bucharest; according to it Romania was "to cede to the Central Powers Dobrudja up to the Danube, to demobilize at least 8 divisions, to facilitate the passage of the Central Powers' troops through Moldavia, towards Odessa and to dismiss all foreign officers who were enemies of the Central Powers and of their representatives".

22 February/7 March, 1918 At the initiative of the General Directorate of the theaters, a grand performance takes place at Mărăști to gather funds for rehabilitating the locality, which "symbolizes the heroism of the Romanian army".

28 February/13 March, 1918 A high Decree provides for the gradual and partial demobilization of the Romanian army, starting from 1/14 March, 1918.

5/18 March, 1918 The preliminary peace treaty between Romania and the Central Powers is signed at Buftea. On this basis, the peace negotiations will start in Bucharest on 9/22 March, 1918.

27 March 9 April, 1918 "On the strength of historical right and of the national right, on the basis of the principle that peoples by themselves should decide their fate", the Country's Council in Chișinău decides the union of Bessarabia with Romania.

3/16 April, 1918 A new political group — "The People's League" — headed by General Alexandru Averescu is set up in Iași.

11/24 April, 1918 The Romanian Legion in Italy is formed at Cittaducale, consisting of 112 members who were to fight in the Italian army for the cause of the Allies.

17/30 April, 1918 "The National Committee of the Romanians of Transylvania and Bukovina" is set up in Paris under the leadership of Traian Vuia. The committee aimed at enrolling the Romanians from France in the armies of the Entente, in order to contribute in this way to the victory of the common cause, to "the liberation of Transylvania, Banat, Crișana and Maramureș and their union with Romania".

24 April/7 May, 1918 The Peace Treaty between Romania and the Central Powers is concluded in Bucharest. According to it, Romania was forced to cede to Bulgaria the ancient Romanian land of Dobrudja, with a population that amounted to over 380,430 inhabitants — as per 1912 census — out of which more than 216,440 Romanians, and to Austria-Hungary a strip of over 5,600 sq.km. along the southern and eastern Carpathians; the navigation on the Danube was the monopoly of the victors, Romania having no right to impose custom taxes; at the same time, Romania was compelled to demobilize almost the entire army, its military strength being reduced to 20,000 people in infantry, to under 3,200 in cavalry and up to 9,000

people in artillery; also, the German company "Öl-länderein-Pachet-Gesellschaft" was given exclusive rights over all oil-fields in the country, etc.

April, 1918 The Romanians in Switzerland sign a protest against the peace treaty concluded in Bucharest, considered as "the very negation of the political and economic independence of our homeland. This peace" — they further underline — "is an instrument of hatred and revenge, obtained by violence, in spite of the most elementary principles of justice (...). The Act of Bucharest is not a peace treaty; it is in glaring contradiction to the notion of peace".

13/26 May, 1918 The Romanian officers and soldiers in Italy send an appeal to the Romanian and Czech soldiers in the Austrian-Hungarian army, asking them to disobey the imperial orders and to fight for the national liberation of their countries.

25 May/8 June, 1918 The colours of the 9th Mountain Guards Regiment and of 2th Infantry Regiment which distinguished themselves in the fierce battles of July—August 1917 on the Mărășești front, are awarded the medal "Virtutea Militară" (The Military Virtue).

5/18 June, 1918 "The Committee for Romanian Unity" is set up in Italy with the aim to "establish the necessary contacts between the leaders of the movements fighting for the same cause, in order to achieve a general co-ordination of the movements for the national unity of the Romanians".

22 June/5 July, 1918 At the initiative of Vasile Stoica the "Romanian Social League" is set up in Washington with the aim of making known in the U.S.A. that the Romanians' struggle for completing their supreme national ideal is a legitimate one.

6/19 July, 1918 "The Action Committee of the Romanians of Transylvania, Banat and Bukovina" is formed with the aim of carrying out a sustained propaganda, as well as of organizing a legion of Romanian soldiers that would take part in the struggle for the liberation of the ancient Romanian territories that were under the rule of the Dual Monarchy.

24 August/6 September, 1918 "The National Council of Romanian Unity" is set up in Paris. It has 29 members among which Take Ionescu, Vasile Lucaciu, Octavian Goga, Nicolae Titulescu, Dr. Ion Cantacuzino, Simion Măndrescu; the Council is recognized by the Allied Powers as the spokesman of Romania's interests.

2/15 September, 1918 The Congress of Romanians, Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Serbians, Croats and Ruthenians held in New York adopts a motion demanding the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary and the liberation of all peoples oppressed by the Dual Monarchy.

16/29 September, 1918 Bulgaria unconditionally surrenders, signing the armistice at Salonika.

29 September/12 October, 1918 The Executive Committee of the Romanian National Party, meeting in Oradea, adopts a declaration on the determination of the Romanian nation of Transylvania "to decide its own fate" and to take its place "among the free nations, that is, to proclaim the firm and inalienable right of the Romanian nation to full nationhood".

2/15 October, 1918 The Romanian legion in Italy is enthusiastically set up.

5/18 October, 1918 The Hungarian parliament in Budapest opens its session and the representative of the Romanian National Party of Transylvania reads the declaration of the Executive Committee of the Party, whereby the Transylvanian Romanians asserted their inalienable right to full national life.

THE HEROISM OF THE ROMANIAN AIRMEN IN WORLD WAR I MIRRORED IN FLIGHT LOGS UNPUBLISHED YET

During the years of the war of liberation and national unity, in the fierce clashes with the enemy, the Romanian airmen carried out exemplary deeds of valour and heroism. The aeronautic personnel — pilots, technical staff, anti-aircraft artillery and aerostation staff — along with the military belonging to the other arms, inspired by a sense of duty and patriotism, by the ardent wish to see their homeland again united, spared no effort, not even their life in the air battles, and scored brilliant successes against a powerful enemy, well supplied with aircraft and military equipment.

At the outset of the campaign, although the air forces were supplied with few aircraft, the scope of the military operations conducted in the autumn of 1916 called for precise information about the enemy's forces and supply. Consequently, a heavy task was set to the reconnaissance aircraft; the air squadrons assigned to the armies had to carry out liaison, reconnaissance and bombing missions. Thus, between August 15 and 23, 1916, the Romanian airmen carried out reconnaissance missions south of the Danube, watching the enemy troops that were heading towards the country's frontier.

Late in 1916 an action of reorganization of Romanian aviation started. Homogeneous squadrons

were set up and supplied with aircraft of the same type and destination: observation (Farman squadrons), fighting (Nieuport squadrons), bombing (Breguet-Michelin squadrons), remote reconnaissance (Caudron C. 12 squadrons). The measures adopted helped increase the efficiency of the aviation units, contributed to a better maintenance of the aircraft and made possible the delimitation of the air space assigned to each aeronautical group.

In the winter and spring of 1917, the Romanian air forces carried out a large number of fighting missions, a large part of them consisting in reconnaissance and taking aerial photographs of the enemy's positions and combat disposition.

The battles of Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz were a severe test for the crews of the three aeronautical groups. The Romanian airmen were most often forced to fly at very low altitudes, to pass through the smoke of explosions in order to collect the information needed by the commanders of the great units. Our pilots carried out with self-denial and courage dangerous missions of reconnaissance, ranging of shelling, aerial photography, bombing, missions (over 20) and air fighting.

Flying day and night, irrespective of weather conditions, the Romanian airmen totalled 8,860 hours of flight, carried out 560 air fights, made 703 shelling-range operations, dropped 61,871 kgs of bombs on the territory occupied by the enemy. A large number of enemy planes were destroyed during the air fights. Here are some of the heroic deeds of our airmen, as recorded in unpublished military documents found in military archives and at the Central Military Museum.

September 8, 1916. Take-

6/19 October, 1918 At a meeting held in Iași, the Romanians of Transylvania and Bukovina adopted a declaration whereby they expressed their determination to fight "through all ways and means so that the entire Romanian nation be united in a single and free national state".

13/26 October, 1918 "The Gazette of Transylvania and Bukovina" is published in Chelyabinsk edited by the 2nd Corps of Romanian volunteers.

14/27 October, 1918 The Romanian National Council of Bukovina is set up and it expresses the wish for Bukovina's union with Romania

● Germany and Austria-Hungary ask for armistice.
15/28 October, 1918 The Czech National Committee proclaims the independence of Czechoslovakia.

16/29 October, 1918 The Conference of Nationalities takes place in Geneva, in which Romanians took part alongside the Czechoslovakians, Yugoslavians, Poles, Italians, its aim being to solemnly assert, before world public opinion, the unshakable will of these nationalities for achieving complete independence and national unity.

17/30 October, 1918 The Slovakian National Council proclaims the union of Slovaks with Czechs within a single state.

● Turkey signs the armistice in the port of Mudros.

18/31 October, 1918 The Central Romanian National Council of Transylvania is set up to lead the movement for national unity. Following the appeal of the Council, "all garrisons where there were Romanian troops" decided to establish "Romanian military senates", the first one being organized in Timișoara.

19 October/1 November, 1918 A suggestively entitled article "România intră în scenă" (Romania Enters the Stage), published in "Gazette de Lausanne", under-

lines, among other things: "If the future peace gives the peoples the right to decide for themselves, it will give the Transylvanians the freedom to unite with Greater Romania, whose setting up is imperative".

20 October/2 November, 1918 An impressive meeting of the Romanians from Cluj and its neighbouring areas is held, at which "the determination for the future state organization of the whole Romanian people" is expressed.

23 October/5 November, 1918 Robert Lansing, the Secretary of the Department of State of the U.S.A., extends recognition to the "National Council of Romanian Unity" of Paris, as well as the justness of the Romanians' national claims, at the same time, underlining that the American government "shall not neglect to use at the proper moment its influence so that the just political and territorial rights of the Romanian nation be obtained".

24 October/6 November, 1918 The Central Romanian National Council of Transylvania, through its chairman Ștefan Cicio-Pop, addressed an important appeal to the Romanian nation, whereby it was decided to set up national guards throughout Transylvania.

27 October/9 November, 1918 The second mobilization of the Romanian army is decreed. Following this Decree, the Romanian army was structured on 5 army corps,

15 infantry divisions, 2 cavalry divisions, heavy artillery, units of aeronautics and navy, defense troops and auxilliary communication formations, guard and order adding up to: 180 infantry battalions, 98 cavalry squadrons, 260 artillery batteries, with a strength of 163,240 military.

28 October/10 November, 1918 "The Supreme Command of Romanian National Guards from Hungary and Transylvania" is set up at Arad and Major Alexandru Vlad is appointed as its head.

● The signing of the armistice between the Allied Powers and Germany at Compiègne marks the end of the hostilities of the First World War.

28-29 October/10-11 November, 1918 Troops of the Danube Army, under the command of the French General Henri Mathias Berthelot (the 30th French Division, the 16th Colonial Division and the 27th English Division) forces the Danube at Zimnicea, Turnu Măgurele and Giurgiu.

30 October/12 November, 1918 The enemy occupation troops leave Bucharest. "On the Victory Street" — one eye witness to the events recalled — "hundreds of processions with flags, demonstrating from street to street. Pieces of the German flags, crowned by a German helmet are carried as trophies".

31 October/13 November, 1918 The armistice between the Entente and Hungary is signed in Belgrade, whereby an arbitrary demarcation line between Hungary and Transylvania is fixed.

7/20 November, 1918 The Grand National Council of Transylvania issues a manifesto concerning the convening of the Grand National Assembly at Alba Iulia on 18 November/1 December.

8/21 November, 1918 The newspaper "Timpul Nou" (New Time) is published in Vienna, press organ of the Romanian Military Council.

11/24 November, 1918 The Central Popular Veceea of Zagreb proclaims the creation of the state of Serbians, Croats and Slovenians.

15/28 November, 1918 The Romanian National Council of Bukovina decides on the union of Bukovina with Romania.

● The Social Democratic Party of Romania changes its name to the Socialist Party of Romania.

18 November/1 December, 1918 At Alba Iulia — "stronghold of dignity and sorrow of our nation" — in the presence of 100,000 Romanians who had come from all the regions of Transylvania, Crișana, Maramureș and Banat and of the 1,228 delegates, the union of these territories with Romania was proclaimed. On this "great, sacred and moving day, which was destined to be written with red letters in our historical calendar", the Grand National Assembly at Alba Iulia — "also great by the simplicity of its organization, by the order kept, by the warmth passing from person to person" would "put an end to the long period of slavery of the Romanian people and announce to all future generations the will to be free and the determination to reintegrate the nation". The National Assembly elected the Romanian Grand National Council, comprising 250 members, out of whom 200 elected by the National Assembly and 50 coopted by the Romanian Grand National Council.

● DORINA N. RUSU, D. Hist.



The Air Force was strongly committed in combat

off at 7.35 hours. Flight altitude 1,400 m. Aircraft Maurice Farman. Mission assigned: reconnaissance over Brașov—Tâlmaci—Sibiu zone. Report: Together with warrant officer Ion Șerban, we bombed a convoy of carts carrying ammunition near Sibiu. Mission accomplished. Flight duration: 2 hours. Take-off: 11.15 hours. Observer, warrant officer Ion Șerban. Mission assigned: Bombing the ammunition depot. Flight duration: 3 hours. Report: Full bombing of [enemy] ammunition depot at Noul Săseșc from 400 m altitude. Depot blows up. (From the flight log of warrant officer Ion Gruia of Group 1 Aviation)

September 22, 1916. I am citing in the order of the day of Group 1 Aviation Flight Lieutenant George Mihăilescu, who under a shower of enemy shells took off in the afternoon of September 15 this year to carry out orders and save the aircraft entrusted to him.

Pilot officers Petre Crețu, Adrian Cașolțeanu and Petre Macavei who flew to the Army 1 and 2 quarters making the liaison with the troops in the Olt Pass and thus contributing to saving Army 1.

My deep admiration for flight engineers Ilie Popescu and Nicolae Bărbuț

who were wounded during the fight.

Although Group 1 Aviation is not combatant, through its misison, when danger showed up every soldier able to carry arms did his duty without hesitation and fear.

(From the Order of the Day No. 21 of September 22, 1916 of Group 1 Aviation)

March 22, 1917. Bombing of airfield [of Galați] by the Germans. Pilot officer Aurel Bălășanu helped by Sergeant Ion Petrescu and soldiers Dumitru Gogu, Dumitru Preotu, Paraschiv Stanciu and Alexandru Felcer, did not hesitate for a moment although the shells were exploding around the hangar, and managed to evacuate the two Breguet-Michelin aircraft which otherwise would have been put out of fight. The shells crossed the Besonneau type hangars.

March 31, 1917. Our squadron bombed the enemy monitors in the port of Brăila. Mission carried out by Captain Ștefan Petrescu, Commander of the squadron, pilot officer Cachet and Corporal Blanchet. The bombs used are Russian-made, each weighing 18 kgs. A plane Breguet-Michelin carries 5 bombs which were dropped through the opening made in front of the chair.

During the attack, a monitor carrying food and supplies was sunk. 28 enemy seamen and soldiers were killed and another 28 were wounded.

April 18, 1917. The squadron bombs the Brăila railway station. Three crews took part. Sixty Michelin bombs [10 kgs] each were dropped on the central part of the station. Our aircraft are heavily shelled by anti-aircraft batteries in Brăila and by A. A. cannons from a warship anchored in the port. (From the Front Log of the Bombing Squadron

THE ROMANIAN MILITARY EFFORT

over 1916-1918

At the beginning of World War I, Romania had an area of 136,907 sq. km. and a population of 7,771,341¹; it was a small country which accounted for only 0.027% per cent of the earth's area and for only 0.47 per cent of the world population, or 0.5 per cent of the 1.5 billion people of the 32 states involved in the war².

Realizing the need to achieve statal unity, and aware of the nation's capacity for effort — which had been many times confirmed in decisive moments of ordeal —, the Romanian decision-making bodies decided and ensured the actual participation of the country's combat forces, in a proportion matched by none of the other countries in the Entente. The 833,601 men called up³ right after Romania's joining the war stood for 11 per cent of the country's population. Subsequently mobilized were the young men of the 1917 contingent, and other available combatants, so that during the two years of the national liberation war the Romanian state used about 1,000,000 people,⁴ therefore 12.8 per cent of the whole population and over one fourth of the country's men. This fact becomes even more eloquent if we think that all men called up during World War I accounted for 5 per cent of the population of the participating countries, this share being 3 times smaller than the one ensured by Romania. The mobilization effort of other states in the coalition was of 2.25 per cent in the case of Britain and its colonies, 9.46 per cent — Russia, and 9.07 per cent — France; however, mention should be made of the fact that those shares were reached toward the end of the war, that is, after many long years of preparing the war and over 50 months of campaign⁵. The situation was much the same in the case of the other South-East European states involved in World War I; Greece, for instance, which had a population of 4,662,000⁶, called up 200,000 men (4.3 per cent)⁷ and Serbia — with about five million inhabitants⁸ — used 450,000 combatants⁹, therefore less than 10 per cent of the whole population.

The strategic-operational characteristics of the Romanian front evidence other arguments backing up the altogether special nature of this country's commitment to the national effort aimed at achieving statal unity.

Developing along 1,600 km., the Romanian front was the longest of the fronts opened in World War I and, moreover, it accounted for over one third of the 4,600 km of the European fronts in 1916 and the following years. The configuration of the Romanian strategic dispositions, the fact that frontiers were opened along nearly three fourths of the length of the borders with the declared enemies, the possibility — actually turned into reality — of large groups of enemy forces to strike convergent blows toward the capital and deep into the national territory, the fact that the war waged for unifying the nation directly and decisively served the cause of the allies required — alongside this total commitment of the Romanian state and people — a more sustained and loyal cooperation on the part of the other partners in the alliance. Even before the first

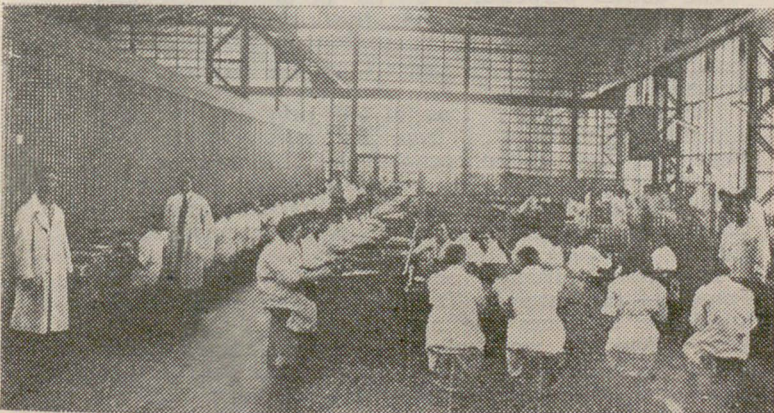
dysfunctions emerged and before the long string of violations of the pledges assumed by the other signatories to the Treaty and Covenant of August 4/17, 1916, the overall situation as well as the particular one had categorically disadvantaged Romania.

Thus, in the summer of 1916, the average density of forces per one kilometer active European front was of over 7,000 people (with about 3,600 people/km for each of the belligerents) whereas when it entered the war Romania could barely achieve a density of 500 people per km of front, a situation which could not have been radically improved even if the allies had duly introduced into the dispositions the army corps provided for in the military covenant.

When Romania entered World War I, the Romanian army had 1,817 artillery pieces which were heterogeneous in point of calibre, technical standard, accuracy, models, etc.; of these, only 113 were cannon, howitzers and mortars of 105 to 210 mm, and 240 were transferred to the artillery of citadels and fortified zones. These artillery pieces were allotted 1,843,340 shells and bullets¹⁰, or an average of 1,000 per piece. That meant — even if the whole artillery had been in working order and had been part of the organic or earmarked to support the front-line troops — that one piece had to cover a front of about 900 m. Throughout the war (despite all existing pledges) Romania only received 1,721,281 artillery charges, of which those for the heavy artillery (423,920 shells) stood for the consumption of the allies' cannon in 2.7 days of combat on the western front.

Not unimportant at this point is a more detailed interpretation of the change caused in the balance of forces between the belligerents by Romania's declaring war on Austria-Hungary. In mid-August 1916, the military power this country committed to battle stood, it is true, for only about 3 per cent of the total the Entente had mobilized by that time; but the Romanian front soon attracted enemy forces the strength of which demonstrates — through their share in the overall military power of the foes — both the importance attached to this front and a clear facilitation of the missions of our alliance partners. Thus, by the end of November 1916, 41 German, Austro-Hungarian, Bulgarian and Turkish divisions had been brought to the Romanian front, of which: 13 divisions from the Russian front (18 per cent of the enemy M.U. committed to this front), 8 from the West front

The rearfront heartily supporting Romania's military effort



B.M. 8 — Galați)

August 3, 1917. Sergeant Theodor Iliescu flies 2 and a half hours at 1,600 m altitude for surveillance in the zone of the Russian VIII Army Corps. Drops 8 bombs on enemy lines.

Pilot officer Vasile Niculescu flies 1.15 hours at 1,600 m altitude for surveillance of sector between Mărășești and Ivești. Drops 8 bombs on the enemy sector; observer, pilot officer Petre Crăciunescu. Bombed and attacked by an enemy fighter plane. Twenty enemy bullets hit the plane and the engine, the airscrew and lots of explosive shell splinters hit the wings...

August 7, 1917. Sergeant Răducanu Văscea flies 1.40 hours at 2,200 m altitude for aerial reconnaissance over the region Panciu—Trestii. 43 photographs are taken of the enemy positions. Observer, warrant officer Pirvulescu. Sergeant Theodor Iliescu flies 2.20 hours at 1,600 m altitude for shelling ranging and bombing in the enemy lines; observer, warrant officer Traian Burduloiu. Mission accomplished.

Pilot officer Vasile Niculescu flies 1.35 hours at 2,200 m altitude for fire ranging; observer, Captain Thauvin.

(From the Front Log of the Surveillance Squadron F. 4)

August 9, 1917. Air raid on Tecuci—Domnești and bombing of Șușița Valley. Fighting with an enemy fighter plane, 8 explosive bullets hit the plane, cut two ribs in the lower part near the cockpit, another one cuts the diagonals of the undercarriage on the right side. After several minutes of fighting the enemy plane abandoned the fight and descended back in its lines; observer, warrant officer Ion Costache. Heavily shelled at 1,300 m altitude by

anti-aircraft batteries, four splinters hit the plane. After bombardment, we landed at Tecuci to repair the plane.

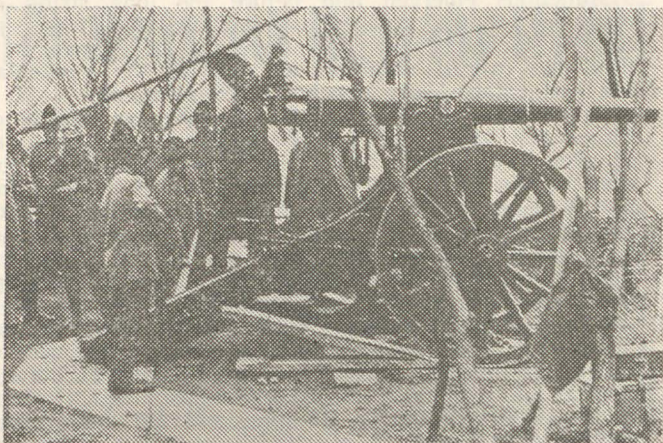
(From the Flight Log of Flying Officer Tănase Rotaru of the Surveillance Squadron F. 4)

August 10, 1917. Pilot-warrant officer Bucur Stan. Take-off at 8.15 hours. Flight altitude: 3,200 m. Landing at 10.05 hours. Mission assigned: army reconnaissance on Cașin Valley—Oituz Valley and Slănic Valley. The route: Răcăciuni—"Union" Factory—Grozești—Poiana Sărată—Oituz—Tg. Ocna. Report: Continuous movement of carts in Oituz Valley. 170—200 carts stationed at various points. Between Oituz and Berecz I saw 30 lorries heading towards Oituz. Movement less intensive in Slănic Valley. 70—80 carts stationed. We were shelled at Poiana Sărată by A.A. batteries of 77 mm and 105 mm. On our way back we were attacked by 2 (Austrian) Brandenburg planes. After 3—4 minutes of fighting, I had to spiral-descent as my machine-gun seized up.

August 12, 1917. Pilot-engineman Dumitru Rosetti. Take-off at 9.05 hours. Flight altitude: 1,800 m. Landing at 11.45 hours. Mission assigned: surveillance of the sector Oituz Valley—Slănic Valley.

Report: I asked the T.M. antenna of Bogdănești for information on the enemy battery within co-ordinates YLHH. After getting into position perfectly, the antenna asked me to change the objective and to range another battery fire, and to fly to Group 2 at Pîrgărești.

Before proceeding with the first ranging, I saw two enemy planes coming from Onești on a reconnaissance mission. I went for them and opened fire. A Nieuport arrived and



Romanian artillery in shooting position

(15 per cent), 2 from Italy (7 per cent), 13 from Salonika and the Balkans (50 per cent), and the remaining 5 from the strategic reserve of the Central Powers¹¹. These divisions stood for over 13 per cent of all divisions committed in Europe against the Entente¹².

The 707 days of foreign military presence in a large part of the Romanian territory turned some of the country's richest zones into a genuine stage where nearly half a million occupiers performed — in full 20th century — an antiquated play of barbarity and primitivism modernized through a rigorous Prussian organization.

In that period of time, over 2,000,000 large animals were slaughtered and over 1,000,000 tons of grain and vegetable products were consumed, all in order to meet the needs of the army and of the authorities of the Central Powers in the region of the Romanian front; also, more than 2,160,000 tons of grain, 600,000 horses, 1,400,000 cattle, 1,000,000 swine, over 1,500 tons of meat and meat products were sent to Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria, while another 25,000 tons of agricultural and food products were sent by the foreign militaries stationed in Romania to their families¹³. In the two years of heavy requisitions, the amounts of food thus received by Germany could have fed 10,000,000 people, or 2.5 times the Romanian population subjected to such a draconic economic spoliation.

The abuses perpetrated by the occupiers were also determined by the fact that the rations established for their own troops (1.2 kilos of meat per week, for instance) were 12 times bigger than the rations of the Romanian inhabitants¹⁴.

The about 2,000,000 tons of oil products extracted and forcefully exported from Romania, that is, consumed for free by the occupiers between December 1, 1916 and October 31, 1918, constituted an amount 2.5 times bigger than the 1916 crude production and 3 times bigger than the country's total consumption in 1914.

The losses inflicted on Romania by the Central Powers — amounting to 72 billion lei gold standard¹⁵ — stood for 33 times the national income of the last year before the war, which, made the state's public debt rise to over 16 billion lei gold standard in the first year of the interwar period, which was 15 times the 1914 figure.

Compared to the prewar situation, the losses incurred during the nearly 2 years of occupation of part of the Romanian territory (4,528.3 lei per capita) exceed by 14 times the per capita national income achieved in 1914¹⁶.

Yet nothing compared with the huge loss of lives with which the Romanian nation paid so dearly, over 1916—1918, for its statal integrity. Of the total 10 million dead of World War I, nearly 340,000 were Romanians from the Old Kingdom, which amounts to 3.4 per cent of all those who fell on the battlefield (7 times more than the share of Romania's population in the 1916 total population of the belligerents). Those who sacrificed their lives for the ideal of unity account for 33 per cent of the total mobilized by Romania, whereas in the case of other Entente states this share did not exceed 13.3 per cent (Britain), 17.4 per cent (Italy), 18.2 per cent (France)¹⁷.

With a total of 800,000 casualties (over 10 per cent of the population) and an average of about 1,700 dead, wounded and missing in action per day of campaign, Romania ranks first in point of the loss of lives for national-statal integrity and, equally, in point of the concrete sustenance of the coalition it belonged to.

Alongside the other millions upon millions of Romanians who laid down their lives for freedom, independence and state unity, the Romanian heroes of 70 years ago once more attested the Romanian people's great capacity for mobilization and sacrifice, the Great Union constituting — as the President of Romania shows — "an act of profound national justice, the attainment of a logic concordance between the objective reality and the people's inalienable rights, on the one hand, and the national framework stringently required by these realities"¹⁸.

• Captain ILIE DELEANU

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2. Mircea N. Popa, *Primul război mondial (World War I)*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 1979, p. 467.
3. The Ministry of National Defense, General Staff, *History Section — România în războiul mondial (Romania in the World War)*, Bucharest, 1934 (further reference R.R.M.), vol. I, p. 59.
4. Mircea N. Popa, op. cit., p. 469.
5. Ibidem, p. 174 ; 468, 469.
6. M. Larcher, *La grande guerre dans les Balkans*, Payot, Paris, 1929, p. 16.
7. Mircea N. Popa, op. cit., p. 469.
8. M. Larcher, op. cit., p. 16.
9. Mircea N. Popa, op. cit., p. 469.
10. R.R.M., vol. I, annex 9.
11. Gen. C. Găvănescu, *Războiul nostru pentru întregirea neamului (Our War for the Unity of the Nation)*, Geographical Department of the Army, Iași, 1918, p. 15.
12. M. Larcher, op. cit., p. 274.
13. A. Deac, I. Toacă, *Lupta poporului român împotriva cotoptorilor, 1916—1918 (The Romanian People's Struggle against the Invaders, 1916—1918)*, Editura Militară, 1978, p. 41—50.
14. Statistica anuală a României, 1915, (*Annual Statistics of Romania, 1915*), Tipografia Curții Regale, Bucharest, 1916, p. 9.
15. M. Mușat, I. Ardeleanu, *România după Marea Unire (Romania after the Great Union)*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 1986, p. 4.
16. Progresul economic în România, 1877—1977 (*Economic Progress in Romania, 1877—1977*) (editor I. Totu), Editura Politică, 1977, pp. 184—194.
17. Mircea N. Popa, op. cit., p. 468.
18. Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Romania on the Road of Building the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society*, vol. 17, Bucharest, 1981, p. 275.

attacked them, and I left immediately and continued my ranging work. As I was going to commence the ranging operations at Pîrgărești, I was attacked by an enemy fighter plane. The fight lasted 10—12 minutes, after which the enemy plane departed and I proceeded with my mission. Hit by a bullet in the airscrew.

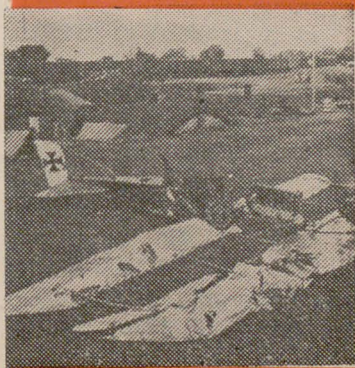
(From the Flight Log of Flight Lieutenant Constantin Conta of the Surveillance Squadron F. 2).

August 13, 1917. Pilot: warrant officer Nicolae Cicei. Flight altitude: 2,600 m. Mission assigned: to range a friendly battery shelling between 7.25 and 10.05 in the Soveja area. Fights with three enemy planes, puts one Brandenburg out of fight. Mission accomplished.

(From the Flight Log of observer pilot officer Gheorghe Stilpeanu of Squadron F. 6)

August 25, 1917. Special mission and remote reconnaissance. Take-off at 5.00 hours a.m. Reached the place established. Returned at 7.20 a.m. At 800 m I crossed over the enemy lines, after which I descended to 400 m. Landing on very rough terrain at 300 m. Heading back towards the lines, flying over the front at

Enemy plane hit and crushed to the ground



1,200 m. Shelled by enemy anti-aircraft batteries, several splinters and bullets hit the plane.

At 5.00 p.m. I reported to General Grigorescu accompanied by Flight Major Popovici. Received congratulations and thanks from General Grigorescu who told me among other things that I would be decorated and promoted to the rank of pilot officer. (From the Flight Log of pilot Tănase Rotaru of Suqadron F. 4)

● VALERIU AVRAM

A WORLD
HISTORY CHAPTER
IS WRITTEN
ON THE SIRET

**THE GLORIOUS
FEATS
OF THE ROMANIAN
SOLDIERS
IN THE SUMMER
OF 1917 REFLECTED
BY ROMÂNIA —
THE NATIONAL
DEFENCE ORGAN**

At the beginning of 1917, in moments of terrible suspense for our homeland, when the enemy was threatening to invade the country's whole territory and the Romanian army, fallen back in Moldova, was undergoing a wide-scope process of reorganization and preparation for the up-coming battles, a group of outstanding writers and journalists — from among whom mention should be made of Mihail Sadoveanu, Octavian Goga, Ion Minulescu, Barbu Ștefănescu Delavrancea, Gheorghe Ranetti, Vasile Voiculescu, Eugen Lovinescu — presented the Romanian General Headquarters Lieutenant Mihail Sado- lieutenant Mihail Sado- veanu, pointing to the

THE INTERNATIONAL ECHO OF ROMANIA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE FIRST WORLD CONFLAGRATION

Reader ION ARDELEANU, D. Hist.

At the end of the 19th century and in the first decade of the 20th, the contradictions between the big powers gradually acquired particularly strong forms. The small and medium-sized countries in Europe were also drawn in that whirlpool. The outbreak of the conflict in June 1914 engulfed the European countries one by one, the war becoming in a short time a world one. After two years of neutrality, in August 1916 Romania joined in the first world conflagration. "The Romanian people", said President Nicolae Ceaușescu, "did not take part in that war guided by intentions of occupation and territorial annexation; yielding to the pressures of the Entente powers, the ruling circles of the country decided to enter the war alongside England, France and Russia, which promised to satisfy our desideratum of national unity".

Referring to that moment, the Chief of the General Staff of the Supreme Command of the German army, General Ludendorff wrote: "At that time I could not realize what a hard blow Romania's declaration of war dealt us".¹ The importance of Romania's joining the war was objectively emphasized by the French prime minister and minister of war Aristide Briand, who subsequently stated in the French Chamber: "During the war M. Tardieu energetically reproached me for having decided Romania's joining the war alongside us. He reproached me with equal vigour that I stood for maintaining the expedition to Salonika. Why? Because the results were not immediate — which did not prevent those operations from proving their advantages later on. From the memoirs of Ludendorff and from the findings of the inter-Allied General Staff results that Germany and its allies were forced to mobilize other 58 divisions on the eastern front because of Romania's entering the action."²

The great deployment of forces assigned to Romania a role apart in the system of the big fronts of military operations. General Field Marshal Hindenburg mentioned in his memoirs "Never a small power like Romania had the opportunity to play a decisive role of so great an importance in the history of the world in such a favourable moment. Never yet two states as powerful as Germany and Austria had, like in this case, been at the mercy of the display of forces by a country whose population hardly amount-

ed to a twentieth part of theirs.”³ The Russian general Vasili Gurko stated in his turn: “Had not the Germans been compelled to throw almost 30 divisions upon the Romanian territory in order to finish with Romania and stop our advance (in Galicia — I. A.) in support of Romania, they would have undoubtedly chosen another theatre of operations”.⁴ The Romanian army engaged with abnegation in great battles. After bitter confrontations, in some winning successes recorded by military history, the Romanian army was forced to withdraw to Moldavia, four months after entering the war. A period of heroic work and severe straining of all forces followed in order to defend the free part of the homeland and reorganize and equip the army. The Romanian army wrote glorious pages in the 1917 military campaign.

The Romanians' strategy, heroism and military art turned the great battles — Mărăști 9/22 July-19 July/1 August), Mărășești (24 July/6 August — 21 August/3 September) and Oituz (26 July/8 August — 9/22 August) into a genuine epic. Those great victories had an outstanding echo among the Romanian people as well as international public opinion. The conduct of the Romanian army during the first world conflagration turned the scale of the fronts and caused the state of belligerency came to an early end.

In the order of the day no. 90 of 8/21 August 1917 General Eremia Grigorescu, commander of the 1st army, mentioned: “Soldiers, from July 24 to August 7 you had the most severe engagements... At Susița and Siret you reduced to nought the terrible efforts of the fierce enemy, proving once more to the world that “No trespassing here either”. Here German General Mackensen came to know the meaning of defeat. Mărășești was the tomb of German illusions... 6 August was a day you wrote in golden letters in our nation's book of bravery, asserting throughout the world its invincible rights”.

In the report of the German 9th Army submitted to the Army Group, Mackensen wrote: “The battles fought between 25 July and 6 August proved that the assumptions and expectations that the Russians and Romanians would withdraw without putting up any resistance, or that they would accept to be taken prisoners were a mistake. On the contrary, the Russo-Romanian armies bravely fought and each ditch, each house, each height were valiantly defended”.⁵

French prime minister Ribot wrote in a telegram sent to Romanian premier I. I. C. Brătianu: “France greets the Romanian nation, its courageous sister who, amidst the present difficulties gave proof of the most heroic virtues, the guarantee of victory. It considers a precious privilege to see today the group of French officers working and fighting in the ranks of the national army. It greets in the present battles a worthy return to the fate of arms. I assure Your Excellency that the French government is solidary more than ever with the aspirations of tomorrow's Romania and has firm confidence in their being soon fulfilled”.⁶ In his turn, the prime minister of England, George Lloyd declared: “Who could overlook the importance of the armed resistance which Romania opposes to the common enemy? The Romanians did inestimable service to the Allies by their tenacious defence of Moldavia. Her sons defend a large part of the country against an enemy invasion, in disheartening conditions. The Romanians fought successfully

necessity of setting up a press organ of national defence, meant to spread patriotic propaganda among soldiers and civilians behind the front. As a consequence of this report the first military daily appeared in this country under the name of *România* — issued in Iași from February 2, 1917, until March 23, 1918, with Mihail Sadoveanu as director and Octavian Goga as editor-in-chief.

Under the signature of our great writers and journalists of that time, the *România* daily reflected the acts of bravery and sacrifice of the glorious Romanian army in the battles waged in defence of its ancient land and for the fulfilment of the ideal of national unity.

Starting with its first issue, as shown by the editorial signed by Octavian Goga, the founders of the military daily considered the Romanian army as part and parcel of the country's heart: “This Romanian army illustrates a sacred right. This army illustrates our ancestors' efforts and sacrifices at the gates of the Orient, it illustrates the vigil which allowed the West to settle and civilize itself in the past. This army means the conscience of the greatest suffering and injustice ever suffered by a people, it carries in its consciousness, like a fatality, the will of bringing together the torn elements of the nation and of breaking down a centuriesold injustice. In this army lie dormant the old aspirations and the final decision: its now or never!”

Under these great auspices, the contributors of the *România* assumed the noble task of being the witnesses and chroniclers of those epos-making days in which the Romanian soldiers, through deeds of unperishable heroism checked the crushing ene-

my at Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz, defeating some of the best troops thrown into the battle by the Central Powers.

The pages of the *România* daily contain many journalistic genres: reportages from the front, accounts, news in brief, orders issued by the General Headquarters, commentaries carried by the foreign press and special columns, such as those which started being released from July 24, 1917, under titles like "Impressions from the Front", or "From Our Front". The materials put out by the daily were pervaded by a militant spirit, being a high praise to the country's heroes of that time and of all times. Frequently managing to reach the front line, war correspondents succeeded in recording for the pages of the *România* daily the hottest moments of the great battles waged in the summer of 1917 at "Moldavia's Gates" — Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz.

An eye-witness of the offensive of Mărăști, writer Mihail Sadoveanu appreciated in his article issued on July 26, 1917, that "The battle of Mărăști will go down in our history as a serious and solid work of military art. Its entire development had been foreseen and the initial plan was carried through. Even the last soldier knew where he had to go and did his duty. The artillery displayed a terrible accuracy. The German officers who were caught admitted it themselves with astonishment and praise".

Elevating pages were reserved for the issues which dealt with the climax of the summer of 1917: the battle of Mărășești, where for the purpose of piercing the Romanian front the enemy had thrown into the battle 12 divisions on the Cosmești and Mărășești direc-



Towering political personalities of the time praised the Romanian people for its contribution to the victory of the Entente powers

and even the Germans were astonished at that heroic resistance. When the moment will come the Allies will not forget Romania, which brilliantly discharged its duty throughout the war".⁷

Reputed commanders praised the Romanian army at that time. The Chief of the French Military Mission to Romania, General H. M. Berthelot pointed out in an interview: "The Romanian soldiers fought admirably. They are equal to the bravest defenders. They are the best soldiers in the world".⁸ And in a telegram sent to General Eremia Grigorescu he noted "The bravery of the Romanian soldiers and officers, who at this moment draw the admiration of all Allied armies and to whom even the enemies pay homage".⁹ The Italian General Luigi Cadorna addressing the command of the Romanian army requested that his deep "admiration" be conveyed to the Supreme Commander for the "great test given by the Romanian troops in the battles of Mărăști, Oituz and Mărășești. Tell him that the Italian army watches with brotherly sympathy the brilliant battles of the Romanian soldiers, who prove to be worthy successors to the victorious conquerors of Plevna".¹⁰ In his turn, the commander of the American Expeditionary Corps, General John Pershing noted: "I admire the splendid heroism of the Romanian army, which fiercely defended the homeland's soil (...) Do not have any fear! It will conquer it back and it will see its dream fulfilled. In America all share my opinion. We like the Romanian people and our hearts, believe me, bleed for the misfortunes you have encountered. Now we know the whole spirit of Romania. We shall be loyal to it and after the victory here and there I shall go to meet your braves".¹¹ The commander of the Russian forces, General D. G. Scherbachev, in an order of the day, praising the Romanian army for the victory of Mărășești, pointed out: "I am full of admiration for the heroism of the Romanian troops and I congratulate the command, the officers and the soldiers of all units for the brilliant way in which they repelled the enemy's offensive".¹² The press in France, England, Italy, Switzerland, the United States and other countries published articles and reports by the war correspondents on Romania's role and contribution to the great battles of the 1917 summer, on the heroism of the Romanian army.

"Le Figaro", through its director Robert de Flers wrote: "The Romaina people climbed turn by turn this cavalry and at the top — which was splashed with blood — picked the most beautiful laurels. The effort of Mackensen's army crushed by the Romaina army jointly with the Russian one — this is one of the great deeds of arms that will remain after this war. Mărășești is the Romaina Verdun... It is impossible after the war for Romania not to attain a flourishing situation that it deserves not only for its present bravery, but also for its entire history so full of sorrows and hard trials".¹³ Referring to the same battle, the French newspaper "Excelsior" noted that the victory of Mărășești "gives Romania full confidence and hope".¹⁴ The English newspaper "The Times" wrote in its turn: "The defence of the Mărășești front, north of Focșani, was the most important feat of arms which the Romanians ever made and it was not surpassed either by the heroism of the Belgians or by that of the Serbians... The Romanians fought with a heroism which is above all praise. The German soldiers were attacked so violently that they discarded the weapons so that they could flee faster or avoid being taken prisoner. This defeat is the most important blow which the Germans received in eastern Europe".¹⁵ Another English newspaper, "Morning Post", noted: "The heroism of the Romanian troops was all the more important as the fight took place in unfavourable and disheartening conditions... The Romanian offensive is a miracle of patience and courage, seldom seen by anyone in this war".¹⁶ As mentioned in the Romanian press of the time, articles full of praise were also published in the English newspapers "The Earth", "Daily Telegraph", "Daily Graphic", "Liverpool Daily" and others.

The Italian newspaper "Corriere della sera" while referring to the same battles wrote: "From the moral point of view the Romanian army stands today equal to the powerful allied armies of the west".¹⁷

The Romanian army's heroism and blood sacrifices imparted a rapid evolution on the events on the eastern front. Revolutions of liberations, for the setting up or completion of nation-states broke out in a number of countries in Central and South-East Europe. The peoples' right to self-determination asserted itself in that process. In the course of events the Romanians' struggle for concluding the process of achieving the unitary nation-state vigorously asserted itself, that historic act being completed on December 1, 1918, through the union of Transylvania with the mother country.

In 1919—1920, the Paris Peace Conference, on the basis of the huge sacrifices made by the Romanian people during the great world conflagration, recognized and gave international juridical sanctioning to the acts carried out by the Romanians in 1918.

The glorious deeds of the Romaina army during the First World War stemmed from the people's glorious traditions of struggle for justice, freedom and independence. These glorious traditions, enriched in the years that have passed till now, are at the foundation of all the present great achievements of the Romanian people, of socialist Romania.

tion, divisions which had to kneel before that resolute No trespassing here either! declared by every Romaina soldier through his feats.

"The proportions of the great battle of Mărășești", wrote Corneliu Moldovan in the *România* of August 3, 1917, "appear more clearly with every passing day, increasing in intensity from one commune to another. It is not only the most terrible battle on the Romaina front, since the beginning of the campaign, but, obviously, the most important one in our entire history. The last chapter of the world epos is written today on the Siret. What is happening there, in that region south of Mărășești, can hardly be imagined".

In emotion-gripping words Octavian Goga cast into relief the heroism of our soldiers in his article published on August 8, 1917: "The soldier who fought at Mărășești showed the world what this Danubian people can do. The legend of the soul superiority of the Berlin culture desintegrated before the villagers of Tîrgoviște who made the attack in shirts, with nothing on their heads, creating around them an atmosphere of classic braveness, as if taken from the most brilliant pages of the Greek and Roman antiquity.

"We can clearly draw the conclusion that Mărășești has something to teach us about.

"Never before has our people's energy been shown more evident than during those days of complicated war, when the armies of the German Empire broke to pieces against the wall raised on the Siret".

On August 6, 1917, a decisive battle for the situation of the front was waged at Râzvoare. There the Romanian army won the final battle for the

1. General E. Ludendorff, *Amintiri din război (Memories of War)*, Vol. 1, Bucharest, 1919, p. 283.

2. *Războiul României. Documente oficiale (Romania's War. Official Documents)*, Bucharest, 1921, p. 6.

3. *Ministry of National Defence — General Staff. Documents*, Vol. 1, p. 78.



Facsimiled excerpts from the **ROMANIA**, a faithful chronicler of the fierce battles



The brilliant, staunch editors of **ROMANIA**

course of war on the Romanian front.

"Suddenly", wrote Mihail Sadoveanu in the *România* of August 14, 1917, "the whole line jerked forward, starting to beat the Germans impetuously. Machine guns were rattling from every corner and the bayonets were thrusting their way into the enemy lines, caught in a tumult of horror. Struck vigorously they fell back, starting to retreat. Ours kept them tight at the points of their bayonets... In this cruel and quick battle of Răzoare, as in fact in all battles, the officers showed full self-control and waited quietly for the counter-attack moment. No weakness, no hesitation... Before dying Lieutenant Colonel Rosetti sent the following message to his regiment: "Let everyone know I have been wounded here. No single man shall go back, over my body..."

4. Central historical Archives, Microfilms, France, reel 81, Report dated November 22, 1916.
5. General G. A. Dabița, *Armata română în războiul mondial 1916-1918 (The Romanian Army in the World War 1916-1918)*, Vol. 4, I. G. Hertz Publishers, Bucharest, pp. 635-636.
6. State Archives, Bucharest, Council of Ministers holding, file no. 23/1917, p. 1.
7. "Mișcarea", August 22, 1917.
8. "România", August 12, 1917.
9. Idem, August 14, 1917.
10. "România Mare", August 24, 1917.
11. "Actualitatea", February 1921.
12. Archives of the Ministry of National Defence, General Staff holding, file no. 476/23, p. 24.
13. "Mișcarea", September 22, 1917.
14. "Excelsior", August 28, 1917.
15. "Actualitatea", February 16, 1918.
16. "România Mare", August 28, 1917.
17. "Actualitatea", February 16, 1917.

ELEMENTS OF ROMANIAN MILITARY STRATEGY AND TACTICS DURING WORLD WAR I

Major-General (retd.) **CONSTANTIN ANTIP**

The military actions, the strategy and tactics of the Romanian army 70 years ago were determined by the fundamental political requirement underlying the option of our country's entering the first world conflagration. It is by setting out from the supreme goal of Romania's joining the war, namely "the fulfilment of our national ideal, that is the completion of the nation's unity" that the "Romanian campaign plan in 1916" logically established the military strategic goal: "to crush enemy

resistance definitively in Transylvania", to reach the Hungarian plain, the Tisza and Danube valleys and to "lay hands on the supply area of the Austro-Hungarian armies"¹. As the circumstances of our involvement in the armed confrontation required the creation of a second front at the Danube and the Black Sea, the Romanian supreme command, when making the strategic planning, conceived the main weight in the north, in order to be faithful to the fundamental political target, aiming at an impetuous, energetic offensive, while for the southern theatre the presence of a smallest possible force was taken into consideration, as a defensive and an offensive phase was anticipated with a limited objective, in keeping with the wait-and-see situation expected.

Analysts conclude that the campaign plan was judicious and adequate in the given political-military context. One of the most recent historiographic syntheses mentions that the offensive with the main weight in Transylvania was to hit the most vulnerable component of the Central Powers, namely Austria-Hungary, and the spot of the Oriental front — the intra-Carpathian space, devoid of the necessary defence; if the Romanian forces reached the river Mureş, this would considerably shorten the initial line of the front already in the first stage, from 850—900 km. to 250—300 km.; the river-line enhanced the operation base of our army and secured consistent material and human advantages which would grow even larger with the advance westward; the forces which the enemy could have brought against us had to be concentrated also in Transylvania and therefore the bulk of the Romanian operational army had to be there².

The existence of the two fronts also indicated an increased degree of complexity in the fields of strategy and tactics and the need for a more marked distinction between those two sides of the martial art. There is good reason to appreciate that an objective need had appeared to subdivide the strategic command, which determined changes in various ways. Structurally the field army imposed itself as an echelon, while the army corps, which until then had been the biggest organizational unit in the Romanian army was increasingly given tactical functions, a level which during the operations was to require organizational particularizations, such as the setting up of groups of detachments of variable strength and temporary character, made up of troops taken out of their organic subordination. In point of execution — by virtue of the new configurations of the fight, battle, campaign and warfare in general — global military strategy involved subdivisions (strips, zones, directions, missions) while tactics involved improvements and changes of forms and methods³.

The operation theatre opened through Romania's joining the war also changed the overwhelmingly static character of the war which had been lasting for over one year and lent it again mobility and dynamism. The very moment of the application of the campaign plan occurred in this sense and in an original way. Giving up the usual canons (common in fact for all armies in conflict), the Romanian command used the military structures assigned to cover the official frontier not as elements of strategic defensive (until the mobilization was finished), but rather with the mission to start the offensive as real vanguard formations of the great units being concentrated behind them, which were to take over the major effort of the operations while in movement. When receiving the order of battle the units in

"In a pile full of dead enemies, our medical orderlies found Captain Ignat, commander of a company of machine guns and its officers, unmoved in the eternal sleep, with their hands clenched on their machines".

Referring to the same battle, writer Ion Minulescu underlined that: *"At Mărășești, after days of bloody battles, the famous 'front breaker' of the German army got nothing but a broken head from the butt of the Romanian gun..."*

"At Mărășești our army gave the most brilliant proof of its high qualities, until then darkened by the cruel fate of arms. Again foreign countries began to show their admiration for our soldiers".

Mentioning the favourable appreciations carried by the foreign press, the *România* of July 31, 1917, noted with satisfaction that *"We shall remember only one fact. In the world war conflagration the Romanian soldier is a main factor, contributing to the triumph of the great European cause to the extent of his unexhaustible powers. It is well to be convinced of this fact and know our role, so that our sacrifice may appear to us lighter while our waiting for the victory shorter"*.

Addressing the soldiers-heroes in the issue of *România* of August 24, 1917, N. N. Beldiceanu said that: *"In the columns of this newspaper we have sent you the beats of our hearts torn by the despair of the days of defeat, or winged by the hopes of the days of victory. We have always been next to you, every day, every hour, every moment, in the humid trenches... And after the bitter days of defeats and withdrawals, after that winter full of darkness, the torrent of light of the victory won at Mărășești and then the sounds*

of heroism against which the waves of the German divisions crumbled to pieces at Mărășești..."

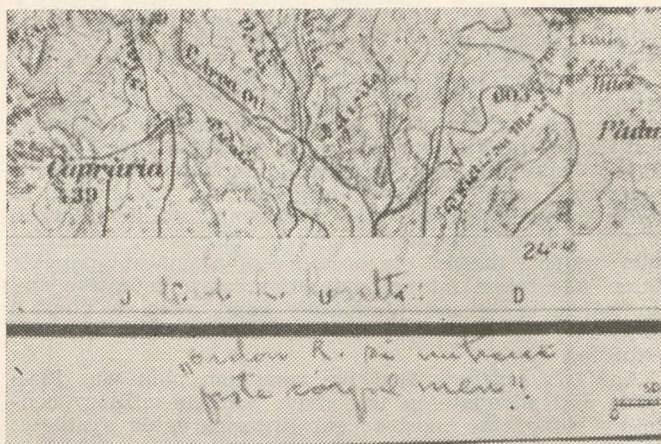
Through its sacrifice, through its great efforts and material expenses, the Romanian people proved also in those hard moments exceptional resistance and force of mobilization, offering the world the example of a small people which resisted heroically to the bloody pressure exercised by big imperialist powers.

Taking justified pride in the heroism of the Romanian army, the founders of the first Romanian military daily mentioned the modest contribution made by those who signed articles in the newspaper's columns: "We were considered already buried. Our enemies had prepared even the cross for our grave. But suddenly the nation's latent energies came to life and strained itself. The whole people, united in one block under the blow of unhappiness. The heroic vigour, the steel-like suppleness which burst out from this concentration lifted us higher than we had thought or hoped. And we too, the servants of the pen came with all our love, with our diligence, with the confidence we have put in this people and did our own duty." (România of February 2, 1918).

● ELENA VOICILĂ

RESPONSE AROUSÉ BY THE ROMANIANS' BRAVERY

"I am on the front [Mărăști] where the Romanian army scored its first victory over the Germans and proved that, if well supplied with artillery and warfare equipment, the people are wonderful.



Lt.-Col. Radu Rosetti noted in brief: "I order my R[egiment] to stay with me body and soul."

the covering disposition — directly guided by the Great General Headquarters (another novelty) — entered Transylvania at one time in 17 points, accomplishing the planned objective in less than 48 hours.

Mobile warfare enabled a judicious blending of offensive and defence, the lack of continuous fronts favouring the large-scale use of manoeuvres, local attacks, etc. While the two strategic manoeuvres along directions of exterior operations — in Transylvania and at Flămînda, initiated but not finished — and those along interior directions — attempted in Wallachia — are of interest merely in point of preparation, the tactical manoeuvres of outflanking and return, intensively used at all echelons, especially in the offensive fighting in the mountains constitute precious sources for the knowledge of the military practice of our army at that time. The Romanian command proved to be superior to the Austro-Hungarian and German commands in the organization and unfolding of the manoeuvre in the mountains, though the latter had special alpine corps and brigades. Conclusive is the double outflanking manoeuvre performed by the 11th Infantry Division in the first battle on the Jiu river, which threatened to encircle the vanguard German troops and chased them back to the starting positions. General Falkenhayn himself, commander of the German 9th Army, noted in his records of this episode that the withdrawal of his units on the Jiu "was accomplished with difficulties that can hardly be described"⁴. Later on, in order to push our troops towards the south-east the Germans had to raise the ratio of forces to 7/1.

The battle on the Jiu cast light on yet another aspect, namely the presence, besides the classical scheme of the front and rear, of nonconventional warfare, through the participation in the fighting of groups of Romanian citizens which did not belong to the army; this phenomenon was to be met with also later on, including incipient partisan warfare⁵.

Stress must be laid on the active, staunch and fierce character of the Romanian defence, especially its having firmly held the passes in the Carpathians, which had not only tactical but also strategic importance, and not allowing the enemy to penetrate beyond the Carpathians through the passes of Oituz, Buzău, Tabla Buții, Bratocea, Predeluș, Predeal, Bran, Turnu Roșu

and others. If the Germans had broken through our disposition in those points and especially at Oituz, Romania would have been faced with a strategic disaster: the enemy would have been able to reach the bent of the Danube directly and along the shortest route, thus rendering any operation of the Romanian army almost impossible. By penetrating only along the Jiu, the invading forces had to conquer the territory between the Carpathians and the Danube across the longer dimension and step by step, to accept successive battles, and this involved considerable time and efforts, more casualties and the exhaustion of their offensive combat potential, thus enabling the Romanian side and the Russian side (which by the end of 1916 had introduced more troops on the Romanian front) to stop the enemy and compel him to take up positions.

During the 1916 campaign, just like in the defence fighting waged for centuries before, the aggressor was weakened not only through casualties caused during warfare proper, but also through the disruption of the logistic basis he had anticipated. Admiral von Tirpitz declared in the Reichstag that the loss of the oil stocks in Romania cut the German submarine war by 50 percent⁶, hence the sacrifice accepted by the Romanians when the oil installations along the Prahova Valley were destroyed had a strategic impact on the world war as a whole.

The Romanian military developments in the time span under review did not allow the Central Powers to attain their strategic goal, namely to take the country and the army out of the war. Not for one moment did Romania break its participation in the conflict and though the position warfare which emerged on our front at the end of 1916 limited the possibilities and scope of an offensive, the Romanian supreme command kept the idea of relaunching the offensive strategy intact on its agenda. For this purpose the decision-making factors undertook a vast action for solving a problem never met with before, during the war, namely the restoration of the military potential in the small territory left under the control of the Iași government, in conditions of direct contact with the enemy forces and in circumstances of exceptional seriousness, which was not the case, for instance, with the restoration of the Serbian army, which was performed on the territory of another country — Greece. Impressed by the fast rate of this work of structural re-shaping and re-supply of the Romanian armed force, of perfect assimilation of the defining innovations in the current warfare, a direct witness, Charles Stiénon, who was acquainted with the reality through the French military mission which took part in the re-organization of our military body, wrote that the Romanian soldiers "had attained a most remarkable level of training", that in the early summer of 1917 "this magnificent army had only one thing in mind — the offensive"⁷.

The results obtained were to be put to best use in the strategy and tactics skillfully applied in the fighting between July 11 and August 21 in the area of the Siret,

In the present-day war, it is not only the army that fights, but also the whole nation.

I. JITIÄNU, Romanian general

The enthusiasm and élan with which they [the Romanian soldiers] fought aroused the admiration of all those who saw them.

"The Times" of August 11, 1917

"The Romanians fought with a heroism beyond any words of praise. The German soldiers were so violently attacked that they threw away the weapons to run more easily, lest they should be taken prisoners. This defeat is the most powerful blow received by the Germans in eastern Europe".

"The Times" of August 17, 1917

"The bloodiest battle ever fought by the Romanians is not over yet. On a front over 100 miles long, from Slănic Valley to Galați, fighting goes on with the inevitable advance and retreat movements, but all in all following a course favourable to our allies. The situation was practically reestablished at the Oituz Pass, where the Romanian troops, after extraordinary counter-attacks, managed to push back the enemy, inflicting terrible losses upon it. On the Mărășești front, north of Focșani, fighting continues with great violence. For six days and six nights, the Russian and the Romanian troops fought with a bravery which words cannot describe. The enemy made use of all its available artillery and made immense efforts to break the front, attacking in compact lines, but it was in vain. The fact that the Russians and the Romanians were able to withstand the enemy's terrible efforts, beginning with August 6, and forced it to bring in reinforcements all the time, thwarted the plans of the Germans who had obviously hoped to

break through this point by surprise."

"The Washington Post" of August 19, 1917

"The Romanians are good, quiet, sobre, tenacious, patient soldiers, capable to make very great efforts".

"Journal de Gèneve" of August 20, 1917

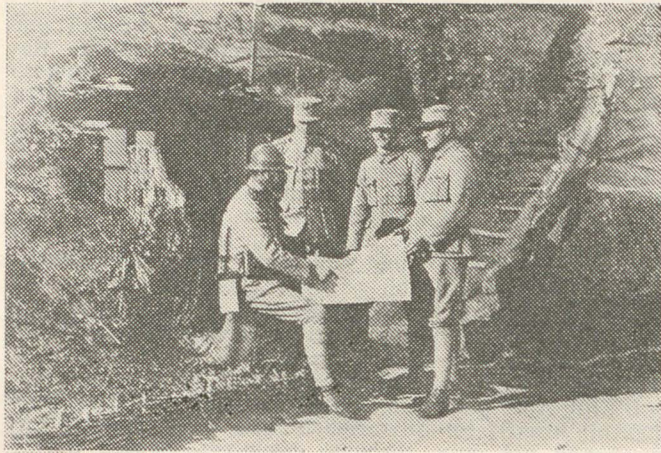
"The defence on the Mărășești front, north of Focșani, was the most glorious deed of arms ever accomplished by the Romanian army. The heroic struggle of these peasant-soldiers who had to fight against the German forces, that were by far superior and had the advantage of surprise on their side, is not surpassed in the least by the deeds of the Belgians or of the Serbians".

"The Times" of August 29, 1917

"The Romanian soldiers did as well and heroically as any soldiers in this war, fighting bravely, although whole regiments had been decimated by the fire of the German cannons and machine guns. Officers and men died on their positions, without retreating or surrendering."

"The Times" of August 29, 1917

"I have already spoken about the unflinching will of the Romanian army to revive from the defeat suffered. This miracle occurred amidst most terrible moral and physical sufferings. And so, one month later, the soldiers of these great leaders, Generals Presan and Averescu, are stopping in front of the Siret river the Austro-German army which thought it would cross it in two days. The losses suffered by many German Divisions were so heavy, that Mackensen had



The map showing the terrain situation brought up to date.

Putna and Oituz river valleys. This truth was obvious even in the campaign plan which established a breakthrough of the enemy's organized defence in two sectors and then the unitary development of the offensive along convergent directions. The pincer movement envisaged along the lower course of the Siret and in the sub-Carpathian region of Vrancea made up a method not yet finalised by the military practice of the time, and which was to be tried and adopted during the Second World War — strategic encircling. The manoeuvre adopted by the Romanian-Russian command was superior to that of the Central Powers Command, which envisaged the carrying out of two strikes; but as those strikes were separated by a mountain zone and a fairly large distance (one in the lower course of the Siret and the other along the Oituz Valley), their conversion into a unitary action was not possible, considering the performances of the time⁸. For reasons which did not depend on the Romanian army, its campaign plan had to be altered and so the three famous battles occurred: offensive at Mărăști and defensive at Mărășești and Oituz.

Outstanding strategically and tactically are the wise selection of the main directions of action, the rational grouping and distribution of the operative availabilities, the judicious application of the principle of saving forces, the good coordination of the simultaneous battles at Mărășești and Oituz, the accurate and efficacious use, considering the parametres of the time, of automatic and artillery fire, the frequent carrying out of return and outflanking manoeuvres (essential characteristics of offensive actions) and of counter-attacks (considered as main defensive actions), the prompt carrying out of engineering works when consolidating positions, the opportune protection and movement of the fighting effectives, of signal troops, so as to ensure centralized, unbroken command, the skillful use of the ground advantages, with stress on the unconditional maintenance of the dominant hills, the technical-material and medical supply according to the needs, and others. At the same time special attention was given to efficient cooperation between infantry (the main attack and defence force) and cavalry (used to develop the successful breakthrough in the enemy defence or as "light infantry"), between those and artillery (concentrated in

the key sectors and supplying mass fire on the main targets), between the land troops and the French aviation (which was able to perform deep reconnaissance behind the enemy lines, sector surveillance through visual observation and air photography, adjustment and control of artillery fire, bombing of enemy targets behind the front, reserves and positions). It is not to flatter us that Archduke Joseph, commander of the Austro-Hungarian troops reported that one of the essential causes of the defeat suffered at Mărăști was the "admirable cooperation" achieved by the Romanians "between infantry, artillery and aviation"¹.

Any analysis of strategy and tactics requires a reference to the management of the war. From this point of view it must be stressed that the Great General Headquarters had well-defined functions, and so had the army commands and the commands of the tactical echelons. For the duration of the operations they knew how to blend tradition and innovation, to apply methods tried by the progress of war, in keeping with the concrete local conditions, to increase their experience in management, organization and execution, to liquidate outdated formulas and put right any deficiency that appeared in the second campaign, the art of management appearing as a decisive factor of victory.

The collaboration character of the war required command cooperation between the Romanian state and the allied states, regulated through the alliance treaty and the military convention, however, with a certain variation in concordance with the evolution of operations. As it mainly concerned Romanian-Russian command cooperation, in its last phase it showed similarities with that in 1877—1878, King Ferdinand, supreme commander of the Romanian army being also commander of the "Romanian Front" (a strategic conglomerate comprising the Romanian and Russian forces in the zone), and having a Russian general as second in command. In fact our troops got missions and orders from the Romanian Great General Headquarters and the Russian ones from their own headquarters: the command of the "Romanian Front" did not fulfil the function of integrated command echelon but rather the role of a structure for organized contact, for strategic harmonization.

The events consecutive to the dissolution of the Russian-Romanian joint command were no longer rooted in and supported by military confrontation. But in all circumstances the living forces of the country militated with staunch determination for the triumph of the ideal in the name of which the Romanian people had made so many sacrifices.

1. România în războiul mondial 1916—1919. Volumul I. Documente-Anexe, Bucharest, 1934, doc. 43.
2. România în primul război mondial, Bucharest, 1979, pp. 155—156.
3. Cf. Dr. Constantin Olteanu, Evoluția structurilor ostășești la români, Bucharest, 1986, pp. 164—165.
4. General Erich von Falkenhayn, Campania Armatei a IX-a împotriva românilor și rușilor 1916/17, Bucharest, 1937, p. 127.
5. Cf. Lieutenant-général Dr. Ilie Ceaușescu, La guerre du peuple tout entier pour la defense de la patrie chez les roumains, Bucharest, 1982, pp. 117—120.
6. Ghislain de Diesbach, La Princesse Bibesco 1836—1973, Paris, 1986, p. 241.
7. Cf. Charles Stiénon, Le mystère roumain et la défection russe, Paris, 1918, pp. 280—290.
8. Colonel Ion Cupșa, Armata română în campaniile din anii 1916—1917, Bucharest, 1967, p. 274.
9. General G. A. Dabița, Armata română în războiul mondial (1916—1918), Vol. IV, Bucharest, 1937, p. 130.

to send them behind the front."

"Le Figaro" of August 29, 1917

"The battle of Mărășești has proved that the Romanian troops, if adequately supplied with everything required by modern warfare, are excellent. The defence of Mărășești sanctioned them in history and raised them to the level of the defenders of Yser and Verdun. Mackensen had sent all his troops available on to the Mărășești front, and was determined to get through it at any price, irrespective of losses. The Romanians had to stand the German avalanche without any other protection than the empty trenches. There weren't any forts or mountains there, to facilitate a defence like that in autumn in the Carpathians; the Romanians stood fearlessly, without giving in, under the fire of the enemy artillery, and each enemy attack was followed by several counterattacks by the Russo-Romanian troops."

"The Times" of September 1, 1917

"The great battle which lasted 15 days on the southwestern and southern front in Moldavia was one of the bloodiest throughout the war. The troops of the 1st and 2nd Army evinced military qualities which aroused the admiration of all foreign officers present there [...]"

The young Romanian officers, fresh graduates from military schools, stood out through their invincible courage. The troops' morale is above any eulogy. The wounded in hospitals have one single wish: to go back to the front as soon as possible [...]"

The civilian population, too, is quite firm and the spirit of devotion is still

greater than at the time when Romania joined the war."

"Journal de Genève" of September 1, 1917

"The Romanians are brave and fight like lions. Today, when Germany threatens to occupy even the last third of the territory left to the Romanians, they die like zealots but they would not let the invaders advance any farther. They die, but they will not surrender. They fight for every bit of their land, as savagely as the she-wolf when her last cub is taken away. I saw the Romanian wounded filling the hospitals and yet, with bright eyes, with the face lit by enthusiasm, they told me: "Oh, I wish I recovered my strength more quickly to go back to fight [...] What a torture for a wounded man to stay idle in hospital, when the motherland calls us, when she needs our help" [...] The Romanians are determined to defend the piece of land left to them at any cost. The army, like one single man, answered: We shall leave our bones here, but the Germans will not advance any further."

"Iujnii Krai" of September 7, 1917

Text selected by
MARIA GEORGESCU

JULY—AUGUST 1917: "NEW PAGES OF GLORY IN THE GOLDEN BOOK OF THE ROMANIAN ARMY"

Mass media in the main centres of the Italian Kingdom gave wide coverage to the military events on

THE MILITARY CLAUSES

of the Paris Peace Treaties

Reader MIRCEA MUŞAT, D. Hist.

Military issues played an outstanding role in the 1919–1920 peace treaties that aimed at settling important questions raised during or before the war.

The debates took place in the capital of France between January 12 and June 28, 1919. The plenary sessions and the meetings of the 16 Committees of experts had less importance than the debates of the Council of Ten (the heads of government and the foreign ministers of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Japan). But the essential decision-making body was the Council of Four (Woodrow Wilson, David Lloyd George, V. E. Orlando and G. Clemenceau), which met from March 24, 1919.¹

There were several problems approached in the diplomatic meetings. The first concerned the ideas of the American President W. Wilson, which, in a way, drew the attention of the peace forum. The head of the American executive had stated them as early as January 8, 1918: the people's right to self-determination, renunciation of secret diplomacy, freedom of navigation on the high sea, *disarmament*, "mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity" within a League of Nations, etc. With good reason a French historian noticed that the months of

the Peace Conference were for public opinion in his country a period of a single confrontation — that of Wilsonian illusions.²

A second question was the *enactement of security*, which was of special interest for Quai d'Orsay. The chief of the French delegation wanted to link the territorial questions of the treaties to be concluded to the military ones.³ Clemenceau did not pursue the plans of the General Staff and of the extreme right which contemplated the annexation of the Rhineland, but only declared himself in favour of detaching that province from Germany, ensuring a permanent occupation and a payment of heavy war reparations. The "programmes" were not approved by Wilson and Lloyd George, the latter fearing a French hegemony on the Rhine and wanting to maintain a Germany able to bar the advance of communism.

There was no general consensus in negotiating the Peace Treaty with Germany. The Foch plan proposed the reduction of the German army to 200,000 men and a short military service. The British wanted that the German army be limited to 100,000 soldiers and 5,000 officers. In the question of Rhineland, the French opinion, expressed in the memoranda of Novem-

ber 27, 1918 and January 10, 1919 submitted to Marshal Foch⁴, was not shared by the British and American diplomacy, although Colonel E. M. House had been a little "persuaded" by the French. On March 14, 1919, British Premier Lloyd George suggested a treaty whereby England and the USA on the one hand, and France, on the other, extended guarantees. The intention was to make the French renounce the Rhineland, and President Wilson liked it. On April 22, the Big Four agreed to the demilitarization of the left bank of the Rhine and it was appreciated that the French occupation of the Rhineland would be temporarily reduced.⁵ The French diplomacy, and not only it, considered that it was essential to ensure the security of the world against a possible revival of the German military power. To this end, it suggested a number of military and political guarantees;⁶ in Paris, the former were seen as the limitation of German armament, demilitarization of Rhineland and the occupation of that zone.⁷

There was a consensus at the Peace Conference to forbid Germany possess heavy and offensive armament: warships, submarines, aviation, heavy artillery, tanks (armoured cars), poison gas. As to the future military effectives and their structure there were two opposite views: the French and the British one. The French thesis, advocated by Foch, allowed Germany to have a small army called up for short term while the head of the British cabinet "preferred" a regular army. In the end, the British point of view will prevail: Germany will be allowed a regular army with a strength of 100,000 men

and a small navy with 15,000 people.⁸

The Treaty of Versailles,⁹ containing severe limitation in the military field, clearly envisaged that those conditions were imposed on Germany "in order to make possible the preparation of a general limitation of armaments of all nations". The sentence was a homage paid to general expectations and to the Wilsonian philosophy.

As a guarantee and as a means of exerting pressure on Germany, the Allies decided the temporary occupation of the left bank of the Rhine. The territories on the left bank were divided into three zones — Cologne, Koblenz and Mainz — the treaty providing for the evacuation of these zones by the Allies after 5, 10 and, respectively, 15 years. While the demilitarization of the left bank of the Rhine and of a 50 km zone on the right bank was accepted without difficulty by the Allies and the USA, the question of "occupation" proved to be more delicate. After the French government had abandoned the project of detaching western Rhineland, Wilson and Lloyd George ended in admitting a "temporary occupation" for 15 years of the left bank of the Rhine, with bridgeheads on the right bank.¹⁰

Political guarantees added to the military ones. Lloyd George and Wilson suggested to Clemenceau two guarantee treaties in exchange for his renunciation of the claims to the left bank of the Rhine: a French-English and a French-American one, which were annexed to the Treaty of Versailles. But the refusal of the Senate in Washington to ratify the French-American Treaty made both of them inoperative. Thus, starting from 1920 there were great differences between the policy of Quai

the Romanian front in the summer of 1917. Newspapers like: "L'Idée Nationale", "Corriere della Sera", "La Tribuna", "il Messaggero", "Il Giornale d'Italia" carried almost daily information about the evolution of fighting and especially about the great battles in the Siret Valley and along the Trotuş tributaries on the eastern slope of the Carpathian Mountains. If we also consider the fact that the news was directly conveyed from the front to the major capitals of the European states in conflict, Petrograd, Paris, London, Rome, Vienna and Berlin, then we can conclude that the Italian press reflected the continental views on the respective events.

On the anniversary of one year since Romania joined the war, the newspaper "La Tribuna" of August 29, 1917, carried the telegram addressed by Lloyd George, the British prime minister, to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Romania, in which it was pointed out: "*By taking the decision to enter the war against the Central Powers, Romania declared for the cause of freedom, against autocracy, for the prevalence of law over force*". At the same time, the British prime minister expressed his "*most cordial admiration for the value, tenacity and heroism proved by the Romanian people for the past year, a people that evinced matchless courage*" in the struggle with the merciless enemy.

Referring to the behaviour of the Romanian army, the same politician mentioned: "*The reorganization of the Romanian army, its consistent and precious resistance under extremely*

difficult conditions, set an example of the strength freedom can inspire in a people."

Indeed, public opinion in Europe expressed its entire admiration for the heroic behaviour of the Romanian military units, and mass media in Italy reflected that state of things. The newspaper "L'Ideea Nazionale" of July 18 wrote: *"The Romanian army, completely reorganized, will be able to contribute efficiently to the final battle"*.

A few days later, "Corriere della Sera" and "L'Ideea Nazionale" of July 27 reported that *"the troops of General Averescu took the offensive and occupied the village of Mă-răsești, taking hundreds of prisoners and 19 cannons, of which many were heavy cannons. The success was due to the skillful action, to the efficient cooperation of the Romanian and Russian troops, to the vigorous action of the allied artillery. At the end of the day a line very well organized from the military point of view was disrupted on a large front. The valour and self-denial of the troops were matchless"*. "L'Ideea Nazionale" of the same day carried also the Austrian communiqué, which admitted that *"The enemy forces went on attacking... and were successful from the very beginning"*. In its turn, the German communiqué pointed out that *"the enemy got into our lines from the southern part of the Carpathians"*, and *"On Mackenzen's front there was a violent artillery duel"*. "Corriere della Sera" of July 28 resumed the German communiqués of the previous day and

d'Orsay, dominated by the objective of ensuring security, and that of Foreign Office, more concerned with "the European equilibrium", with "important implications for the loyal implementation of the clauses of the peace treaties", the military provisions especially.

The military provisions of the treaty with Germany fixed the strength of the army of that country to 100,000 soldiers, and the officer corps to 4,000 men. The compulsory military service was forbidden and the German General Staff abolished. Germany was not allowed to maintain or build fortifications either on the left bank, or on the right bank, west of a line drawn 50 kilometers east of the Rhine (articles 42—43). The maintenance or gathering of armed forces, be it even on a temporary basis, as well as military manoeuvres, of any nature they might be, and the maintenance of any material means for mobilization were forbidden. (Part V, Military, Naval and Air Clauses — articles 160—198).¹² The German army was to consist of only infantry and three cavalry divisions (article 160). Germany was not allowed to have heavy artillery, tanks, submarines, military aviation. Kiel canal was internationalized. The treaty provided for the trial of those guilty of unleashing the war, Emperor Wilhelm II, first of all¹³. Signed by the German plenipotentiaries on June 28, 1919, the Treaty of Versailles provided that Germany should acknowledge its "responsibility" in unleashing the war, which should justify the demands of the Allies with regard to reparations. The treaty also had a provision whereby England was to assist France if Germany violated the status of the Rhine land zone¹⁴.

By its military clauses, the Treaty of St. Germain-

en-Laye, concluded on September 10, 1919, compelled Austria to demobilize the army, which was to be reduced to 30,000 people, officers included (article 120). At the same time, Austria was not entitled to have military aviation and had to surrender to the Allied and Associated Powers, on account of war reparations, the military navy, the submarines, the monitors and torpedo boats on the Danube, as well as the entire merchant fleet¹⁵. Article 88 of the Treaty of St. Germain forbade Anschluss¹⁶.

The military clauses of the treaties concluded with the other allies of the former Central Powers had similar content to those established for Germany and Austria. Thus, the Treaty of Trianon, signed on June 4, 1920, forced Hungary to demobilize its armed forces, to abolish the compulsory military service and to maintain an army of only 35,000 men (article 104)¹⁷. Hungary was not allowed to have aviation, tanks and heavy artillery, and the fleet was to be surrendered to the Allied and Associated Powers¹⁸.

As far as Bulgaria was concerned, the military interdictions were similar to those of the Trianon Treaty. Its peace-time military strength should not go above 33,000 people¹⁹.

Finally, the last treaty in the series of the Paris peace system, that of Sévres — signed on August 10, 1920 — replaced the Turkish army by a gendarmerie, and police was placed under the control of an Allied commission. England, France and Italy had the right to keep in the zone of Bosphorus and Dardanelles land and air military forces. The clauses of the Treaty of Sévres infringed the independence and sovereignty of the Turkish state and would be revised at the Lausanne Conference,

which also affected the military provisions. The diplomacy of Bucharest welcomed the creation of a demilitarized zone between Turkey and Bulgaria and was of the opinion that the freedom of the straits was a "lasting base"²⁰ for the evolution of international life in this zone. In the exposition to the law whereby the Romanian parliament was to ratify the Treaty of Lausanne, I. G. Duca appreciated that it represented, as compared to the past, "a great progress", a "real victory" for the young Turkish Republic.

The treaties of 1919—1920 tried to solve, partially, the problems of the period preceding the war, questions which had been in dispute between the former allies and enemies, or only between some of them. The military clauses were in addition to those contained in the annex treaties or, as it was the case of Germany, in

the Treaty of guarantee. In the majority of cases, Part V dealt with the military, naval and air clauses. Those clauses were common in general but differed in respect of the specific situation of each of the former enemy states.

The military clauses of the Peace Treaties had first of all in view the policy of preventing new military aggressions from the part of the defeated countries²¹.

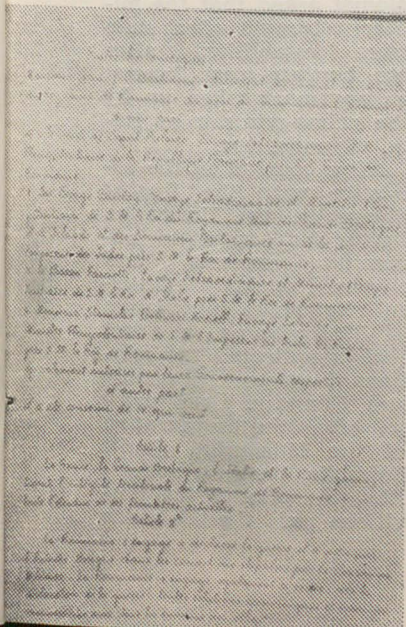
"The intentions" of the victorious Big Powers were determined by the desire to prevent the revival of the German military power. The Allied Control commissions and the League of Nations, founded in 1919, aimed at observing the way in which Germany and its former allies in the First World War implemented the military provisions of the Peace Treaties. The Allied Control Commission headed by the French General Nolet, had the task of "carrying out" the treaty, in order to have the "guarantee" that Germany won't take up arms again²².

In the following years, Germany, helped from outside and taking advantage of the lack of "vigilance" of the big European powers, signatories of the Treaty of Versailles, and of the dissensions between them, will evade the military limitations of the treaties and will wait for the moment "when it will be again powerful enough, in order to become a threat"²⁴. Hungary and Bulgaria will react similarly, the figures mentioned in the peace treaties at the chapter regarding active army being surpassed by far. Thus, in 1924, Hungary had an army of 120,000 men, although the Trianon Treaty allowed it to have only 35,000 soldiers²⁵.

International life in the period following the signing of the Paris peace treaties would evince that

informed the Italian and other readers that in the curvature of the Carpathians "new fighting took place" crowned by success for the Romanian army. "We gave up, in favour of the enemy, the Soveja Valley up to the upper Putna river", and on the Mărăști front, "the Romanians took the initiative with renewed ardour and dealt a magnificent blow to the adversary, getting into its line 12 km deep", mentions a communiqué carried by the same newspaper. The Petrograd communiques published in "Corriere della Sera" of July 28 pointed out that "the Romanian troops advanced as far as the Șușița springs, where they consolidated their positions. The advanced units got as far as the heights situated west of Soveja"... "On the day of 26 the Romanians took a large number of prisoners, captured 6 cannons, 3 machine guns, 3 mine launchers, a large amount of ammunition and other warfare material". "L'Idée Nationale" of July 30, based on news circulating in the official circles in Petrograd, published the article entitled "New Romanian Successes", pointing out that "the Romanian troops kept on chasing the withdrawing enemy and at the end of the day of 27 they occupied one of the hillocks situated five versts south-east of Cașin Monastery, Dragoslave-Bretcu". At the same time, they "took hold of an enemy battery and took prisoners". Another article carried by the same newspaper stressed that "the Romanians" were "valuable allies". "L'Idée Nationale" of August 19, taking over information carried by "The Times" in London, informed its readers: "The greatest battle ever fought on the Romanian front is not over yet". The battle was carried out on a large area and "took a turn favourable to the

Facsimile of Romania's alliance treaty with the Entente incuding the recognition of its legitimate rights to the Romanian territories under the occupation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire



Russians and to the Romanians, who fought with great, highly commendable courage. The enemy carried there all the artillery available and is making desperate efforts to break the front, attacking in compact mass, but all its attempts have failed. The fact that the Romanians have managed to stand the frantic efforts of the enemy since the day of 6 of the current month, forcing it to bring in new and new reinforcements, has thwarted all the plans of the enemy, that was hoping to break the front by a rapid blow".

With great attention did public opinion and the allied and enemy official circles watch the battles which took place in the Slănic field, Oituz and Căşin.

Referring to those battles as well as to fighting in other parts of the Romanian front, the newspaper "L'Idée Nationale" of August 19 wrote under the heading "The Fierce Battle" that "the Austro-Germans took again the offensive towards Tîrgu Ocna, in the morning of the day of 16. The most violent attacks were unleashed in the Slănic area" ... "The enemy managed to take hold of several fortified positions north and south of that locality, but the counter-attacks of the Romanian reserves redressed the situation. On the Şuşita Valley, north-east of Soveja, fighting continued throughout the day of 16. The Romanians kept the positions occupied by them rejecting the furious enemy attacks. On the night of 16 the enemy took the offensive towards Focşani, Muncelu, Moviliţa, but the Romanians successfully coped with everything". Information about the same military events was published by "Il Messaggero" and "Corriere della Sera" of August 19, under the headline "Great but Futile Enemy Attempts

The history of the struggles fought along the centuries by our people against many enemies offers the image of the Romanian soldier's special qualities, tenacity and fearlessness in the clash with the enemy, spirit of sacrifice stemming from love of the country.

N. IORGA, Romanian politician, historian and writer (1871—1940)

the states defeated in the First World War or dissatisfied with the peace conditions were drawing closer to each other; after some discussions agreements were concluded between Berlin, Budapest, Moscow and Sofia which had important implications upon the observance of the peace treaties signed in Paris in 1919—1920²⁶.

The Paris Peace Treaties sanctioned the principles of justice and of freedom in behalf of which Romania had taken to arms alongside the Allies in 1916. Indeed, a series of texts in the peace treaties recorded the completion of the nation-state unity, such as article 292 of the Versailles Treaty, articles 59, 61, 89 of the Treaty of St. Germain, articles 27, 45, 47, 74 of the Trianon Treaty, articles 29, 59 of the Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine and the Protocol of Paris, of October 28, 1920, concluded between the main Allied and Associated Powers and Romania²⁷. We underline that, at the time the Paris peace forum was opening, Romania was a unitary nation-state, consisting of territories that had always been inhabited by Romanians. The Paris Conference did nothing else but took part in giving a juridical sanction to a *de facto* situation, resulting from the struggle of the Romanian people for achieving the aspiration for its national unity²⁸.

It is not the place to analyse the efforts of the Romanian diplomats in

Paris and the desire of Bucharest that new norms were adopted in international relations, which took account of the juridical equality of all states, irrespective of their size and their economic and military power²⁹. We shall bring under discussion some aspects related to the way in which Romania approached the military problems during the debates in the French capital.

The first intervention took place on June 5, 1919, when prime-minister I. I. C. Brătianu underlined how mistaken it was for the small states the theory that they might have "limited interests". "The small states" — I. I. C. Brătianu pointed out — "have not limited interests, only their influence is limited. The military power of a country must be conceived in relation with its borders and neighbours"³⁰. In this context, the Romanian diplomat asked that the military strength of a state were established after the borders were known, an argument taken up by the prime-minister of Italy, Orlando, too.

After concluding the armistice with the Dualist Monarchy, the Hungarian authorities committed numerous excesses and crimes³¹, against the peaceful Romanian population of Transylvania, a fact that complicated the relations between Romania and Hungary. Even more so, after the instauration of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, the new authorities, in spite of the provisions of the Belgrade

armistice for which Romania was not consulted, decreed mobilization and attacked Romania twice³².

"The demarcation line" between Romania and Hungary, although not a frontier, left a large part of Transylvania under Hungarian occupation. Thus, a situation was created out of which a series of political, military, diplomatic and economic difficulties developed that rendered difficult the activity of the Romanian delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, who was asking for the *de jure* recognition of the decision taken by the Grand National Assembly of Alba Iulia.

On May 22, 1919, prime-minister I. I. C. Brătianu informed M. Pherekyde that, "considering the present circumstances from the political point of view, we do not think it is advisable that the Romanian army advance towards Budapest. We have no interest to consolidate any Hungarian government before it takes the pledge to recognize our claims and to co-operate in the development of friendly relations with us"³³. On June 9, I. I. C. Brătianu sent another telegram, in which he considered that "it is in our political interest that the military operations against Hungary maintain a defensive character", Romania having to preserve its own "security" within the present limits³⁴.

Hungary did not intend to acknowledge the Decision of the Grand National Assembly of Alba Iulia, which had been confirmed by the Paris peace forum³⁵.

On June 11, 1919, I. I. C. Brătianu rejected as groundless the "accusations" formulated by Wilson and Lloyd George in connection with Romania's policy towards Hungary³⁶ and he underlined that he could not

take the responsibility of a retreat from Tisza "till the borders were not known" in order to avoid any future complications with them³⁷. The Foreign Ministers' Council took note of Brătianu's observation and made the Romanian-Hungarian border line known, the Romanian politician stating that it "was decided without our participation"³⁸.

The Romanian government, in its answer to the ultimative note of the Supreme Inter-Allied Council of June 15, 1919, underlined that it had no intention to prolong "the occupation of regions uncaptured by it but for the period necessary for its security and as long as the threat of military aggression must be faced"³⁹.

On March 8, 1920 the Conference of foreign ministers and ambassadors, presided over by Lord Curzon, decided that the draft treaty with Hungary was final in respect of the territorial, military, financial and transit clauses. After that date, the issues still under debate in the commissions of experts were not liable to prejudice Romania's fundamental interests. The makers of the Treaty of Trianon, signed on June 4, 1920, accepted, in fact, the indubitable value of the Decision of the Grand National Assembly in Alba Iulia. Thus, after more than a year of diplomatic debates, period in which the issue acquired a military character too, the peace forum acknowledge *de jure* the Decision of Union of Alba Iulia. The centuries-long aspiration of the Romanians to live within the frontiers of a single state became reality.

1. Pierrt Milza, *De Versailles à Berlin 1919-1945*, 2^e édition, Paris, Masseur et C^{ie}, 1972, p. 6.

2. Pierre Miquel, *La paix de Versailles et l'opinion pu-*

to Break Romanian Front. Austro-German Plans Upset". Both newspapers took over the information released in London and Petrograd.

The description of the battle in the Focșani sector of the Romanian front given by M. Sadoveanu, published in the French press, was resumed by "Corriere della Sera" of August 24 under the heading "The Way the Romanians Fight", and by "L'Indee Nazionale" of August 25 with an even more significant title: "The Romanians' Valour at Focșani". "La Tribuna" of August 30, in an article entitled "Heavy German Losses on the Romanian Front", tried to sum up events, based on news received from our front by the British newspaper "The Times". It was rightly pointed out that "The great battle which lasted fifteen days on the southeastern and southern front in Moldavia, is one of the bloodiest of this war. The troops in the first and second lines of the Romanian army evinced military qualities which aroused the admiration of all foreign officers present there. The German losses are much higher than those inflicted upon the Romanians and Russians."

The remarks found in "La Tribuna" of August 29 can be regarded as a conclusion, because they rightly pointed out that "the German attempt to break the front can be considered a failure. The Romanian troops proved a very strong morale and enthusiasm; with the battles in the Carpathians and on the Siret river new pages of glory have been written in the golden book of the Romanian army".

● Dr DUMITRU
ZAHARIA

THE ENEMY HAD TO ADMIT THE ROMANIAN FIGHTS EXCELLENTLY

July 13, 1917. /.../ Late in the afternoon the bombardment against Division 218 Infantry intensified (18 batteries fired about 730 shells). The bombardment was guided by aircraft and lasted late in the night.

August 7, 1917. /.../ That day's new attacks against Caşin were in vain. /.../ The attacks a bit farther to the north failed, because of the enemy's strongly fortified position and fierce resistance and because of failures in our artillery. Partially great losses.

August 10, 1917. /.../ The Romanian is retreating step by step only and holds out rather well, carrying out violent counter-attacks. Losses are great for both sides. The Romanian fights excellently for all the difficult terrain and lack of water. Losses are great.

Army Corps 8. /.../ In front of the left wing the enemy stands firmly... The enemy resistance is strong and fierce.

August 13, 1917. Repeated enemy attacks on Army Corps 8, at Măgura Caşinului, the glassware factory, all of them rejected. In the afternoon, the enemy managed to get to the glassware factory, in our line. The counter-attacks restored the situation. Heavier enemy bombardments on either side of

blique française, Paris, Flammarion, 1972, p. 212.

3. Michel Leunay, Versailles, une paix baclée? Le XX-ème siècle est mal parti, Bruxelles, Editions Complexe, 1981, p. 89.

4. Ibidem, p. 89; Inga Fleet, Colonel House in Paris. A Study of American Policy at the Paris Peace Conference 1919. Universitet Sforlaget, Harhaus, 1973.

5. Michel Launay, op. cit., p. 92.

6. Paul Mantoux, Des Délivrations du Conseil des Quatre (24 mars - 29 juin 1919), Paris, 1955, t. II, p. 50, 271.

7. I. B. Duroselle, Histoire diplomatique de 1919 à nos jours, Paris, Dalloz, 7-è édition, 1978, p. 17.

8. James Ioll, Europe since 1870. An International History, Penguin Books, 1983, p. 276.

9. Arno Mayer, Politics and Diplomacy of Peace Making, 1918-1919, New York, Alfred, A. Knopf, 1967, pp. 753-812.

10. I. B. Duroselle, op. cit., p. 18.

11. R. Poislevin, Jacques Barvéty, Les relations franco-allemandes, 1815-1975, Paris, A. Colin, 1975, p. 275.

12. H. W. Y. Temperley, A History of the Peace Conference of Paris, London, Henry Frowde, Hosler and Stoughton, t. III, 1920, pp. 99-335.

13. Gilbert Bodia, Histoire de l'Allemagne contemporaine 1917-1933, t. I, Paris, Editions Sociales, 1964, p. 159.

14. H. W. Y. Temperley, op. cit., t. III, pp. 337-340.

15. Ibidem, t. IV, 1921, pp. 141-156.

16. F. Lee Benns, Europe since 1914. In Its World Setting, Sixth edition, F. S. Crafts and Co., 1945, pp. 127-131.

17. A. F. Franqlis (ed.), Dictionnaire Diplomatique, t. I, Paris, Hache, pp. 1079-1082.

18. A. Mayer, op. cit., p. 521; Mircea Popa, Primul război mondial 1914-1918 (The First World War 1914-1918), Bucharest, 1979, p. 451.

19. H. W. Y. Temperley, op. cit., t. IV, p. 170; A. F. Franqlis, op. cit., I, pp. 379-381.

20. "Monitorul oficial", part I, no. 189, August 31, 1924; Relații internaționale în perioada interbelică (International Relations in Interwar Period), Bucharest, Editura politică, 1980, pp. 61-64; Paul C. Helmnick, From Paris to Sévres. The Partition of the Ottoman Empire at the Peace Conference of 1919-1920. Ohio State University Press, Columbus, 1974.

21. Eftimie Antonescu, Studiu asupra ultimelor tratate de pace. 1919 (A Study of the Last Peace Treaties. 1919), Part I, The League of Nations, Bucharest, Editura Universul, 1938, p. 10.

22. Data taken from H. W. Y. Temperley, op. cit., t. IV, p. 170.

23. Archives of the Ministry of National Defence, holding 5475, file no. 32, 1919, p. 463 (Report no. 4011, Mr. Rozin to the Ministry of War).

24. Information Bulletin of the General Staff in Bucharest, April 12, 1924. War budget in Germany was 12 per cent of the general budget in 1924 (idem, holding 950, file no. 1, 1924, p. 448).

25. Ibidem, p. 594.

26. Idem, holding 5417, file no. 13, 1923, p. 10.

27. George Sofronis, Principiul naționalităților în Tratatul de pace din 1919-1920, Bucharest, Editura Universul, 1936, pp. 196-197.

28. C. Botoran, I. Calafeteanu, E. Campus, V. Moisuc, România și Conferința de Pace de la Paris (1918-1920). Triumful principiului naționalităților (Romania and the Paris Peace Conference. 1918-1920. The Triumph of the Principle of the Nationalities), Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1983; M. Mușat, I. Ardeleanu, De la statul geto-dac la statul român unitar (From the Geta-Dacian State to the Unitary Romanian State), Bucharest, Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House, 1983, pp. 657-700.

29. Archives of the Ministry of National Defence, holding 71, Peace Conference, 1919, file no. 222, pp. 133-134; Sherman David Spector, Romania at the Paris Peace Conference. A Study of the Diplomacy of Ioan I. C. Brătianu, New York, 1962; Documents on British Foreign Policy, First Series, Vol. VI, p. 20.

30. Paul Montaux, op. cit., t. 2, p. 315, 190, 321.

31. Archives of the Ministry of National Defence, holding 876, file no. 9, 1919, p. 155; idem, holding 3831, file no. 128, 1919, p. 3.

32. Archives of the Ministry of National Defence, holding 71, Peace Conference, 1919, file 181, pp. 33-36.

34. Archives of the Ministry of National Defence, holding 71, Peace Conference, 1919, file no. 181, p. 125 (telegram no. 383 sent from Paris, on May 22, 1919 by I. I. C. Brătianu to Pherekyde).

33. Archives of the Ministry of National Defence, holding 3831, file without number, p. 16, 184-281.

35. Ibidem, f. 127 (telegram no. 414, June 9, 1919, I. I. C. Brătianu to M. Pherekyde).

36. Archives of the Ministry of National Defence, holding 3831, file no. 106, 1919, p. 8-9.

37. Archives of the Ministry of National Defence, holding 21, Peace Conference, 1919, file no. 222, p. 207.

38. Ibidem.

39. Ibidem.

(continued on page 83)

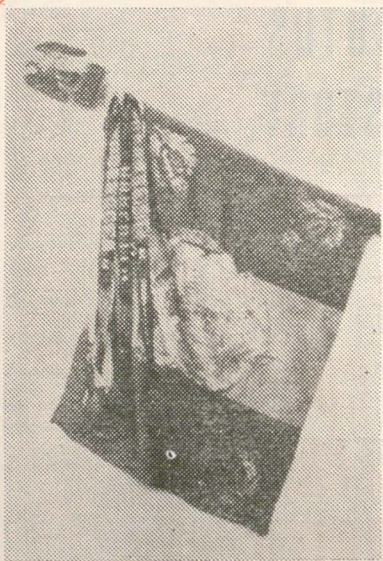
FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS OF NATIONAL HISTORY

LIBERATION OF THE ANCIENT TERRITORIES OF THE CONTINUOUS ROMANIAN EXISTENCE, WHICH WERE OCCUPIED BY THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN MONARCHY — ROMANIA'S MAIN REASON FOR HER PARTICIPATION IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Lieutenant-General ILIE CEAUȘESCU, D. Hist.

Our forefathers' boundless love for their native land with which they had always identified themselves, conferred them an outstanding historic vitality, an unflinching determination of continuing their existence, without surrendering to any foreign occupation and domination, at the cost of tremendous human and material sacrifices. Two million and a half years ago, "the most valiant and just of the Thracians" had put up a fierce resistance to the huge Persian army commanded by king Darius. The centralized and independent Dacian state led by Burebista, "the first and the greatest of all kings that had ever ruled

Thracia", and then by Decebalus, fought the Roman Empire, one of the strongest forces of the ancient times. After long and serious battles, the Romans conquered part of Dacia, but the Geto-Dacian people could neither be defeated, nor destroyed. The two great civilizations — the Dacian and the Roman — merged, mutually acting upon each other; the Dacian people assimilating the Latin language, giving thus birth to the Romanian people, that combined the most exquisite virtues of both Dacians and Romans, a new people capable of facing the hardships of history for about two thousand years of unitary existence.



The three-colour flag is fluttering again north of the Carpathians on the age-old Romanian land of Transylvania

The Romanian people and its armies waged heroic battles during the great migrations of peoples, against those coveting the riches and lands of our ancestors — characteristic for that age being Menumorut's outlook on the independence and integrity of his land. Living in close communion with "the mountains and plains, with rivers and proud woods," the Romanians bravely defended their homeland, continuing their existence around the Carpathians, the Danube and the Black Sea, on the lands inherited from the Dacians, despite all vicissitudes they had heroically faced. Independence and sovereignty have always been fundamental ideals and goals of the Romanian people. That is why the permanent struggle for a self-reliant development, for freedom and independence has been a characteristic feature of the Romanian people's bimillenary history, influencing its very existence, its conceptions and principles.

The fierce struggles waged by the Romanian people led by famous princes like Menumorut, Gelu, Glad, Basarab I, Mircea the Great, Iancu of Hunedoara, Stephen the Great, Michael the Brave and many others, defeated strong and numerous invading armies, strengthening the feelings of unity of the Romanians of the three Romanian lands: Walachia, Transylvania and Moldavia. The great capacity of organizing their existence, of putting up resistance against

aggressions by arming the whole people, the Romanian soldier's legendary heroism, and the diplomatic ability of the illustrious Romanian princes were methods used by the Romanian principalities that managed to preserve their state autonomy despite the expansionist tendencies of the great empires, continuing to keep unaltered boundaries with the neighbouring countries, having their own institutions, administration and customs, with individual rulers and a peculiar socio-political and military life, developing an original, prosperous culture, that won them a well-deserved international fame. This explains the fact that neither Moldavia, Walachia nor Transylvania had never been provinces of the Ottoman Porte, preserving their autonomy within the usual feudal vassalage relationships, a thing which did not happen to other Balkan countries, like Greece, Albania, Serbia, Bulgaria, that were incorporated into the Ottoman Empire. As to Hungary, it was turned into a pashalik, after the battle of Mohacs (1526), the Hungarian kingdom disappearing as an European state for several centuries. As a consequence of the Ottoman Empire's offensive towards Central Europe, the Romanian Land of Transylvania was turned into a vassal of the Porte, preserving its own diet and laws. And this is another proof of the undeniable historic reality that the intra-Carpathian state had never been part of the feudal Hungarian state, as some foreign pseudo-historians, deprived of any elementary professional probity, are still claiming.

Michael the Brave fulfilled in 1600 the Romanians' ideal of union, a political act which, according to the General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party "has become a symbol and a stimulus for future generations to continuously struggle for national unity and independence." The mediaeval age knew in fact a Dacia of the Romanians, expressed through the economic and cultural unity of the whole Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic area.

Through their long resistance, the Romanian principalities were a solid obstacle that delayed and diminished the powerful force of the Ottoman invasion, representing a genuine shield for Central and Western Europe, which could thus develop the luxuriant Renaissance civilization.

After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in Vienna (1683) and Austria's ra-

pid advance towards south-eastern Europe, the ancient land of Transylvania ridded itself of Ottoman suzerainty and fell into Hapsburg domination, preserving its individuality of a great principality, with a separate administration and an individual diet, independent from the Hungarian one, which was incorporated into the Hapsburg Empire.

The numerous devastating wars waged on Romanian territory by the Ottoman, Czarist and Hapsburg Empires during the 18th century plundered our national riches, destroyed or took away numerous material and spiritual values, hampering the Romanian society's economic development in the long run, the three great neighbouring empires vehemently disputing the Romanian lands' very international status and integrity. Subjected to permanent pressure and attacks by the expansionist Hapsburg and Czarist Empires, the Ottoman Empire ceded, without being entitled to, parts of the Romanian territories to the Hapsburg Empire (Transylvania, in 1699, Oltenia and Banat, in 1718 and Bukovina in 1775) and to the Czarist Empire (Bessarabia in 1812), seriously damaging the unity of our ancient homeland. The new situation brought about the initiation and widening of a sustained and uninterrupted struggle for national independence, grounded on the legitimated historical rights of the Romanians living in the territories under foreign domination — a struggle which was going to be gloriously crowned by the 1918 Great Union.

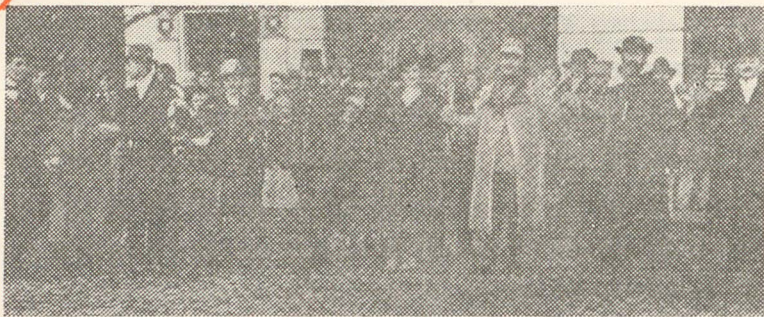
During the second half of the 18th century, the ideas on the Romanians' common origin, long-standing continuity and unity would become a genuine pro-

gramme of national emancipation, of development of the Romanians' awareness promoted mainly by the Transylvanian School, a trend of Transylvanian intellectuals. The 1784 popular revolution headed by Horea, Cloșca and Crișan was a climax of the Romanian emancipation struggle in Transylvania, being appraised by Karl Marx as a "symbol of Dacia's renaissance."

The 1848—1849 revolution that took place in all territories inhabited by the Romanians recorded the union of the Romanian principalities as a main point of their platforms, an idea so clearly expressed by the so meaningful words uttered by the tens of thousands of people gathered on Liberty Field in Blaj: *"We want to unite to our Motherland!"* The Romanians' aspiration for national unity was noticed by the Hungarian liberal politician Miklos Wesselenyi: "At the present time of developed and developing nationalities, the high spirit of the national feeling has fired the peoples and nations of Walachian origin. These people, whose origin and language can mainly be traced down to the great Roman kin... have never wholly forgotten their brilliant origins... Their plans and hopes are a future union into a single nation and country belonging to all Walachian populations having the same origin and language. They do not want only the union of the two principalities, but also extend their claims over the numerous Walachian inhabitants from Bukovina and Bessarabia, that is over these two provinces — the former being torn from Moldavia 50 years earlier and the latter only in 1812. Their claims are grounded on their former lands, on their

Under the Romanian three-colour flag, our soldiers, our brave men





The Union Dance,
the symbol
of Romanian
national
unity

original ownership, never lost, but only limited through oppression and illegal encroachment, and on many other similar facts."²

The repression of the 1848 Romanian revolution through the brutal intervention of the great neighbouring empires could not kill our people's determination to get united. *"Never has the confidence in the future of a great undivided Romania deserted our souls,"*³ showed the manifest of the Romanian emigrants in Paris, and Alexandru Odobescu, the writer and historian, wrote in 1851 that *"it is high time Romania formed alone a single and strong nation."*⁴ The patriot revolutionary Cezar Boliac pointed out in 1853 that *"the Romanians' union into a single state is neither an idea produced by the minds of a few more advanced Romanians, nor an outcome of the debates going on since '48 onwards: it has been a national feeling anywhere in Romania ever since history has begun revealing things about Dacia."*⁵

The union of the Romanian principalities of Moldavia and Walachia on January 24, 1859 and the creation of the modern state Romania was a polarizing nucleus for all foreign dominated Romanian provinces. Alexandru Papiu-Ilarian wrote: *"When Cuza was elected prince, the Transylvanian Romanians' enthusiasm may have been greater than in the Principalities."*⁶ The inner consolidation of the modern Romanian state, its strengthened international position, the multiple amplification of the links between the Romanians on both sides of the Carpathians became a solid guarantee for fulfilling the ideal of the Great Union.

A telling proof of national solidarity was offered by the wide protest action aroused by the conclusion of the Austro-Hungarian dual pact in June 1867, which

annexed Transylvania — an integrant part of the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic space, a millennial cradle of the Romanian people — to Hungary, for 51 years, counter to the will of the majority Romanian population. Dearly wanting to scrape out the Romanian character of that territory, the Hungarian authorities resorted to a policy of forced denationalization, which made the Austro-Hungarian dualism *"the bleakest period of the whole history of the Romanian people from Transylvania."*⁷ The Romanians of Transylvania and Banat had a very determined retaliation at the somber prospects opened to them by the dualist bargain of 1867. The struggle against the dualist regime was morally, materially and politically supported by the Romanian state, being considered the struggle of the whole nation for safeguarding its national being and getting united to the Motherland. Mihail Kogălniceanu declared in the Romanian Parliament: *"it is well known that the Romanian nation stands close by the Romanians of Transylvania and Banat."*⁸ The protest-memorandum of the national movement, known as the Blaj Pronunciament (3/15 May, 1868) made public the Transylvanian Romanians' fundamental national claims, grounded on their legitimated historical rights. The creation in 1869 of the Romanian national parties in Banat and Transylvania and their subsequent unification in 1881 were special moments in the organization of the national emancipation movement in the areas beyond the mountains, in intensifying political ties between the Romanians in the two provinces and those in the free country, in order to fight against the exploitation and denationalization policies promoted by the dualist regime, to keep up the national being, to gain autonomy and to achieve in the future a full national unity.

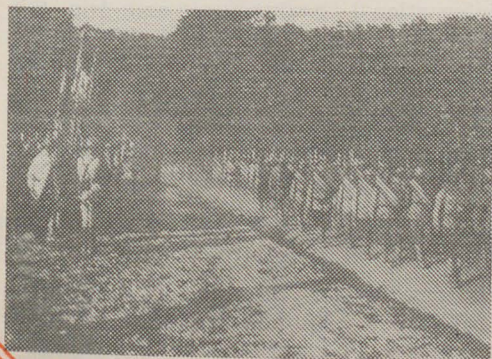
Romania's full state independence acquired after the 1877—1878 national and popular war proved to the whole world that the Romanian nation is single and indivisible, irrespective of temporary boundaries imposed by the great neighbouring powers, that the whole Romanian people on both sides of the Carpathians share the same historical aspirations — the achievement of the unitary nation-state. The peace treaty signed in Berlin on July 1/13, 1878 that sanctioned Romania's new international juridical status stipulated also the reintegration to the Motherland of Dobrudja, an ancient Romanian land, dominated by the Ottoman Empire for over four hundred years. Part and parcel of the ancient homeland, Dobrudja strengthened the Romanian economic potential, its reunification to the national territory being an important stage for building up a re-integrated Romania.

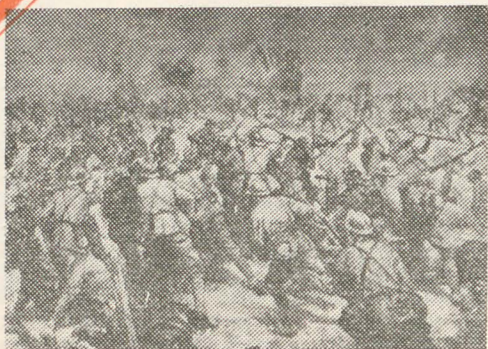
Early 20th century socioeconomic and political evolution in the areas making up the geographical entity of the Romanian space, the development of the productive forces and the strengthening of capitalist relationships, the expansion of commercial exchanges with the other countries, the progress of Romanian society as a whole were inexorable requirements of completing the state union. The General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party points out that *"The union into a single state — the Romanians' age-old dream, a lofty cause for which numerous previous generations had fought — had become an immediate target, an acute necessity required by the very advancement of the Romanian society."*⁹ The general effort for uniting within the framework of the same state

was a general concern of the whole nation, involving all social classes and strata. Vasile Goldiș was voicing a generally Romanian conviction when writing in the *Românul* newspaper that: *"we, the Romanians, as an ethnically unitary people, are worth living as an own national individuality. We either disappear all of us, or live together!"*¹⁰ The Romanian determination to complete the revolutionary process launched by the 1859 Union and continued with the 1877 Independence had been noticed by the leading Hungarian politicians too: *"It is hard to imagine the spiritual influence produced upon the Romanians by the existence of the independent Romanian state..."* Count Bethlen Istvan would admit in the Budapest Parliament. *"The greater the prestige of independent Romania in the eyes of the Romanians in Hungary, the more daring their policy has become. They aim at uniting the territory they are living in to the Romanian kingdom, at a favourable moment."*¹¹

The Romanian political forces, ranging from the bourgeois to the socialist ones, especially those in the provinces beyond the country's boundaries, would dedicate a great part of their activity to the major national objective: the national reintegration. The National Conference of the National Romanian Party that took place in Sibiu in 1910, took notice of the worsening political, economic and social situation of the Romanian people living under the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and called up the whole Romanian population to take more determined action to reject the attacks of the Magyar Government and Parliament, showing that the final victory could be achieved only through: *"political awareness and a continuous struggle waged in all fields of public life"* and through achieving *"the strictest solidarity of the Romanian people."*¹² The Romanian socialists asserted their firm stand on the national question in Austria-Hungary: *"As a social body, a country has to develop completely,"* C. Dobrogeanu-Gherea used to write in 1911. *"Divided into several parts, like Poland or part of Romania, its development becomes abnormal and unhealthy."* And the author further said that *"social-democracy intends in fact to make the hour of liberty and reunification of the Romanian people come closer."*¹³

The march of the Romanian liberating troops





The battle of Mărășești (fresco by D. Stoica)

The powerful trend of the public opinion in favour of supporting the class struggle for freeing the Romanian provinces had drawn the cadres of the Romanian army, who would pledge their adhesion, under various forms, to the ideal of state union. General Constantin N. Hîrjeu showed that "the Romanian people would never give up its national ideal, its traditional dream: the replacement of political, conventional boundaries with ethnical, natural ones," his generation undertaking the great duty of "preserving unaltered the country's land and of preparing means of action for the future generations to fulfil our last will."¹⁴

At the outbreak of WW I, in the summer of 1914, at the crossroads of strong interest of the great conflicting powers, — function of the complex situations cropped up — Romania acted only for ensuring her national independence and sovereignty, for finding those ways that should lead to the liberation of her territories from foreign domination and their union to their motherland. That is why the solution of laying in wait decided by the Crown Council on August 3, 1914 fully met the national interests of the Romanian state, the Romanian people's determinations and aspirations. It was obvious for everybody that, within the huge clash of forces and means involved between the two imperialist groupings, Romania had to find the best moment to come in in such a way as to create the favourable conditions for the achievement of her national ideal. The *Adevărul* newspaper wrote: "Armed neutrality ... to be ready at any moment to take the supreme decision, but only when we deem it necessary to interfere

and if it is to our interest to do it."¹⁵ Highlighting the Romanian people's just national aspirations of achieving the union of the Romanian nation in a single state, Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea voiced the Romanian socialists' principled stand: "In a country whose greatest misfortune is to have part of its territory under foreign domination, the reintegration is a mutual wish of all her citizens. And this is a desideratum beyond any question. What is questionable," Gherea went on, "is the method, the time and the mode of this reintegration, the circumstances, consequences, the strength of its achievement..."¹⁶ The stand adopted by the Bucharest Government was appraised in Transylvania as the only formula meeting the interests of the whole Romanian nation. The *Telegraful român* newspaper of Sibiu wrote in January 24/February 6 1915 that "nobody can ask her (Romania) to abandon her expectancy as long as she does not have absolute guarantees that her bretherns' fate would change in the future", as "Romania's interests are identical to those of all the Romanians, and the Romanians' interests are identical to those of the future Europe: viz. a just assertion of each people within the European states, at the place where they have shown to be an unquestionable force."¹⁷

Romania's policy of neutrality and armed expectancy proved to be a conjunctural solution that could not be infinitely prolonged as the achievement of the national ideal required an efficient action, which could be only joining the war on the side of the Entente powers, which, after numerous Romanian diplomatic demarches, were willing to acknowledge the country's legitimated national desideratum. Life has proved that the only possibility of achieving the national ideal under those historical circumstances was to make use of the international conjuncture and join the war at the most favourable moment of its development so that the Romanian people's fighting capacity should be most efficiently used, in such a way as the liberation of Romanian territories under foreign domination and the completion of the unitary nation-state should be the direct outcome of the sacrifices of the Romanian people and not of the game of foreign forces. As a matter of fact, the whole interval of neutrality is characterized by a massive and continuous action of the public opinion throughout the country, sustained by politicians

for immediately joining the French-Russian-British coalition in order to speed up and achieve the nation's complete political union. The ideal of national union had involved all classes and political parties, wipping out any conflicting views. *"The meaning of the word union should permeate our whole being..."* declared the leader of the Conservative Party. *"We may be divided by second-rate problems, but the great question of the ideal cannot divide in any way the Romanians. All Romanians have the same ideal, and that is why we have to have one single feeling. At this crucial time, when Romania's interests require the union of all forces, we must not be suspicious of each other."*¹⁸

The Romanian public opinion was openly in favour of joining the war against Austria-Hungary and freeing the invaded territories. Romania's stand was clearly expressed by I. I. C. Brătianu, the Prime Minister: *"Romania is not asking anything else than a rectitutio in integrum, she does not have the ambition of conquests for the conquest's sake. Romania wants only to free her brethern who have always been united to her through the closest ties."*¹⁹

Faced with diplomatic and military pressures exerted on her, Romania joined the war on the side of the Entente powers, after having clearly stated her national rights, her requests laying at the basis of the alliance treaty and of the military convention concluded on August 4/17 1916 with the countries of the quadruple convention. The seven articles of the political treaty stipulated Romania's declaration of war to Austria-Hungary and the allies undertook to guarantee Romania's territorial integrity, acknowledging at the same time her right to unite the territories within the

Austro-Hungarian Monarchy that belonged to her. The military convention stipulated among military operations Romania's participation in the war side by side with the other armies. According to article 9 of the convention, the main target of the Romanian action "will be in Transylvania..."

Prime Minister Ion I. C. Bratianu, in a Crown Council on August, 14/27 1916, stressed upon the fact that *"we shall declare war to Austria-Hungary alone and not to anyone else"* and motivated that decision by showing the territorial rights accepted for Romania as well as a status of equality at the Peace Congress, concluding that: *"it is impossible to go back now."*²⁰ It is therefore beyond any doubt that Romania's reason for taking part in the First World War was solely required by the achievement of the national desideratum, that is the eliberation of the territories anciently and permanently inhabited by the Romanians, Transylvania, Banat and Bukovina, at that time under Austro-Hungarian domination. For that reason the 1916-1918 war waged by Romania was a just war of national liberation and reintegration. **"Though the First World War had an imperialist character"**, highlights the President of Socialist Romania, **"the Romanian people did not participate spurred by invasionistic and annexationist intentions..."**²¹

The Government's decision to join the war against Austria-Hungary got unanimous acclaim of the wide popular masses, of the Romanian popular opinion on both sides of the Carpathians. *"Romania joins the action to fulfil her historical mission, by achieving national unity and the liberation of her brethern who have been waiting for a thousand years this hour of redemption"*²², wrote Ion C. Grădişteanu in *Epoca* newspaper.



**Shooting position.
And this is where
the liberation started**

The Romanian people accepted all these sacrifices brought about by the country's participation in the war, as it understood from the very beginning its liberating character and considered it as the only solution required by the necessities of the moment. The Romanian people has never, throughout its whole existence, been animated by invasionist tendencies or hatred for other peoples. "We have not joined the chaos of this massacre to make any conquests," said Barbu Ștefănescu-Delavrancea. "We do not want anything belonging to others, what we do want is the union with our brethern in Transylvania, Banat and Bukovina... We are not making a new homeland by sword, we only reunite it."²³ The same lofty and just ideals underlaying the Romanian action were highlighted by Professor Onisifor Gibu: "We do not want to conquer other people's land, we want to take back our own land which had been exploited for hundreds and thousands of years on end. We want to rid our Transylvanian and Bukovinean brethern of slavery, we want to regain the land in which the archangels of our kin are laying in eternal slumber: Michael the Brave and Stephen the Great."²⁴

Upon hearing about the Romanian Army's joining the war for national liberation and reintegration, the whole country was swept by an inspiring enthusiasm, standing proof of the just aim pursued by Romania. Tens of thousands of peoples were demonstrating in the streets of the Capital City, expressing their total adhesion to the "sacred and just" cause of the country's joining the war, conferring thus a deeply popular character to the struggle for achieving the national desideratum. "Whether the history of wars mentions that some of them were popular wars," the *Opinia* newspaper wrote, "then our war will certainly by given such an epithet for times to come. Yes, indeed! Our war is a popular one, it is the war of the Romanian people!"²⁵

The Transylvanian Romanian population gladly welcomed the liberating Romanian troops, manifesting thus their deep attachment to the cause of completing the Romanian unitary nation-state. The greetings addressed to the Romanian Army upon their entering the city of Brașov were most telling: "Welcome to you all... to this ancient cradle of Romanian culture, from us, those of the same blood and faith." The Procla-

mation of the Romanian command published in *Gazeta Transilvaniei* read like this: "Setting foot on the sacred land in which the language of our oppressed people has been spoken for centuries on end, the Romanian Army has not come as an enemy against people of any religion or kin remained by their homes but on the contrary, animated by the most brotherly feelings for all peaceful people." Voicing the deep patriotic frame of mind, the same periodical wrote: "We are at a loss for the proper words to phrase our joy suppressed by century-old suffering... Our liberating brethern have come... Be welcome and have a good progress forward."²⁶

Romania's joining the war in the summer of 1916 was hailed by a series of governments and politicians of various countries who had understood the justice of our people's cause. Thus the Belgian foreign minister showed: "Joining lawfulness and resistance to the German aggression, Romania will manage to gloriously achieve her national aspirations and to join to the great Romanian family her sons from beyond the mountains who have been unjustly separated from her," while the Belgian ambassador to Serbia noticed that the Romanian army "is so arduous because it is struggling for a national ideal."²⁷

Romania's joining the war for national reintegration was an expression of the Romanian nation's determination to get united, of her necessity to get asserted as a unitary and independent state. The Romanian Army answered with unbound enthusiasm to the country's call, fully realizing the historic imperative of undelayed action for achieving the national ideal. The sacred cause of liberating the territories of ancient and permanent Romanian habitation then under the domination of Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had permanently strengthened the Romanian soldiers who made a wall of their bosoms in the Carpathian passes, on the Jiu, Olt, in Dobrudja, on the Argeș and especially at Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz, with the blood-written inscription on it: "No trespassing!" The epos of the battles waged by our army, of our people's resistance to the invading armies of the Central Powers between 1916 and 1918 was grounded from the unity of feelings and options of the majority political forces, of the whole

Romanian people who considered their participation to the conflict as a war for the Romanian reintegration.

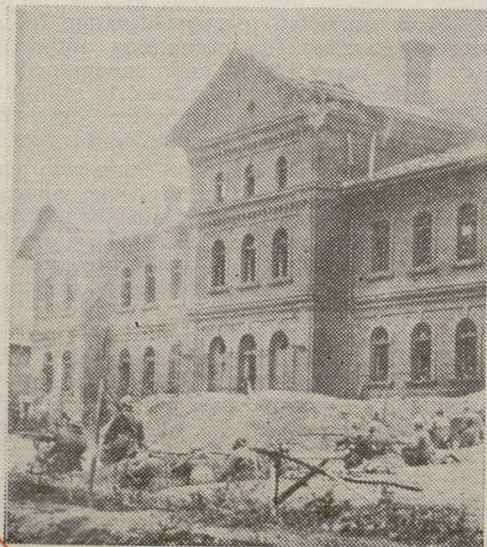
The decisions of the plebiscitary meetings of 1918 of the historical Romanian provinces that decided upon the union to Romania gloriously ended the long process of the Romanian people's struggle for independence and national unity. The creation of the Romanian unitary nation-state was, therefore, the result of the decisive struggle of the widest popular masses, being an act of deep national justice through the achievement of a logical concordance between the objective reality and the peoples' inalienable rights, on the one hand, and the national framework strongly required by these realities.

1. Nicolae Ceaușescu, România pe drumul construirii societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate, (*Romania on the Road of Building the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society*), vol. 17, The Publishing House for Political Literature, Bucharest, 1979, p. 269.

2. Apud Cornelia Bodea, 1848 la români. O istorie în date și mărturii, (1848 with the Romanians. A History in Dates and Documents), vol. II, The Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1982, pp. 241—243.

3. Gîndirea social-politică despre Unire (1859). (*Social-Political Thinking on the Union, 1859*), The Publishing House for Political Literature, Bucharest, 1966, p. 50.

The frontline passed through the Mărășești railway station



4. Ibidem, p. 60.

5. Ibidem, p. 66.

6. Ibidem, pp. 274—275.

7. Nicolae Ceaușescu, România pe drumul construirii societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate, (*Romania on the Road of Building the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society*), vol. 26, The Publishing House for Political Literature, Bucharest, 1984, p. 434.

8. Monitorul oficial, no. 63, March 18/30, 1867, pp. 370—371.

9. Nicolae Ceaușescu, România pe drumul desăvîșirii construcției socialiste (*Romania on the Road of accomplishing the Building of Socialism*), vol. 2, The Publishing House for Political Literature, Bucharest, 1968, p. 467.

10. Vasile Goldiș, Scrieri social-politice și literare (*Social-political and Literary Writings*), Timișoara, 1976, p. 102.

11. Desăvîșirea unificării statului național român. Unirea Transilvaniei cu vechea Românie (*The Completion of the Unification of the Romanian Nation State. Transylvania's Union to the Old Romania.*), Bucharest, 1968, p. 97.

12. 1918. Unirea Transilvaniei cu România (*Transylvania's Union to Romania*), IVth edition, Bucharest, 1978, p. 286.

13. C. Dobrogeanu-Gherea, Asupra socialismului în țările înapoiate (*On Socialism in Backward Countries*) in K. Kautsky, Bazele social-democrației (*Bases of Social-Democracy*), with a preface and introductory study by C. Dobrogeanu-Gherea, Bucharest, 1911, p. 264 ; 205.

14. General C. N. Hârjeu, Pregătirea armatei pentru război. Studiu de organizare, de psihologie și de instrucțiune militară (*The Preparation of the Army for the War. A Study on Military Organization, Psychology and Instruction*), vol. 1, Bucharest, 1905, p. 302.

15. Const. Mille Simpatii, antipatii, interese, (*Sympathies, Antipathies, Interests*), Adevărul, year XXVIII, no. 9842, August 6, 1914.

16. C. Dobrogeanu-Gherea, Război sau neutralitate, Bucharest, 1914, pp. 27—28.

17. Telegraful român, year LXIII, no. 9, January 24/February 6, 1915.

18. Apud Mircea Mușat, Ion Ardeleanu, De la statul geto-dac la statul român unitar. (*From the Geto-Dacian State to the Romanian Unitary State*), The Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1983, p. 477.

19. Journal de Genève, June 1, 1915.

20. Al. Marghiloman, Note politice (*Political Notes*), vol. II, 1927, apud Emil Răcilă, Contribuții privind lupta românilor pentru apărarea patriei în primul război mondial (*Contributions to the Romanians' Struggle for the Homeland's Defence during the WW I, 1916—1918*), The Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1981.

21. Nicolae Ceaușescu, România pe drumul desăvîșirii construcției socialiste (*Romania on the Road of accomplishing the Socialist Construction*), vol. 2, The Publishing House for Political Literature, Bucharest, 1968, p. 467.

22. Epoca, August 16, 1916.

23. Epoca, September 7, 1916, Barbu Ștefănescu-Delavrancea's allocution to the opening of the Academy.

24. Gazeta ostașilor, September 11, 1916.

25. Opinia, August 23, 1916.

26. Gazeta Transilvaniei, August 24, 1916 and September 7, 1916.

27. Apud Mircea Mușat, Ion Ardeleanu, op. cit., pp. 502—503.

THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT OF THE ROMANIAN PEOPLE IN THE TERRITORY TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED BY THE ENEMY

On the three fourths of Romania's area, temporarily occupied in the end of the 1916 campaign, as well as in the Romanian territories under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (Transylvania, Banat, Crişana, Maramureş and Bukovina) there was a strong resistance movement which lasted until 1918, as part of the general liberation struggle waged by the Romanian people during the first world war.

As assessed by Romania's President, Nicolae Ceauşescu, "foreign domination did not manage to stifle the thirst for freedom of the people, or to extinguish its strong will for unity. The hardships and sufferings only fanned up ever more strongly the flame of the struggle for the completion of the nation, and strengthened the feeling of patriotism, of national dignity. The ideas of national community inspired the people and enhanced its forces in the struggle for the defence and progress of the homeland".

Illustrative for the entire Romanian people's joining the struggle against the foreign military presence was the resistance put up by the population in the occupied territories. Reconstituting the forms it had assumed, the time and place where various actions had taken place, one sees that the territories under temporary occupation had always been unstable for the enemy, constituting a real battlefield. For the "pacification" of those territories the enemy concentrated numerous effectives and set up a strict regime of intimidation and terror of the population. But the means used by the enemy did not manage to stop the mass resistance movement, which experienced permanent amplification. From insubordination to forced labour mobilization, to sabotage, to killing of isolated enemy soldiers, to attacks or fire-setting to unit or subunit barracks, to the organization of intelligence networks, to the

activity of groups for the destruction of enemy communication works, to open anti-German demonstrations, to the setting up of detachments of partisans, that is a brief survey of the range of the Romanian popular resistance during the first world war.

One of the most widely spread forms of resistance which showed the popular character of the opposition against the occupants was insubordination to work. Most of the 20,000 people arrested, condemned to terms in jail or fines during the occupation had been found "guilty" of refusing to perform various works, especially agricultural works.

Another resistance form which took on a mass character was refusal to give up the products subjected to requisitioning. In numerous counties the occupation authorities imposed heavy fines and condemned to prison terms those who refused to relinquish the quantities of wool, butter, eggs, etc, which they had been compelled to give in.

Desertion from the Austro-Hungarian army by Romanians from the territories annexed by the Habsburg empire and their fraternization with their brethren in the army of the Romanian free state represented another form of expression of national resistance against foreign domination. Despite repressive measures, despite condemnations and executions, the Romanians in Transylvania and Bukovina remained true to their belief that ultimately the cause of the entire Romanian nation's freedom will triumph. A report of the Hungarian police in November 1916 noted the following: "The attitude of the Romanians is generally obedient but secretly full of hope. They unflinchingly believe in the return of the Romanian armies and this belief can be identified also among the Romanian soldiers at the front".

A main direction of the resistance was manifest also in the contribution lent by the inhabitants of the villages and towns to the Romanian army in the operation zones in obtaining data on the enemy troop disposition and movement. Inhabitants of the localities close to the enemy lines formed real intelligence networks. An eloquent example is the group headed by Vasile Chilian, a native of Vrancea region. He managed to set up a network comprising peasants, village teachers, priests, health assistants, etc. Using their acquaintance with enemy officers they managed to find out details and to send the Romanian command maps about the German positions and information on enemy effectives. The same group managed to intercept telephone communications among German units. Vasile Chilian's group obtained important successes also in organizing the passage across the front line of Romanian soldiers escaped from prisoner camps or soldiers who had lost contact with their units and had been left in the territory temporarily occupied by the enemy. Over 2,000 men were taken across the Putna river into Moldavia in one point alone between December 1916 and May 21/June 3 1917. Eventually discovered by the Germans, the group leaders were executed on August 17/30 1917. In a hastily written will Vasile Chilian laid down the idea which had guided his intrepid action: "I die for my country!"

Similar activities were performed by a group of 257 Romanian intellectuals, workers and peasants in Transylvania (Braşov, Sibiu, Alba, Harghita) and Banat. Involved in a resounding trial, most of them were condemned to death by a German-Austro-Hungarian military court in Cluj.

The repressive measures of the occupation authorities caused an intensification of the mass resistance, instead of weakening the opposition spirit. There were ever more nu-

Death sentences of some Romanian inhabitants in the territory temporarily occupied by the enemy

Bekanntmachung.

Durch gerichtliches Urteil wurden wegen Spionageverbrechen

ZUM TODE VERURTEILT:

Militärleutnant VASILE CHILIAN aus Tichirşul.

Rumänischer Kriesspionager Sergeant VASILE BALATAN aus Peştera.

Landarbeiter DUMITRACHE PANTAZICA aus Tichirşul.

Landarbeiter TOMA ION COŢEA aus Păuleşti.

Bürgermeister STEPHANACHE SECALUS aus Păuleşti.

Das Urteil wurde durch Erschiessen vollstreckt.

Im Zusammenhang mit diesen Verurtheilen wurde eine Anzahl Personen zu hohen Freiheitsstrafen verurtheilt.

Peştera, den 3. September 1917.

(Gest.) von MORGEN.

Publicaţiune

Prin sentinţa judecătorească din cauza spionajului au fost

CONDAMNAŢI LA MORTE:

VASILE CHILIAN proprietar de moşie din Tichirşul.

Sergeant VASILE BALATAN proprietar de război din Peştera.

DUMITRACHE PANTAZICA agricultor din Tichirşul.

TOMA ION COŢEA agricultor din Păuleşti.

STEFANACHE SECALUS primar din Păuleşti.

Sentinţa a fost executată prin împuşcare.

În legătură cu aceste cazuri criminale un număr de persoane au fost condamnate la înalte pedepse de închisoare şi muncă silnică.

Peştera, 3. Septembrie 1917.

(Gest.) von MORGEN.

The Romanians have not favoured the war of acquisition. Their mission was to defend the country... most of their wars were defensive in point of policy, though offensive from the soldierly stand.

N. BĂLCESCU, politician, leader of the Romanian revolution of 1848, historian (1819—1852).

merous cases of open civilian resistance against the occupation troops, and in many places isolated enemy soldiers or small groups of enemy soldiers were exterminated. Thus on June 17/30 1917 representatives of the occupation administration announced that three inhabitants had been executed for "having fanned up civilian insubordination towards the German military activities". Another three people, from the commune of Brădiceni, county Gorj were executed for having liquidated a German soldier "who had committed robberies in the communes of Brădiceni, Peştişani and Şomăeşti".

In places where the resistance fighters could not be identified such as the communes of Costeşti and Stîlpul, county Prahova, Cărpiniştea, Beceni, Nicoreşti, Săruleşti, Nehoiu, county Buzău, on whose territories German soldiers had been killed by civilians, the respective localities had to pay fines amounting to 15,000—20,000 lei.

Destruction of telephone lines was, likewise, widely used by the Romanian resistance. Besides, sabotage acts caused the enemy important damage. Railway interruption or destruction, setting on fire of buildings and storehouses belonging to the occupation military units are frequently mentioned in documents issued by the German military authorities, forcibly set up in Romania.

But the highest resistance form was the organization of partisan detachments. Thus, in the sub-Carpathian zones of counties Mehedinţi and Gorj a group of partisans was set up under the leadership of the reserve junior lieutenant Victor Popescu, which took on also soldiers left in Oltenia after the withdrawal of the Cerna Group. In an appeal to the inhabitants Victor Popescu urged the people to armed struggle, the liberation of Romania's territory being understood as "a duty of honour towards the country, towards our ancestors". Expressing firm belief in the final victory the appeal finally proclaimed, "There is no question of us ever accepting German occupation!"

Although rather small, this group proved extremely efficient thanks to the support lent to it by the inhabitants in numerous villages of the two counties. In order to put an end to this situation, which had become dangerous for the German war machine, the occupation authorities turned to mass arrests, especially among the peasants. In order to dishearten and intimidate the

population they condemned to death ten inhabitants of the communes of Negomîru, Drăgotesti, Bolboși, Horăști and Covrigi, and had them executed on July 11, 1917 at Turnu Severin. Their last words were, "Long live Greater Romania!"

Numerous resistance actions were recorded in workers' milieus. Absenteism, sabotages, protest demonstrations, strikes, were the main forms under which the proletariat in Romania, with the socialists in the lead fought against the foreign occupation. The strike at the Railway Workshops "Grivița" in the Capital acquired particular scope: over 800 workers organized street manifestations in May 1917. Many of those actions were initiated by socialist militants who had stayed behind in the temporarily occupied territory, such as Gheorghe Cristescu, Ilie Moscovici, Alecu Constantinescu, dr. Ecaterina Arbore, C. Titel-Petrescu, and others. They also arranged escapes for workers detained by the German authorities in the Prahova Valley. The socialists also led workers' actions and manifestations in Bucharest, Ploiești, Craiova, Turnu-Severin. The political party of the working class in Romania in fact stood firmly in favour of armed resistance; many of its members fought arms in hand against the invaders. In this respect it is quite telling that the secretary of the party's Executive Committee, Dimitrie Marinescu died a hero's death in the battles for Transylvania's liberation.

Over 30,000 volunteers enlisted in the Romanian army, of whom many came from Transylvania and Bukovina. This was indicative of the strong state of mind hostile to the occupants inspiring the Romanian population under the boot of the German-Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian-Ottoman invad-

ers; many of them made the last sacrifice in the fighting for the defence and liberation of the occupied national territory.

The intensity of the staunch resistance, animated by ardent patriotism, of the people's masses confirmed the fact that the war waged by the Romanian people against the invaders was inspired by a great ideal — the completion of national state unity and the country's free, independent development. In fact a representative of the occupation troops noted briefly that "any military co-operation of the Romanian population in the occupied territory with the Central Powers is out of the question". This formula grasped the anti-German-Austro-Hungarian state of mind, the dignity, the will for unity and independence of an entire people, which for many generations had attended the high school of defending national freedom at any cost.

Is it with full reason that Nicolae Iorga noted the following on December 19, 1916/January 1, 1917, "Under the present circumstances our army is made up of the entire people. Counting out the ones directly involved in the fighting, those lending support in any possible way, those following every battle with their suffering, with the deep response of their entire being — counting them all out, there is no one left of the Romanian people". The Romanians' unity within national borders was the outcome of the entire people's struggle, as part of which resistance against the German-Austro-Hungarian occupation was but one form of manifestation of that struggle.

● Colonel
CONSTANTIN CĂZĂNIȘTEANU

GREAT ARMY COMMANDERS

CHRISTESCU, Constantin (b. December 2, 1868, Pădureți — d. May 8/9, 1923, Bucharest). Romanian General. Studies: The School of Infantry and Cavalry Officers, Bucharest (1885). L'Ecole Polytechnique, Paris (1890). The School of Artillery and Engineering — Fontainebleau (1892). The High School of War, Paris (1894). Second-Lieutenant (1887), captain (1894), general of brigade (1914), general of

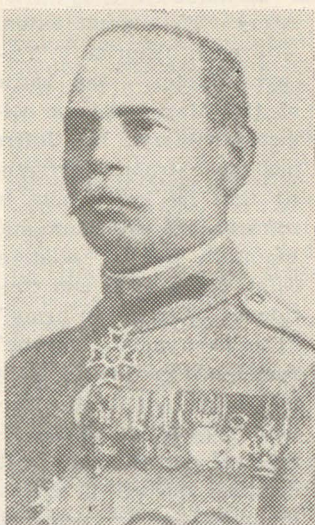
division (1917), general of army corps (1918).

An officer with sound military and civil training, Christescu held for many years the chair of general tactics at the High School of War, a prestigious military institution he headed between 1910 and 1912. In his quality as Chief Assistant of the General Staff and Chief of Operations Section (1912—1916), he prepared the Romanian army's campaign plan in

the second Balkan war; during that conflict he was appointed the Romanian army's representative attached to the Serbian army, gaining the Romanian ally's great acclaim for the conception of the Bregalnica battle. He masterminded "Hypothesis Z", which was the Romanian army's operational plan in launching the war of national reintegration and liberation. After the outbreak of hostilities, he became the Chief of Staff of the 2nd and 3rd Armies, and after the breakthrough at Flămînda, he led the Danube's Defense Corps, a great unit he commanded up to the day before the enemy forced the river (No-

ember 10/23, 1916). For a short while he was in command of the "Northern Army", and in 1917 he was appointed Chief Assistant of the General Headquarters; in this quality he actively participated in the reorganization and training of the Romanian army in the winter and spring of 1917. In July 1917, he was temporarily entrusted the command of the 1st Romanian Army to prepare the Nămolosa offensive; the illustrious officer thoroughly fulfilled the task, but the offensive was unexpectedly cancelled off in the wake of events occurred on the Russian front. He led the 1st Romanian Army in the first Mărășești battle until July 30, 1917. For a while inspector of enlisting centers, General Christescu was afterwards appointed in the leadership of General Staff (1918—1923) in the extremely difficult interval which followed the signing of the Bucharest "peace". At the head of a group of patriot officers, he led the secret action of eluding the military terms imposed by the Central Powers, maintaining in Mo'davia weaponry and ammunition exceeding by far the "peace" provisions, which facilitated the second mobilisation of the Romanian Army (October 28/November 10, 1918). After the military operations ended, he led the activity of mapping out and establishing the Romanian army's new framework of peace and participated in founding the system of defense alliances with Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.

A remarkable officer on the battlefield, he was also author of a rich theoretical work, mostly made up of lectures on tactics. As G. A. Dabija noted, General C. Christescu made a



General Constantin Christescu



Marshal J. J. C. Joffre

**Peace is the homeland
and the homeland is
peace.**

T. ARGHEZI, Romanian
writer (1880—1967)

great contribution to laying foundations of solid unitary military doctrine in the Romanian army. The promotions of officers whom he taught military theory became in their turn worthy commanders.

JOFFRE, Joseph-Jacques Césaire (b. January 12 1852, Riversaltes — d. January 3, 1931, Paris). French Marshal. Studies: the College Perpignan (1866), L'Ecole Polytechnique, Paris (1872). Lieutenant (1872), captain (1876), colonel (1897), general of brigade (1902), marshal of France (December 27, 1916). Joffre volunteered in the French Army in the Franco-Prussian War (1870—1871), distinguishing himself in the battles for the defense of Paris. As a commissioned officer, he specialized in engineering works and served at various times in colonial troops, cutting a heroic figure in 1893 when the "J column" conquered Tombuctu after a 800 km-long march. Back to Paris, he was briskly promoted, first as director of engineering works at the Ministry of War (1905) and then Chief of Staff of the French Army (1916); in this quality he led the war preparations in the period prior to the first world conflagration. He militated for the adoption of the law on the three-year-long military service and reorganized the high command, vesting greater rights and prerogatives on the generalissimo. Moreover, Marshal Joffre called for the adoption as a campaign plan of "Hypothesis XVII", based on his conception on "the offensive up to the last drop of blood" and envisaged the launching of the main attack in Lorraine, concomi-

tantly with secondary actions carried out in Southern Alsace and Ardennes. "Hypothesis XVII" started from two assumptions which proved, in fact, wrong: the enemy's passive conduct and the latter's observance of Belgium's neutrality. That very freedom of action the German troops gained thereon in the northern flank was decisive in the first month of war, the French Army's intentions being outdistanced by the enemy's rapid advance toward Paris. Marshal Joffre who, after the mobilisation, became the Chief of General Staff succeeded to stave off the attack of the Kaiser's armies in the first battle of the Marne (September 5—12, 1914) taking advantage — at General J. Gallieni's advice — of the hazardous march of the 1st German

Army. "To a great extent — French historian F. Tesseyre wrote — the battle of the Marne was a collective victory... But Joffre has the extraordinary merit that he knew how to retrieve the situation and maintain by its 'sedative' calm, the morale and confidence of an entire army." "The hero of the Marne" remained in the military history as one of the fervent supporters of the offensive carried out with compact masses of infantry, engaged in repeated actions, with a view to destroying the enemy's manpower. The ample offensive carried out in 1915 under his direction in Champagne and Artois resulted in huge casualties among the Allies, which caused great dissatisfaction

with his leadership. The following year, the Allied armies had to resist the German troops' assault at Verdun (February 21 — December 18, 1916), gaining, nevertheless, a partial victory in the fierce battle on the Somme (January 24 — November 13, 1916). Marshal Joffre paid special heed to reaching an understanding among commands with a view to launching a concerted offensive through a pincer likely to weaken German pressure on the western front. In this context, he placed special importance on Romania's entrance into the war, an action he deemed decisive to be triumphant on the western front and even to win the entire war.

● ADRIAN PANDEA

GREAT BATTLES

TANNENBERG

Colonel NICOLAE CIOBANU, D. Hist.

Of the major clashes of the first world war, the Tannenberg* battle is among the operations held on the eastern military theatre towards its northern flank, where the Russian 1st and 2nd Armies set up the "North-West-

ern" Front, with general Jilinski in command.¹ According to the Entente's campaign plans the Russian forces were to develop the offensive on the eastern military theatre in order to contribute to the failure of the "Schliffen

Plan" on the holding of military actions on the "Western" Front.

The commander of the "North-Western" Front decided to go on to the offensive through a pincer movement with his two armies, to annihilate the main forces of the German 8th Army and to conquer the line between Allenstein and Osterode, and then to develop the offensive deep into Eastern and Western Prussia.

The commander of the German 8th Army initially decided to put up resistance on successive lines, attracting the enemy on the territory of Eastern Prussia, farther and farther away from its bases and forcing it to lengthen its communication lines, and then through interior actions to annihilate the two Russian armies successively, or depending on the situation to proceed to defence on the lower course of the Vistula.

On August 17, 1914 the "North-Western" Front turned to offensive. The Russian 1st Army, with general Rennenkampf² in command (which made up the right arm of the pincers) defeated part of the forces of the German 8th Army headed by general Prittwitz in the battles of Gumbinnen and Goldap (19—20 August), and then stopped for restoration without following the enemy. Concurrently the Russian 2nd Army, with general Samsonov³ in command (which made up the left arm of the pincers) was making headway rather slowly towards the right flank and rear of the German 8th Army. Noting the danger presented by the manoeuvre of the Russian 2nd Army and general Rennenkampf's passive attitude, the commander of the German 8th Army, general Paul von Hindenburg and his chief of staff, general Erich Ludendorff** decided to concentrate the main thrust against the Russian 2nd Army through interior manoeuvre and to annihilate its main forces through a pincer movement in combination with a line thrust. Thus ample manoeuvring was performed to shift the German forces from the left flank of the 8th Army to the centre and right hand of the offensive disposition. The 1st Army Corps,

with general François in command, moved by railway from the Gumbinnen, Goldap area and took up positions in the right flank of the German Army, in front of the Russian 1st Army corps at Usdau, pursuing to start an offensive and to repel the right flank of the Russian 2nd Army; the 17th Army and 1st Reserve Corps, with generals Mackensen and Below in command made a combined march, by rail and by foot, and took up fighting positions in the left flank of the 8th Army, pursuing to start an offensive and to outflank the right flank of the Russian 2nd Army, namely the Russian 6th Army Corps; in the centre of the German army disposition and in contact with the Russian army was the 20th Army Corps, with general Scholtz in command and reinforced with the 3rd Reserve Division and a Landwehr Division. All in all the German 8th Army had 15 infantry divisions, a cavalry division, with 1,044 cannons, 56 planes and two dirigible airships⁴.

The Russian 2nd Army (the 1st, 6th, 13th, 15th, 23rd Army Corps) — all in all 13 infantry divisions⁵ and 3 cavalry divisions, with about 600 cannons, crossed the border between Russia and Eastern Prussia on August 19 and came into contact with the German 20th Army Corps, repelled it

and occupied, with the 15th Army Corps, the localities of Soldau and Neidenburg, located about 16 km. from the frontier. The advance of the Russian army continued, rather slowly, up to 25 August 1914, when it was in contact with the enemy as follows: on the right flank of the Russian 2nd Army in the southern zone of the Masurian lakes was the 6th Army Corps, pursuing to secure its right flank and to make the connection with the forces on the left flank of the Russian 1st Army; in the centre the 13th and 15th Army Corps and the 2nd Division in the 23rd Army Corps, pursuing to develop the offensive along the direction of the main thrust of the army and to reach the line between Allenstein and Osterode⁶; then followed the forces of the 23rd and 1st Army Corps whose mission was to secure the left flank of the Russian army. The disposition adopted by the Russian 2nd Army was characterized by the existence of large gaps between the army corps — up to 30 km.⁷ The Russian 6th Army Corps was in fact isolated in the right flank of the army, way off the main forces.

Early on 26 August the 2nd Army started the offensive. The main forces (the 13th, 15th Corps and a division in the 23rd Army Corps), managed to occupy (with the divisions of the 13th Corps) the locality of Allenstein; concurrently the right-hand neighbour of the 15th Corps (the division of the 23rd Corps) was rebelled, and this created the danger for the 15th Army Corps to be outflanked. Considering the situation the commander of the 13th Corps intervened to support his neighbour, expecting the locality of Allenstein to be taken over by the 6th

* Tannenberg (presently Stebark), located in the north-east of Poland is noted especially for the battle of Grunewald held in its proximity on July 15, 1410, attended also by a Romanian cavalry corps sent by the Moldavian prince Alexander the Kind.

** They had taken over the command of the German 8th Army on August 22, 1914, when the initial commander and chief of staff were dismissed.

Army Corps which he thought was in offensive action on his right. The 6th Army Corps, which was performing a march from the right flank of the army towards its centre, was however tackled by the German 17th Army and 1st Reserve Corps, which had advanced unimpeded, as the troops in the Russian 1st Army, which were to make the junction, were moving in another direction. Under such circumstances although the Russian units resisted the German pressure until late in the evening, they were repelled with significant losses⁸, so that the right flank of the Russian 2nd Army was completely uncovered. On the left flank of the army the 1st Corps was resisting because its direct enemy, the German 1st Corps, confined itself to local actions.

On August 27, the commander of the Russian 2nd Army saw the enemy manoeuvre meant to encircle his troops and tried, thoughtlessly joining the battle directly, to avoid this through the resistance of the 1st Army Corps on the left flank and by pivoting the whole army disposition around it. Pounded by the enemy heavy artillery and attacked by the forces of the German 1st Army Corps, the Russian troops stubbornly managed to maintain the positions on the army left flank in the Usdau zone with heavy losses. Concurrently the army centre (the 15th and 13th Corps) continued their attack on the German positions. On the third battle day the German 1st Corps resumed the offensive and penetrated deep into the left flank of the Russian army (the 1st Corps) thus ma-

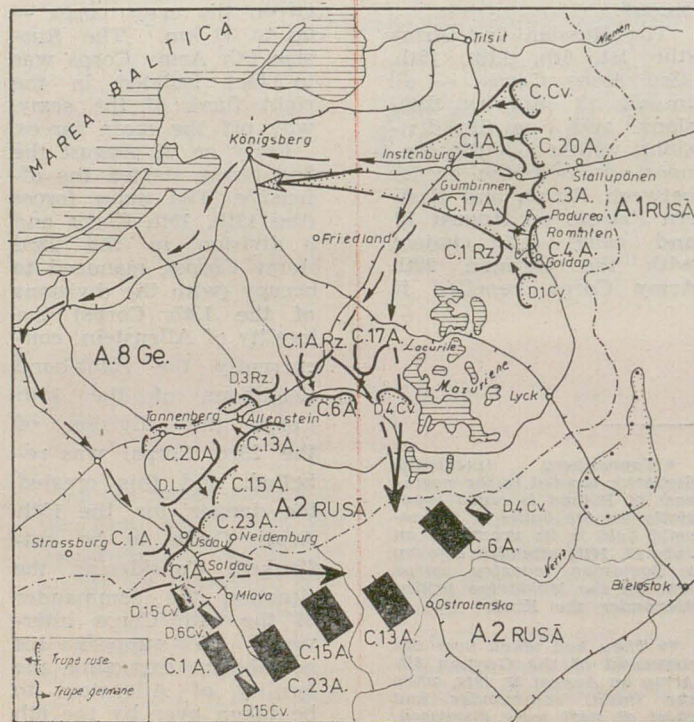
naging, in cooperation with the 17th Army Corps and 1st Reserve Corps, to achieve an open encirclement of the Russian 2nd Army, whose centre (the 15th and 13th Corps) resisted courageously, causing concern with Hindenburg and Ludendorff's command.

Late on August 28, the commander of the Russian 2nd Army and part of his general staff moved to the command post of the 15th Army Corps (inside the encirclement, together with the 13th Corps) where, on 29 and 30 August they tried to organize the retreat from encirclement of the remaining Russian 2nd Army. As part of those actions the counter-attack performed by the Russian 1st Army Corps (with general Sirelius*** in command) stood out on August 29, when it managed to repel the German troops and to reconquer Neidenburg. But it was too late; without any support from the army reserve or other forces, the attack did not produce any consequences.

The Russian 2nd Army was practically annihilated — over 30,000 men had died in the battlefield, while over 90,000 men had been taken prisoners.⁹ The army commander, general Samsonov committed suicide; two army corps commanders (Martos and Klinev) had been taken prisoners, others had been dismissed from office.

The offensive of the German 8th Army continued up to the border between Eastern Prussia and Russia, and then the German command, which, during the Tannenberg battle, had been reinforced with more big units — directed its forces against the Russian 1st

Tannenberg Battle



*** General Sirelius was appointed commander of the 1st Army Corps, after General Artamonov had been dismissed.

Army, which it defeated in the battle of the Masurian Lakes.

The Tannenberg battle was lost by the Russian army because of mismanagement and bad coordination of the thrust of the "North Western" Front by the commander of the front, whose command post was located at Volkovisk (about 290 km away from the contact line, devoid of stable communications and fresh information). Likewise, the passive attitude adopted by the commander of the Russian 1st Army after the victory at Gumbinnen and Goldap, and especially the offensive development by the 1st Army along the general direction Insterburg — Königsberg voided the initial plans of the Russian command on the annihilation of the German 8th Army through a pincer movement.

The lack of communications between the commands of the two armies,

the delay in achieving the junction between their inner flanks created favourable conditions for the separate and successive defeat of the two Russian armies, although the ratio of forces was clearly in favour of the Russian forces.

The slow advance of the Russian 2nd Army in a zone devoid of communications, with wide sectors of heavy ground (forests, sandy ground and marches) and with scarce supply sources cut the operative troops off from their supply bases and created a poor logistic system; all this had negative consequences on the combat actions — whole units remained without food, ammunition, medicines and other supplies for days on end. Often this caused delays in the starting of offensive actions, their postponement and even the stoppage of some attacks.

Despite the spirit of

sacrifice, bravery and initiative of the soldiers, the Tannenberg battle was lost by the Russian army, whose effectives later on showed an increasing open adversity for the imperialist war they had been compelled to fight.

1. *Akademiya Nauk S.S.S.R., Istoriya perviy miravoy voyay, 1914—1918, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1975, p. 370.*

2. *L'Album de la guerre, tome premier, Paris, L'illustration, 1925, p. 156.*

3. *Pierre Dauzet, Gloria, histoire illustrée de la guerre 1914—1918, deuxième édition, Librairie Hachette, Paris, pp. 50—51.*

4. *Ibidem, p. 21.*

5. *Barbara W. Tuchman, Tunurile din august, (in Romanian translation), Bucharest, 1970, p. 360.*

6. *Major Wladimir Chirovici, Războiul Mondial, Sibiu, 1930, p. 48.*

7. *Ibidem.*

8. *Major C. Găvănescu, Major I. Manolescu, 1914—1915, războiul cel mare, Vol. I, Bucharest, 1915, p. 333.*

9. *Pierre Dauzet, op. cit., p. 21.*

VERDUN

Colonel VASILE PRICOP

The battle of Verdun one of the great military confrontations in the First World War, has a leading place in the historiography of that conflagration. Works on military art and war memoirs describe it as a landmark in the development of military operations on the western front, as a hard materialization of two implacable wills: the German one to win the victory in the 1916 campaign; the French one, to resist with a determination that roused the admiration of the entire world.

"The school of Verdun",

"As at Verdun" are phrases that dominated historiography, the lectures and the text books of the military schools and academies in the inter-war period, entered history as expressions denoting unparalleled concentration of forces and means by the attacker and the defender in a small area, defence positions and fortifications turned into a moon-like landscape, ceaseless attacks and counterattacks, fierce battles carried to the last ounce of physical or moral strength.

In a brief description

of the huge battle, which lasted from February to December 1916, we intend to reveal its causes, the main features, the results and their impact upon the course of the war on the western front and upon the First World War in general.

Limited in the north by the French-Belgian and French-Luxembourg frontiers, in the east by the Moselle Valley, in the south by the Nancy-Bar-le-Duc line and in the west by the valley of the river Aisne, the region was fated to become an outpost of the country's north-east, playing an important part in the French history since 843. It is a hilly area, with heights not rising above 400 m, and uneven terrain, suited for organizing a strong

defence, based on forts spread out in a system centred on Verdun locality.

After the French-German war (1870—1871) the Verdun region was turned into a fortified area, known as the “Verdun Fortified District” (VFD), “becoming our main point of support at the border in relation to Metz and Thionville”.¹ That is why in 1914 and 1915 the Germans avoided to engage their forces for conquering it; they manoeuvred it from west to south, but without any result. During the battle of Marna, VFD played the role of a pivot in the huge front stretching from the North Sea to the border of Switzerland and contributed to that resounding victory by threatening the left wing of the attacking German group and immobilizing important enemy forces.

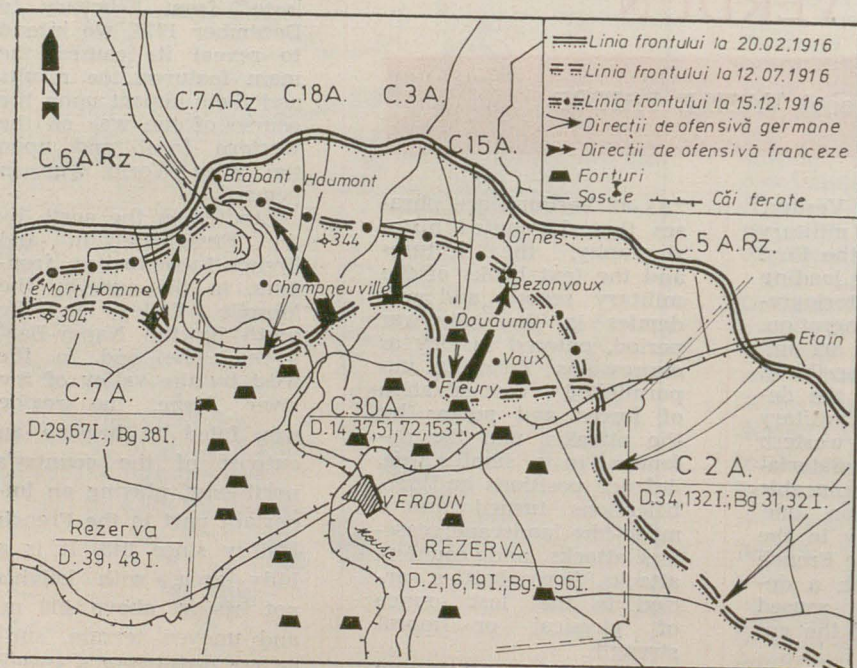
After two years of devastating war, analysing the strategic situation, the German Supreme Command, with forces scattered on four theatres of mi-

litary operations (east, west, the Balkans and North Italy), focused its attention on the western front as it considered it the main front and the French army the most dreaded adversary. This is inferred from the report sent by General Falkenhayn—Chief of the German General Staff—to Kaiser Wilhelm II in December 1915, in which he underlined: “France is weakened to the limit, from both the military and the economic point of view... it is to our advantage to take strong action in France in order to give this people the feeling that there is no hope from the military point of view... if this can be achieved the French resistance will be broken and England will be left without its best sword...”² The report further mentions that the best targets are Belfort and Verdun and the latter is to be preferred because “at this point the front is only 20 km away from the German railway”.³

Falkenhayn had rightly

assumed that this important point would not be ceded by the French Command; on the contrary, to keep it the French would be forced to engage in battle even their last human and material resources. “If the French Command acts this way, the French troops will be worn out by their heavy losses because it will be impossible for them to avoid the fight, whether we shall attain our target or not”⁴ concluded General Falkenhayn.

Aware of the importance of the Verdun Fortified District in case of a new German offensive, the French Command took steps to add new defence works, to improve the capacity of the communication lines, to increase the effectiveness of troops and the firing power. On February 20, 1916, in the VDF, on a semicircular front (between D’Avocourt and Paroches) of 166 km, the French troops amounted to three army corps (230, 7) with 15 divisions and four infantry brigades,



The map showing the situation on the front in February—December 1916

with 632 artillery pieces, of which 244 heavy ones.⁵ The defence works consisted in four positions of 2—3 trenches, each one going up to 2.5 km in depth. The positions were completed by the 21 forts — permanent defence works — built of brick, stone and reinforced concrete and placed in concentric lines, the outer one 7—8 km from Verdun.⁶ Built at the end of the 19th century those forts proved to be vulnerable to heavy shells. For the offensive against Verdun, the German Command concentrated six army corps (3, 15 and 18 active and 5, 6 and 7 in reserve) with 19 infantry divisions⁷ and 1,250 artillery pieces, of which 770 heavy ones (calibres up to 420 mm).⁸ The Germans were superior in artillery and about equal to the French in infantry.

The battle of Verdun, started on February 21, 1916, had two distinct phases: the first, from February 21 to July 1 is the period of German offensive and French defence, during which the Germans penetrated the French defence some 12 km in depth, in the direction of Haumont, Fort de Souville (5 km north-east of Verdun); the second, from July 16 to December, is the period of the French counter-offensive during which they recovered a large part of the lost ground, but did not succeed in rejecting the enemy beyond the line wherefrom it had started the offensive.

On February 21, 1916, at 7.15 A.M., the German artillery opened fire throughout the Verdun front; the maximum intensity was in the sector east of river Meuse, in the area around Haumont locality and the Caures forest. After nine hours of such artillery pounding, unusual by its length and density, which in some

When you come into battle always think of your past and your future.

TACITUS, Roman historian and politician
(A.D. 55—120)

places amounted to 80,000 strikes in a quadrangle of 500/1000 meters⁹, nine German divisions (six in the first echelon, three in the second one) started the offensive on a strip of 10 km (between Haumont and Ornes), in "waves of people side by side". This is how that "war of attrition" started, in which the artillery fire played the decisive role, and the infantry started the attack only after the enemy positions had been raked by shells.

In spite of the particularly violent fire and the strong impact of the German forces, the French infantry resisted heroically, retreating step by step and fighting for each trench or fold of ground, inflicting great losses on the enemy. In its turn the French artillery concentrated its fire on the German assault waves successfully rolling a curtain of fire. Moreover, the fact that the French successfully employed the reserves, directing them to the sectors that were under attack gave an active character to the defence. The French defence achieved its steadfastness through the bitter fighting of the infantry on the four defence positions and through a judicious use of artillery. Out of 21 forts, four were attacked, and only two of them (Douaumont and Vaux) were conquered by the Germans. On July 1, the last German attack ended in failure.

The French counter-offensive started on July 16 in the Fleury, Thiaumont

district and then extended towards Vaux and Damouloup; in September it spread to the left wing of the front in the district Mort-Home, D'Avocourt. On October 24, three French divisions attacked and reconquered Douaumont fort and on November 2, fort Vaux. At the beginning of December, the French, in their turn, launched the offensive on a 10 km front with nine divisions, of which five in the first echelon, regaining Bezanvoux, Cote de Poivre, Vacheroville until December 16; then the front stabilized.

The decline in the intensity of the action started on July 1; it was not only due to a reciprocal exhaustion of the forces engaged in the Verdun zone, but also to other events that had occurred on the other theatres of military action. Thus, on July 1, the French-British offensive on the Somme started, on July 4 the Russian army started the offensive in the area between the Pripet river and the northern border of Romania, on August 27 Romania joined in the war alongside the Entente powers and on August 6 the Italian army launched the offensive on Isonzo and succeeded to conquer Gorizia. All this weakened the German pressure on Verdun, the Supreme Command being forced to cope with the new situations by manoeuvring the troops on other fronts, the Romanian one included. Thus, the German Alpine Corps, which in June had attack-

ed along the main thrust toward Fleury, by the end of August was transferred to Transylvania and during September was engaged against the I Army Corps of the Romanian 1st Army in the Olt Valley.

The battle of Verdun, a massive clash of fire and human forces in an extremely limited space, resulting in losses that amounted to 378,000 men on the French side and 336,000 on the German side¹⁰ is considered in the history of military art as a "model of strategy of attrition, of the strategy of cool reasoning and wise steps..."¹¹ The quotation is from Ludendorff but, without explicitly saying so he considered that battle an adventure because Germany had not enough troops and material to carry it through. The French, in their turn, see it a prestige-laden victory in which the "prodigious energy of the German soldier crumbled before the

heroism and tenacity of the French soldier".¹² Reference books do not lack in comments and analyses done in the light of the principles and laws of armed struggle. However, many have considered that Verdun was a prelude to the war of the contemporary epoch, which becomes more and more devastating, while the unlimited improvement of the destruction means has pushed it to absurd limits.

Verdun became a symbol of tenacity and heroism. It is true. But it also became a symbol of blind destruction, of armed violence pushed to the extreme. The 714,000 victims of the battle — struck by bullets, by shell splinters, poisoned by gas or buried alive by the 420 mm shells — had no time to think of the necessity of the "cool reasoning and wise steps" that unleashed the massacre. Verdun must become the symbol

of firm struggle for saving mankind from such carnage.

1. General Palat (Pierre Lehautcourt), *La ruée sur Verdun*, Paris, 1925, p. 2.

2. General Ettore Basico, *Evoluția artei războiului (The Evolution of Warfare)*, Vol. II (translated from the Italian), Bucharest, 1933, pp. 204—205.

3. Ibidem, p. 205.

4. Jacques Madaule, *Istoria Franței (The History of France)*, Vol. 3, Bucharest, 1970, p. 107.

5. Lt.-Colonel De Thomasson, *Les préliminaires de Verdun, Nancy—Paris—Strasbourg*, 1921, p. 199.

6. Ibidem, p. 298 (the map with the defence system of the VFD).

7. Ibidem, pp. 200—201.

8. *Histoire universelle des armes*, Paris, 1966, p. 66.

9. General Palat (Pierre Lehautcourt), op. cit., p. 144.

10. *Histoire universelle des armes*, p. 67.

11. Mircea N. Popa, *Primul război mondial (The First World War)*, Bucharest, 1979, p. 222.

12. *Histoire universelle des armes*, p. 67.

MĂRĂȘEȘTI

Colonel VASILE MOCANU, D. Hist.

During the last decade of December 1916 the enemy offensive was stopped along a line marked by the Eastern Carpathians, the lower course of the Putna, Siret and Danube rivers. Admitting the failure of the Central Power armies, Ludendorff wrote, "We pushed the Romanian army back but did not manage to crash

it. We had to leave forces in Dobrudja and Wallachia, which before Romania joined the war we had used on the eastern front, on the western front or in Macedonia. We were left weaker than before in the general war development"¹.

Under shelter of the new front, a busy activity took place in the winter

and spring of 1917 for the reorganization of the Romanian army. In exceptionally difficult circumstances, when a greater part of the country's territory was occupied by the enemy, when catching diseases (malignant typhus and recurrent fever) took a heavy toll among the civilian population and the army, while winter was one of the harshest, when the restricted territory and resources of Moldavia had to feed and give shelter to a number of people three times as high as in normal situations (besides the local population there was the Romanian army, the Russian army on the front in Moldavia, the refugees from the territories occupied by the enemy), despite those extremely difficult conditions, the

Romanian people showed sublime patriotism, mobilizing its forces in an exemplary way, so that by May 1917 the Romanian army was completely reorganized. A new army, well staffed and well endowed with modern equipment received from the Allies, especially from France, and trained on the basis of the experience of the ongoing war, was determined to make a supreme effort in order not only to prevent the enemy from occupying the remaining territory of the country but also to start an offensive in order to liberate the occupied territory. "Great elan was animating the revived and consolidated Romanian army", noted an eye-witness, the Chief of Staff of the 4th Russian Army, "the officers and men were looking forward to the battle, eager to avenge the failures in 1916 and to liberate the occupied territory"².

While the Romanian people and its army were making firm preparations, the Entente envisaged a general offensive on all fronts for 1917, meant to bring about the complete defeat of the Central Powers and the final victory.

As part of the general allied offensive, the Romanian and Russian forces in Moldavia (the Romanian 1st and 2nd Armies, the Russian 4th and 6th Armies) had to take offensive action. The plan, minutely drawn up by the Romanian Great General Headquarters (with which the Russian command agreed) envisaged the carrying out of two convergent blows, meant to encircle the enemy troops operating in the Focșani-Nămoloasa sector: one main blow in the Nămoaloasa sector with Romanian 1st and Russian 6th Armies, which then had to develop the offensive towards the west and

north-west, in order to encircle and annihilate the main forces of the German 9th Army; a secondary blow, carried out before the main one in the Mărăști sector, with an offensive development towards the Vrancea depression, performed by the Romanian 2nd army and the troops in the right flank of the Russian 4th Army.

In its turn, the Command of the Central Powers decided to annihilate the Romanian and Russian forces in Moldavia, and after that to take Romania out of the war, and subsequently to develop the offensive towards the east, towards Ukraine. For this purpose it planned the carrying out of an offensive through two blows, along convergent directions, although remote in space: one blow northwards in the space between the Siret and the Prut rivers, with the German 9th Army, whose main thrust was initially directed against the Nămoaloasa region; a secondary blow carried out from the north, from Galicia and Bukovina southwards with the Austro-Hungarian 3rd and 7th Armies, with the main thrust along the river Prut.

Therefore offensive preparations were being made simultaneously by the two belligerents, either wanting to effect the main blow in the same zone — Nămoaloasa.

But the Romanian forces got ahead of the enemy, beginning the offensive on 11 July 1917 in the Mărăști region against the grouping at the right flank of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army. The Romanian 2nd Army, commanded by General Alexandru Averescu and the troops on the right flank of the Russian 4th Army crashed the enemy resistance along a front of 30 km, with a depth of 20 km,

and in 5 days liberated the entire Soveja basin. The remaining forces of the enemy were repelled in the Vrancea Mountains, beyond the upper course of the Putna river.

However, the important success of the Romanian 2nd Army could not be accomplished and finalized because of the situation in Galicia and Bucovina, where the Russian troops were on the retreat: the Mărășești offensive was stopped and measures were taken against the danger from the north, while at Nămoaloasa the Romanian 1st Army gave up starting the offensive, although the artillery preparation had been made with full success.

The defeat at Mărăști compelled the Central Power Command to give up the initial campaign plan, deciding to carry out two convergent blows but on a more restricted area: one with the German 9th Army along the Siret, across Mărăști and towards Adjud, and the other with the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army along the Oituz Valley, pursuing to encircle and annihilate the Romanian and Russian forces in that area. The final strategic goal was the same: to invade Moldavia and southern Ukraine.

In its turn the Romanian command decided to assume the defensive in southern Moldavia, to regroup two army corps of the Russian 4th Army in order to send them against the Austro-Hungarian armies in the north and to replace the Russian 4th Army with the Romanian 1st Army, this time with General Constantin Chirițescu in command. The regrouping of the Romanian and Russian forces in the Siret Valley had to be finished by the July 28. On July 24, however, the German 9th Army assumed the offensive surprising the Romanian and Russian troops

about to form the new operative disposition. This is how two major defensive battles, which took place concurrently, occurred: the battles at Mărășești and Oituz, won through the heavy sacrifices of the heroic Romanian army.

The defensive operation at Mărășești took place in the area between the bent of the Carpathians and the Siret river, in the Mărășești zone, east of Panciu and north of Focșani, between July 24 and August 21, 1917.

At the beginning of the German offensive the situation of the Romanian and Russian forces in front of the German 9th Army was the following³: the Romanian 1st Army had the 2nd Cavalry Division in defense on the Siret, between Movileni and Liești, four infantry divisions, a border brigade and a light cavalry brigade on their way to replace the Russian troops in the 4th Army with the first units already in the Tecuci zone; all in all the 1st Army had 58 infantry

battalions, 38 cavalry squadrons and 57 artillery batteries. The Russian 4th Army, (entrenched in defence on the northern bank of the Putna between Valea Sării, where it was in junction with the Romanian 2nd Army, and the northernmost point at Biliști on the Siret, where it was in junction with the 2nd Cavalry Division in the Romanian 1st Army) had 84 infantry battalions, 32 cavalry squadrons and 79 artillery batteries.

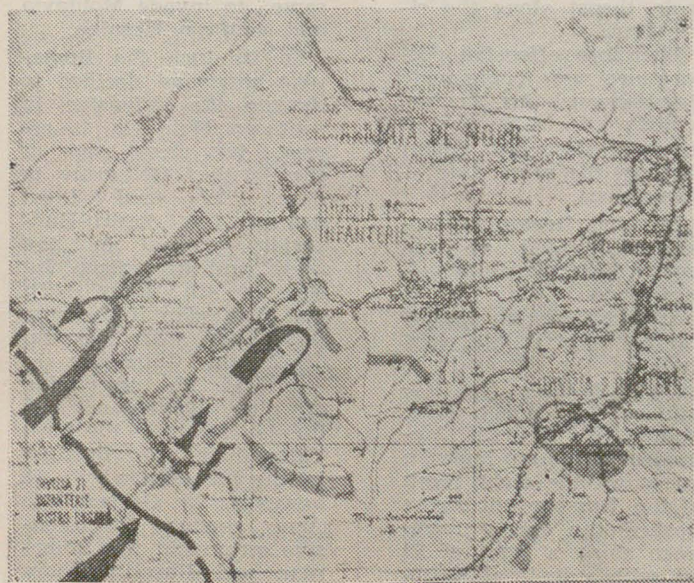
Therefore the strong thrust of the offensive carried out by the German 9th Army had to be initially borne by the 4th Romanian Army, to which the big units of the Romanian 1st Army could only lend successive support, spaced out in 2 or 3 days, because there were few passage points across the Siret.

The German 9th Army, with General von Eben in command, established that in order to fulfil the goal envisaged by the new compaign plan the offensive had to take place in

three stages: in the first stage it was to break the defence of the Russian 4th Army between the Siret river and the locality of Făurei, to develop the offensive towards the east and north-east and to conquer the line between Mărășești and Panciu; in the second stage, in cooperation with the Gerock Group in Valea Oituzului it was to encircle and annihilate the Romanian 2nd Army and the Russian 4th Army and conquer a bridgehead east of the Siret; in the third stage the German forces in the bridgehead were to hit the right flank and rear of the Romanian and Russian troops between the Siret and the Prut, while the remaining divisions of the 9th Army were to develop the offensive towards Adjud. The forces of the German 9th Army in the offensive sector represented the equivalent of 12 infantry divisions, amounting to 102 infantry battalions, 10 cavalry squadrons and 213 artillery batteries.⁴

An analysis of the operative ratio of forces between the two sides shows the following: before the Russian 4th Army the enemy had a 1.2/1 superiority in forces and means in infantry and 2.7/1 in artillery, while in cavalry the ratio was 1.3/1 in favour of the Russian 4th Army. Considering, however, also the forces of the Romanian 1st Army, the superiority in infantry and cavalry favoured the Allies, while the German 9th Army maintained its superiority only in artillery — 1.6/1; in the 12 km wide break sector between Făurei and Biliști, the German 9th Army initially concentrated 45 infantry battalions and 516 artillery pieces, achieving tactical densities of 3.75 battalions and 45 artillery pieces per one km. of front. In the same sector,

A map of that time describing a moment of the Mărășești battle



the Russian 4th Army had forces tantamount to an infantry division, with 12 battalions and 72 artillery pieces, and tactical defence densities of one battalion and 6 artillery pieces for each km. of the front. Therefore along the direction of the main blow of the 9th Army the enemy had an overwhelming superiority in the break sector in point of forces and means as regards tactical densities: 3.75/1 in infantry and over 7/1 in artillery⁵.

Despite all this the tenacious resistance and the extremely violent offensive retorts of the Romanian and Russian troops finally crashed the offensive of the German 9th Army, preventing the enemy command from fulfilling the stages envisaged by the initial plan, in the course of battle.

The operations of the Romanian army during the Mărășești battle fall in three characteristic stages.

The first stage, between July 24 and August 3, 1917, comprises the fighting waged jointly by the Russian 4th Army and the Romanian 1st Army, during which the Romanian great units replaced the Russian ones.

The German 9th Army assumed the offensive early on July 24, after a three-hour artillery preparation. The German 1st Corps, having overwhelming superiority, repelled the Russian 34th Division to the north. However, the Romanian 5th Infantry Division, with General Aristide Razu in command intervened energetically and after fierce fighting stopped the enemy between the Prișeaca forest to the south and the village of Birighești to the north. On the following day, especially in the Doaga sector, the enemy attack was crashed by the 32nd Regiment "Mircea", whose men counter-attacked in

No instruments of struggle, no matter how improved, can work by themselves. Man has made them and man alone can handle them. It is in his power that lies the key to the value of each instrument he has created. It is in his physical, intellectual and especially moral force that lies the value of instruments of struggle.

C. DRAGU, Romanian general

their shirt-sleeves, and by the 8th Regiment "Buzău" and the 3rd Mountain Corps Regiment. Through their heroic resistance the soldiers of the 5th Infantry Division temporarily stopped the offensive of the German 1st Army Corps, foiling their attempts at forcing a crossing over the Siret in the zone of the locality of Ciuşlea.

Seeing the staunch resistance of the Romanian 5th Infantry Division and the orientation of the front, the commander of the German 9th Army decided to cover itself with two divisions to the north (the right flank of the 1st Army Corps) and to move the main effort to the left side of that corps, which was to operate with three divisions to the north-west in order to fall in the flank and rear of the Romanian 2nd Army, while later on, in combined operation with the offensive of the Gerock Group, planned to begin at Oituz on July 26, all Romanian and Russian forces had to be encircled from both directions.

The offensive, according to the new plan, started early on July 26, the German 1st Corps managing to penetrate, after fierce battles, on 26 and 27 July, 3—4 km. deep. On the night between 26 and 27 July the 9th Infantry Division with General Constantin Scărișoreanu in command joined the battle. Through its staunch resistance and through a vigorous counter-attack that great unit made an impor-

tant contribution to stopping the enemy offensive and to consolidating the tactical situation in the sector. On July 28 the Romanian 1st Army and the Russian 4th Army sent two divisions each for a counterblow along the railway line between Focșani and Mărășești, the Romanian 5th and 9th Infantry Division operating east of the railway line. After some progress the divisions were stopped, counter-attacked and compelled to return to their initial positions.

On the following days the German attacks continued, with the thrust shifting more to the west, right of the 18th Army Corps, reinforced with heavy artillery. Through successive interventions, the 13th Infantry division with General Ion Popescu in command and the 10th Infantry Division, with General Henric Cihoski in command, and a detachment from the Romanian 2nd Army stopped the enemy along the line between Șerbăști, Străoani, Diochești, causing it heavy casualties and holding it there until late on 3 August.

On 30 and 31 July important changes occurred in the organization of the command. General Eremia Grigorescu, the hero of Oituz in the autumn of 1916 was appointed in command of the Romanian 1st Army, with the VIII Army Corps of the Russian 4th Army also under his subordination. When tak-

The army must be a moral force capable of withstanding not only the brutal shock war subjects it to, but also a clash that is as dangerous as war: the clashes of spirit and of conceptions.

M. TOMESCU, Romanian officer

ing over the command of the army he launched the catchword: "No trespassing!"

The second stage was the decisive stage of the Mărășești battle. After a short operative break, needed by both belligerents, the German 9th Army again assumed the offensive with the I Army Corps, which, reinforced, had 55 infantry battalions and 95 artillery batteries, in order to conquer the line between Mărășești and Diochești. The main thrust of the enemy blow was supported by the Romanian 13th Infantry Division, which had to fight against two divisions and most of the artillery of the German 9th Army. An extremely fierce clash followed, our men resisting tenaciously, in bayonet and hand-to-hand combat, down to the last drop of life. After heavy efforts and casualties the enemy managed to create an extremely dangerous pocket in the Răzoare forest, about 2 km. deep and 2—3 km. wide.

At that critical moment the commander of the 13th Infantry Division pushed the reserve in combat — two battalions with majors Tomescu and Miclescu in command — to counter-attack on both flanks of the enemy forces which had penetrated the defence disposition. Under the convergent blows of the Romanian battalions, most of the forces of the German 115th Infantry Division operating in the area were annihilated, and the remaining forces retreated hurriedly back to the positions they had held when starting the offensive earlier in the day. Extremely fierce fight-

ing took place near the locality of Mărășești, where the 9th Infantry Division was entrenched in defence. There again the enemy suffered heavy defeat. Beginning with August 6, the German 9th Army assumed the defence in the Siret Valley, having to give up the goals it had set at the beginning of the offensive.

The third stage took place between 15 and 21 August, after an operative break of 8 days, during which both sides replenished the forces, replenished the supplies and let their men take a rest.

On August 15 the XVIII Army Corps assumed the offensive again in the Muncelu sector and, at the cost of considerable losses, managed to create a recess north and north-west of the village. The Russian VIII Army Corps carried out two strong counter-attacks, one with two divisions and the other with three divisions; those actions, combined with the staunch resistance of the units on the inside flanks of the Romanian 1st and 2nd Armies completely stopped the enemy offensive. The German 9th Army had to take up the defensive along the entire front on August 21.

The Mărășești battle concluded with the victory of the Romanian army, after 29 days, of which 16 with extremely heavy fighting and 13 with local fighting or operative breaks. Over 20 divisions on both sides took part in the battle in the main sector alone. The Romanian 1st Army owed its victory to the mass heroism of all its men, officers and generals, at the cost of 27,000 casualties

(dead, wounded and missing). The enemy lost over 65,000 officers and men (dead, wounded and prisoners).

The heroism and staunchness of the Romanian soldiers at Mărășești were acknowledged by the enemy itself. "The Romanians", the commander of the German I Army Corps wrote, "put up a strong resistance, expressed in 61 counter-attacks in 16 days of battle. The fighting in August showed that the Romanians were redoubtable opponents"⁶.

The Mărășești victory had a treble significance: politically, it prevented the enemy from conquering the entire territory of Romania and from bringing our people into subjection and barred the way of the Central Powers to the Ukraine and the port of Odessa; militarily it set an example of a successful, well-organized and well-managed defence operation; morally it gave unsuspected strength to the Romanian soldiers, reinforced their confidence in the army's resistance capacity and offensive elan, in the final victory against the invaders and the liberation of their ancestral land, in the accomplishment of the Romanian unitary nation-state.

1. Ludendorff, *Souvenirs de guerre*, Vol. I, Paris, 1934, p. 331.

2. Monkovitz, *La décomposition de l'armée russe*, p. 74.

3. For details see: Colonel Ion Cupșa, *Armata română în campaniile din 1916—1917*, Editura Militară, 1967, pp. 231—235.

4. For details see: Colonel Dr. Costică Popa, *Armata română în campania din anul 1917*, *Academia Militară*, Bucharest, 1981, pp. 30—32.

5. Ibidem, pp. 33—34.

6. General G. A. Dabija, *Armata română în războiul mondial 1916—1918*, Vol. 4, Bucharest, p. 631.

Monuments of the fight

MĂRĂȘEȘTI

The memorial to the heroes in the first world war

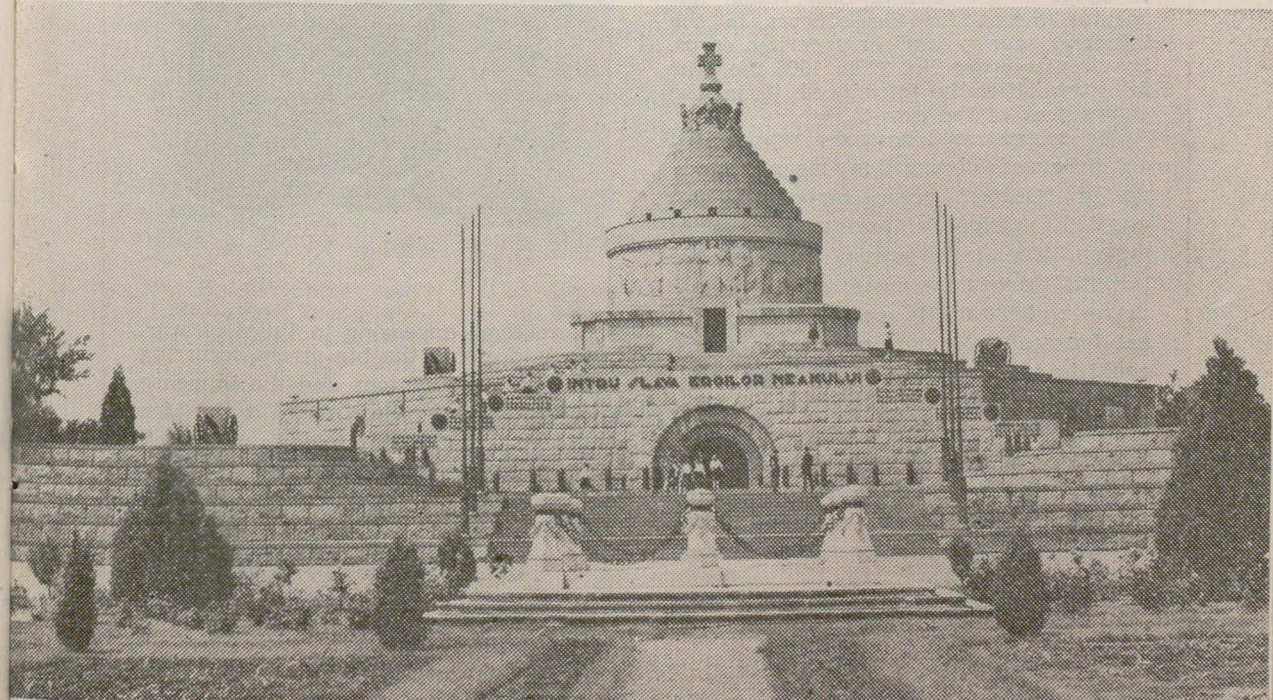
"Jiu, Olt, Sibiu, Crasna, Cireșoia, Robănești, Neajlov, Dragoslavele, Predeal, Cimpulung, Panciu, Răzoare, Brașov, Porumbacu, Mărășești, Mărăști and Oituz, Doaga, Muscel, Arabagi, Bărcuț, Amzacea, Prunaru, Cerna, Cașin, Valea Ursului, Sticlăria". Those inscriptions on the façade of the Mărășești Memorial evoke places of the national epos, where the brave Romanian soldiers became immortal as creators, together with the entire nation, of our ancient lands' freedom. The battles were fierce. The enemy, experienced and well equipped, had already had three years of life and death clashes behind him. He had invaded our land, our dream, our language, our light. Only the ancient hearth of Moldavia had remained free. All the other regions, which had always been Romanian, were suffering the foreign oppression. Those were "days of terrible turmoil and all of a sudden hope flutters fresh and rejuvenated over the bullet-riddled flags", as Octavian Goga wrote in the first issue in 1917 of the newspaper "Romania".

For nights and days on end, at Mărășești, the German forces attacked fiercely, in order to open their way northwards and to

invade Moldavia and the south of Ukraine. An order of Romania's Life and Future flew from mouth to mouth: "No Trespassing!" And the enemy was not able to pass the flint-like wall made up of Romanian soldiers. It was in vain that Mackensen, the "Front crusher" concentrated four divisions and a major artillery grouping between Mărășești and the Răzoare Forest. The 9th and 13th Infantry Divisions repelled them, and to the west the 13th Infantry Division stopped them and counter-attacked vigorously and successfully.

Thousands of Romanian soldiers made the great sacrifice at Mărășești. The remains of 6,000 soldiers are in the graves in the ground floor of the mausoleum, while the names of the heroes are laid down on marble plates in front of them. In the centre stands the sarcophagus of General Eremia Grigorescu, the man who gave the brief, historic order, "No trespassing!" and led the troops to the victorious fulfilment of that order. On the first floor of the circular hall are the flags of the Romanian units which took part in the fierce and glorious battle. On top there is the "Dome of Glory", guarded

The impressive mausoleum erected to pay homage to the heroes who laid down their lives for their homeland in the war of national liberation and reintegration



by four granite eagles at its basis and surrounded by a frieze, whose bass-relief, with a total area of 100 sq. m, was made by sculptors Ion Jalea and Cornel Medrea. The inside of the entrance in the dome is decorated with a fresco painted by Eduard Săulescu. In front the grave of the unknown warrior covered with a white stone slab, reminds one that **HERE RESTS IN HAPPINESS THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER... ON HIS BONES RESTS ROMANIA'S LAND.**

The blueprints of the imposing memorial work — 30 m high, and 40 m in diameter, made of reinforced concrete, plated with slabs of andezite brought from Deva — were made by architects George Cristinel and Constantin Pomponius. The Memorial was erected between 1923 and 1938 upon the initiative of the Congress of Romanian Women, held on June 8, 1919 in the Senate Hall in Bucharest.

Upon the anniversary of half a century since the heroic battles in the summer of 1917, the General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party visited the Mausoleum and noted the following in the memorial book: "It is with deep emotion that I came to these places which have gone down in the glorious history of the Romanian people through the unparalleled deeds of valour of the Romanian soldiers in the battles for defending national freedom and independence. Mărășești will remain for ever a symbol of the heroism of our people, a high moral trait, brilliantly affirmed in the enthusiastic work performed by the working people in this country, under the leadership of the party, on the wide front of socialist construction."

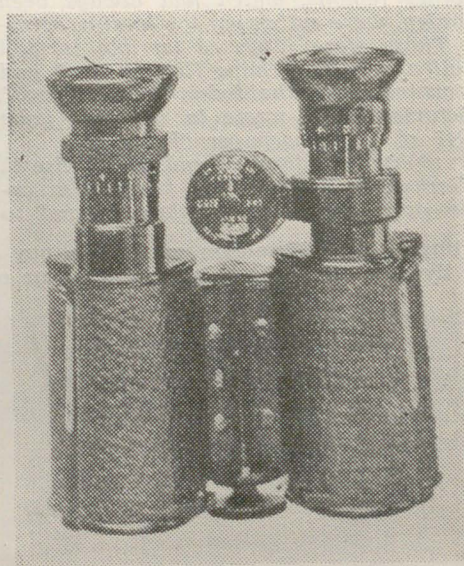
● **Captain Commander
ILIE MANOLE**

THE TELEMETRIC BINOCULARS "Colonel V. Ionescu"

Among the military specialists who contributed to the development of the technical means in the endowment of the modern Romanian army at the beginning of the 20th century was colonel V. Ionescu, former director of the Army Geographical Institute.

Passionate mathematician and physicist, colonel V. Ionescu made a number of researches of applied optics, especially between 1902 and 1905. On their basis in 1905 he suggested the War Ministry to adopt a new optical observation apparatus meant for the officers in the infantry, cavalry and engineering corps. By circular order No. 22 in 1906 the War Ministry officially introduced it in the endowment of the army.

The telemetric binoculars represented an improved observation means, made up of "Geertz" prism binoculars and adapted "Colonel Ionescu" telemeter system. The usual visual field of the "Geertz" binoculars measured 87 m at a distance of 100 m. By means of the "Colonel Ionescu" telemeter system the image could be well-framed to a distance ranging between 1,600 and 2,300 m, so that targets with heights between 1 and 5 metres could be identified. According to the specifications of the telemeter binoculars it enabled the solution "without any computation" of various "measur-



ing problems appearing in times of war, thus suppressing the big errors occurring from rough estimations and the immense inconvenients deriving from it for the artillery — ammunition waste and lack of orientation in beginning and performing the fire."

● **Major O. BURCIN**

THE REVISIONIST PROGRAMME OF HORTHY'S REGIME

The news of a new amputation of the national territory through the fascist Vienna Diktat (August 30, 1940) aroused a wave of indignation in Romania, where the entire range of socio-political forces declared for resistance. As revealed by recently published documents of the Romanian General Staff, the decision-making factors in Bucharest were compelled to accept the "arbitration" of the fascist powers "under the threat that in case of refusal the Romanian state will be completely dissolved through a simultaneous attack by Hungary, Bulgaria, Russia, Germany and Italy" and faced with the "prospect of Moldavia being swallowed by Russia a fact that would have had immense consequences upon the future of the Romanian cause".¹

Referring to the imperialist sentence passed against the Romanian people, whereby Transylvania, an ancient Romanian land, was cut into two, the northern part being given to Horthyist Hungary, American publicist Milton G. Lehrer wrote: "In the entire history of mankind, one can find no example of a more arbitrary or more artificial delineation of new frontiers".² "From every

standpoint" — Lehrer underlines — "historic, geographic, economic, ethnic and ethical, such a separation constitutes an absurdity and a danger to European peace. The shattering of Transylvania's unity was in total disregard of the most elementary notions of common sense and equity. Transylvania's existence had always been characterized by an indissoluble unity... whether independent, autonomous or oppressed, whether unwillingly integrated into the Habsburg monarchy or violently annexed to the Hungarian crown, Transylvania has had to drink the dregs from the cup of bitterness. But until recently", the American author concludes, "it has never experienced the tragic situation of being cut asunder by fictitious, arbitrary, illogical and impossible borders".³

The Horthyist authorities introduced in the occupied part of north-west Romania a fascist-type occupation regime, by implementing laws meant to contribute to the physical elimination of the Romanian majority population from the socio-economic activity, from political life, from the demographic reality. The methods of repression employ-

TESTIMONIES

(continued from page 56)

Grozești. During the day the enemy repeatedly and vigorously carried out outflanking attacks on the Coșna Height. It managed to push one kilometre back our troops (Division 117 Infantry) in position there. The enemy got into the line of Division 70 Infantry. The Division retreated to Cireșoia.

August 16, 1917. The enemy puts up fierce resistance on the heights east and north-east of Soveja. Our attack could not get through, the counter-attacks were rejected even in man-to-man combat.

August 19, 1917. The Gerok Group /.../. At night an enemy attack was rejected east of the War Mount. The enemy position is strongly fortified and solidly held. Our assault patrols found strong garrisons everywhere in the enemy position.

August 20, 1917. The Gerok Group. Attack carried out against Height 895 north-east of Soveja; the height has been conquered. Several enemy counter-attacks were partially rejected there, only after heavy fighting with grenades... At 5 hours P.M. the enemy proceeded with outflanking attacks with great forces on Coșna Height... The enemy defends itself extremely vigorously, each new advance following a fierce battle must be protected against the violent enemy counter-attacks.

Selections :
Senior Lieutenant
MARIUS GIURGIU

ROMANIA'S COLLABORATION WITH THE ENTENTE MIRRORED IN NUMISMATICS

Romania's collaboration with its allies in World War I was recorded on many Romanian medals. Such medals and plaques were issued during and especially after the war,¹ worked by such Romanian medalists as O. Negreanu and Emil W. Becker or by foreign medalists, like the Frenchman Lavrillier. Here below is a presentation of several such medals.

1. The Plaque "The Co-operation of the Romanian Army with the French Army". 80×53 cm uniface bronze, modelled by P. Delalasprie and G. Scott.

Obv.: A French soldier shaking the hand of a Romanian soldier near the flags of the Entente states. In the background, a Romanian church and the cathedral of Reims. Below, the year 1916. The plaque was struck in 1917 in Paris.²

2. "General Berthelot's Medal". Bronze. 150 mm diameter. Author, Lavrillier. The medal was on display at an exhibition organized at the Athenaeum in March 1919.³

3. The Medal "The French 40th Infantry Regiment Entering Romania — October 28/November 10, 1918".

Obv.: Circular inscription: VIVE LA FRANCE — VIVENT NOS ALLIÉS. In the field, seven lines reading: SEJOUR DE LA GLORIEUSE ARMÉE EN ROUMANIE — 1918. On the edge, a perled circle.

Rev.: Circular caption: "SOUVENIR DE MADAME HÉLÈNE I. MOVILA". In

ed were of a wide range — the extermination of Romanians, en masse or individually; their expulsion to the territory that had remained free; the dislocation of whole communities; Magyarization through school, the press and religion; internment into forced-labour camps in Hungary and Germany.

In spite of assassinations, expulsions (300,000 Romanians were driven out from their homes and lands), of the attempts at Magyarization through various channels, the demographic structure by nationalities could not be modified — the Romanians continued to be the majority.

The army, police and gendarmerie, the Horthyist civilian authorities and various Hungarian paramilitary guards joined in a concerted action of extermination and repression, brutally carried out in the north-western part of Romania.

The memoirs of General Nagy Vilmos, published in 1986 in Budapest under the title *Fatal Years*, insists on revealing the good intentions that animated him when entering Transylvania; the author, former commander of the Horthyist occupation troops, underlines that he told the civilian personalities in Cluj-Napoca that "peace

and understanding will be enthroned", that no one "will be wronged for one's ethnic origin", that the army would ensure the security of the area, of the persons and properties". How did "peace and understanding, equality of all inhabitants promoted by Nagy Vilmos materialize? On September 9, 1940, 68 Romanians were killed in Trăsnea commune; in the night of September 13 to 14, 157 Romanians, of which 82 children, were assassinated in Ip commune; on September 18, 16 Romanians were killed in Cosmiciu de Sus commune, etc. Up to October 30, 1940, 919 Romanians were killed in the territory occupied by the Horthyists. "I shall not allow", General Nagy Vilmos stated at the Cluj meeting, "that anyone be wronged for one's ethnic origin".⁵ But the "pacifying general" does not mention a word about expulsions, assassinations, tortures, profanations and arrests. In the territory snatched through the fascist Vienna Diktat, the Horthyist occupation authorities aimed at the systematic destruction of the Romanian element, through any means. Telling in this respect is the situation in 56 communes in the north-western part of the country.⁶

	Total	Romanians	Magyars
Called-up reservists	2,225	2,174	51
On the front	1,174	1,146	28
Dead	127	127	0
Wounded	83	83	0
Missing	51	51	0
In labour camps	1,508	1,492	16

A brief and partial acknowledgement of what happened, coming from the editor, Ranki Gyorgy, also tries to minimize the deeds and the number of those guilty: "...officers holding other beliefs in the same army (Hungarian) committed a series of atrocities against the Romanians".⁷

Debating the problem of responsibilities, Milton G. Lehrer noted: "Encouraged by the attitude of the Magyar troops who, instead of keeping order, themselves pillaged the territory they occupied and committed other horrible crimes, the Hungarian population in Transylvania gave free scope to their primeval instincts and engaged in a paroxysm of the most goulsh deeds".⁸

Wanting to extend or, at least consolidate, the territorial conquests, the Hungarian ambassador in Berlin sounded the intentions of the Nazi leadership. As a result of his soundings, Sztojay Dome revealed to the Hungarian foreign minister Csaky the urgent necessity of adhering to the Axis: "Only in this way we can ensure the possibility that within the new order, when the political and economic issues, and, surely, the territorial ones will be decided, we may have an active participation".⁹ Consequently, on November 20, 1940 the act whereby Hungary adhered to the Tripartite Pact was signed with great pomp.

In December 1940, while expressing its agreement and intention to take part in Hitler's war against the USSR, the Hungarian General Staff began instructing the commands and the effectives of 15 brigades for the campaign.¹⁰ A memorandum drafted by the Chief of General Staff, General Werth Henrick, before the

unleashing of the war on the eastern front, mentioned the reasons for an intervention alongside Nazi Germany:

"1. This is necessary for ensuring our territorial integrity, our socio-economic order.

2. The removal of Soviet vicinity from our frontiers and its weakening (of the Soviet power — M. R.) is of major national interest to our future. /.../

5. Other territorial expansions of the country (annexations — M. R.) depend on this".¹¹

On April 1941, the attack against Yugoslavia occasioned a general "rehearsal" of the combat training. As a reward, Hungary received from Nazi Reich a territory of almost 11,500 sq km, so that the total area of the Horthyist state amounted now to about 173,000 sq km, out of which over 79,000 sq km had been taken by force and dictate from the neighbouring countries in the period November 1938 — April 1941.

Expounding in another manner on what Werth had brought into relief, the Hungarian military attaché in Berlin, Homlok, reported on June 20, 1941: "I consider our participation necessary; we must occupy territories north of the Carpathians and then we should negotiate as masters over them /.../"¹²

In spite of the statement — recorded by Hungarian historiography — received on June 23, 1941 by ambassador Kristoffy from the government to which he was accredited — that "it has no claims against Hungary and no intentions to attack it, that it had no objections to the satisfaction of Hungary's claims to the detriment of Romania and in this respect it will not have in the future too"¹³ — on June 27, 1941 the Horthyist

the field, six lines: "AU 40^e REG. D'INF. — 7^e C^oie S. P. 515 — 24 DEC. 1918 BUCAREST". On the edge, a perled circle. The medal is 32.5 mm in diameter, and has an ear and French tricolour ribbon. Only a few copies were issued (15 made of copper and 10 of silver-plated copper). Engravers: the Leonard brothers.⁴

4. The Medal "The Romanian Legion in Italy"

The legion of the Romanian soldiers was formed of Transylvanian-Romanian prisoners of war, in keeping with their wish to fight for national unity and following the propaganda of a Romanian committee headed by Professor S. Mindrescu. On the occasion an oval medal was issued, which has an ear and is 35×25 mm in size.

Obv.: Two feminine figures (Italy and Romania) under a tree. The figure symbolizing Italy is armed with a sword; "Romania" carries a shield inscribed "RUMENIA". Below, the caption: "AVEZZANO 1919".

Rev.: The statue of the she-wolf with Romulus and Remus; caption "S.P.Q.R.". Below, the flags of Italy and Romania, bound with oak leaves, and at the bottom, in three lines: "IN FIDE AC FORTITUDINE SALUS".⁵

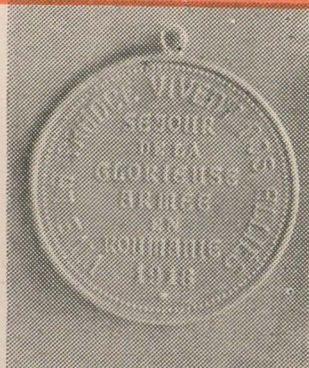
5. The "Victory Medal" Bronze, 36 mm diameter. It was instituted on the strength of the high decree no. 3390 of 1921 and of the ministerial resolution no. 857 of July 3, 1921, both published in the Official Gazette 121 of Sept. 2, 1921. Medalist — C. Cristescu.

Obv.: Centre — front view of the Winged Victory holding a sword in the right hand.

Rev.: In the field of the medal, a double-edged halberd trimmed with laurels. Three-line inscription reading: "THE



The medal "The 40th French Infantry Regiment Entering Romania" (reverse)



The obverse of the medal
The Victory medal (obverse)



troops unleashed the aggression against the USSR.

With only some 45,000 military at the beginning, the Hungarian troops engaged in the anti-Soviet war amounted, by the end of 1942, to about 300,000 men in the Second Operational Army, to which one should add those from the occupation divisions (five great units in 1941, eight in 1942—1944).¹⁴ The increased participation of the Horthyist forces on the Soviet-German front was not motivated only by Hungary's desire to conquer new territories, but also by its intention to assume the role of "local power" in south-east Europe. On September 10, 1941, prime minister Barossy assured Ribbentrop that "the only sure factor of preventing the assertion of various anti-German movements in this region, which are to be found in any period and revive any time, is the Hungarian power. For this reason its maintenance is also in the interest of Germany".¹⁵ The idea of preferential treatment was also present in the meetings which some officials from the political leadership had with representatives of western powers accredited to neutral capitals: to leave the Axis Hungary asked that its territory be guaranteed and the political system at that time be maintained.¹⁶

Moreover, the Horthyist forces engaged in bloody repressions of the liberation movements in the annexed Slovakian and Yugoslavian territories.

During the war too, a constant feature of the policy pursued by the Horthyist regime was the continuation of the aggressive actions against the Romanian people and state, the violation of the territory within the jurisdiction of the government in Bucharest, the Hungarian ruling circles aiming at occupying the whole of

Transylvania. The Horthyist forces staged countless provocations along the temporary demarcation line, incursions south of it, violation of the airspace, all in order to build up a state of tension that would be settled in their favour. This attitude was known to the Nazi leadership too. According to what Nagy Vilmos wrote, Göring declared that he would stop any delivery of armaments to Hungary "as he knows that we prepare against Romania and we want to use the armament to attack that country. He has precise information according to which the Hungarian units were deployed with complete war strength along the Transylvanian border, while the Romanian units had peace-time strength".¹⁷ As General Szombathelyi, Werth's successor at the head of the Hungarian General Staff pointed out, even an Anglo-American landing in the Balkans had to be used to Hungary's interest: "Therefore, in case of war in the Balkans, the first step will be an intervention against Romania". In this way "we could also achieve our specific purpose, the occupation of the whole of Transylvania..."¹⁸

In spite of the terror unleashed by the Horthyists in north-west Romania, the Romanian population was engaged in an active national resistance movement. As Nagy Vilmos — compelled by facts — had to admit in January 1943, "the Romanians do not in any way agree with the situation created as a result of the Vienna decision (diktat — M. R.), all their efforts being directed towards expressing this discontent and maintaining in the mind of the Romanian population in the territories retroceded (occupied — M. R.) to Hungary the idea that the situation is not final and will soon be changed".¹⁹

The historic act of August 23, 1944, when the Romanian people imposed its democratic option, which has always characterized it, on the development of the Second World War was "from both the political and military points of view, of extremely great consequence for Hungary. The military conception that the Soviet army might be held up at the Carpathians until Hungary's position became more favourable fell..."²⁰ With the Romanians turning their weapons against the Germans and the advance of the front line, the Soviet troops could in a short time move forward for hundreds of kilometres without fighting across the territory liberated by the Romanian forces. The impact of the revolution was felt by General Vörös Janos, at that time Chief of Staff: the Romanian army turned the weapons against the German troops "partially destroying them and compelling the remaining forces to withdraw to the border. In this way the Soviet troops advancing here do not encounter any resistance. As a result, this section of the front is, for the moment the most endangered one in the entire eastern front, a fact that turns critical the entire eastern front and decisively bears on the outcome of the war".²¹

The Hungarians wrongly understood the unanimous turning of the front carried out by the Romanian army and considered that the situation was favourable and the time had come for launching an attack south of the demarcation line in order to occupy the whole of Transylvania. On September 4, 1944 General Vörös described in detail the goals of the Horthyist forces: "The defence of the Carpathian range de-

mands that the German leadership and, due to its specific interests the Hungarian one too, make efforts into two directions. The preliminary condition for the successful defence of the Carpathians is the occupation of the Southern Carpathians [...], because only their inaccessible heights offer conditions for an efficient defence against a probable enemy offensive from the direction of the Balkan Peninsula. If we do not occupy the passes in these mountains and if the Soviets reach southern Transylvania, starting their offensive there, there is no doubt that the present demarcation line (Oradea — Cluj) cannot be defended even with forces several times bigger than those we have at present. At the same time, this means that we must give up the defence of the Eastern Carpathians and withdraw on the Danube-Drava line, which would, therefore, be the border of the last Hungarian nucleus".²²

As a result, on September 5, the Hungarian troops mounted an offensive in central Transylvania. The political motivation of the action was the desire of the Hungarian leadership to preserve the territorial status, obtained by force and with Germany's support, and its political regime: "...our only way out", General Vörös noticed, "would be negotiations conducted arm in hand, with the internal order and armed forces as the strong point... We must start negotiations while we can still do it arm in hand... We have, for a time, to go on alongside Germany also because only in this way we are and we shall be able until the end of the war to maintain the integrity of the present

GREAT WAR FOR CIVILIZATION". On the edge, a chain in the links of which are inscribed the names of the Entente countries: "BRITAIN, BELGIUM, GREECE, JAPAN, SERBIA, AMERICA, CHINA, ROMANIA, ITALY, FRANCE".

The medal has an ear and a ribbon in the colours of all the partners in the coalition.

6. The Medal "To the Inter-Allied Monument of Liège". On the anniversary of 20 years since the battles of Liège, the Belgian authorities decided to have a monument erected to the memory of the fighters who had fallen for the cause of the Entente. On that occasion a 60 mm bronze medal was issued in Romania (medalist — E. W. Becker).

Obv.: The head of the King of Belgium, Leopold III, to the left, flanked by the inscription: LEOPOLD III ROI DES BELGES. MCMXXXVII. Below, the sign of the medalist: E. W. BECKER scul[ptor].

Rev.: Central, the monument, with the explanatory inscription on either side. On the edge, between laurel leaves, the Arms of the Allied countries.⁶

• CORNEL POPA

1. C. Nufu, *România în anii neutralității 1914—1916 (Romania in the Years of Neutrality 1914—1916)*, Bucharest, 1972, p. 81 and fol. M. Ioniță, *Medalii și plachete românești (Romanian Medals and Plaques)*, in "B.S.N.R.", year I, no. 3—4, 1920, pp. 23—1980), p. 518.

2. *Cronica numismatică (The Numismatic Chronicle)*, year I, no. 3—4, 1920, pp. 23—24.

3. C. Moisil, *Expoziția Lavrillier la Ateneu în martie 1919 (The Lavrillier Exhibition at the Athenaeum in March 1919)*, in "B.S.N.R.", year XIV, no. 29—32, pp. 34—35.

4. *Cronica numismatică (The Numismatic Chronicle)*, year I, no. 3—4, 1920, p. 25.

5. C. Moisil in "B.S.N.R.", year XV, no. 35—36, 1920, p. 85.

6. Not recorded.

Hungarian territories, that is to stop the enemy at the border".²³

The Hungarian military and politicians hoped to reach the peaks of Southern Carpathians and dik-tate from there the armistice conditions. But they did not take into account the moral and will power of the Romanian army, stemming from the aims of the just, liberating war fought for freeing the national territory that was under Horthyist occupation. Three days after its launching, the Hungarian-German offensive in the Transylvanian Tableland was stopped. Starting from September 8, the Romanian forces (from September 10 in co-operation with the Soviet ones) mounted a counter-offensive succeeding to liberate the national territory until October 25, 1944. Tens of thousands of dead and wounded rendered void with their blood and life the injustice made in the Belvedere Palace of Vienna on August 30, 1940.

* * *

The armistice between Hungary and the United Nations was signed on January 20, 1945. Among its provisions were the equipping and arming of eight infantry divisions and their placing at the disposal of the Soviet army; the return to the frontiers existing on December 31, 1937. In spite of the agreement, numerous Hungarian fascist forces (according to information of that time amounting to 12—14 great units) continued to fight alongside Nazi Germany.²⁴

Failing in the military attempt to maintain under occupation the north-western part of Romania, in the period 1945—1947 the Hungarian political circles made many ap-

proaches to get the advantage through diplomatic means. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a Section for the preparation of the peace treaty was set up with the task of co-ordinating at state level the preparations for the participation in the Peace Conference. Together with other various bodies the Section drafted several notes (July 4 and August 14, 1945, January 25 and February 1, 1946) which it submitted to the governments of the main anti-fascist powers.²⁵ The notes expressed the Hungarian government's viewpoint with regard to the post-war political organization in Central Europe, setting forth the claims on the neighbouring states under the formula: "exchange of population only with territorial compensations". The necessity was asserted that "Hungary's political frontiers be identical with the ethnographic ones".²⁶

Just as in the interwar period Bethlen Istvan, Gömbös Gyula and other emissaries of the government in Budapest made numerous tours in order to determine officials from other countries to support the revisionist cause; so in the first part of 1946 Hungarian political factors had contacts in Moscow in April, the USA and London in June. During the talks with representatives of the three governments, the Hungarian delegation, led by Nagy Ferenc, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and Rakosi Matias, Vice-Chairman, contended that Romania should cede some of her territory.²⁷ During the meeting at the Foreign Office, Rakosi said that the Romanians would be agreeable to concessions, but not before the elections (??).²⁸ Similar opinions were expressed during the meeting between the members of the

Hungarian and American delegations in Paris, on September 4, 1946. Premier Nagy Ferenc underlined that Hungary, a "bulwark of western culture and political ideas" (sic!), needs, for political and psychological reasons" a serious border rectification in Transylvania. The reasons invoked were his retaining the office of prime-minister and the desire to avert a civil war.²⁹ Nagy Ferenc admitted thus the lack of any Hungarian "rights" over Transylvania, so much invoked by older or younger historians in Hungary or elsewhere.

Having learnt of the activity of some Hungarian political circles the Romanian minister of justice Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu stated: "What stand do the authorized representatives of the neighbouring republic take when they do not accept the final delimitation of Transylvania's borders as they are today? Let us call a spade a spade. We are witness to a new edition of revisionism, of a new revisionism which is not new to us, but we see with bitterness and sorrow that new revisionism is connected with the well-known tendencies of past revisionism, so fervent in yesterday's Hungary".³⁰

On August 27, 1946, the Hungarian delegation started the action against the decision of the Foreign Ministers' Council to render nul and void the arbitrations of Vienna (November 2, 1938 and August 30, 1940). With regard to the frontier with Romania, the Hungarian diplomatic representatives asked that a territory of 22,000 sq km be annexed to their country; the act in itself would lead to the normalization of the relations

with the Romanian state. The political-territorial commission was not intimidated by the diplomatic blackmail and rejected the Hungarian claims next day.

On August 31, the Hungarian delegation repeated the attempt: Auer Pál contended the standpoint of his government questioning the decision of the Peace Conference. But what did Auer Pál say in fact? That the Hungarian ruling circles, which were no longer "blinded by prejudices" as the former governments were, sincerely wanted "to settle" the question of their own frontiers. And the settlement was possible only by... Romania's ceding a part of its territory of 4,000 sq km, ensuring the rights of the Hungarian minority in Romania under Allied control and granting broad autonomy to the Szeklers.³² From 22,000 sq km the Hungarian political circles would have also been satisfied with an area five times smaller! Therefore, what was insistently pursued was especially *the revision of a principle that was included in the text of the peace treaties*. Had this been achieved everything else would have been placed under the sign of revision: frontiers, war damages, military clauses, etc.

On September 2, the Romanian delegate Gheorghe Tătărăscu proved the inconsistency of the claims formulated against Romania and "underlined the unity of Transylvania within the present borders". With regard to the

Allied control in the question of minorities, the head of the Romanian delegation submitted a well documented written statement about the rights enjoyed by the minorities in Romania, which were sanctioned by the country's Constitution: "Irrespective of ethnic origin, language or religion", read the Constitution, "the Romanians enjoy the freedom of conscience, of the press, of meeting, of association and all the freedoms and rights established by law [...]. Differences of religion and denominations, of ethnic origin and language are not an obstacle in enjoying and exercising civil rights in Romania". Besides, Gheorghe Tătărăscu pointed out, "the representatives of the Hungarian community in Romania publicly acknowledged" that they had been granted all the fundamental rights and freedoms.³³

On October 10, 1946, the Peace Conference unanimously approved the annulment of the Vienna arbitration. The injustice of August 30, 1940 was redressed and the historical truth restored. Justice triumphed: the instruments of international law once again confirmed, after Trianon in 1919, the justness of the ethnic frontier between the two states. At the same time, all the territorial conquests of the fascists were annulled, revisionism was condemned and any attempt at reviving it vere rejected.

● MIHAI RETEGAN

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2. Milton G. Lehrer, Transylvania. History and Reality. Edited and with a Foreword by David Martin. Bartleby Press, Silver Spring, Maryland, 1986, p. 277.

3. Ibidem, pp. 268-269.

4. Nagybacsoni Nagy Vilmos, Végzetes esztendőök. Gondolat, Budapest, 1986, p. 67.

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20. Juhász Gyula, op. cit., p. 299.

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28. State Archives, Bucharest, microfilms USA, reel 631, frame 278.

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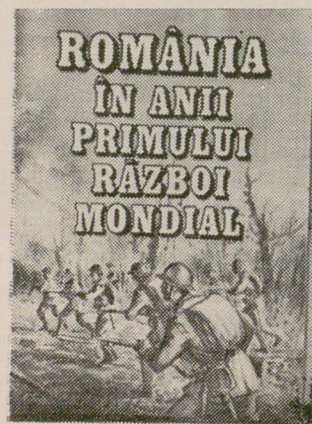
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ROMANIA DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The remarkable monograph "*România în anii primului război mondial*", issued under the aegis of the Romanian Commission of Military History and of the Centre of Studies and



Research in Military History and Theory, an ample synthesis in two volumes, presents the main political-military events in Romania and in the world from the beginning of the 20th century till the conclusion of the peace treaties in 1919—1920, the huge human and material effort made by the Romanian people between 1916 and 1918 for the country's liberation and for building the unitary nation-state.

The first volume presents Romania's evolution from the beginning of the 20th century until the end of the 1916, the causes which determined the outbreak of the first world conflagration in the summer of 1914, the operations carried out by the Romanian army in 1916. The authors give wide coverage to the pre-war policy of the Romanian state (especially in the military field), a policy which pursued the defence of the country's ancient land and the liberation of the Romanian territories under foreign rule exclusively. The work moreover points out the truth that Romania did not take part in the First World War for annexationist reasons, its determination springing from the need to wage its own war for the liberation of the Romanian territories which had been annexed by big powers. The political and strategic goals of the Romanian state are not to be mistaken for those of the coalition it had joined. Obviously the greater part of the volume presents the military operations carried out by the Romanian army in 1916, military analysis blending with stress on the massive support given by the popu-

lation behind the front line, on the political-diplomatic activity of the government, on the developments on other European war theatres. During the 135 days of the campaign in 1916 — the authors point out — stress was laid again on the national and popular character of the war waged by Romania, the principle of the entire people's war for defending the homeland, inherited from the forerunners, acquiring new scope. Fighting in extremely difficult conditions on the longest front line in Europe — 1,600 km. — the Romanian army, following the attack carried out in the south of Dobruja by a strong German-Bulgarian grouping and the non-observance, by the allies, of their pledges in the Military Convention, had to assume the defensive in Transylvania. The dramatic events in the autumn of 1916, the withdrawal, the heavy casualties suffered in battle (one third of the mobilized military force), the occupation, by the enemy, of an important part of the national territory, did not bring about Romania's capitulation. The Romanian state continued to exercise its prerogatives of an independent and sovereign state, in alliance with the Entente powers.

The second volume covers the time span between 1917 and 1920, marked by the heroic battles of Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz in the historic summer of 1917, which saved Romania from total occupation, from its dismantling as a state, by the carrying out of the historic acts of national will at Chișinău, Cernăuți and Alba Iulia in 1918, which sanctioned the fulfilment of a centuries-old ideal — the building of the unitary nation-state, and their interna-

tional recognition following the signing of the peace treaties in 1919—1920. The volume enables the reader to derive valuable conclusions referring to the huge work of reconstruction and strengthening of Romania's combat capacity, to the dignified attitude of the Romanian state, to the unflinching belief in the final victory, to the mass staunchness and bravery of the Romanians. The authors make a detailed presentation of the international political-diplomatic and military conditions — characterized by numerous contradictions and confrontations within the two coalitions and by numerous attempts made by the Entente to coordinate the war efforts more efficiently. Light is also cast on the command relations between Romania and the allies, on the difficulties a small state like Romania had to surmount in its relations with its big partners in the Entente.

Also remarkable is the final part of the work, which deals with the intensification of the Romanian people's struggle for accomplishing full national unity; this struggle had a wide mass character, the people deciding upon its future in big representative, democratic national assemblies.

The monograph as a whole represents a valuable scientific contribution regarding the struggle of the Romanian people for defending its national being during the first world war, a vibrating patriotic message for the present generation to understand, treasure and take further the virtues of their ancestors.

● Major
ALEXANDRU DUȚU

THE SCIENTIFIC APPROACH TO A FUNDAMENTAL HISTORICAL REALITY AN IMMUTABLE REALITY *

In 1944 the work of the American journalist Milton G. Lehrer entitled *Transylvania — A Romanian Land* was released in Romania. The title expresses briefly a fundamental historical truth and an immutable reality. Since then the work has registered a continuous, deep and broadly resonant echo among both specialists and a large public. Born in New York in 1906, the author worked for a long period between the two world wars as a correspondent of *La Tribune des Nations* and in this capacity, he spent many years in Romania, being also vice-chairman of the association of foreign correspondents in this country. As a journalist, Milton G. Lehrer could gather detailed information on Transylva-

* Milton G. Lehrer, *Ardealul — pământ românesc*, Bucharest, 1944.

** Milton G. Lehrer, *Transylvania. History and Reality*, Silver Spring, Bartleby Press, 1986, XI + 308 p.

nia's history. The book he dedicated to this ancient Romanian province was born out of the wish to inform world public opinion on the true past of Transylvania and to reject convincingly, with arguments, the revisionist propaganda pursued mainly by Horthy's Hungary.

As Milton Lehrer shows in the foreword to his book, he strived to carry out an objective investigation, guided by the wish to find the truth. The assertion of this truth meant and still means the revelation of Transylvania's status as an ancient Romanian land, part and parcel of old Dacia, inhabited and owned from time immemorial by Geto-Dacians, then, after the completion of the Romanian ethnogenesis, by Romanians, in a perfect and impressive endurance. Though Milton Lehrer wrote a book for the large public and, consequently, he did not elaborate it in a scientific manner, whoever goes through this work can realize that the author undertook a thorough research, at the end of which he accumulated a rich documentation, from mediaeval chronicles to sources of contemporary history. The author was concerned with Transylvania's demography, economy and political life, and therefore his work offers an all-embracing image of this Romanian province.

Milton Lehrer starts his exposition by evoking the circumstances in which the Hungarian tribes were infiltrated in Transylvania and concludes it with a chapter dealing with the odious fascist Vienna Award — "a deliberate, inequitable and apolitical act, imposed by violence" (Foreword, p. 1) — and with the atrocities committed by the Horthyist troops in north-western Romania, snatched by this Award. Milton Lehrer un-

Man is born not only for himself, but also for the homeland and for his fellowmen.

CICERO, Roman politician, writer and philosopher (104—43 B.C.)

derlines that "awards imposed by dictators share the fate of their creators. Nothing can really be achieved by violence — the same as nothing can be built on sand: either dictatorships or diktats" (Foreword, p. 11).

Written more than forty decades ago, Milton Lehrer's work preserves unaltered its scientific and political topicality, in spite of the revisionist propaganda — anachronistic and contrary to historical objectivity. Doubtlessly, whoever misinterprets Transylvania's past and, in general, that of the Romanian people, whoever continues to circulate the same theses taken from Roesler's arsenal concerning the alleged void of Romanian population in Transylvania during the penetration of the Hungarian tribes and the so-called tardy arrival of the Romanians inside the Carpathian arch commits the crime of interference in the domestic affairs of another state, encroaching upon that state's national independence and integrity. Grounding his scientific approach on studying and understanding historical reality, according to which Transylvania was subject to Austro-Hungarian domination for 51 years (1867—1918), the author lays bare the policy of exploitation and oppression of the Transylvanian Romanians, exercised as part of the regime founded on the formula *Unio trium nationum* (the alliance established with the Magyar nobility, the Szeckler aristocracy and the Transylvanian Saxons' elite), then, after the creation of the Dual Monarchy (1867),

as part of the Hungarian state. The policy of forced Magyarization pursued by the governments of Budapest is firmly denounced by the author who entitled one of his chapters "*Hungarian Intolerance: The Main Cause of the Fall of the Dual Monarchy*" (p. 138).

Highly instructive through the contrast of the reality presented are the chapters tackling the minority policy adopted by the Hungarian government between 1867 and 1918 and the policy of the Romanian state in the interwar period. On the basis of an extremely revealing documentation, Milton Lehrer proves that the regime of oppression and denationalization practiced by the Hungarian authorities was followed, after the Great Union of 1918, by the regime set up by Romania which eliminated national discrimination, ensuring appropriate conditions for the coexisting nationalities.

Milton Lehrer's book is the testimony of an objective observer who, informed and honest, considered it his moral duty to wash away the falsities and calumnies circulated by the revisionist propaganda of Horthy's Hungary. Whoever reads this book in the same spirit of objectivity in which it was written can only share the author's own conclusion that: "In the Europe of the New Fascist Order the righteousness of the Romanian cause was trampled, by raising frontiers between Roma-

nians belonging to the same country. In the New World the righteousness of the Romanian cause triumphed again". Transylvania was acknowledged as belonging to the Romanian nation, "by virtue of the most sacred principles of ethnic unity" (p. 309). And further on he exclaims enthusiastically: "Today the whole Transylvania is free. For ever!" (p. 310).

The historical perspective sanctioned and consolidated this immutable reality and this fundamental truth: Transylvania, — an ancient and permanent Romanian land.

A recent edition of the work** facilitates the access of the American readers to historical data characterized by scientific objectivity. Studying it thoroughly the reader will understand that he has gone over a real book about the true history of the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic space. The release in the United States of this work in a language of international circulation contributes to a better understanding of the historical reality and to the rejection of tendentious assessments about Transylvania's past which run counter to historical truth.

The topicality and freshness of the work — although more than four decades have passed since its first release — as well as its obvious scientific value would justify its republication also in Romania, an event expected by both specialists and a large public.

ANDREI BUSUIOCEANU

An original record of the Romanian people's military history:

FRENCH GENERAL BERTHELOT'S MEMOIRS

French General H. M. Berthelot holds a distinct place in the collective memory of Romania's WW I generation. Head of a military mission arrived in Romania late in October 1916, following an agreement made between the Romanian and French governments, General Berthelot was one of the most representative figures of the French military command in the First World War. At the outbreak of the world war which spanned 1914—1918, he held senior positions in the French general staff, being one of Generalissimo J. Joffre's advisers. Subsequently, until his arrival in Romania, he held various senior assignments on the front (division and army corps Commander). In Romania, he carried out two missions. The first one, from October 1916 to May 1918, overlapped with a period of utmost intensity in the history of Romania's participation in WW I: the defensive fights which the Romanian army heroically and steadily waged in the Carpathian passes, in Walachia and on the Siret line; then, the reorganization of the Romanian army and the great victories in the summer of 1917 — at Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz; eventually, Romania's quandary, in the spring of 1918, when the Central Powers forced upon it a dictate which they termed, without any legal or historical grounds, as a "Peace Treaty."

General Berthelot's second Romanian mission, from October 1918 to Mai 1919, coincided again with an eventful period. As a Commander, in principle, of the French Army of the Danube, General Berthelot was an eye-witness to Romania's joining again the war, alongside the Entente Powers, before the first worldwide conflict ended, as well as to the achievement of the Romanian people's Great Union of 1918, which culminated in the National Assembly, gathered in Alba Iulia, on December 1, 1918.

His record of daily events related to his two Romanian missions is rich (nearly 300 pages)* and includes accounts that are both interesting and useful for the historiographic study of those hard times which the Romanian people victoriously traversed. He outlined the circumstances that gov-

erned the adoption of far-reaching political and military decisions on the Romanian front; he grasped the frame of mind of both the population and the army; he assessed the latter's fighting potential and portrayed prominent Romanian political and military figures; he highlighted the relationship between the allied commands fighting together against the Central Powers, a.o.

Owing to the fact that he was deeply involved in Romania's situation over 1916—1919, when he had access to the highest circles of political and military decision-making, the French General's notes are still topical, 70 years after the occurrence of events. This is all the more so as his notes tellingly attest to the endurance of the Romanian national ideal of Union, with the Romanian people making the supreme sacrifice on the battlefields of the time, to make its historical justice and legitimacy triumph. General Berthelot's diary also points to the Romanian-French brotherhood-in-arms in the First World War — a major component of the traditional, friendly ties between the two countries and peoples.

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The sections of the French General's diary recording the preparations for, the unfolding and significance of the great battle of Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz, in the summer of 1917, are of major interest for Romanian military history. As it is commonly known, those battles, which the Romanian army initially waged in cooperation with the Russian forces, sanctioned the failure of the scheme devised by the Central Powers to finally take Romania out of the war and to push on further to southern Ukraine.

The sequence of military events which took place in Romania in the summer of 1917 followed a contradictory course. At a first stage, the Romanian Higher Command planned and prepared the launching of a wide-front offensive in southern Moldavia, meant to disrupt the enemy positions and create premises for the liberation of a sizable part of the national territory that

the Central Powers had occupied the previous year. As early as May 17, 1917, General Berthelot approached the subject with General Constantin Presan, the Romanian chief of staff: "We discussed the oncoming offensive, the preparations for it, the date on which it should be scheduled, the provisions of all kinds of supplies, the precautions that should be considered against espionage, a. o."

The final decision regarding the launching of the allied offensive in southern Moldavia was adopted on July 16, 1917. The diary records that event as follows: "At noon, the King /Ferdinand, Commander-in-Chief on the Romanian front, ed. n./ convenes a war council on the projected operations; attending are Brătianu,¹ Sherbachev², Presan and myself. Brătianu disagrees with the offensive, raises several considerations and voices fears of all kinds: the allies do not attack any longer, the British intend to evacuate Macedonia, the Russians no longer advance in Galicia, the Germans are self-sufficient in point of forces, their aviation is superior and has just blown up an ammunition train, without our being able to prevent it. He is actually afraid of the Russians' conduct! I oppose his theses on purely military grounds: great distance from the other theatres of war, relatively safe conditions for the proposed initiative, weak enemy effectives in the area targeted for the attack, low enemy morale on that front, the enemy's difficulties in quickly dispatching reinforcements to the area. Everything is ready with us, and any delay would negatively bear on the action. We cannot keep the secrecy about our preparations for much longer. The Romanian troops, who are impatiently waiting, would be disappointed. Sherbachev fully agreed with me: he commands the Russian troops and asked that the attack be set for Averescu³ and Ragoza⁴ on July 24, and for Cristescu⁵ and Turikov⁶ on the 25th. The King agrees and everything is thus decided upon."

In a note dated July 20, Berthelot made a concise assessment of the overall plan for the offensive on the Romanian front against the Central Powers: "The general idea: energetic conduct of the frontal attack at the turn of the Siret river, to conquer a new position apt to cover the subsequent advance of all the troops engaged in the offensive towards Focșani, which should be launched immediately in order to push the Germans back to the mountains. As for Averescu's attack, his advance on to the mountains may result in outflanking the enemy positions along the valleys of the Putna and Șușița rivers."

Hence, the operational idea was generous, meant as it was to break the enemy front and to break it up into sections, leading to the collapse of the positions the Central Powers held between the outer angle of

the Carpathians and the Danube. The operational idea was realistically founded on the allied forces available, on the good fighting morale of the Romanian troops, which were impatient to resume the fight for the liberation of the occupied territories. The notes recording the days of the battle of Mărăști were written in the same concise and suggestive tone: on July 24, Berthelot noted that "the offensive launched by Averescu's army, carried on in the mountains, and that of the army corps on the right flank of Ragoza's army seem to unfold with success." On the following day: "The offensive launched by the Romanian Second Army corps and the Russian Eighth Army corps is successfully unfolding. They captured 17 and, respectively, 19 cannons, as well as valuable war materiel, and more than 2,000 prisoners were reported."

The first "leg" of the offensive was thus successfully under way. The Romanian Second Army continued its vigorous advance, compelling the enemy to dispatch major reserves to that area. Nevertheless, the fulfilment of the allied plan was stalled by an event that took place on July 25, 1917. Berthelot described it in his own terms: "At noon, *coup de théâtre!* General Presan tells me that a cable from Kerenski⁷ orders the cessation of all attacks and calls off any offensive. I hurry to see Sherbachev, who confirms the news. I ask him to send a cable to Kerenski to cancel the order for the Romanian front. I add that even if I were to receive such an order, at a moment like this, I would simply ignore it. Sherbachev answers that he cannot do such a thing..."

That unexpected turn of events called for the reassessment of the overall moves, which virtually meant that the initial offensive plan was dropped. General Averescu's offensive was brought to a halt, and he was only allowed to pursue his advance until he reached a position affording a stable defense, while the offensive which the Romanian First Army had launched in cooperation with the Russian Fourth Army, at the U-turn of the Siret river, was cancelled. Concomitantly, starting from the first days of August, the Romanian troops were confronted with a powerful enemy attack, deployed on the whole front. Launching the offensive along the Siret river, with a view to penetrating the defense in the Oituz pass and advancing into Moldavia, the enemy had planned a broad outflanking of the Romanian and Russian troops aligned on the front between the Carpathians and the Danube. The fierce resistance opposed to the enemy's two-pronged "tongs" was behind the historic defensive battles of Mărășești and Oituz.

Day by day, Berthelot recorded the string of events falling within the general framework that was briefly outlined above. On July 26, he recorded the situation in the

battle of Mărăști, whose compelling momentum had been arrested: "Averescu protested the halt to which his victorious troops had been forced. In this respect, I fully agree with him. He is authorized to push forth his lines up to the Putna, between Valea Sării and Negriștești, and to conquer Mt. Cașin and thus secure a better communication line with the Russian Ninth Army. He was instructed to concentrate most of his troops in the Soveja area." Another note on the Romanians' success at Mărăști, on July 27: "Averescu's growing success confirmed: another eleven cannons and 900 prisoners were added to the previous days' spoils."

On August 3, starting 5 P.M., a war council, presided over by the Romanian King, who was also Commander-in-chief on the Romanian front, was convened to change the plan for the campaign. "I also attended, together with Sherbachev and Presan, and with Averescu. Brătianu came a bit later. Sherbachev reported on the steps he had taken. The defense must be secured in northern Moldavia, and, for that purpose, an exercise army must be set up and concentrated between Roman and Pașcani. That army will be made up of the (Russian, Ed. n.) 29th, 40th, 7th and 30th Armies, as well as of the Zamurskaia Cavalry Division and the Romanian First Cavalry Division. However, as a result, the Russian Fourth Army will be dismantled and the Romanian divisions available will take over that army's front, on their own account. The decision taken in this respect: the Romanian Second Army will extend its positions to the right, taking over also the front line covered by the Russian 40th Army corps, up to the Doftana river; it reintegrates the 7th and 12th divisions; the (Romanian, Ed. n.) First Army will take up positions between Liesti and Valea Sării, taking in its subordination the Russian 8th Army corps, which makes the liaison with Averescu. It was also decided to defend each patch of Moldavia's land, and, only in case of emergency, to withdraw to Russia, with King, government and all fighting forces. Anyway, we are far from such step."

Indeed, the Romanian divisions' heroic resistance at Mărășești and Oituz obliterated the ultimate decision taken by that war council. The enemy was stopped short at Mărășești and in the Oituz valley, and the Romanian State's representative institutions continued to operate on the national territory; as for the Central Powers' offensive, it ended in a failure, which Field Marshal von Hindenburg, the German army's chief of staff, briefly recorded in his memoirs: "Attacking subsequently near Focșani, we tried to break up the Romanian front in Moldavia; our troops did not succeed in penetrating it."⁸

On August 7, Berthelot mentioned the violent clashes that had taken place at Mărășești the previous day: "The Germans attacked in force, after using a massive dose of poison gas in a violent bombing. The (Russian, Ed. n.) 34th infantry Division immediately gave ground. Finding its left flank exposed, the (Romanian, Ed. n.) 13th infantry Division also beat into retreat. The (Romanian, Ed. n.) 5th infantry Division was quickly dispatched from the bridges at Cornești to support the Russians, while the artillery of the (Romanian, Ed. n.) Ninth (Division, Ed. n.), aligned along the river banks, enfiladed the attackers. The battle is in progress. The latter two divisions are preparing a counter-offensive." On August 8, another note depicts the previous day's progress in the battle of Mărășești: "The German attacks continued all day long yesterday, concentrating on the railway. The Russian 13th Division was routed, which means that the Romanian 5th infantry Division had to engage the enemy with all its forces and means." On August 9, General Berthelot wrote down: "The fight is in progress at the gates of Mărășești. The Romanian First Army divisions gradually replace the Russian divisions. It seems that the Germans would rather engage the Russians, and their efforts are increasingly concentrated to the west. The Romanian 9th infantry Division was compelled to join the fight. A German officer, taken prisoner yesterday, stated: 'We wanted to attack the Russians and instead, we came over the French.' He alluded to the lightblue uniform of the Romanian troops. Another attack was carried out yesterday on the right flank of the (Romanian, Ed. n.) Second Army: the 7th division was forced to abandon a position overlooking the road to Groșești." Two days later, another note illustrative of the fierce fights: "The fight is still in progress at Mărășești. The Germans committed eight divisions here. The Romanians hold their ground: the 5th and 9th divisions have reported losses, yet they counter-attack and take prisoners." On August 12, Berthelot sketches the critical situation at Oituz: "yesterday the enemy conquered the commune of Slănic, now it bombs Tirgu-Ocna, threatening the railroad along the Trotuș river, a communications line of the Russian Ninth Army"; nevertheless, the following day he reports the energetic counter-offensive launched by the Romanian troops: "Vigorous counter-attacks carried out by the right flank of the (Romanian, Ed. n.) Second Army in the area of Cireșoaia and Coșna, which lead to winning back the former positions." On August 15, Berthelot also recorded that, in the neighbourhood of Panciu, Cihoski's⁹ division (the Romanian 10th infantry division, Ed. n.) stopped the German attack and completely replaced the Russian 14th infantry Division."

General Berthelot's diary further unreeis the film of the battles that were waged the following days, peicing up, sequence by sequence, the image of an all-out confrontation. His notes on August 18 and 19 depict a moment when the fight receded into a low, when peace and quiet set in. The quiet was only a lure since, on August 19, in the afternoon, "the Austrians drove the right flank of the Second Army back to Tîrgu Ocna, and the Germans took hold again of the floorboard factory on the outskirts of Mărășești, which was occupied by the (Romanian, Ed.n.) 9th infantry Division. Therefore, their offensive is not over." The information contained in the notes made the following day completes the image of the previous day's clashes, highlighting the valiant behaviour of the big Romanian units: "Yesterday was extremely harsh; after an intense artillery barrage, the Germans conquered the first lines of the (Romanian, Ed.n.) 9th Infantry Divisions, and advanced on to Răzoare forest and Hill 100. The vigorous counter-attack carried out by the 10th division and the reserve of the 13th division drove the enemy back to Satul-Nou, taking 100 prisoners. Moreover, the 9th division won back the railway station and set up its defenses along the southern outskirts of the town of Mărășești. The (Romanian, Ed.n.) Second Army also sustained a powerful attack on its right flank, from Tîrgu-Ocna, which caused a slight retreat and heavy losses, yet the front was maintained."

The finale of the battles of Mărășești and Oituz, owing to the Romanian troops' crushing victory, was reported in a note dated August 22, 1917: "Fights waged by the First and Second Armies, without considerable advantage on one side or the other. I received a telegram from our War

Minister¹⁰: the French army congratulates the Romanian army for its beautiful actions at Mărășești and Mărăști. Going to tell Preșan about it."

General Berthelot's daily annotations abound with the reverberating names of the Romanian victories in the summer of 1917, names of military commanders, and words of praise for the entire Romanian army, an army that carved its way into legend in that deadly clash with the enemy at the gates of Moldavia, writing down its motto: "No trespassing!"

Text and notes presented and selected by Major MIHAIL E. IONESCU, D. Hist.

* *The French General's diary records daily events throughout the First World War, a (typed) copy of those notes being preserved in the archives of the Hoover Institution for War, Peace and Revolution in Stanford — Cal., in the USA.*

1 Ion I. C. Brătianu, Chairman of Romania's Council of Ministers.

2 D. G. Sherbachev, Russian General, Deputy Commander-in-Chief on the Romanian front.

3 Alexandru Averescu, general, Commander of the Romanian Second Army.

4 A. I. Ragoza, Russian general, Commander of the Russian Fourth Army.

5 Constantin Christescu, general, Commander of the Romanian First Army (July 30-August, 12, 1917).

6 Turikov, Russian general, Commander of the Russian Sixth Army.

7 A. F. Kerenski, head of Russia's provisional government.

8 Von Hindenburg, *Aus Meinem Leben* (Ma Vie), Paris, 1921, p. 244.

9 Henri Cihoski, general, Commander of the Romanian 10th Infantry Division.

10 Paul Painlevé, war minister in the French government in the summer of 1917.

Front cover: Making the Attack (reproduction after a painting by Em. Lăzărescu)

Back cover: On watch in the trenches at Mărășești (a photograph of that time)

Ready anytime to defend Socialist Romania

● 1914—1918. Der erste Weltbrand stört den Weltfrieden ● Rumänien während dem ersten Weltkrieg ● Das europäische politische und militärische Bündnissystem am Ende des XIX-ten Jahrhunderts und Anfang des XX-ten Jahrhunderts ● Kriegführende Streitkräfte, Feldzugpläne, Kriegszustand ● Zwei historische Entscheidungen für die Rumänen: 21 Juli/3 August 1914 und 14/27 August 1916 ● Bezeugungen ● Die rumänische militärische Feldzugplan ● Der Feldzug des Jahres 1917 auf der rumänischen Front ● Rumänien in dem Befreiung = und Nationalergänzungs Krieg Chronologische merkmale ● Die rumänische militärische Anstrengung während den Jahren 1916—1918 ● Das internationale Echo der Teilnahme Rumäniens an dem ersten Weltkrieg ● Rumänische militärische strategie = und Taktik-elemente während den erstem Weltbrand ● Die militärischen Klausel der Friedensverträge von Paris (1919—1920) ● Grundlegende Wahrheiten der Nationalengeschichte. Die Befreiung den Uralt = und Ständigzusammenlebendem rumänischen Gebiete, die sich unter der Oppression der österreich-ungarische Monarchie befanden, grundsätzliches Objekt der rumänischen Teilnahme an den ersten Weltkrieg ● Grundlagen den rumänischen Militärdoktrin ● Der Widerstandskampfes rumänischen Volker in das vom Feind zeitweilig besetzte Gebiet ● Grosse Kommandanten ● Der General-oberst Constantin Christescu, der General-feldmarschall J.J.C. Joffre ● Grosse Schächete ● Tannenberg, Verdun, Mărășești ● Die Denkmäler des Kampfes ● Das Fernrohrtelemeter „Oberst V. Ionescu“ ● Unglaublich aber wahr. Das revizionistische Program der Horthyregierung ● Das Geschichtsbuch ● Memoiren: Berthelot ●

● 1914—1918. La première conflagration mondiale trouble la paix du monde ● La Roumanie pendant les années de la première conflagration mondiale ● Le système des alliances politiques et militaires européennes à la fin du XIXe siècle et au début du XXe siècle ● Forces belligérantes, plans de campagne, état de guerre ● Deux décisions historiques pour les Roumains: 21 juillet/ 3 août 1914 et 14/27 août 1916 ● Témoignages ● Le plan de la campagne militaire roumaine ● La campagne de 1917 sur le front roumain ● La Roumanie pendant la guerre de libération et pour l'achèvement de l'union nationale. Repères chronologiques ● L'effort militaire roumain entre 1916—1918 ● L'écho international de la participation de la Roumanie dans la première guerre mondiale ● Éléments de stratégie et de tactique militaire roumaine dans la première conflagration mondiale ● Les stipulations militaires des traités de paix de Paris (1919—1920) ● Vérités fondamentales de l'histoire nationale. La libération des anciens et permanents territoires roumains qui se trouvaient sous l'oppression de la monarchie autrichienne-hongroise, l'objectif principal de la participation de la Roumanie dans la première guerre mondiale ● Fondements de la doctrine militaire roumaine. La lutte de résistance du peuple roumain dans le territoire temporairement occupé par l'ennemi ● Grands commandants. Le général Constantin Christescu, le maréchal J.J.C. Joffre ● Grandes batailles. Tannenberg, Verdun, Mărășești ● Monuments du combat. Le Mausolée de Mărășești ● Les jumelles-télémetre „colonel V. Ionescu“ ● Incroyable mais vrai. Le programme révisionniste du régime horthyste ● Le livre d'histoire ● Mémoires: Berthelot ●

● 1914—1918. Первая мировая война мутит мир на земле ● Румыния во время первой мировой войны ● Европейская система военно-политических союзов в конце XIX века и в начале XX века ● Воюющие стороны, военные планы, военное положение ● Два решения исторического значения для румын: 21 июля/3 августа 1914 г. и 14/27 августа 1916 г. ● Доказательства ● План румынской военной кампании ● Кампания 1917 года на румынском фронте ● Румыния во время войны освобождения и национального воссоединения. Хронологические данные ● Румынское военное усилие в 1916 — 1918 гг. ● Международный отклик участия Румынии в первой мировой войне ● Элементы румынской военной стратегии и тактики в первой мировой войне ● Военные условия Парижских мирных договоров (1919—1920) ● Коренные истины национальной истории. Освобождение территорий древнего и постоянного существования находящихся под игом австро-венгерского королевства, главная цель участия Румынии в первой мировой войне ● Основы румынской военной доктрины. Борьба сопротивления румынского народа во временно оккупированной врагом территории ● Великие военачальники. Генерал Константин Кристеску, маршал Ж.Ж.К. Жоффр ● Крупные битвы. Танненберг, Вердун, Мэрэшешть ● Памятники борьбы. Мавзолей Мэрэшешть ● Бинокулярно-номер «Полковник В. Ионеску» ● Невероятно, но... верно. Ревизионистская программа хорватского режима ● Книга по истории ● Мемуары. Бертоло ●



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