

Romanian-Soviet Relations 1917-1934

Our interest in the *Romanian-Soviet Relations 1917-1934* arose from the need to clarify certain empirical causalities and to obtain a response to the existentialism of the Communist period. Of course, many scientific papers have been devoted to this topic, but we consider that some are too narrow in their approach, others incomplete or biased, due to the historical period in which they were written, bearing the seal of different political or ideological influences.

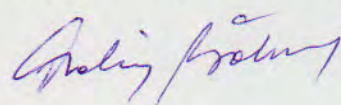
In our demarche, we were interested in clarifying the emergence of the Communist regime, starting from its origins, through the victory of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia on 25 October/ 7 November 1917. At that time, Romania was involved in the National Reconstruction War and had the Russian Bolshevik Army as an ally. And how, then, the intention of revolution export turned Romania into a real iceberg in the way of Bolshevism infiltration and expansion, our country became the enemy of the new Soviet State. By the Decree of the People's Commissars on 13/26 January 1918, the Soviet Russia unilaterally declared the breaking of diplomatic relations with Romania, confiscating the Romanian Treasure deposited in Moscow in December 1916 and July 1917, with the (never kept) promise that it will be given back to the Romanians in its entirety. Subsequently, the issue of the Treasure, as well as that of Bessarabia's union with Romania through the Country Council's decision on 27 March 1918 (O.S.), a political act never recognized by the Soviets, were the dominant points of the Romanian-Soviet frictions.

For a thorough analysis and better understanding of the interdependence of certain historical events, we considered it necessary not to disregard the creation of the Third Communist International (1919), the other level of Soviet policy, which included subversive actions, through which they had aimed to undermining the Romanian national unitary state.

All considerations up mentioned marched, then, for 16 years, until 1934, the attempts to normalize the relations between Romania and USSR. This was a long and difficult process, with far-reaching consequences with that we are still facing today, a process that we was trying to decipher in the present work, also taking into account the direct or indirect implications of the international context of the time.

By the mode of approach of the theme we tried to give it a note of originality, inspired even from the research process and highlighted in the very structure of the paper, systematized in 11 chapters.

However, mention must be made that in order to make the transition to the research topic, we considered it necessary to make the evolution of the politico-diplomatic and military



events prior to 1917, which we synthesized in *Prolegomena*. By their chronological rendering, apart from a good understanding of the facts, we avoid invoking them during the work, when the context would impose it.

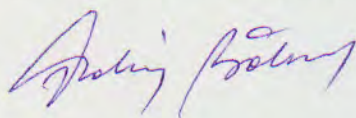
Thus, Chapter I of the thesis approaches *The way of Romanian-Russian cooperation in the coalition of forces in Entente during 1917, until the victory of the Bolshevik revolution*. We implicitly expound on the military, political and diplomatic consequences of this cooperation.

Chapter II deals with *The establishing of Soviet power in Russia on 25 October/ 7 November 1917 and its repercussions on relations with the Romanian as an allied country*. This part of the paper details the deterioration of the Romanian-Soviet relations, especially after the implementation of the *Decree on Peace*, immediately after the victory of the Bolshevik regime, which generated the signing of the separate truces with the Central Powers, from Brest-Litovsk (USSR) and Focșani/ Braila (Romania); the diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Romania have been broken off on 13/26 January 1918, with serious repercussions: the seizure of the Romanian Treasure in Moscow and the expulsion of the Romanian Legation from Petrograd.

In fact, the main cause of Soviet dissatisfaction at that time were the events in Bessarabia. This, on the principle of the right a people to self-determination (acclaimed, otherwise, by the Bolshevik regime), has proclaimed its autonomy and independence, thus creating the premises of the union with Romania. Subsequently, this will become a further object of dispute and negotiations in the Romanian-Soviet relations, especially by invoking the "Averescu-Rakovsky" Agreement.

Chapter III presents *The Treaty of Bucharest - a "Pax Germanica" - the consequences of The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk*. As one can infer from the title itself, in the spring of 1918, Romania signed a peace treaty with the Central Powers, due to the unilateral exit of the Russian/Soviet allied forces from the war. Surpassing the difficult conditions imposed by the Central Powers through the Treaty of Bucharest, Romania had the chance to declare it null and void after reentering itself in the war on the side of Allies and after the surrender of the Central Powers, on 11 November 1918. At the same time, we made references also to the process of achieving the national unity of the Romanians, in this context highlighting the fight against the Hungarian Bolshevism for the defense and consolidation of the Romanian national unitary state.

In order to reproduce the events contained in the above mentioned chapters and to give them the originality note, we used of the Fund of General Berthelot's archive, respectively his diary, which is in the Central National Historical Archives. These data were interwoven with



documentary sources from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archive, E2-P2 World War I Fund; the Petrograd Fund; from General Constantin Coanda, Head of the Romanian Military Mission at Stavka, and especially from the Archives of the Ministry of National Defense (The Great General Quartier). Same years ago, capitalizing on such documentation, two collections of documents were published: Vasile Popa, *General Coanda's Mission to Stavka (1916-1917)*, Military Publishing House, Bucharest, 2010; Vasile Popa, Ion Cerăceanu, Vasilica Manea, *General Coanda's Mission in Kiev (1917-1918)*, Military Publishing House, Bucharest, 2012.

Chapter IV, *The Versailles System - a means of international regulation of post-war peace and support for the Romanian interest in the deterioration of the Romanian-Soviet relations* is centered upon the efforts of the Romanian diplomats at the Paris Peace Conference to acknowledge the union of Bessarabia and Romania within an international legal framework (the Paris Treaty on 28 October 1920), as well as the regulation of other pending issues, in relation with breaking of Russia's diplomatic relations to Romania. The main issues were, of course, the Romanian Treasure in Moscow and the return of Transylvanian and Bucovinian volunteers from Russia. This chapter also deals with the Romanian diplomatic concerns to consolidate the political and territorial *status quo* established by the Versailles system, against the revisionist tendencies, mainly of ones the Soviet, namely obtaining ratification the Treaty of Paris by signatory states and to establish defensive alliances in the early 1920s. Obviously, for this our own documentation was made on the basis of primary sources, mainly from the Archives of the Ministry of National Defense, the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the Fund of Little Entente) and the Central National Historical Archives etc.

By the title: *Diplomatic approaches for the normalization of the Romanian-Soviet relations in the first part of the '20s of the interwar period*, Chapter V presents the negotiations between Romania government and Soviet government, from 1920 until 1924, for settling misunderstandings and resuming the diplomatic relations. We considered the following negotiations: Copenhagen (February-March 1920) and London (May 1920-February 1921); The White Fortress, referring to the of Dniester's Liman (9-22 July 1921); Warsaw (22-25 October, 1921), Genoa from 10 April to 19 May 1922; Hague (15 June-20 July, 1922); Moscow (30 November-12 December, 1922); Lausanne (20 November 1922-24 July 1923) and Vienna (27 March-2 April 1924).

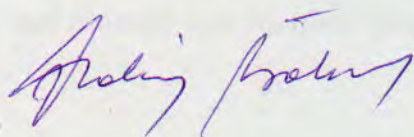
In order to objectively analyse the stand points of the delegations that dealt this the issue, we used information mainly from direct sources, from specific archive funds. We shall not specify them all here because they can be found in the footnotes and the bibliography of

the thesis. However, from the multitude of archive sources, for the usefulness and originality of some information, we must remember by the USSR Fund, in Archive of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, that proved to be particularly useful and original. In this respect, we would like to mention Dan Geblescu's unpublished study on the Romanian-Soviet relations between 1917 and 1937; (volume no. 137/1917-1937). This comparat and completed with a similar source (volume no. 132), but by also other documents, we was able to accurately follow the chronology of the events of this period, thus directing our attention to some facts that otherwise could have gone unnoticed. We would also like to point out the "Vaida-Voevod" Fund from the Central National Historical Archives. We highlight this because in many historical works the fund was overlooked, which led to a lapidary prezentation of the beginning the Romanian-Soviet negotiations (1920).

At the same time, we would like to emphasize that from many edited sources used, some of them being from Russian istoriografical, we had synthesized important informations from the volume: *The Romanian-Soviet Relations. Documents, vol. I, 1917-1934*, Encyclopaedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1999, issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, as well as in other sources.

We have also tried to treat the Romanian-Soviet relations of that period in the international context, and when it was necessary we case of presenting in parallel the official and nd informal politics of the R.S.F.S.R./U.S.S.R., because only in this context we can pencil objectively the events in question.

Chapter VI of the paper, deals about *The Third International and the subversive policy of U.S.S.R towards Greater Romania (in the first half of the 1920s)*. In addition to general treatment of origin, methods of action, etc., the note of originality is given to him by valorisation for the first time in Romania, of a special documentary fund from the National Military Museum Archive. This is about the fund that show the activity of the Third Army Corps Command in Bessarabia, under Major-General Nicolae Rujinski's command. This army corps along side other military formations, defended the eastern border of our country against the subversive actions of Soviet Russia, especially after the establishing of the Third International. Until 1921, together with the soldiers under his command, General Rujinski stopped the penetration and spreading of Bolshevism in Romania, defending the Romanian national state, despite poor living conditions and reduced military endowment. The informations in this fund are completed with the images of an album in the archives of the National Military Museum, of the same period, particularly interesting and so untapped to

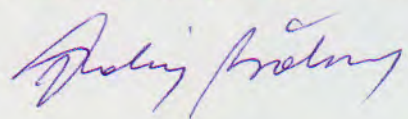


date, even titled: *For the King and Greater Romania at Dniester against Bolshevism* (inventory no. 380).

This part of study is original because we examined and some Soviet documents from the Comintern archive, which were brought to Bucharest from Russia and are now in the Central National Historical Archives, making the fund of Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party [or P.C. (from) Romania], Foreign Policy. These documents come from the Third International, which implemented the USSR policy and contain instructions for the subordinated Communist organs; they clearly reflect the relations of Romanian Communists with the Soviet higherechelons, as well the servitude towards them, since all instructions were precisely carried out. This resulted in various subversive actions aimed at destroying the Romanian state and transforming it into a Soviet Republic.

Chapter VII, *Romania and "The International Entente against of The Third International"* (in short: *Î.I.c.I.₃*) is an original contribution because capitalizes the fund with the title homonym, from the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The 20 volumes in this fund contain various documents, brochures, newsletters, 80% of them written in French, plus others written in Russian, English, German, Romanian, etc. We have not extensively dealt with this interesting source, but we have signalled its existence with the intention to investigate it in a further work. In the present study, however, we referred to the information about the efficiency of this organization, focusing on the Romanian contribution and benefits resulted from the good cooperation with *Î.I.c.I.₃*. This fund is really interesting to explore in order to understand the international efforts to prevent the rise of Bolshevism, by encouraging the right-wing political regimes (Hitler, Mussolini) through the secret relations maintained with them by the *Î.I.c.I.₃* leader. This fact was also emphasized by the former American diplomat and spy Allen Welsh Dulles in his work (eg: *The Craft of Intelligence: America's legendary spy master on the fundamentals of intelligence gathering for a free world*, Guilford, CT: The Lyons Press, 2006). He was aware of the situation in Romania, because in World War I he had accomplished missions in Hungary and the Balkans. Together with his brother, Allen Dulles opened a bank in Geneva, where the *Î.I.c.I.₃* headquarters was located. He met by the President of the The International Entente, Théodore Aubert, through whom he subsequently meet Hitler. Allen Dulles claims that the rationale behind the Marshall Plan was to overcome the expansion of communism (Allen Welsh Dulles and Michael Wala, *The Marshall Plan*, Providence, RI: Berg, 1993).

Chapter VIII deals with *The Romanian-Soviet relations in correlation to the purpose of the League of Nations to maintain the Versailles statu-quo through the policy of disarmament and peacekeeping*. Apart from the fact that the chapter deals with the



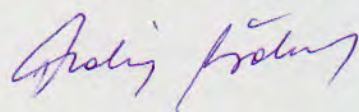
normalization of the Romanian-Soviet relations, the originality of this chapter is given by the way of dealing with the official and unofficial policy of the USSR. towards with Romania, in the early 1930s, by detailing of the Romanian-Soviet relations under two aspects. For this we have consulted documents obtained by Romania through various diplomatic channels and we have systematized them in the subchapters: The Imminence of the Soviet Attack on Romania in the early '30s - apprehension or reality? (see 7.4) and Romania and USSR between the spectrum of war and diplomacy in the early '30s (see 7.5).

The same note of originality is given also by the presentation of subchapter: *The Romanian and Soviet Military Potential - as a means of security in relation to the "Draft Convention on Reduction and Limitation of Armaments" of the Disarmament Conference*. This investigation helps us understand the difference between USSR official declarations and actual actions regarding disarmament, within the international framework at that time, when countries were interested in maintaining peace and stability. As a consequence, result the attitude that Romania had to taken to strengthen its defense and security system, given the threats of war coming from the eastern border.

We have could conducted our research only after receiving permission to study the special disarmament documents in the Ministry of National Defence Archives, coming from the funds: The Supreme Council of National Defence and The Armed Forces General Staff. Despite the difficulty to gain access to such documents, our endeavour was finally successful.

Chapter IX, *The World Economic Crisis and the role of Soviet dumping in the threat to Romanian security (1929-1933)* approaches the Romanian-Soviet relations during the *pyatiletka* and *dumping* Soviet, as this is considered "the reddest era in the history of Red Russia". The exacerbation of Soviet dumping has given rise to international convulsions; for Romania it has deepened the economic crisis and increased the Soviet subversive pressure, with inevitable social and political consequences.

It could not be conceput without the use of archival sources emanating primarily from the USSR, from The Third International, through the orders given to its Balkan structures and the Romanian Communist Party, documents today preservation in the especially Fund of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, from the National Historical Central Archives. This contain orders concerning the destruction of the Romanian Armed Forces and other social segments with an equally important role in defending the country against the Soviet expansionary tendencies. Some of these documents are listed in the Appendix. We further refered to Soviet sources at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, obtained through various Legations of friendly nations. We presented these documents in extenso throughout the thesis or in the Appendix, as necessary. Our intention was to accurately render the historical events,



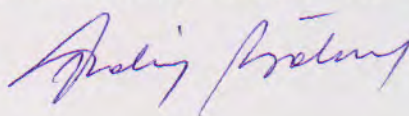
because we discovered that the same information was cited from one work to another and over time it diminished its original meaning due to improper copying or misinterpretation.

Chapter X approaches *The Process of normalizing Romanian-Soviet relations*, with special reference to the diplomatic actions taken between 1932 and 1934. Some historical events we talk about in this chapter are well-known, being dealt with in many other historical works. I make reference to *The Convention for the Definition of Aggression from London, in 3-4 July 1933* (see 10.5) or the *Normalization of the Romanian-Soviet Relations, on 9 June 1934* (see 10.5). However, we consider that this chapter also presents news about the diplomatic steps to normalize the Romanian-Soviet relations, especially through Poland and France, but also through Turkey. All this clearly illustrates how Romania has understood to defend its interests, which can be a lesson for present and future. Then, reiterating the beliefs of Nicolae Titulescu, the great Romanian diplomat, on respecting and interpreting the norms of international law in terms becoming the emergence of the Romanian-Soviet relations, we thought of them like as possible ways, with validity in time and space, for the claims which Romania still has to made from Russia.

We consider our approach is not devoid of the originality note since we analyse the events within the international context of that time, relying on information collected from the archives of The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the same funds from the Ministry of National Defence referred to above. Another original part of this chapter is our analysis of Romania's efforts to convince other countries, such as USA, to acknowledge its union with Bessarabia. These facts are significant because, despite the normalization of the Romanian-Soviet relations in 1934, the Treaty of Paris (28 October 1920) has never been ratified by Japan, and USSR has never acknowledged Romania's sovereignty over Bessarabia, and a big part of the Thesaurus Romanian was had remaine in Moscow.

In the last section of this chapter, *Romanian security measures after the resumption of Romanian-Soviet relations*, we analyse *in extenso* the rush with which the relations between the two states were normalized. We discovered that certain Romanian players, responsible for the process, were taken by surprise; this can be seen in the process of elaborating the measures imposed for ensuring security.

Chapter XI, *The reverberations of the Romanian-Soviet relations between 1917-1934; Reflections in recent history*. We think this chapter is undoubtedly original and added as a new contribution to historiography. If in the previous parts of the thesis we conducted archive research and investigated other works on the same topic, in this chapter on recent history, we used electronic sources by accessing the sites of official institutions from Romania (Presidency, Parliament) and from abroad, *i.e.* Russia, Ukraine, USA, or the site of the



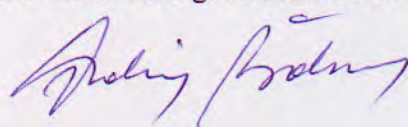
Parliamentary Assembly of the European Union. In connection with this issue, it is worth mentioning the appearance *The Romanian Treasure in Moscow* (Univers Enciclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2014) by Professor Ioan Scurtu, PhD, in which the author talks about his personal experience within the Romanian-Soviet joint commission.

In search of originality we used many and various sources. We wanted to have a different approach from the historical works on the same topic, which were either influenced by the political regimes at the time of their publishing, or by the fact that their authors, to after the Revolution of December '89, could not gain access to documents since these were classified, like the military documents we have mentioned. And, because in the period under investigation, wasn't normal relations between Romania and the USSR, the information available in Romania — from and about Soviet Russia — was obtained through various diplomatic channels, through the representatives of friendly nations in USSR or in Bucharest.

Therefore, obtaining information about U.R.S.S. vis-à-vis Romania, required the study of numerous documents obtained from the Romanian Foreign Affairs through the various Romanian Legations in the amicaly and friendly countries. Evidently, this required long time documentation. However, we must confess that our scientific endeavour would not have been successful without the support of outstanding personalities who, at one point or another, were in charge with the most important archival institutions in Romania. We express our deep gratitude to these people.

Since original documents are of paramount importance for researching historical truth, we included 60 Appendices in a separate volume (Volume I) to supplement basic information.

Mention must be made that in order to better understand some of the historical events presented in the thesis, we sometimes lingered over some of the documents, transliterated and adapted them to the given context. We have done so especially with sources related to Communist ideology, to the organization of the Communist Party in Romania, with the reports that their representatives forwarded to higher echelons of the Balkan Communist Federation or to the Third International. Perhaps it would have been easier to offer a simple synthesis of these sources, to simply mention or include them in Chapter "Appendices", as it is often the case in the speciality literature. Nonetheless, we considered that our interpretation only is not enough to feed the curiosity of any reader of this work, more or less knowledgeable. Therefore, we took this approach for a better understanding of the historical phenomenon in question, especially due to the fact that those who have put the communist ideology into practice were renowned for their the "wooden" language. We did the same thing in the case of the documents that prove how remarkable were Romanian diplomats, such as I.Gh. Duca, Nicolae Titulescu, etc., when have upheld Romanian interests and rights over USSR claims.

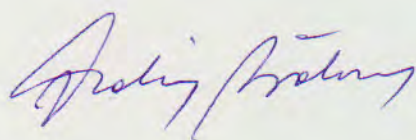


Furthermore, we have integrated such documents into the context of the research topic for a better understanding of the diplomatic approaches in Romanian-Soviet relations, and to serve as a diplomatic guide for those who wish to learn from the lessons of the past.

Another category of sources that we have used were electronic sources. Due to computer technology, we were able to obtain data from remote areas, from important libraries and archives worldwide: USA, Russia, England, France, Italy, Australia, etc. Not many years ago, researchers' access to such sources was much more difficult, mainly for financial reasons – the expenses for travelling and studying abroad.

Our thesis is also original through the use of the pictures we have included in the Pictorial, systematized in Volume II. We have selected these pictures mainly from the heritage of the National Military Museum, where I am employed. Out of these sources we would like to highlight the following albums: *For King and Greater Romania at Dniester against Bolshevism* (inventory no. 380); *Pages of Glory. From Tisza to Budapest* (inventory no.633); *The Romanian Legionars through Russia to Vladivostok* (inventory no. 146); *Comrade Stalin on the Front of the Civil War 1918-1920*, coordinator Varvara Stepanova, Moscow, 1938 (inventory no. 244). We added them other pictures, from the "Original Pictures" Collection, but also some on testimonies of memoirism and monumentalism e.t. To all these, we have added electronic sources that successfully supplement the basic information; we have thus gathered 336 (mostly color) pictures. Most probably because of my job as a curator, I see pictures as true witnesses of an era, since they can capture a spark in an individual's experience or can offer the elements for recreate the features of an atmosphere. So, the imagery helps us to draw the traits of some personalities, introduces us to specific places where important decisions have been made for the time to which we refer. The information thus obtained is elucidatory as regards historical facts or phenomena, and it provides the necessary elements for a possible reconstitution in cultural-scientific purposes.

Therefore, the visual representations included in this study besides consolidating our knowledge in the field, they can also be used as probatory arguments of the relevant historical information, both of the diplomatic and political, military, social, economic, and other life. Moreover, images reveal how different political ideologies and orientations have influenced certain international relations in the period under investigation, as well as how all these have influenced the various artistic creations which, in turn, became the source and means of propaganda. Therefore, pictures help us understand the mentality and spirit of a certain age, keeping political messages alive in our collective memory. Thus, the images in this study actually become (visual) documents concerning the Romanian-Soviet relations between 1917 and 1934.



Through all the above, we did not think of doing a philosophy of the history of the Romanian-Soviet relations in the temporal margin treated, but we intended to present the events that took place through the nature of the Romanian-Soviet relations, a comprehensive treaty of the theme, in accordance with the new concept of *cultural history*, having the freedom of an objective interpretation, unencumbered by any ideological or other constraint. Only from this perspective we can have a real and overall picture of what has generated and characterized the Romanian-Soviet relations during the analyzed period. Through such rendering we hope that the objectivity and use of original sources in this study will enrich and expand the historiography on the Romanian-Soviet relations between 1917 and 1934. Over time, the reverberations of the Romanian-Soviet relations between 1917 and 1934 could make us believe that the phrase „back to the future” (belonging to the political scientist and American professor John Mearsheimer) is justified [see Joseph S. Nye (Jr.), *Understanding International Conflicts: An Introduction to Theory and History*, translator Ion Vlădoiu, ANTET XX PRESS Publishing House, Filipeștii de Târg, Prahova 2005, p. 48).

From this perspective, we consider that our research topics are highly important in the context of the political-military and social turmoil beyond the eastern Romanian border, or in the context of the similar convulsions in the Middle East, with various transnational implications and consequences.

Therefore, it is necessary to explore the nature of Soviet Russia's policy during the period under analysis, in relation to Romania's national interests, so as to better understand its levers, its low and high tide, especially now that we are facing the challenges of globalization and the new geostrategic realities across the border of our country. In particular we, Romanians, should take interest in this field of research because through the legacy of generations, historically speaking, it is necessary to find a logical solution to the problems of the past, in terms of a historic reparation regarding Bessarabia and the Romanian Thesaur.

