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Foreword

Vladimir Jarmolenko

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Lithuania and Romanian lands entered into relations, according to the existing data, since Middle Ages. During that period both states were interested in strengthening their power, in self-determination and in increasing their influence in Europe. Since the 14th century there was a strong influence of the Great Duchy of Lithuania and latter on of the Lithuanian – Polish Union over Moldova. In the second half of the 15th century there were signed treaties between Stefan the Great, head of Moldova, and Cazimir IV, the Great Duke of Lithuania.

After a long period of events, our nations restarted to have diplomatic relations, in the context of a newly declared independent Lithuania (1918). Relations were not simple and transparent and the dialogue remained rather occasional. It was a difficult period for both states, as it was for many other European nations. Both countries started to be diplomatically represented, even if that was done from Prague for Lithuania, by Dovas Zaunis since 1924 and later on, since 1935 until the Soviet occupation, by Edvardas Turauskas, and from Riga in case of Romania, by Constantin Valimarescu, starting with 1935.

The diplomatic relations between Romania and Lithuania were interrupted after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed. Lithuania disappeared from the map of Europe. The Pact determined the course of events in the European history for the following years. On August 23 and September 28, 1939 Nazi Germany and USSR signed two secret protocols that determined Lithuania's fate for the next 50 years. The names of our countries – Romania and Lithuania, were unfortunately included in the short text of the secret Protocol attached to the Treaty. As such, the 1st article of the secret protocol mentions that “in the event of a territorial and political rearrangement in the areas belonging to the Baltic States (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the northern boundary of Lithuania shall represent the boundary of the spheres of influence of Germany and USSR. In this connection the interest of Lithuania in the Vilna area is recognized by each party”. The 3rd article mentions that “with regard to South-eastern Europe attention is called by the Soviet side to its interest in Bessarabia. The German side declares its complete political lack of interest in these areas”.

Afterwards “our” historians and History kept quiet about the agreement for 50 years until the documents of the Nazi Germany and communist Soviet Union became researchers' fortune. The occupation was officially recognized as a crime and the “disappeared” Lithuania came back on the map of Europe and of the world. Fortunately, the History cannot be forced to keep silent or to tell lies for a long period of time.

There was another 20 years needed for the historians of our countries to “opening forgotten histories” of the bilateral relations between Lithuania and Romania. Thanks to an enthusiastic person, Dr. Silviu Miloiu, attracted by the history and research of the relations of the Nordic and Baltic countries, there was established, along with a group of hard working young Romanian historians, the Romanian Association of Baltic and Nordic Studies. The same group of people organized in May 2010 at the “Valahia” University of Târgoviște the First International Conference on Nordic and Baltic Studies in Romania called “Romania and Lithuania in the Interwar International Relations: Bonds, Intersections and Encounters”.

The papers included into this number of the magazine were presented at the above-mentioned conference. The period referred to in the papers is that comprised between the two world wars, while each author focuses on specific issues, such as, for example, the establishment of the political and diplomatic relations between Lithuania and Romania, as does D. Bukelevičiūtė and F. Anghel, or on Nicolae Titulescu’s new Eastern Policy and Romania’s diplomatic ties with Lithuania, about which writes S. Miloiu. E. Dragomir makes a comparison between Romania and Lithuania and their development characteristics, considering that both states were a periphery of Europe. N. Babinskas looks at the H. Stahl’s conception of Historical Sociology and the Bucharest School of Sociology. The representative of Iasi School of History B. Schipor writes about the Polish-Lithuanian crisis of March 1938. R. Kraujelis deals with Romania and Lithuania as part of the Allied-USSR fateful wartime agreements. I. Cazacu focuses on the situation of the Second Corps of the Romanian Volunteers in Russia and their encounters with their Lithuanian, other Baltic and Czechoslovak fellows. This number of the magazine is especially important because is the first such a collection of research papers about the bilateral relations between Lithuania and Romania.

Going back to the development of the relations between our countries, I would like to mention that on the occasion of the conference a Memorandum of Understanding between the Embassy of Lithuania and “Valahia” University was signed and a similar Memorandum between the Faculty of History of the Vilnius University and the Faculty of Humanities of the “Valahia” University will follow.

During the official visit of the Romanian president Traian Băsescu to Lithuania, that took place on July 14, 2010, it was mentioned that the collaboration of the Lithuanian and Romanian historians should be raised up at a higher level, that of Academies of Science, a dimension that would facilitate common projects. I express the hope in realising that in the nearest future.

For the beginning there were done quite many things. There are planned to be published the first “History of Lithuania” in Romanian language, as well as a volume of Romanian and Lithuanian diplomatic documents.

I question myself what will follow and in the same time I express the confidence that the collaboration will continue.

WAN LIGHT OF LITHUANIA IN BUCHAREST. THE SOURCES OF A NON-DECLARED DIVORCE (1918- 1926)

Florin Anghel

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This paper has been presented at the First International Conference on Nordic and Baltic Studies in Romania: *Romania and Lithuania in the Interwar International Relations: Bonds, Intersections and Encounters* hosted by the Romanian Association for Baltic and Nordic Studies, Târgoviste, May 19-21, 2010.

Abstract:

Between the Acts of Union and, respectively, of Independence of 1918 and 1926 Romania and Lithuania shared no strategic interests or common regional politics. Although the Bucharest diplomacy insistently asked Warsaw to debate over its Baltic policy, at the end the Romanian-Polish anti-Soviet alliance became one of the most important pieces of so-called "cordon sanitaire" geopolitics, which included Baltic and Black Seas regions countries, but no Lithuania. Both states became locked in cold relations with no contacts and no recognition (until August 1924), which was due to regional politics, but contrary to common interests. The diplomatic relations, officially opened in August 1924, lacked any practical political consequences. The Kaunas coup d'état of December 1926 had little political and media impacts in Bucharest and, in the rarely definitions of Antanas Smetona new nationalist regime, most of Romanians condemned it (contrary with their attitude towards the coup d'état of Warsaw in May 1926). It was only in the last half of the '30s that between Bucharest and Kaunas new avenues in bilateral relations had opened, the impact of the fortunate decision of foreign minister Nicolae Titulescu in 1934 to create a Romanian Legation to cover Lithuania.

Rezumat:

În perioada dintre Declarația de Unire care constituia România Mare și Declarația de Independență care punea bazele statului independent al Lituaniei (1918) și anul 1926, atunci când în Lituania lua sfârșit regimul democratic, România și Lituania nu au împărtășit interese strategice sau politici regionale comune. În ciuda faptului că diplomația de la București a cerut insistent Varșoviei să discute împreună politica sa baltică, în cele din urmă alianța antisovietică româno-poloneză a devenit una dintre cele mai importante piese în geopoliticile așa-

numitei "cordon sanitaire", care includea țările din regiunile Mării Baltice și Mării Negre, dar nu și Lituania. Ambele state au rămas închistate în relații reci fără a avea contacte între ele și fără a-și acorda recunoaștere reciprocă (până în august 1924). Aceasta se datora politicilor regionale, dar era împotriva intereselor comune. Relațiile diplomatice, stabilite oficial în august 1924, au fost lipsite de orice consecințe practice. Lovitura de stat de la Kaunas din decembrie 1926 a avut un impact minor în mediul politic și în mass-media și, în rarele abordări ale noului regimul naționalist al lui Antanas Smetona, cei mai mulți dintre români l-au condamnat (în mod contrar atitudinii lor față de lovitura de stat de la Varșovia din mai 1926). Abia în a doua jumătate a anilor '30 s-au deschis noi contacte și legături între București și Kaunas, ca o consecință a deciziei fericite a ministrului de externe Nicolae Titulescu din 1934 de a constitui o legăție românească destinată să supervizeze evoluțiile din Lituania.

Keywords: Romania, Lithuania, regional politics, non-recognition, coup d'état

1. Nothing about the Baltic without Poland

The interwar Romanian diplomacy had missed almost all instruments of analysis and verification of information and expertise offered by the allied capitals in terms of major European geopolitical spaces. In the '30s and '40s of the 20th century, but even later on, the North - with the Scandinavian countries - and the North-East - with the three Baltic republics that became independent in 1918 - were not the major concern for the objectives and strategies of Bucharest. Usually, Paris and Warsaw offered not only their full reports on the internal policies of these spaces (which they of course interpreted in the light of their own interests) but especially they showed inflexible attitudes and directions, unequivocally, with respect to the regional policy solutions. And often France and Poland had insisted that Romania subordinates its Scandinavian and Baltic weak contacts to a regional complex, aiming to the relationships with / towards Germany and /or Soviet Russia / USSR.¹

¹ A unified and original approach on the development of the Romanian diplomacy in this context at Silviu Miloiu, *România și țările baltice în perioada interbelică* (Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2003). Miloiu, „Some Aspects of the Military Cooperation in the Border States Area in the First Half of the 1920s”, in *România și sistemele de securitate din Europa, 1919-1975*, ed. Ioan Ciupercă, Bogdan-Alexandru Schipor and Dan Constantin Măță (Iasi: Editura Universitatii Alexandru Ioan Cuza, 2009), 65-79; Miloiu, „Exploring the Newborn in-between Europe: Romania, The Baltic States and the Concept of Collective Security During the 1920s,” *Valahian Journal of Historical Studies* 1 (2004): 62-73. From the Romanian perspective, in addition: Florin Anghel, *Construirea sistemului "cordon sanitaire". Relații româno- polone, 1919-1926*, second edition, (Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2008); Anghel, „Polish Influences on the Baltic Demarches of Romanian Diplomacy, 1920-1930”, *Lithuanian Historical Studies* 4 (1999):

The Romanian Foreign Ministers, quite precarious in competences of North and North-Eastern Europe geopolitical spaces, subordinated themselves, with some limited reserves, to the majority of French and/or Polish projects or to those inspired by the so-called policy of "collective security". Often there was no logical in the Bucharest's actions relative to specific interests, most often the decisions were taken in conformity with the decisions of the other two allied capitals. One can remember here about the release with which Romania has renounced in the early 20s to the permanent diplomatic missions in some Scandinavian capitals (Oslo, Copenhagen, Helsinki), when, during World War I, in these states have been taken place important propagandistic and influence disputes for the international recognition of the 1918 Union' documents. In a similar fashion can be regarded the obstinacy - worthy for a better cause - not to recognize and establish diplomatic relations with the young independent Lithuanian republic, for reasons related exclusively to the specific interests of the Republic of Poland.²

It is worth pointing out that this situation - somewhat eccentric for a regional medium power, as Romania was, with strong central and southeast Europe alliances (the Little Entente, the strategic partnership with Poland, and eventually the Balkan Pact) and with defining claims regarding a specific relationship with the East (USSR), included in a geopolitical "cordon sanitaire" - can be easily revealed by factors and actions that bypass the strictly bilateral relations with the concerned countries. First, none of the strategic axes of military, political-diplomatic, economic or of cultural interest succeeded to start-up - up to the interwar decades, during that period and even later - from Bucharest to the North and North-Eastern Europe, the relations with these States being rather of conjuncture. The intellectual and political contribution of the Romanian elites (coming from Transylvania and Bukovina) who joined the Old Kingdom in 1918 was almost organically related to the interests and developments of the Central-European space (Germany, Hungary, Austria and Czechoslovakia). The tradition and the common spaces of the old

83-94; Anghel, „Apie svetimšalius ir nepažistamuosius. Rumunijos politiniu elitu požiūris i Lietuva pirmaisiais nepriklausomybes metais po 1918 m“, *Lietuvos Istorijos Metraštis*, 1 (2007): 33-43.

² Florin Anghel, „About Strangers and Unknowns. Romanian Political Elites Towards Lithuania in the First Years of Independence After 1918“, in *Europe As Viewed From The Margins. An East Central European Perspective From World War I To Present*, ed. Silviu Miloiu, Ion Stanciu and Iulian Oncescu (Târgoviște: Valahia University Press, 2008, 163-170. A complementary approach at Silviu Miloiu, „New Wine in Old Bottles. The League of Nations from Hopes to Disillusion: Lithuanian Perspectives“, in Silviu Miloiu, Ion Stanciu and Iulian Oncescu, 155-162.

political class in Bucharest took into account, almost without exception, France and its interests; moreover, from the late 19th century and early 20th century on, Romania claimed a strong position in the evolutions and relations from/with the South-Eastern Europe. On the other hand, the institutional fragility and the precariousness of numerical representation and influence of the elite from Bessarabia (that became part of Romania on March 27, 1918, after breaking away from Russia and following a brief independent existence) were major obstacles in the eastern direction of foreign policy, which aimed primarily the Soviet Communist State. It should be noted that this very Bessarabian elite, it alone in the Greater Romania, was educated in prestigious universities in czarist Russia: Moscow, St. Petersburg, Tartu and Riga.³

Secondly, another equally important aspect is the fact that the Romanian diplomatic representatives in Northern and North-Eastern Europe were intellectual and professional capacities worthy to be taken into account, some of them becoming later Foreign Ministers. Their limited competence related to the peculiarities of the states where they were on duty, but especially the definitely limitation of the Romanian interests in Scandinavia and the Baltic region by Paris and Warsaw had limited, if not even cancelled, any independent assessment and strategy. Extremely well-meaning people at their posts (Raoul Bossy, in Helsinki⁴; Mihail Sturdza⁵ and Grigore Niculescu-Buzești⁶, in Riga) had informed and properly perceived the internal developments but, above all, the potential of the states where they were officials.

An irony of fate that defines the atypical relationship of Romania with the neighbouring area of the edge of Europe⁷ is revealed in June 1940, in the conditions of the precise application of the *Secret Additional Protocol* of the

³ Florin Anghel, „Între oglinzi paralele: provinciile de margine în conturarea politicilor externe interbelice ale României și Poloniei”, in Ioan Ciupercă, Bogdan-Alexandru Schipor and Dan Constantin Mătă, 118-130.

⁴ See Raoul Bossy, *Mărturii finlandeze despre România* (București, 1937) (reprinted as *Mărturii finlandeze și alte scrieri nordice despre români* (Târgoviște: Valahia University Press, 2008 by Silviu Miloiu); Bossy, “Urme românești la miazănoapte”, *Academia Română. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice* seria III, tom XIX, mem.3 (1937).

⁵ Mihail Sturdza, *România și sfârșitul Europei. Amintiri din țara pierdută* (Paris- Alba Iulia, 1994).

⁶ An overview of the activity of Grigore Niculescu-Buzești in Riga in 1939 - 1940, at Florin Anghel, “Instaurarea comunismului în teritoriile ocupate de Uniunea Sovietică în 1940. Cazul Letoniei”, *Arhivele totalitarismului* 17 (1997): 80- 87.

⁷ A good Romanian overview of the effects of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in the region, by comparison, at Silviu Miloiu, “Constructing Easternness and Settling New Frontiers in Europe: Again About the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact”, *Valahian Journal of Historical Studies* 5-6 (2006): 27-44.

Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. In Riga, the Romanian envoy, Grigore Niculescu-Buzești, had transmitted, with emotions and in a moving manner, as many details as possible about the brutal annexation of the independent Republic of Latvia by the USSR, a military, political and ideological action supervised by A.I. Vyshinsky, special envoy of Joseph Stalin. Four years later, in Bucharest, in autumn 1944, the new foreign minister, the same Grigore Niculescu-Buzești, had witnessed powerless to the action of fast Sovietization of the country, led by the same A.I. Vyshinsky.

2. Geopolitical pictures of the edge of Europe: Romanian-Lithuanian relations until the end of 1926

The proclamation of Independence of the Republic of Lithuanian - read in Taryba on February 16, 1918 - passed almost unnoticed both in political, diplomatic and intellectual Romanian circles and in the press - censored - which was allowed to appear in Bucharest (under German occupation) and Iași (where the royal family, the Government and the Parliament had retreated). Even successive prime ministers, Alexandru Averescu⁸ (January 29 - March 18, 1918) and Alexandru Marghiloman⁹ (March 18 - November 6, 1918) did not mention anything about the historic decision in Vilnius in their detailed journals (it is also true that they did the same with respect to the events from Helsinki, Tallinn and Riga). However, a valuable Romanian diplomat like Vasile Stoica¹⁰, who left for the United States in 1917, in order to advocate for the Union cause, on behalf of the Romanian Government, had unconditionally supported the independence movement of the Baltic States in all discussions and negotiations that he held in America. In 1943, a quarter of century after the miraculous year 1918, Vasile Stoica recalled with emotion: *“Small and medium-sized nations from the Baltic to the Aegean, established in independent states, have followed, whether they were or not aware of, the “Joint Declaration of common goals of the independent central European nations” from Philadelphia, from October 26, 1917, the principles that we had then adopted. And who could contest the great progress the Baltic States or Poland and Czechoslovakia, or the Balkan states have made*

⁸ Alexandru Averescu, *Notițe zilnice de războiu, 1916- 1918* (București, 1928).

⁹ Alexandru Marghiloman, *Note politice*, vol.3 (1918- 1919) (București, 1995).

¹⁰ Vasile Stoica (1889 - 1959), Transylvanian militant for the Union, Romanian Minister in Tirana (1930 - 1932), in Sofia (1932 - 1936), in Riga and Kaunas (1936 - 1939), in Ankara (1939 - 1940) and in Hague (1946 - 1947), secretary-general of the Romanian Foreign Ministry (1945 to 1946), died in the political prison at Jilava.

Wan light of Lithuania in Bucharest. The sources of a non-declared divorce (1918-1926) from 1919 to 1938? The current war found them in full economic and cultural rising. Their destiny demanded its compensation for the past slavery".¹¹

After December 1, 1918, when Romania was able to achieve its national unity, the elites from Bucharest had agreed, by the need to obtain international recognition of the union, but also for the case of possible resistance to an aggression from the East that would have contested it by force, to get involved in the building of the geopolitical system called the "*cordon sanitaire*", of French inspiration and active participation of Poland.¹² Thus, until the outbreak of World War II, the diplomatic relations (from 1934 to 1941) between Bucharest and Moscow were rather frozen on two contentious issues impossible to be avoided: the Romanian treasury evacuated in Russia in 1916-1917 and, even worse, the failing by the Soviets to recognize the Union of Bessarabia with Romania. Then, in the background, the diplomatic relations with the ephemeral Ukrainian state or those with Latvia, Estonia and Finland had always been filtered exclusively through the light of the specific interests of Poland.

In the period 1919-1923, when the strategic alliances of Romania were built and until the federalist projects inspired by Józef Piłsudski failed, the Bucharest diplomacy had completely ignored the international legal status of the independent state of Lithuania, by refusing any official contacts with the authorities from Kaunas. Meanwhile, Romania had established normal diplomatic relations with Latvia, Estonia and Finland and opened in Helsinki, for a brief period of time, a permanent mission. Moreover, in the midst of negotiations concerning the conclusion of the Romanian-Polish Convention on defensive alliance (signed on March 3, 1921 in Bucharest by the two foreign ministers, Take Ionescu and Prince Eustachy Sapieha), Warsaw had made consistent efforts to convince Bucharest that the text of the document - which defined not only the Eastern policy of the two countries, but also the whole "*cordon sanitaire*" system - should refer to both Soviet Russia/USSR, and to Lithuania. The Romanian diplomacy had not given a positive answer to the Polish allegations but, until 1923, it had maintained a full caution to the Lithuanian State.

Since summer 1923 until summer next year 1924, the governments from Bucharest and Kaunas, through the Romanian and Lithuanian legations, had started in Prague exploratory contacts, designed to open negotiations for establishing diplomatic relations. The insistences coming from

¹¹ Vasile Stoica, "Sub zodia Marii Uniri. De la Baltică la Egee", *Magazin istoric* 12 (1992), 8.

¹² Basic texts in this regard would be the works of the Finnish historian Kalervo Hovi, *Cordon sanitaire or barrière de l'Est? The Emergence of the New French Eastern Europe Alliance Policy, 1917-1919* (Turku, 1975) and Hovi, *Interessensphären im Baltikum. Finnland im Rahmen der Ostpolitik Polens 1919-1922* (Helsinki, 1984).

Lithuania can be fully understood: the aim was the weakening of the Polish pressures in favour of building a federation and against the independence. After one of these Lithuanian insistences, initiated during the dead season of summer holidays, the Romanian ambassador in Prague, Dinu C. Hiott, communicated to his Foreign Minister, I.G. Duca on August 25, 1923, that he had received enough signals from Polish diplomats who had suggested him the restriction of contacts with government representatives from Kaunas. Hiott believed, however, that Poland was proving an excessive position and in any case was opposed to the interests of Bucharest as Romania had no reason to continue ignoring a European geopolitical fact: the existence of Lithuania.¹³ I.G. Duca found it necessary to consult also the Romanian ambassador in Warsaw, Alexandru Florescu, in order to obtain a competent view on the relations with the allies in the event of a favourable response to Kaunas. *"Lithuania - wrote the Romanian Foreign Minister on July 20, 1924 - urges us, for more than one year, to establish diplomatic relations. Because of the difficulties it has with Poland, so far we have managed to avoid giving a response. But now we can not postpone a favourable response. Furthermore, we would not want to be offensive to Poland by our decision"*.¹⁴

I.G. Duca asked Al. Florescu to draw up, in the shortest time possible, a comprehensive report reflecting the views of the politicians from Warsaw, in order to obtain the most realistic possible view on the impact of a Romania's favourable decision towards Lithuania. The Romanian Foreign Minister wanted to be known, however, that Bucharest had no reason to refuse the request of Kaunas on the establishment of diplomatic relations.¹⁵ If, however, Poland would have proved unsatisfied with this initiative - continued his exposing Duca - Romania was obliged to take this into account and to decline the Lithuanian's offer¹⁶.

Al. Florescu received with reserve the indications from the Romanian chief diplomat: on August 2, 1924 he visited Count Aleksander Skrzyński, state secretary at the Polish Foreign Ministry, to whom he reminded of the Lithuanian offer and the hesitation of I. G. Duca. Skrzyński insisted that the text of the bilateral Convention on defensive alliance be interpreted as a common position towards both the Soviet Union and Lithuania. Faced with such a radical choice of reading, the Romanian ambassador in Warsaw made an appeal to more calm and rejected in an elegant, but clear manner,

¹³ Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe (hereafter, AMAE), folder Lithuania 71/1920-1944, vol.4, 251.

¹⁴ Ibid., 253; report no. 38 111 of 20.07.1924 from I.G. Duca (Bucharest) to Alexandru Florescu (Warsaw).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

any plan for joint action against Lithuania, disagreeing also with the excessive interpretation according to which the government from Kaunas would be already a "Sovietized" one.¹⁷ "For me - explained Florescu to Skrzyński - it is becoming increasingly clear that Lithuania is a source of instability, where the flame of a new large conflagration could break out. Romania has as definite aim to keep Lithuania away from those political forces that try to push the government from Kaunas in the common arms of Germany and the Bolshevik Russia".¹⁸

The lack of any impediments to the establishment of normal diplomatic relations with Lithuania - other than those which were due to the categorical position of Poland - but definitely also the attempt to avoid a deliberately abusive interpretation of the text and spirit of the Convention on defensive alliance from March 3, 1921, by including Lithuania with the Soviet aggression factor - led the Romanian Foreign Ministry to take a quick and positive decision. On August 24, 1924, Romania (the last European country, except Poland) announced that it formally recognized the Republic of Lithuanian and that it established diplomatic relations with it at legation level.¹⁹

Undoubtedly, the Romanian gesture was a mimetic one, inspired by foreign policy philosophy from Bucharest to promote and to support the concept of collective security and to deal friendly with all small and medium states in the region in order to maintain the spirit of the peace treaties of 1919-1920, especially the territorial *status quo*. Beyond the formal act, the Romanian- Lithuanian relations remained practically frozen, no actions of solidarity or courtesy being found out. During the two interwar decades neither can be reported even a single visit at government level having taken place, nor it is possible to make an appeal to some important bilateral documents. The human, trade, intellectual exchanges between the two countries had remained at ridiculous levels and there was no large-scale project designed to put an end to the deep hostility, built almost exclusively by the Warsaw regional strategy of alliances. The ephemeral common, historical Romanian-Lithuanian memory, from the time of the reign of Alexander the Good of Moldavia (1400- 432)²⁰ was never referred

¹⁷ Ibid, 255; report no. 3358 of 3.08.1924 from Al. Florescu (Warsaw) to I.G.Duca (Bucharest).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid, 254.

²⁰ See, e.g.: Constantin Rezachevici, "Ringala-Ana. Un episod dinastic în relațiile moldo-polone- lituaniene din vremea lui Alexandru cel Bun", *Revista de Istorie* 8 (1982): 917- 923; Virgil Ciocîltan, "Raporturi moldo-lituaniene, 1420-1429", in *România în istoria universală*, ed. Gheorghe Buzatu (Iași, 1988), 129-143; Gheorghe David, "Repere româno-lituaniene", *Magazin istoric* 4 (1992): 60. In the latter text one can read an account from 1574 of the Polish traveller Maciej Strykowski who had noticed many similarities between the popular

to in the political and diplomatic relationship: the Polish propaganda clichés invaded in the years '20s, here including even the geographical Lithuanian names, while the Romanian media constantly quoted *Kowno* (and not *Kaunas*), *Litva*, *litoan* (and not *Lithuania*, *Lithuanian*) or *Vilna*, *Wilno* (never *Vilnius*).

The anti-Lithuanian baubles in the Romanian intellectual discourse are not many but they had been taken by the most famous representatives of the elites, and on a concrete level, they had devastating effects on the image of the young republic. Thus, in 1924, invited to take a series of conferences at several universities in Poland²¹, N. Iorga arrived also in Vilnius, the city regained by military means by General Lucjan Żeligowski, on behalf of the Marshal Pilsudski. Here, the scientist launched a strong accusation against the Lithuanian state, widely publicized, arguing that the entry of Lithuania into the Soviet sphere of influence had made it a European threat that must be resolved, including by military means. The capital of Kaunas is the target of heavy irony: "*temporary and artificial city*" which managed to gather shortly after the independence "*individuals chasing a fast career*", in order to eliminate any Polish historical footprint.²² In another text, printed in 1926 in the magazine "The Romanian People" („*Neamul românesc*"), the scientist and politician condemned the "*Marxist Russia*" and its allies, citing as right solution the application of the spirit of the Romanian-Polish Convention of 1921.²³

One year after the normalization of the bilateral relations between Bucharest and Kaunas, the Romanian ambassador in Warsaw, Alexandru Iacovaky, accredited also and in the capitals of the three Baltic republics, was asked by the Foreign Minister to draw up a sum up report. The diplomat, a very experienced professional, with extensive relationships in the good Polish social environments (he was on duty in Warsaw since 1919, when the Romanian Legation had been opened), found it necessary to

customs of commemoration of the dead persons in the villages of Lithuania and in some regions from Moldavia and from Walachia. "*The people from Lithuania, the Litvans - writes Strykowski - use to celebrate the memory of the dead persons, of parents, of mothers and of their relatives, usually in October or, sometimes, at every celebration, singing laments on the graves and weeping, especially the women who enumerate with virtues, the characteristics of householders of their husbands. This custom is kept also in Moldavia and in Walachia, as I have certainly seen in several towns, in Buzău, in Rusciuc, in Giurgiu on the Danube and in Bucharest, the city of residence of the prince of Great Walachia, where in addition to those customs, people light candles and incense the graves.*"

²¹ The impressions were collected in Nicolae Iorga, *Note polone* (București, 1924),

²² Iorga, "Un colț de Lituania", in N. Iorga, *Pe drumuri depărtate*, ed. Valeriu Râpeanu (București, 1987), 535- 538.

²³ Iorga, "Tratatul cu Polonia", *Neamul românesc*, year XXI, no. 73, March 30, 1926.

undertake an extensive pilgrimage among his acquaintances, statesmen and leading politicians. On August 26, 1925, Duca received a highly critical text on the Lithuanian statehood, the internal and external policies of the authorities from Kaunas, impregnated with many assumptions and versions circulating in the Warsaw elite circles. Iacovaky insists on some very tough words like "*Lithuanian xenophobia*", situation of fact which would be intended to destroy, among other things, the German character of the city Memel (Klaipeda). The Romanian diplomat was condemning, without providing conclusive evidence, "*the suspected approaching*" of Lithuania to USSR, inducing the idea that Kaunas effectively participated in the Kremlin's propagandistic diplomacy.²⁴

3. From Kaunas to Bucharest, again through Warsaw

The substantial modification of the internal political regime in Warsaw in mid May 1926 through the coup d'état done by the Marshal Józef Piłsudski, amplified the rumours transmitted by the Polish officials in Bucharest on a possible disintegration of the fragile regional geopolitical balance, by the armed intervention of Lithuania, possibly supported by the Red Army.

Somewhat surprised by this avalanche of rumours, the new Romanian Foreign Minister, I. Mitilineu, installed in early April 1926, requested an accurate assessment of the situation, in the idea of analyzing the opportunities opened by the Romanian-Polish bilateral defensive Convention and also the frozen relations with the USSR. On June 28, 1926, Alexandru Iacovaky sent a comprehensive document on the relations between Warsaw and Kaunas, composed on the basis of the information obtained from the key Polish decision makers. "*Lithuania - wrote Iacovaky to Mitilineu - remains for Poland the Achilles' heel of its international relations*".²⁵ "*When in Warsaw swept over the Civil War*²⁶ - continued Iacovaky -, *the Lithuania's chargé d'affaires in Prague said to Beneš*²⁷ *that the civil war will conquer the whole Poland and that in this situation, Lithuania can not remain indifferent to the fate of its brothers who were under the Polish yoke*".²⁸

²⁴ AMAE, folder Poland 71/1920-1944, vol. 49, 138, report no. 3412 of 26.08.1925 from Alexandru Iacovaky (Warsaw) to I.G. Duca (Bucharest).

²⁵ Ibid., 228; report no. 2581 of 28.06.1926 from Alexandru Iacovaky (Warsaw) to I. Mitilineu (Bucharest).

²⁶ The street fights from mid May 1926, when the army and Piłsudski seized the state power

²⁷ Edvard Beneš, Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia, the only Member of the Little Entente which had a permanent diplomatic representation in Kaunas.

²⁸ AMAE, folder Poland 71/1920-1944, vol. 49, 228; report no. 2581 of 28.06.1926 from Alexandru Iacovaky (Warsaw) to I. Mitilineu (Bucharest).

In parallel with the coup d'état from Warsaw, on the Lithuanian political scene equally important events were taking place: in May 1926 the parliamentary elections for *Seimas* had shaped the defeat of the Christian Democratic Party, the main force of the country after the independence, in favour of the Left (the Social Democratic Party and the Popular Party). Mykolas Sleževičius was sworn Prime Minister in June 15, 1926 and at the end of June the *Seimas* elected the new President of the Republic, in the person of Kažys Grinis. Both were not among those who composed and signed the *Declaration of Independence* of February 16, 1918.²⁹ A complex process of liberalization was started, in the spirit of the Constitution of August 1, 1922, the martial law, in force since 1919, being abolished. The unexpected signature on September 28, 1926, in Moscow, of the non-aggression pact between Lithuania and USSR and the fears of the traditional political, military, intellectual and clerical (Catholic) elites of an annexation of the republic to the Soviets, led to a feverish opposition, grouped around Antanas Smetona and his political group, the Nationalist Lithuanian Union (Lietuviu Tautininku Sąjunga). Together with leaders of the army, during the night of December 16 to 17, 1926, Smetona removed by coup d'état, the constitutional executive power (the President of the Republic and the government) and the legislative (*Seimas*), and installed an authoritarian political regime with a new Constitution, which turned Lithuania into an undemocratic state.

Broadly speaking, one can find a number of similarities between the two actions - Warsaw, in May 1926 and Kaunas, in December 1926 - and between the two new installed regimes. However, the reactions in Bucharest were, as usual, as different and as subjective as possible: as Józef Piłsudski was a close personal friend of the royal family and of the Romanian political elites, the Sanacja masterminded by him was perceived with a great relief and, in many environments, with enthusiasm. The whole critical message against the parliamentary government and against the state established by the Constitution of 1921 was taken over and unanimously approved in Bucharest. Moreover, Piłsudski became, from that moment, a figure of legend, venerated both in the official speeches and in the Romanian press from Bucharest.

However, the action from Lithuania received a glacial reserve and, above all, a general suspicion in both political and diplomatic circles and in public information, although from Warsaw and from Riga the projects and the unfriendly actions against the USSR from the new power in Kaunas

²⁹ "Lietuvos Taryba skelbia Lietuvos neprisklausomybę", *Lietuvos Aidas*, Vilnius, year II, no. 22 (70), February 19, 1918.

were confirmed. Relevant to the attitude adopted by Romania is the fact that neither the Prime Minister, General Alexandru Averescu, nor his Foreign Minister, I. Mitilineu, had found that it would be useful to send to Kaunas an exploratory mission led by the Plenipotentiary Minister in the Lithuanian capital, Alexandru Iacovaky. General Averescu is far from being a partisan of outright position towards Poland and its regional policies: in his previous term as head of government (March 13, 1920 to December 17, 1921), although he accepted the negotiations (led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Take Ionescu) and the conclusion of the Convention of alliance with Poland (on March 3, 1921), he categorically rejected all offers from Warsaw of political and military collaboration, of territorial reconfiguration of the Eastern space by extending the Romanian administration in southern Ukraine.³⁰ Averescu's deep distrust in the capacity of the Polish elites was now exceeded by the inclusion *ab initio* of the Lithuanian state in the of USSR's foreign policy.

In this situation, even before Christmas 1926, the Prime Minister called Al. Iacovaky to prepare a comprehensive paper on the effects of the coup d'état from Kaunas in the joint Romanian-Polish regional policy and in the prospect of the attitude towards USSR. The Romanian Minister in Warsaw requested and immediately obtained on January 8, 1927, a meeting with the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs August Zaleski. *"Immediately after the end of the Great War - was transmitting to Bucharest the chief diplomat in Warsaw, through Iacovaky - the Polish public opinion was divided when it came to the importance of the Baltic problems. Today, these differences of views do not exist any more and all agree to believe that the existence of the independent Baltic states is one of the foundations of our foreign policy, based not only on the recognition by Poland of the right of each nation to dispose of its own fate, but also on the knowledge of the true interests of the Polish state, interests that are, such as experience teaches us, not just those from a recent past, but those gained during the centuries.(...) But our relations with Lithuania are not such as we would have wanted to see them. The Lithuanians will understand that it is impossible to continue their policy of suicide, that the understanding and the friendship with a*

³⁰ See in this regard: Florin Anghel, "Okupacja Pokucja przez Armie Rumuńska (24 maja-początek sierpnia 1919) i początki stosunki polsko-rumuńskich", *Przegląd Historyczny* LXXXIX, 2 (1998): 251-261; Anghel, "Între latrodictium și ordine legală. Perspectivele alianței româno-polone în contextul conflictului militar dintre Polonia și Rusia Sovietică (1919-1921)", *Studii și materiale de istorie contemporană* VI (2007): 5-12. For the entire political and military activity of Alexander Averescu, see the excellent monograph of Petre Otu, *Mareșalul Alexandru Averescu- militarul, omul politic, legenda* (București, 2005).

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*strong Poland is the best basis and the best guarantee of a favourable development of their national independence.”*³¹

In this long expose of his interlocutor, Iacovaky considered necessary to convince General Averescu that after the political changes occurred in Warsaw and Kaunas, within just half a year, it was expected that the nationalist regime of Antanas Smetona repudiates the good traditions in the relations with Germany and the Soviet Union and seeks a rapprochement with Poland, under the choice of “lesser evil”. *„The view often heard in Poland - wrote the Romanian minister in Warsaw on January 12, 1927 - is that between two powerful and greedy neighbours (USSR and Germany), Lithuania will ultimately choose the third one (Poland), which can more easily guarantee the independence, without threatening it with the danger of absorption”*³² Moreover, the Romanian Premier also learned that, within the new political context, Marshal Pilsudski was more willing than ever to make peace and that, under these conditions, he offered to the authorities from Kaunas projects of collaboration. The General Averescu knew already, through a document sent one day before, on January 11, 1927, by the same Al. Iacovaky (before he met August Zaleski) that *“what Pilsudski wants is to restore trade relations (between Poland and Lithuania), and especially the navigation on Niemen, then the access on the Lithuanian territory to the Polish citizens on the basis of passports in order and rail transit on the Lithuanian railway. Pilsudski also said that he will not annex any meter from the Lithuanian territory that what he wants is the end of the state of war and the reestablishment of normal relations”*.³³

The arguments of Marshal Pilsudski and his Foreign Minister, August Zaleski, in favour of the Polish-Lithuanian reconciliation had failed to persuade General Averescu. First, the head of the Romanian government was extremely irritated by the fact that Warsaw avoided to transmit to Bucharest its references on the ideological characteristics of the regime Smetona. Then Averescu had not clearly known the intentions of the authorities from Kaunas with respect to the relations with the USSR, Germany and Poland, especially since the Prime Minister no longer wanted to hear about a new dispute on the interpretation of the text of the Romanian-Polish Convention from March 3, 1921. A state of conflict on the Polish-Lithuanian border conflict would attract, as the General knew well, an unexpected request by Romania to intervene immediately, politically

³¹ A.M.A.E., fond Poland 71/1920/ 1944, vol. 1, 170; report no. 172 of 12.01.1927 from Alexandru Iacovaky (Warsaw) to I. Mitilineu (Bucharest).

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., vol. 48, 252; telegram no. 117 of 11.01.1927 from Alexandru Iacovaky (Warsaw) to General Alexandru Averescu (Bucharest).

and militarily. The Prime Minister did not want such a situation - he had rejected it unequivocally also in 1921 - but now he was terribly concerned also because of the internal situation, following closely the cancer disease in terminal phase of King Ferdinand I. As the future king, Michael, was only six years, the future of the Romanian constitutional monarchy was put in a quite questionable light. For these reasons, in early February 1927, Al. Iacovaky received the mission to obtain from Marshal Pilsudski and from the Foreign Minister, August Zaleski, as many details as possible about the regional strategic Polish intentions and about the new configuration of the Lithuania's foreign policy. It would be worth emphasizing, once again, that General Averescu did not have the initiative to send his envoy to Kaunas, to meet Antanas Smetona and to get the expected answers.

Therefore, on February 8, 1927, August Zaleski sent to the authorities from Bucharest, through Al. Iacovaky, some of the requested messages. *"The Government from Kaunas - the Polish Foreign Minister set forth - does not enjoy a parliamentary majority, it is at the discretion of a military occult that represents the integral nationalism and prohibits both an approach to Russia and an enfeoffment to the Germany's policy. Recently, Germany has proposed a loan to Lithuania, which it would have had great need, but it put as a condition the conclusion of a customs union between Germany and Lithuania. The military government opposed the proposal. The relations with Russia are also bad; the measures taken against the Lithuanian Communists angered the Soviets".*³⁴

Zaleski confirmed to the Romanian diplomat what he had learned from Jules Laroche, the French ambassador in Warsaw, a few days earlier, namely that *"Lithuania's relations with Germany and Russia are far from being good ones and the moment is appropriate to restore contact between Lithuania and Poland."*³⁵ Both Laroche and Zaleski had sent also their deep reserves on the nature, more than transitory, of the regime established by Smetona, focusing on the lack of popular support, other than a small and improvised army. The chief of the Polish diplomacy said even that he found that the Lithuanian nationalist leader would have been rather the prisoner of an inspired act by some ambitious officers with clear political aspirations. *"At the head of the Lithuanian military conspiracy - he said to Iacovaky during their long meeting on February 8, 1927 - are two Russian officers: the former admiral Dovkont, who became today Dookontas, and a former Polish officer from the guard, Plechowicz, who became today Plechovicus. The two men compel recognition to the mass of improvised Lithuanian officers both by the superiority of their military culture, and by courage. They have in hand the whole army. Their*

³⁴ Ibid., folder Poland 71/1920-1944, vol. 1, 174; report no. 600 of 8.02.1927 from Alexandru Iacovaky (Warsaw) to I. Mitilineu (Bucharest).

³⁵ Ibid.

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action is exercised in secret but it is also the determining factor of Lithuanian politics".³⁶

Two days later, on February 10, 1927, in the well heated halls of the small palace Belwedere, Marshal Piłsudki was receiving, extremely friendly, the emissary of the Romanian Prime Minister, expressing satisfaction that he could prove to General Averescu, also a hero of the World War I, the practical utility of their bilateral alliance. The Marshal did not hide his fear of a revaluation, in Moscow, of the Soviet strategies towards the European neighbours, in the context of an apparent isolation of the USSR. In this context, hoped Piłsudski, Romania will rethink its strategic relationship with Poland and agree to become more active in the Baltic region, in order to succeed, through joint efforts, a new strategy on medium and long term. *„I do not believe - continued the Marshall - that there is currently any connection between Germany's and Russia's policies. Germany can not accept that at its own borders, in Lithuania, develops freely a Bolshevik propaganda (...). The concordance of the German-Russian interests having ceased, with respect to the policy of these two states in Lithuania, the Soviet leaders fear not to miss Germany's support in general matters.”*³⁷ Piłsudski also wanted that Romania maintained on short and medium term its reserved relationship with Lithuania, strictly controlled by Warsaw. This was necessary, in the Polish view, as long as the regime from Kaunas was redefining its relations with the USSR and Germany and, of course, set highly personalized relationship with Poland.

Iacovaky was very sceptical regarding a new geopolitical optimistic strategy, due to some spectacular Lithuanian actions. He advised the General Averescu rather not to promise anything to the Poles and to await a possible thawing of the relations with the regime from Kaunas. *„Germany - considered, on May 25, 1927, the Romanian Minister in Warsaw - will not consent to reconciliation between Warsaw and Kowno (Kaunas) than in return for specific benefits. Otherwise it has no interest in getting out of the Poland' heel the thorn that is for her the Lithuania's intransigence with respect to question of Vilna. (...) The anti-communist tendency of the dictatorial government from Kowno is expressed in the measures it takes against the Soviet agents.”*³⁸

The very limited observations that the Romanian diplomacy had used whenever it was about its relationship with Lithuania were due to the lack of first-source information, the lack of imagination in the configuration of

³⁶ Ibid., 175.

³⁷ Ibid., 175-178; report no. 655 of 11.02.1927 from Alexandru Iacovaky (Warsaw) to I. Mitilineu (Bucharest).

³⁸ Ibid., folder Lithuania 71/1920-1944, vol. 1, 4; report no. 2282 from 25.05.1927 from Alexandru Iacovaky (Warsaw) to the General Alexandru Averescu (Bucharest).

normal political and diplomatic relations, to the full ascendant of the Polish diplomacy with respect to the Romanian interests in the North and North-Eastern Europe and, last but not least, to the comfortable feeling of doing not much on one's own will. The authorities from Bucharest chose to consider the Baltic region as a marginal one in terms of interest and direction of action and, therefore, they have cancelled all strategies, objectives and own means. Only in the late '30s, when it was becoming obvious that there were deep connections and information on the belonging to the same geopolitical space claimed by Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union, timid efforts of collaboration and mutual support were initiated. Any glimmer of hope was brutally destroyed in June 1940, with the annexation of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina and the Herta region to the USSR.

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THE POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN LITHUANIA AND ROMANIA (1935-1940)

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Abstract:

The first contacts between Lithuanian and Romanian representatives started after the World War I when Lithuania was looking for the protection of her inhabitants who were still refugees in Russia. As Russia became entrenched with Bolshevism, the Lithuanian citizens were evacuated through Romanian territory from South Ukraine and Crimea. Lithuania and Czechoslovakia established diplomatic relations in December 1919 and eventually an attempt was made to set up ties also with Romania. As a member of the Little Entente and an ally of Poland, Romania drew the attention of the Lithuanian government. Romania recognized Lithuania de jure on August 21, 1924 and Dovas Zaunius was appointed the first Lithuanian envoy to Bucharest. Nevertheless, during the next decade no political or diplomatic contacts between Lithuania and Romania existed. With the growing influence of Germany, the Soviet Union and the Little Entente on the international arena, Edvardas Turauskas was appointed on August 27, 1935 as envoy to Romania residing in Prague and later in the year Romania accredited Constantin Valimarescu for the position of envoy to Lithuania residing in Riga. The dialogue between the two parties remained, however, occasional. When on July 21, 1940 Lithuania was occupied by Soviet Union, Turauskas visited the Romanian Legation in Bern and presented a note of protest in this respect. Romania did not acknowledge Lithuanian occupation and annexation.

Rezumat:

Primele contacte dintre reprezentanții ai Lituaniei și ai României au început după Primul Război Mondial atunci când Lituania avea în vedere protejarea cetățenilor săi refugiați în Rusia. În vreme ce în Rusia bolșevicii preluau puterea, lituanienii erau evacuați pe teritoriul românesc din Ucraina sudică și Crimeea. În noiembrie 1919 Lituania a solicitat oficial guvernului român dreptul de tranzit și în toamna anului 1920 primul-ministru român Averescu i-a promis asistență

reprezentantului lituanian Laisauskas. Praga a fost în perioada interbelică un centru important pentru diplomația lituaniană în ceea ce privește inițierea legăturilor cu România. Lituania și Cehoslovacia au stabilit relații diplomatice în decembrie 1919. În martie 1920 Donatas Malinauskas a fost desemnat însărcinat cu afaceri în capitala Cehoslovaciei, iar Ministerul Afacerilor Externe al țării sale i-a solicitat să obțină recunoașterea de jure din partea României. Guvernul lituanian era interesat în stabilirea unor relații apropiate cu România deoarece această țară era membră a Micii Antante. Guvernul lituanian era de asemenea interesat în relațiile României cu Polonia, cu atât mai mult cu cât conflictul lituaniano-polonez era cea mai importantă chestiune de politică externă lituaniană. Din nefericire, Malinauskas nu a progresat în încercarea de a înnoda dialogul dintre cele două ministere de externe. Lituania a arătat un interes mult mai mare în ceea ce privește România după ce Dovas Zaunius a fost numit ministru plenipotențiar în Cehoslovacia în 1923. România a recunoscut Lituania de jure la 21 august 1924 atunci când relațiile diplomatice dintre cele două state au fost stabilite. În aceeași lună Zaunius a vizitat Bucureștii și în noiembrie a fost numit în calitate de ministru plenipotențiar al Lituaniei în România cu reședința la Praga (până la 11 februarie 1925). România și-a exprimat intenția de a desemna un ministru în Lituania cu reședința la Varșovia, dar Lituania nu a fost de acord nici atunci, nici în 1927. În perioada 1925-1927 contactele politice și diplomatice dintre cele două state au lipsit. Ministerul Afacerilor Externe al Lituaniei a fost interesat în desemnarea unui ministru lituanian la București în 1933, dar pași concreți în această direcție au fost făcuți abia în anul 1935 în circumstanțe diferite marcate de creșterea influenței Germaniei, Uniunii Sovietice și a Micii Antante pe scena internațională. La 27 august 1935 Edvardas Turauskas a fost numit ministru al Lituaniei în România cu reședința la Praga (până la ocupația sovietică a Lituaniei). Turauskas a vizitat Bucureștii, l-a întâlnit pe regele României, miniștrii afacerilor străine, diplomați și i s-a solicitat să întreprindă o vizită în România în fiecare an. La sfârșitul anului 1935, România l-a numit pe Constantin Vallimarescu în calitate de ministru în Lituania cu reședința la Riga. În martie 1939, după ce Praga a fost ocupată de Germania nazistă, Turauskas s-a întors în Lituania, menținându-și însă poziția de ministru plenipotențiar în România. În Lituania acesta a stabilit contacte cu diplomații români. În anul viitor diplomații lituanieni și cei români au întreținut contacte la Berna, Paris, Londra și în alte capitale. La 21 iulie 1940 Lituania a fost ocupată de Uniunea Sovietică, iar diplomați și reprezentanți lituanieni au decis să prezinte note de protest împotriva actului ilegal al ocupației. Turauskas s-a stabilit la Berna la 4 iulie 1940, iar la 25 iulie a vizitat Legația României pentru a prezenta o asemenea notă de protest. Acesta a fost ultimul contact al lui Turauskas cu reprezentanții României în calitate sa de ministru în România. România nu a recunoscut anexarea Lituaniei.

Keywords: Romania, Lithuania, Prague, diplomatic relations, 1930s, Little Entente, Baltic Entente

At the end of the First World War, Lithuania has gained its independence. In spite of this achievement, the young Lithuanian state still

had some unresolved disputes regarding Vilnius' and Klaipėda's regions statute. These political issues somewhat limited Lithuania's international standing when the government was seeking for international and diplomatic *de jure* recognition from the European community, especially as the disputes opposed it to some of the neighboring countries, such as Poland, Russia and Germany. For that reason, it was especially important for the Lithuanian state to achieve political and diplomatic cooperation with other European countries. The main objective was however to search for diplomatic relations with large countries. Lithuania's special interest in Balkan countries seems to have appeared slightly later. There is no mention of political ties between Lithuania and Romania in the Lithuanian historical literature, which is similar to the situation of Lithuanian foreign affairs with the rest of the Balkan countries. This article is based only on the analysis of the historical archive documents, which are not included into Lithuanian historiography spectrum as yet.

The first diplomatic contacts between Lithuania and Romania started around the fall of 1918. These ties were based on Lithuania's primary concern over the issue of bringing home the Lithuanian political refugees and prisoners of war. The Lithuanian government issued a statement to their representatives in Prague to seek for diplomatic relations with other countries and to gain their *de jure* recognition. The Romanian Foreign Ministry did not show much interest in such encounters with the Lithuanian state. Eventually, in 1923, an active Lithuanian politician D. Zaunius showed initiative and made the first diplomatic steps towards the Romanian side. He got in touch with the Romania's envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, D. Hiot. Zaunius described him the situation in all of the Baltic States. In the summer of 1923, the Lithuanian and Romanian diplomatic contacts became more active and from here resulted Romania's recognition of Lithuania's independence on August 21, 1924. Although Romania recognized Lithuania *de jure* and *de facto*, the two countries did not exchange diplomatic representatives.

Only eleven years later, the two countries strengthened up their political relations. There were many reasons for this positive change in the relations between them, especially the fact that the political situation in Europe had changed by then. As regards the bilateral relation, E. Turauskas, the Lithuanian envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, was appointed in Prague on October 25, 1934 and subsequently he showed much initiative in contacting the Romanian diplomats in Prague. At the same time, the Romanian legation in Riga gathered some useful information about Lithuania. The Romanian diplomats eventually sent all this information to Bucharest.

According to the documents from the archives, the Lithuanian side was first to propose diplomatic representatives to the Balkan countries. Lithuania wanted to have equally good foreign diplomatic relations with Romania and Yugoslavia. Lithuanian and Romanian representatives agreed on the start of diplomatic relations between the two countries in spring till autumn of 1935. Thus, Turauskas became Lithuanian envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary in Romania since August 27, 1935 and in Yugoslavia from November 15, 1935. From autumn 1935 until spring 1936, the Lithuanian diplomats have actively searched a man who can be appointed as Lithuania's honorable consul to Romania, but these searches finished without results.

Every year E. Turauskas would visit Bucharest where he would meet influential Romanian politicians. The first visit took place in November 1935. On November 29, he submitted his credentials to the King of Romania. Turauskas was unpleasantly surprised that during this ceremony, the Romanian side did not play the national anthem of Lithuania and King Charles II did not reflect on some of the essential subjects presented by the Lithuanian politician. Turauskas called their brief discussion as "the most banal possible".¹

At the end of 1935, the Lithuanian state issued a diplomatic agreement to the Romanian envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, C. Vallimarescu, who however resided in Riga, not in Kaunas. This fact was disappointing to Lithuanian politicians. Vasile Stoica, the new Romanian envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary in Lithuania and Latvia, was appointed on March 9, 1937.²

When the year 1936 started, all the members of Little Entente and Baltic Entente fully normalized their diplomatic contacts. From a geopolitical perspective, the political ties between the Little Entente and the Baltic Entente started a new era of political cooperation between the two alliances. As already mentioned, the previous year Romania set up diplomatic relations with the Baltic countries by appointing an envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to Riga and Tallinn. Lithuania, on other hand, started international bonds with the Little Entente countries and appointed Turauskas as Lithuanian diplomatic representative to these countries residing in Prague. This way, Prague became a very important

¹ Lithuanian envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary in Czechoslovakia E. Turauskas' report of 14.12.1935 from Prague to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, Lithuanian Central State Archive (hereafter, LCVA). F. 648. Ap.1.B. 14.L.334.

² Czechoslovakia's envoy to Lithuania J. Skalický's report of 15.03.1937 from Kaunas to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia, Archive of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Czech Republic (hereafter, AMZV). Pz-Kaunas 1937, č.j. 87-duv.

political center for the formation of the geopolitical dimension of Lithuania's foreign policy. In the years 1936-1937, Kaunas was looking for more intensive political contacts with the Balkan countries especially considering the fact that Italy and Germany showed more interest in the Balkans. Consequently, Lithuania entered into diplomatic relations with the Hungary.

The Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia K. Krofta became an important source of political information to Lithuania as regards the Romanian political matters. In June 1936, Turauskas and Krofta discussed about Romanian King Charles the Second's visit to Prague and some other important subjects such as the possibility of a Romania's agreement with the USSR. They also approached the growing USSR's political influence in Romania. Krofta confirmed the information that the Romanian King mentioned the possible freezing of political ties between Czechoslovakia and the USSR. The Romanian monarch also approached the political relations between Czechoslovakia, Romania and the USSR.

The changing political ties between Romania and Poland aroused the Lithuanian interest. When the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs V. Antonescu visited Warsaw, the Lithuanian state officials kept a close eye on this event. The Lithuanians were wondering how this would affect their foreign relations with Romania and Poland.³ Turauskas also hoped to find out during his second visit in Bucharest more about the visit of the Polish Foreign Minister Colonel Beck to Romania of May 1937. Antonescu confessed him that Romania was simply renewing an old agreement between the two countries. He reassured the Lithuanian representative that the Romanian-Polish agreement was not set against any other country in particular.⁴

During his second visit in Bucharest just as in 1935, Turauskas encountered some difficulties in scheduling a meeting with the Romanian Foreign Minister. The meeting was, however, a fiasco and Turauskas described it in such words as: "The talk was unpleasant and the interlocutor wanted as much as possible to finish it".⁵

During this short interview, Antonescu appreciated that Romania's relations with the USSR were good enough. Cădere, Romania's envoy in Prague, gave more information to Turauskas regarding the Romanian-Soviet relations. He mentioned that the changes on the Balkan political

³ J. Skalický report of 05.02.1937 from Kaunas to Foreign Ministry of Czechoslovakia, AMZV, Pz-Kaunas 1937, č.j. 43-duv.

⁴ E. Turauskas report of 18.05.1937 from Prague to Foreign Ministry of Lithuania, LCVA. F. 648. Ap.1.B.16.L.64.

⁵ Ibid., L.63.

arena were mainly influenced by the Soviets and argued that Titulescu would sign a military agreement with the USSR only if M. Litvinov would cease being so stubborn about Besarabia.⁶

In the fall of 1937, the Lithuanian diplomatic community showed interest in the issue of national minorities. Romania did not agree to sign a resolution concerning the Hungarian minority as other Little Entente countries did. The government in Kaunas implied that the real reason of Romanians was as much rotten in their domestic politic arena as in Titulescu's personality who wanted to make stronger his opposition. S. Lozoraitis, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania met with Krofta in Geneva who confessed him that the Romanian side' standing in this issue created unnecessary tensions within the Little Entente.⁷

In the spring of 1938, the political tensions in Europe grew high and Kaunas received information about the matters in the Balkan region from many of the Lithuanian diplomatic legations in the European capital cities. At the time, Turauskas enjoyed good contacts with the Romanian envoy in Prague, T. Emandi. Emandi, showed some political initiative and proposed to President E. Beneš to host periodically so-called "conferences" of Baltic, Little and Balkan Entente groups, but this remained just an idea.⁸ In the meantime, the Lithuanian government lacked the interest to continue sponsoring Turauskas' visits to Bucharest.⁹

By March 1939 the situation in Europe had changed: Germany had occupied the Czechoslovakian state and created a Bohemian-Moravian Protectorate. The Germans had also annexed Klaipeda region from Lithuania. The international relations between Romania and Lithuania was also affected by these changes on the international arena. The Lithuanian legation in Prague closed down in June 1939 and Prague ceased to be the center of political dialogue between the two states. After Czechoslovakia's occupation, Turauskas left Prague and returned to Kaunas not being posted as diplomat in Romania. A new page in the history of Romanian-Lithuanian relations was thus opened.

In September 1939 the Second World War started. This tragic event tied up both Romania and Lithuania close to each other. Both countries

⁶ E. Turauskas report of 04.05.1937 from Prague to Foreign Ministry of Lithuania, LCVA, F. 648, Ap.1.B.16. L.55.

⁷ Memorandum of Foreign Minister of Lithuania of 26.10.1937, LCVA, F. 648, Ap.1. B.53. L. 110.

⁸ E. Turauskas' report of 03.03.1938 from Prague to Foreign Ministry of Lithuania, LCVA. F. 648, Ap.1. B.14. L. 125-126.

⁹ E. Turauskas' report of 03.03.1938 from Prague to Foreign Ministry of Lithuania, LCVA, F. 383. Ap. 7. B. 2035. L. 28.

continued their political dialogue in the capitals of third states. Amongst subjects of those dialogues were the political issues and the problems they faced at the start of the conflagration such as the Romanian relations with Germany or Soviet Union and their possible retaliations during the war. Romania openly showed interest in the Vilnius' region matters and in the spectrum of relations between Lithuania and Poland.

By the middle of September, the Romanian envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary Cruțescu visited the Lithuanian minister K. Škirpa in Poland and informed him that the Romanian government officially announced its neutrality in the war. The Romanian diplomat was interested, as Škirpa reported, "if we were going to regain Vilnius". Škirpa answered that the Lithuanian government was holding its ground firmly on neutrality on this particular matter and that he didn't have the authority to discuss this issue. Cruțescu implied that "the mentioned region is *de facto* without government so that it wouldn't clash with neutrality to invade it and that possibility it wouldn't be any risks" in doing so. Škirpa answered that it was Poland who had to show its initiative towards Lithuania „for all of the harm they did”, but Poland never stepped up with a possible truce. Cruțescu also wanted to know about the general population's opinion in this matter and Škirpa informed him that the Lithuanians wanted Vilnius back but this was not the political course and position of the Lithuanian government.¹⁰

In the same month, the Romanian envoy to Paris, R. Franasovici, showed his concerns over the Baltic and Balkan countries' future fate. He was interested also in Vilnius' region problem (he had worked in Warsaw before the war) and about the political interests of Moscow. The Lithuanian envoy P. Klimas assured Franasovici that such an early return of Estonian Minister Setler's delegation could be due to serious reasons. Besides, the Romanian diplomat mentioned "the possible Bolshevik propaganda that can cause serious consequences inside the countries".¹¹

A few weeks later, Klimas visited Franasovici in Paris in order to gain some additional information about Romania's relations with and USSR. The Romanian diplomat informed him that the Soviet ambassador in Bucharest stated that Russia "doesn't have anything against Romania and the only Russian concerns are about *status quo* in the Black Sea region". In

¹⁰ Lithuanian envoy in Poland K. Škirpa's secret report of 15.09.1939 to Foreign Ministry of Lithuania, LCVA, F. 648. B. 40. L. 82-83.

¹¹ Lithuanian envoy in France's secret report of 26.09.1939 to Lithuanian Foreign Minister J. Urbšys, LCVA, F. 648. B. 30. L. 186.

Klimas' opinion „Russia would not touch the Bessarabian question if Romania would not join any alliances directed against the Soviet State”.¹²

In the beginning of 1940, the Romanian charge d'Affairs in Riga, Gr. Niculescu-Buzești was especially satisfied with the fact that the Soviets were being stuck in the war with Finland, which made them less interested in the Balkans for the moment. He informed the Lithuanian diplomats that the Romanian representatives met in Moscow with V. Molotov, but they didn't get any clear and valuable answers on the Soviet view of Bessarabia. After the meeting it was stated that “the Romanian government concludes that the Soviets won't touch upon the Romanian country”, but the situation will depend on the evolutions in the war.¹³ The Lithuanian newspapers began to write numerous articles about the situation in Romania at that time.

In February 1940, the Lithuanian Foreign Minister J. Urbšys showed his interest in the Romanian situation. He arranged a meeting in Kaunas with the Romanian Charge d'Affairs, Niculescu-Buzești. The latter mentioned him that “nothing had changed” in relations between Romania and Germany. All of the economical treatises between both countries were valid.¹⁴ Niculescu-Buzești also talked to Turauskas about Romania's desire to be neutral in the war and the reasons why some big countries would criticise Romania for that. He stated that Romania, just as the rest of Balkan countries, didn't want the Germans to win the war. But there was a big difference between wishes and the harsh reality. That was the reason for which Romania supplied Germany with their oil.¹⁵

In April 1940, the Kaunas Foreign Ministry received an important information regarding situation in Romania from the Lithuanian diplomats in Berlin. They reported that there information circulated from many sources in Europe about the German plans to invade Romania. The Lithuanian diplomat informed that “there is something going to happen in Balkans”, but Yugoslavia and Romania tried to avoid confrontation with the Germans and with the Allies, although the pressure coming from both side was high.¹⁶ More often information from now on was received by Kaunas from the Lithuanian Military Attaché in France, J. Lanskoronskis.

¹² Lithuanian envoy in France's secret report of 04.10.1939 to Lithuanian Foreign Minister J. Urbšys, LCVA, F. 648. B. 30. L. 195.

¹³ Lithuanian envoy in Latvia's secret report of 05.01.1940 to Foreign Minister J. Urbšys, LCVA, F. 648. B. 22. L. 149.

¹⁴ Memo of Foreign Minister of Lithuania J. Urbšys of 20.02.1940, LCVA, F. 648. Ap. 1. B. 55. L. 81.

¹⁵ Memo of E. Turauskas of 22.02.1940, LCVA, F. 648. Ap. 1. B. 55. L. 90.

¹⁶ Lithuanian envoy in Germany's secret report of 16.04.1940 to Foreign Ministry of Lithuania, LCVA, F. 648. Ap. 1. B. 40. L. 279.

All these events culminated in June 1940 when the fate of Lithuania was sealed by the USSR-Germany Pact of Non-Aggression. On the next day, the Red Army crossed the borders of Lithuania. J. Paleckis signed an Act No. 771 on June 19 about the dismissal of Turauskas as Lithuanian envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary in Yugoslavia and Romania.¹⁷ This happened shortly before the assignment of a new government in Lithuania. On July 21, 1940 the People's Parliament voted and decided to include Lithuania into Soviet Union. The Lithuanian political diplomats sent protest notes to many countries they were assigned and accredited to.

On July 25, 1940 Turauskas visited Romanian legation in Bern and gave an official protest note. This was the last visit of Turauskas as a diplomat and his last meeting with Romanian diplomats.

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¹⁷ Decision of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania V. Krėvė-Mickevičius no. 221, LCVA. F. 383. Ap. 3. B. 293. L. 307.

NICOLAE TITULESCU'S NEW EASTERN POLICY AND THE UPGRADING OF ROMANIA'S DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH LITHUANIA

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Abstract:

In 1933 Nicolae Titulescu, widely regarded as the main driving force behind many of Romania's decisions in the field of foreign affairs for a decade and a half, started to ponder about the idea of opening a diplomatic representation of Romania in Kaunas. Reasons such as the necessity of advancing Romania and the Little Entente's interests in the area, the usefulness of gaining access to information about Soviet Union circulating in the area and the importance of the geopolitical location of Lithuania at the intersection of Soviet, German and Polish interests were offered by the Romanian envoy to Riga to convince Titulescu. Yet, only in late 1935 and early 1936 was the decision being implemented and Constantin Văllimărescu was appointed to represent his country in Lithuania's temporary capital. This paper analysis these new evolutions in the Romanian-Lithuanian relations and the reasons behind them and approaches the diplomatic relations between the two countries in mid-1930s.

Rezumat:

În 1933 Nicolae Titulescu, considerat deja de peste un deceniu și jumătate personalitatea care se afla în spatele multora dintre deciziile de politică externă ale României, a început să ia în calcul ideea deschiderii unei legații românești în Kaunas. Argumente precum necesitatea de a susține interesele României și ale Micii Înțelegeri în regiune, utilitatea de a obține informațiile despre Uniunea Sovietică ce circulau în regiune, precum și importanța așezării geopolitice a Lituaniei la intersecția intereselor sovietice, germane și poloneze au fost menționate de ministrul român la Riga, Mihail R. Sturdza, un viitor ministru de externe al țării sale, pentru a-l convinge pe Titulescu de fezabilitatea acestei

decizii. Totuși, de-abia la sfârșitul anului 1935 și începutul anului 1936, în contextul în care România traversa o perioadă dificilă în relațiile sale cu Polonia și se constituise gruparea franco-cehoslovaco-sovietică, la care Titulescu dorea să alătore și țara sa, a fost aplicată această decizie. Constantin Văllimărescu a fost primul diplomat român desemnat să-și reprezinte țara la Kaunas, capitala temporară a Lituaniei, iar numirea sa a fost un semnal clar că România avea de acum înaintea intenția de a aborda politica sa în regiunea baltică și în funcție de interesele sale, și nu numai de cele poloneze, așa cum se întâmplase până în acel moment. Vasile Stoica îi va succeda lui Văllimărescu și noi pași, deși mărunți, au fost întreprinși în ceea ce privește dezvoltarea relațiilor dintre Lituania și România. Acest articol analizează aceste noi evoluții din relațiile româno-lituaniene și rațiunile din spatele acestor decizii, precum și relațiile diplomatice dintre cele două state la jumătatea anilor '30.

Keywords: Romania, Lithuania, Nicolae Titulescu, diplomatic relations, 1930s, Eastern policy

Writing in the aftermath of his dismissal from the position of Romanian foreign minister he held for four years (1932-1936) in what can be regarded more as a justificatory work than a testimony, Nicolae Titulescu placed a special emphases on the Romanian benefits resulting from the signing of the London Convention of July 3 and 4, 1933. In Titulescu's understanding, this achieved not only a more thoughtful and comprehensive definition of aggression and aggressor in the international relations¹, but made impossible to Soviet Union to forcefully annex Romania's eastern province of Bessarabia, opening the path to the signing of the Balkan Entente (decided in October and fully signed next year on February 9)² and the Romanian-Turkish Pact of Eternal Friendship (October

¹ Upon Soviet's entry in the League of Nation, Commissar Maxim Litvinov repeatedly insisted on the need of a League's document to encompass the definition of aggressor. The full text of the document and an assessment of the Russian understanding of the Convention, at Christi Scott Bartman, *Lawfare: use of the definition of aggressive war by the Soviet and Russian Federation governments* (Cambridge Scholar Publishing, 2010), 36-40. Titulescu himself time and again referred to what he termed the need to legally organize peace, which he normally linked to anti-revisionism or to Briand-Kellogg Pact, i.e. in his conference delivered in the German Reich in May 1929 and at Cambridge University in November 1930, Nicolae Titulescu, *Pledoarii pentru pace*, ediție îngrijită de George G. Potra și Constantin I. Turcu (București: Editura Enciclopedică, 1996), 158-161, 257-258

² On the formation and aims of the Balkan Entente exists an impressive bibliography published from late 1960s, the majority of which appeared with the interest of Communist Romania to use the past in order to establish better relations with her Balkan neighbors, see the classical syntheses signed by Cristian Popișteanu, *România și Antanta Balcanică. Momente și semnificații de istorie diplomatică*, ediția a II-a (București: Editura Politică, 1971), especially 69-201 and Eliza Campus, *Înțelegerea Balcanică* (București: Editura Academiei, 1972). After 1989, the Romanian historiography produced a number of less-focused but fresh

17) and to the further improvement of Romania's already intimate relations with France and Czechoslovakia. Moreover, the accomplishment of this pact opened the Romanian-Soviet diplomatic relations and political dialogue and consolidated the two countries' interest in fulfilling the project of the Eastern Pact.³ Titulescu must have been particularly satisfied with Soviet foreign commissar of foreign relations Maxim Litvinov's declaration in the presence of Turkish foreign minister Tevfik Rüştü Aras: "I understand that by signing these declarations I offered you Bessarabia".⁴ He soon decided that Romania should establish bilateral relations with Soviet Union and even act as an intermediary between Moscow and Geneva and Moscow and Romania's allies. Thus, the year 1933 was a benchmark in Romania's foreign policy when the Little Entente was strengthened, the creation of the Balkan Entente was decided and the bases of a rapprochement with Moscow were set up. Where, however, in his perspective of multilateralism and collective and regional security was the place of Lithuania, a country situated less than a thousand km north from the Romanian border? How the Romanian-Lithuanian relations evolved during the latter part of 1930s in the complex international relations generated by the revisionist challenge to the Versailles order?

To answer these questions and understand the changes operated in this relation during Titulescu's mandate an overview of the relations between Romania and Lithuania will be achieved. An analysis of Romania's foreign policy concerning Soviet Union, France and Poland is also necessary in order to envisage how Titulescu's decisions in relation to Lithuania were affected, the more so as during the previous period always Bucharest's policy in this respect was subsumed to its relations with Warsaw. Finally, Romania's projects in respect to the Eastern Pact and other international developments in the multilateral diplomacy must be also considered.

The *longue durée* of the Romanian-Lithuanian relations was a byproduct of geography and history. During the Middle Ages at the heydays of the Lithuanian Duchy and eventually during the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth geography facilitated this relationship. The Lithuanian, and then the Polish-Lithuanian advance towards the Black Sea turned them into neighbors of Moldova Principality with common border

interpretations of this alliance, thus creating a more complex picture of the interests and aspirations of its members. New documents were also published.

³ Nicolae Titulescu, *Politica externă a României (1937)*, ed. George G. Potra, Constantin I. Turcu and Ion M. Oprea (București: Editura Enciclopedică, 1994), 105-118.

⁴ Walter M. Bacon, *Nicolae Titulescu și politica externă a României. 1933-1934* (Iași: Institutul European, 1999), 100.

being established on the Dniester at Soroca, Orhei and Lăpușna.⁵ From Lithuanian perspective Moldova was an important political player on the commercial road linking the Baltic and the Black seas that was of such outstanding importance to the Lithuanian state.⁶ In the linear economic systems of the time, merchants and merchandises were exchanged between Orient, Geneva and the Baltic Sea crossing the Romanian lands territory. In Valahia, for instance, the merchants from Poland and Lithuania were required to pay customs only in the city of Târgoviște. As the Romanian historian P.P. Panaitescu has long since argued, a constant in the foreign policy of Poland and Lithuania was to keep in vassal relations the voievod of Moldova and the grand master of the Teutonic Order, the first holding the clue to the Black Sea and the second to the Baltic Sea trade roads.⁷ This was achieved by concluding treaties and agreements, by mixed marriages and by common fighting against their enemies in the logic of the Middle Ages. Important figures of Romanian past such as Alexander the Good (1400-1431) and Stephan the Great of Moldova (1457-1504) or Mircea the Old (1386-1417) of Valahia were involved in these political, commercial and cultural exchanges. Although with the raising stars of the Ottoman, Habsburg and Russian empires history turned aside the attention of Romanians and Lithuanians from each other for many centuries, this past will be eventually evoked in 1938 when the Romanian envoy Vasile Stoica held four conferences in Kaunas, which will be later recalled in this paper.

For about a century, the Bessarabians and the Lithuanians were co-nationals in the Russian Empire whose downfall together with the demise of the other empires and the creation of a new international order following the World War I recreated the frame for re-knotting the relations at state level between the two nations. Not incidentally, the Lithuanian struggle for independence inspired the Bessarabian drive towards unification with Romania in 1917-1918⁸, as, following the same pattern, a consequence of geography, will contribute to the Republic of Moldova's independence in 1991.⁹

⁵ Virgil Ciocîltan, "Raporturi moldo-lituaniene, 1420-1429", in *Românii în istoria universală*, ed. Gheorghe Buzatu, III/1 (Iași, 1988), 129-143.

⁶ Daniel Stone, *The Polish-Lithuanian state, 1386-1795* (The University of Washington Press, 2001), 32-33.

⁷ P.P. Panaitescu, *Interpretări românești. Studii de istorie economică și socială* (București: Editura Enciclopedică, 1994), 83-84.

⁸ Ștefan Ciobanu, *Unirea Basarabiei. Studiu și documente cu privire la mișcarea națională din Basarabia în anii 1917-1918* (Chișinău: Editura Universitas, 1993), 32.

⁹ Interview of the author with former Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis, Vilnius, June 15, 2009.

The aspirations of Romanians and Lithuanians to self-determination and national unification have met in the United States when representatives of the two nations were co-founders of the Democratic Mid-European Union and co-signatories of the Declaration of Common Scopes of Mid-European Independent Nations. Vasile Stoica reached the position of First Vice-President of the Union where the Lithuanian National Council in America and Lithuania was represented by Dr. John Szlupas (Sliupas) and Th. Marus Narusevicius.¹⁰ The desire for a better world, for peace and democracy were inscribed in this declaration, but the nations situated in-between Germany and Soviet Russia were too weak and divided to be able to put them in practice. The Polish-Lithuanian dispute over the Vilna region and the capital city of Vilnius is a good example of this discord and of its dividing capacities in an area of mixed ethnicities, elective identities¹¹ and disputed histories.

In fact, the Vilna dispute affected also Romania's eastern foreign policy on a bilateral and regional scale. In terms of bilateral relations, due to the Romanian-Polish alliance of March 1921 it created a barrier in the relations with Lithuania.¹² For instance, in August 1923, when the Lithuanian envoy in Prague visited his Romanian counterpart, Dinu Hiott, handing him a letter requesting the setting up of diplomatic relations between the two countries, foreign minister I.G. Duca had to refer the request to Prime Minister Ion I.C. Brătianu and to confess that only a few days before the Polish had demanded that Romania should not establish diplomatic relations with Lithuania.¹³ Although the envoy to Warsaw Alexandru Florescu had gained one year later the Polish acquiescence to Romania establishing diplomatic bonds with Lithuania¹⁴ and the

¹⁰ Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale [The Romanian National Archives] (hereafter, ANIC), folder Vasile Stoica, file I/137, 1-36.

¹¹ I use this term in the sense attributed by Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, "Elective Ethnicity: The Phenomenon of Chosen National Identity in the Modern Baltic World," in *The Baltic World as a Multicultural World: Sea, Region and Peoples*, ed. Marko Lehti (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts - Verlag, 2005), 155-163.

¹² On the Polish barrier to the development of the Romanian-Polish relations, see Florin Anghel, *Construirea sistemului "cordon sanitar". Relații româno-polone, 1919-1926*, second edition, (Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2008), 176-186 and „Polish Influences on the Baltic Demarches of Romanian Diplomacy, 1920-1930”, *Lithuanian Historical Studies* 4 (1999): 83-94.

¹³ He persuaded the Polish authorities that a Romanian diplomatic presence in Kaunas will serve Polish interests insofar as Bucharest will try to detach Lithuania from Soviet Union and to bring it closer to Romania and its allies, Constantin Hiott's telegram no. 1324 of 25.08.1923, Arhivele Diplomatice ale Ministerului Afacerilor Externe [The Diplomatic Archives of the Romanian Foreign Ministry] (hereafter, AMAE), folder 71/1920-1944, Lithuania. Relations with other states, vol. 4, 251.

¹⁴ Alexandru Florescu's dispatch no. 3357 of 3.08.1924, *Ibid.*, 255-258.

Lithuanian Legation in Prague extended for a brief period of time its authority to cover also Romania on August 21¹⁵, a Romanian Legation to Lithuania was late to come into being and a diplomat to Kaunas was not appointed for more than a decade. An attempt to set up a Romanian legation to Lithuania failed to materialize in late summer and beginning autumn of 1924, the main reason being Bucharest's intention to accredit to Kaunas her envoy to Warsaw, which was wholly unacceptable, almost a blasphemy to Lithuania.¹⁶

The reasons are to be found, again, in the recurring worsening of the Polish-Lithuanian relations. In January 1927, for instance, the new scale of tension between Romania's ally and Lithuania raised the attention of the Romanian Foreign Ministry, especially after a report from the envoy to Warsaw, Alexandru Iacovaki, mentioned Marshal Pilsudski's unwavering desire to attack Lithuania. The prospect of war worried the Romanian Foreign Ministry, Iacovaki being instructed to remain in permanent contact with the French envoy to Warsaw.¹⁷ One week later Constantin Diamandy reassured from Paris his Foreign Ministry superiors that due to the demarches of the French, British and Italian governments in Kaunas and of the French government in Warsaw the tensions calmed down and the likelihood of war diminished.¹⁸

Already in his first mandate as foreign minister, Titulescu attempted to open a Romanian diplomatic channel with Lithuania perceived as a country with which because of geographic proximity Bucharest wanted to improve its relations.¹⁹ Already at the beginning of November Titulescu was urging the envoy to Paris to approach his Lithuanian counterpart with the proposal that Romania appointed its envoy to Warsaw, Carol Davilla, as envoy to Kaunas, too. Titulescu was aware that Lithuania had previously refused to grant the approval to any such scheme, but he trusted Davilla's abilities and assurances that an exception in case of Romania was achievable.²⁰ Although Estonia had

¹⁵ AMAE, folder 82, Lithuania, vol. 93, 1.

¹⁶ Foreign Minister I.G. Duca's telegram no. 44558 of 25.08.1924, AMAE folder 71/1920-1944, Lithuania. Relations with other states, vol. 4, 259; N.B. Cantacuzen's dispatch no. 1951/XIV to French Prime Minister Edouard Herriot, *Ibid.*, 260; AMAE, folder 82, Lithuania, vol. 93, 1.

¹⁷ Mitileneu's notes no. 738 of 6.01.1927, ANIC, folder Casa Regală, Mihai I, Regență. Probleme externe, file no. 22/1927, 75.

¹⁸ Constantin Diamandy's dispatch no. 8120 of 14.01.1927, *Ibid.*, 76-77.

¹⁹ Titulescu 1994, 224.

²⁰ Nicolae Titulescu's instructions no. 8876 of 3.11.1927, ANIC, folder Casa Regală, Mihai I, Regență. Probleme externe, file no. 22/1927, 64.

granted in late October the agreement for Davila to be posted to Tallinn²¹, too, Titulescu's hopes that Lithuania will act similarly will soon prove futile. Envoy Petras Klimas, one of the twenty signatories of the Act of Independence of Lithuania, turned down the request on the ground that whether accepted it will create a precedent in his country's relations with other states.²² One month later Klimas produced a memorandum for the Romanian Legation restating Lithuanian's policy with regard to Poland and accusing this country for violating its territorial integrity.²³ Even when a Romanian Legation was created in Riga according to the decisions adopted in late December to cover the eastern Baltic and Mihail R. Sturdza was appointed in May 1929 to head it as charge d'affaires²⁴, no progress was achieved in integrating Lithuania in the Romanian system of diplomatic representation.

Eventually, on March 28, 1931 a trade agreement between the two states was signed in Berlin containing the clause of most favored nation, which was the first document concluded between the two states.²⁵ Yet, the exchanges remained negligible and the agreement had little if any consequences.

Soon after Titulescu's second appointment at the head of Romania's Foreign Ministry, the issue of appointing an envoy to Kaunas resurfaced. The envoy to Riga, Prince Studza, was prompting a decision in this matter already for some time by arguing that following Hitler's accession to power and the shift of political interest to the West a Romanian diplomatic representation to Kaunas would be welcomed.²⁶ This report followed other suggestions from Sturdza of June 17, 1931, February 26 and 27, 1933, asking for the extension of Riga Legation's powers to Kaunas on the ground that the absence from Lithuania was affecting Romania's capacity to gain valuable information serving itself and its allies' interests and anticipating that important political developments were going to take place in Kaunas.²⁷

²¹ Carol (Citta) Davila's dispatch no. 4389 of 25.10.1927 to Titulescu, in *Nicolae Titulescu. Opera politico-diplomatică, iulie 1927 - iulie 1928*, Partea I, volum îngrijit de George G. Potra and Costică Prodan (București: Fundația Europeană Titulescu, 2003), 246.

²² Constantin Diamandy's dispatch no. 9009 of 25.11.1927, ANIC, folder Casa Regală, Mihai I, Regență. Probleme externe, file no. 22/1927, 65.

²³ Constantin Diamandy's dispatch no. 9066 of 6.12.1927, *Ibid.*, 66-68.

²⁴ Silviu Miloiu, *România și Țările Baltice în perioada interbelică* (Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2003), 81-82.

²⁵ Ion Calafeteanu, coord., *Istoria politicii externe românești în date* (București: Editura Enciclopedică, 2003), 267.

²⁶ Mihail Sturdza's dispatch no. 82 of 26.02.1933, AMAE, folder Latvia, 1933-1940, vol. 7, 120-121.

²⁷ Foreign Ministry's report on Romania's diplomatic relations with Lithuania and the accrediting of Bucharest's envoy to the Baltic States to Kaunas, *Ibid.*, 262.

Titulescu himself showed a renewed interest into opening a legation in Kaunas, the more so, as he was informed, Czechoslovakia had already been present there for five years and even Yugoslavia had appointed an envoy in 1933.²⁸ The subsiding of the Great Depression may have also positively contributed to the readjustment of Romanian foreign policy priorities in the Baltic area.

Gradually, Titulescu's foreign policy acknowledged a change especially as a consequence of the threat he perceived coming from Germany's revisionist program in the aftermath of the failure of the disarmament conference. The Polish-German Non-Aggression Pact of January 1934 and the steady improvement in the French-Czechoslovak-Soviet relations in 1934-1935 further changed the environment in which Romania's foreign policy was pursued. Titulescu was also afraid that things might change in the Soviet foreign policy and he wanted to prevent the possibility of a German-Soviet rapprochement on the Rapallo pattern on the expense of Romania and its allies. Although badly striving to keep the relationship with Poland and Germany on a good track, by 1935 he chose to close ranks with the French-Czechoslovak-Soviet constellation of powers which had the merit of maintaining the Romanian foreign policy in line with Paris and supporting the collective security program which was the basis of his country's foreign policy.²⁹ Additionally, Romania was interested in the project of the Eastern Pact that was anathema to Poland.³⁰

By spring 1935, rumors started circulating in the press and in the political circles about an agreement on military assistance between Romania and the Soviet Union according to which the Russian troops were given the right to use the Romanian territory. The rumors were not baseless and this naturally affected the Romanian-Polish relations. For this and other reasons, the gap between Bucharest and Warsaw was widening. Victor Cădere, Romania's envoy to Warsaw, who professed criticism of the conversations between Romania and Soviet Union, was, contrary to his wishes, transferred and posted to Southern America. According to Finnish diplomatic sources, strongly influenced by opinions circulating in Warsaw, in criticizing Titulescu, Cădere adopted a similar position with that of the Polish Government that was opposed to the eastern pact on the ground that it would open the Russian troops the possibility to use the Polish territory for meeting the forces of the enemy. Cădere considered that

²⁸ Ibid., folder Lithuania, 1927-1939, vol 4, 261.

²⁹ Emilian Bold and Ion Ciupercă, *Europa în derivă (1918-1940). Din istoria relațiilor internaționale* (Iași: Casa Editorială Demiurg, 2001), 138+139.

³⁰ Magnus Ilmjärv, "Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania And The Eastern Pact Project", *Acta Historica Tallinnensia* 10 (2006), 72.

Polish refusal of the scheme made the treaties between France, Czechoslovakia and the USSR pointless unless Romanian accepted the passage of Romanian troops on her territory.³¹ Nevertheless, new signs of the rapprochement reached in the Romanian-Soviet relations came on October 19 with the opening of the traffic between Tighina and Tiraspol over the Dniester that had been interrupted for the past decade and a half.³²

In Nazi Germany, Titulescu's new eastern policy, at least according to the experienced Finnish envoy to Berlin, Aarne Wuorimaa, who had interviewed in this respect a high official in the German Foreign Ministry, Dr. Gerhard Köpke, was interpreted as an attempt to find the proper way in advancing the Romanian-Soviet relations and in keeping unified the Little Entente in the aftermath of the French-Soviet-Czechoslovakian treaties. Germany, whose foreign policy still bore the mark of the old diplomatic school³³, seems to have been at the time tranquil with regard to the Romanian-Soviet relations. The Auswärtiges Amt had received assurances from the Romanian envoy to Berlin Nicolae Petrescu-Comnen on behalf of Nicolae Titulescu that the claims regarding Romania's intention to grant the Red Army the passing rights through Romania and to conclude a defense treaty with Soviet Union were unsubstantiated. Nevertheless, in the short interview of Petrescu-Comnen with Wuorimaa, the former was not as convinced that an agreement between Romania and Soviet Union was unattainable.³⁴

The Romanian-Polish strong disagreements over Romania's policy towards Soviet Union had continued to turn apart the two states of each other and to affect the relations between the Polish envoy Arciszewski and Titulescu. The Romanian foreign minister repeatedly accused the Polish envoy of working against his line of foreign policy. During a very tense conversation reported by the Finnish envoy to Bucharest Idman, Titulescu

³¹ K.G. Idman's dispatch no. 7 of 24.10.1935, Ulkoasiainministeriön arkisto [The Finnish Foreign Ministry Archives] (hereafter, UA), folder 7 E Romania.

³² K.G. Idman's dispatch no. 9 din 23.10.1935, folder UA 5, microfilm C 14.

³³ See in this respect Köpke's testimony to the Nüremberg German Major War Criminals where he described foreign minister Konstantin von Neurath as close to conservative circles, "prudent, moderate, reliable", exercising a "moderating and calming influence on the Party", The Nizkor Project, "Dr. Gerhard Köpke's testimony to the Nüremberg German Major War Criminals, One Hundred and Sixty-Fourth Day: Wednesday, 26 June, 1946". 1991-2009., <http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/imt/tgmwc/tgmwc-17/tgmwc-17-164-05.shtml>, 217 (accessed June 20, 2010).

³⁴ Aarne Wuorimaa's dispatch no. 49 of 26.10.1935, UA, folder 7 E Romania. The best monograph on the Romanian-German relations in this period that explains the turnabouts of Titulescu's approach to Germany is signed by Ioan Chiper, *România și Germania nazistă. Relații româno-germane între comandamentele politice și interese economice (ianuarie 1933 - martie 1938)* (București: Editura Elion, 2000).

let his guest know that he hoped to make an agreement with Soviet Union and thus adhere to France and Britain's European policies and pointed out to Romania's right to pursue the foreign policy it considered appropriate. Arciszewski threatened the Romanian chief of diplomacy in the name of the Polish General Staff that the outcome of such an agreement would be that Poland might change its strategic policy. An unwilling witness to this harsh exchange of views that seemed to destroy the basis of the Romanian-Polish alliance, Idman could talk to Titulescu after his Polish colleague left. Titulescu explained the Finnish envoy that the Pact of the League of Nations did oblige Romania to take such an action. If Titulescu found in Idman a more relaxed interlocutor, he did not find a mate soul however. Idman noticed that Titulescu's views were not supported by the latest developments, such as the war between Italy and Abyssinia. Once more, Titulescu stressed his intention of avoiding his country being drawn in a war.³⁵

Thus, between what was regarded as the Polish-German and the French-Czechoslovakian-Soviet foreign policy lines, Titulescu chose regardless the strong criticism coming from Warsaw, Berlin and Rome and from the Romanian right and central right politicians to follow in the footsteps of the French foreign policy.

This is where our logical hypothesis is to be introduced. It seems that with Titulescu and his collaborators being less willing to take into consideration the Polish point of view in relation to Lithuania, now Romania moved finally faster in the direction of establishing diplomatic relations with Lithuania. Naturally, this was not only the outcome of the tensions existing in the Polish-Romanian relations, but also of the desire to get a wider view of the developments in eastern Baltic and of Titulescu's understanding that expenses should not be spared when foreign policy is at stake. On December 1, 1935, a decree was signed and the Romanian envoy to Riga and Tallinn was appointed to Kaunas, too. Constantin Văllimărescu, the first Romanian envoy to Riga, was informed of this decision on December 18 and the agreement of the Lithuanian government was quick into coming.³⁶ This decision set the Romanian-Lithuanian relations on a track of normality, late but necessary.

Romania's absence from Kaunas for so many years was partly compensated by the very cordial reception the Lithuanian authorities made to Văllimărescu in January 1936 when he handed his credentials in the hands of the Lithuanian President Antanas Smetona. The head of state,

³⁵ Idman's dispatch no. 13 of 18.11.1935, UA, folder 5, microfilm C 14.

³⁶ Miloiu, 115.

Prime Minister Juozas Tūbelis and foreign minister Stasys Lozoraitis have all emphasized the significance of this event and underlined Romania's important role on the international arena. The main topic of discussion between Văllimărescu and the Lithuanian politicians was Romania's relations with the Soviet Union. This was a logical as it was the new eastern policy of Titulescu and the positive evolutions of the Romanian-Soviet relations that explain the very presence of Văllimărescu in Kaunas. Văllimărescu also remarked that "the satisfaction caused by the setting up of a Romanian Legation in Kaunas was obvious".³⁷

In the meantime, a new Lithuanian envoy was also appointed to Bucharest with residence in Prague. In fact, Lithuania's foreign stance grew worse following Hitler's accession to power in Germany given his declared interest in the fate of all Germans abroad. Therefore, Lithuania tried to encourage the development of better relations with Soviet Union. Thus, in December 1933 Jurgis Baltrušaitis, the Lithuanian envoy in Moscow, visited the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and pledged to reserved Soviet officials for better relations between the Lithuanian Army and the Red Army and for improving the Lithuanian defense capacities with Soviet help.³⁸

In these circumstances and with the 1934 Baltic Entente concluded, Lithuania also wanted the improvement of Lithuania's relations with the other Baltic states and with the countries in Central Europe. In a memo of May 1937 prepared for the Lithuanian Ministry of War, it was emphasized the importance of securing Latvia's benevolent neutrality in case of war, no less for assuring a retreat of the Lithuanian Army in this country in case of military defeat. As regards the side to choose in case of a German-Soviet conflict that appeared likely at that moment, the document read: "Lithuania would have the least chance to remain independent in case of Germany's triumph. Lithuania must join the states which oppose Germany's expansion."³⁹ There is no evidence to state that Lithuania thought differently several months before. Therefore, one can conclude that Lithuania's interest in Romania was also a function of Kaunas' national interest to strengthen the anti-German camp and to follow the evolutions that might lead to Romania joining the opponents of Berlin alongside France and Czechoslovakia.

³⁷ Constantin Văllimărescu's dispatch no. 32 of 20.01.1936 to Titulescu, AMAE, folder Latvia, 1921-1940. Relations with other states, Vol. 8, 106-109.

³⁸ Magnus Ilmjärv, "The Baltic States military and their foreign and defence policies 1933-1938", *Acta Historica Tallinnensia* 7 (2003): 98.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 102-103.

The Lithuanian envoy in Prague, Edvardas Turauskas, was the person chosen to represent Lithuania's interest in Romania. The audience for presenting his credentials on November 29, 1935, 12.30 o'clock at the Royal Palace to King Charles II is documented in the Romanian archives. Turauskas came to Bucharest to ask for audience with eight days in advance and he received a half an hour meeting with the sovereign because at 13 o'clock the Latvian envoy Martinš Nukša was scheduled to present his credentials, too. Adjutant General Nicolae Condeescu was in charge of bringing Turauskas from Hotel Stănescu, where he resided, to the Royal Palace. At the entrance to the Royal Palace, an 80 people big firing party and 14 soldiers had to play the Lithuanian national anthem and to present the honors to the Lithuanian envoy. The ceremony was attended from the Royal Civil House by Adjutant General Ernest Balliff, Baron I.V. Stârcea, Anton Mocsonzyi, Dr. I. Mamulea and Adjutant General Nicolae Condeescu and from the Military House by generals Constantin Ilasievici and Petre Grigorescu and Major Teofil Sidorovici.⁴⁰ This proves that at least in terms of ceremonial the Royal House gave the Lithuanian and Latvian representatives all the attention and honor habitual in these ceremonies and none of the six documents discovered in the Romanian archives prove that any difference would have been made between the treatment of Lithuanian and Latvian ministers. Nevertheless, according to Lithuanian documents referred at in this issue of *Revista Română de Studii Baltice și Nordice*, show Turauskas' dissatisfaction over the fact that the Lithuanian national anthem was not performed (and also that the King was brief and distant)⁴¹, which is difficult to reconcile with the story one may read in Romanian documents.

One of the recurrent themes to be found in the Romanian diplomats' assessments of Lithuanian foreign policy in the first half of the 1936 is the tensions between Poland and Lithuania. When visiting Colonel Beck at Polish Foreign Ministry in mid-January 1936, Constantin Dinu Hiott could learn about foreign minister's accusations that by encouraging the Ukrainian terrorist organizations in Poland, Lithuania constituted a danger to peace.⁴² In exchange, Beck's public accusations against Lithuania were received with deep dissatisfaction in Kaunas and fierce critics against Polish foreign policy could be heard at a time when the Lithuanian-German

⁴⁰ Miloiu, 113-114.

⁴¹ See Dalia Bukelevičiūtė, "The political and diplomatic relations between Lithuania and Romania (1935-1940)," *Revista Română de Studii Baltice și Nordice* 2, no. 1 (2010): 25-33.

⁴² Constantin Dinu Hiott's telegram no. 136 of 15.01.1936, în Laurențiu Constantiniu and Alin-Victor Matei, compilers, *Documente diplomatice române*, Seria a II-a, Vol. 18, Partea I (București: Editura Academiei Române, 2008), 55-56.

relations seemed to be moving on a good track springing from German interest to counter the growing Soviet influence in this country.⁴³ The worsening of the Lithuanian-Polish relations continued unabated in February due to anti-Lithuanian Polish staged meetings in Vilnius and in spite of the understanding by some Lithuanian Foreign Ministry high officials of the fact that the improvement of the relations with Warsaw was in Kaunas' advantage. Yet, the worry that a rapprochement between the two countries without any gain regarding Vilnius issue for the Lithuanian side might alienate the army and turn the nationalists against the regime prevented any courageous decision in this respect.⁴⁴

When Hitler proposed to several states in Central and Eastern Europe, Lithuania included, the signing of bilateral non-aggression pacts⁴⁵, the Romanian envoy to Warsaw, Constantin Vișoianu, "Titulescu's man" who shared Titulescu's reserves regarding Polish foreign policy, interpreted the Polish reception of the proposal as causing a shock in Warsaw. The Polish had counted on the German-Lithuanian tensions into curtailing Lithuania's choices to an alliance with Poland and now this assumption proved groundless.⁴⁶ This document demonstrates once more Romania's desire to think with its own mind on the realities in eastern Baltic, on the Polish-Lithuanian relations especially, as opposed to the uncritical "absorption" of Polish views on this region of the past decade and a half.

Soon, rumors about Polish desire to reach a rapprochement with Lithuania started to spread and were registered by the Romanian Legation in the Baltic states.⁴⁷ At the Tallinn Baltic Conference of May 7-9 it was even

⁴³ Synthesis of the Political Direction of the Romanian Foreign Ministry registered no. 5296 of 1.01.1936, in *Ibid.*, 129-130.

⁴⁴ Synthesis of the Political Direction of the Romanian Foreign Ministry no. 3 of 15.02.1936, in *Ibid.*, 204.

⁴⁵ What Hitler had in mind was however the "localization of war" because they included no clause to suspend their validity in case of aggression by either signatory against a third party. The aim was to prevent the achievement of collective and regional defense against aggression and thus ease Germany's drive in the region, R. Palme Dutt, *World politics, 1918-1936* (New York: Random House, 1936), 258. Besides, in the aftermath of the German troops entry in Rhenania, Hitler wanted to counter the Locarno Treaty signatories' possible military reactions to the unilateral German violation of the agreements, Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *Istoria relațiilor internaționale 1919-1947*, Vol. I (București: Editura Științelor Sociale și Politice, 2006), 149.

⁴⁶ Constantin Vișoianu's dispatch no. 789 of 13.03.1936, in Constantiniu and Matei, 346.

⁴⁷ Synthesis of the Political Direction of the Romanian Foreign Ministry no. 6 of 1.04.1936, in *Ibid.*, 468.

discussed a Polish project to start relations between Poland and Lithuania.⁴⁸ They were, however, as Georg von Rauch has noticed, more in line with Polish interests than with Lithuania's, a new proof of the excellent relations existing between Estonia and Poland.⁴⁹ The results ran however contrary to the intentions according to the information possessed by the Romanian Legation in Warsaw, Lithuania eventually attempting to further improving its relations with the Soviet Union.⁵⁰

From these reports come out the interests of Romania in the first months of the opening of the diplomatic channel with Lithuania, and in this respect Lithuania's relations with the Soviet Union, Poland, the Baltic states and Germany are most significant.

When Titulescu was removed in August 1936 from the position of foreign minister, the Romanian-Lithuanian relations were already registering some measure of progress and one of the areas of common interest was the likelihood that the two countries will be part of the same camp in case of a European war. Titulescu's intimate dialogue with Litvinov and with the Soviet envoy to Bucharest M.S. Ostrowski drew the attention of all diplomatic circles and was perhaps a matter of interest in Kaunas in what direction the Romanian-Soviet and Romanian-Polish relations were heading. Titulescu's removal did not fundamentally change Romania's foreign policy on the short-term, but it did negatively affect the Romanian-Soviet relations. The new foreign minister Victor Antonescu assured the Auswärtiges Amt that Titulescu's pro-Soviet policy was the reason for his firing.⁵¹

In the Romanian-Lithuanian relations, on November 11, 1936 Vasile Stoica followed Văllimărescu as envoy to Baltic states, the Transylvanian diplomat being also appointed to Kaunas.⁵² It could not perhaps have been made a better choice as Stoica had already cooperated with Lithuanian representatives in the United States at the end of First World War. The new envoy presented his credentials to President Smetona on March 9, 1937 and Smetona thanked him very warmly for the support given to Lithuania in the United States in 1918. As a symbol of gratitude, General Vladas

⁴⁸ Synthesis of the Political Direction of the Romanian Foreign Ministry no. 9 of 15.05.1936, in *Ibid.*, 752-753.

⁴⁹ Georg von Rauch, *The Baltic States. The Years of Independence: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania 1917-1940* (London: C. Hurst, 1974), 185.

⁵⁰ Synthesis of the Political Direction of the Romanian Foreign Ministry no. 11 of 15.06.1936, in Constantiniu and Matei, 889.

⁵¹ Rebecca Haynes, *Politica României față de Germania între 1936 și 1940* (Iași: Polirom, 2003), 28.

⁵² An excellent monograph has been dedicated to Vasile Stoica by the Romanian historian Ioan Opreș, *Vasile Stoica în serviciul României* (București: Editura Oscar Print, 2008).

Nagevičius presented Stoica with a sculpture of a Lithuanian artist, Petervis. Stoica underlined in his speech and conversations what Romania and Lithuania had in common: fidelity to the League of Nations, respect to the national freedom of all peoples, attachment to the principles of collective security and reminded about the good relations between Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Moldova Principality during the Middle Ages.⁵³

Although not particularly satisfied with his posting in the frozen north, Stoica will be very actively promoting the relations with Lithuania. His aim was to improve Romania's relations with the countries situated in the area between the Baltic, Black and Egean seas, a task which required a "serious work" in order to reach "more profound relations" and "a frank and amiable cooperation with regard to mutually support each other in the economic field".⁵⁴ Stoica also strived, as he declared to the press, for a common awareness of the need to "intensify and deepen" these relations with the goal of "preserving their national and political independence".⁵⁵ Stoica also supported the enrichment of the Baltic libraries collection of books about Romania in order to counter the Hungarian revisionism in Latvia and Lithuania.⁵⁶ Anything can be said about Stoica's deeds, but that they lacked astute vision and understanding of the dangers and opportunities of this area. He was deeply aware of the little work done in order to implement the ideas he was striving for already in the last phases of the World War I based on domestic and international democracy, self-determination, rights for minorities, peace, compromise, regional cooperation and mutual understanding.⁵⁷

More importantly, the Romanian envoy wanted to use history in order to create that sort of basis for resetting the Romanian-Lithuanian relations on a favorable course. In January-February 1938, he held in Kaunas a series of four conferences about the medieval legend of Romanian origin of Lithuanians and Latvians, the Lithuanian relations with Moldova in the 14th and 15th centuries, the trade relations between the Black and the Baltic seas through Moldova in the 14th to 18th centuries and an overview of the Romanian history.⁵⁸ This was the first time a Romanian official pleaded for creating an arch over time for integrating the past and the present and the

⁵³ AMAE, folder 82, Lithuania, vol. 93, 4.

⁵⁴ ANIC, folder Vasile Stoica, file I/69, 12-13.

⁵⁵ Vasile Stoica's dispatch no. 86 of 27.02.1937 to V. Antonescu, AMAE, folder Latvia. Relations with other states.1920-1940, Vol. 8, 127-132.

⁵⁶ Vasile Stoica's dispatch no. 118 of 22.11.1937, *Ibid.*, 134.

⁵⁷ Opriș, 62-109; Silviu Miloiu, „Activitatea desfășurată de Vasile Stoica în S.U.A. pentru cooperarea națiunilor central și sud-est europene”, *Cercetări Istorice (Serie Nouă) XVIII-XX* (2002): 449-461.

⁵⁸ Vasile Stoica's dispatch no. 724 of 24.03.1937, ANIC, folder Vasile Stoica, file I/69, 34-35.

only Romanian conferences held in interwar Lithuania. In only a few years Lithuania will be annexed by the Soviet Union, as it also happened with Romania's eastern part, Bessarabia.

By then, Titulescu's eastern grand design was already history and his striving to avoid the outbreak of a new world war proved fruitless. The Romanian-Lithuanian relations were slowly progressing, but Central and Eastern Europe had done too little to be able to keep the great powers surrounding them at bay. Lithuania, which was integrated in Titulescu's new eastern policy as player in the French-Czechoslovakian-Soviet anti-German League, will be paradoxically incorporated by Soviet Union with the consent of Germany. Before befalling over Nazi Germany in 1945, the *Götterdämmerung* descended over the unhappy small and mid-sized nations in the area.

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Nicolae Titulescu's new Eastern policy and the upgrading of Romania's diplomatic ties with Lithuania

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DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERWAR EUROPEAN PERIPHERY: THE CASES OF ROMANIA AND LITHUANIA'S AGRICULTURE

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This paper has been presented at the First International Conference on Nordic and Baltic Studies in Romania: *Romania and Lithuania in the Interwar International Relations: Bonds, Intersections and Encounters* hosted by the Romanian Association for Baltic and Nordic Studies, Târgoviste, May 19-21, 2010.

Abstract:

In economic terms, the interwar European periphery was limited to underdeveloped, poor, and non-industrialized states. According to this definition, both Romania and Lithuania belonged between the two world wars to the periphery of the continent. The two countries approached the economic problem using similar instruments: radical agrarian reform, stress on exports, industrialization. Despite the industrial developments that Romania and Lithuania witnessed during the interwar years, they remained, throughout the period, essentially agrarian economies. Although both states had to start from a very under-developed agriculture that shared many similarities, Lithuania's interwar agriculture was eventually considered 'one of the most efficient in Eastern Europe', while Romania's remained highly 'inefficient and peasant'. Using the comparative historical analysis method and a similar-systems approach, this paper compares their problems, evaluates steps taken towards their solutions and reveals the different outcomes.

Rezumat:

Periferia europeană interbelică a fost limitată, din punct de vedere economic, la statele subdezvoltate, sărace și neindustrializate. Conform acestei definiții, atât România, cât și Lituania, în perioada interbelică, au aparținut periferiei Europei. Afectate de probleme economice similare, cele două state au răspuns cu măsuri similare: reforme agrare radicale, atenție deosebită acordată exporturilor, industrializare. În ciuda dezvoltării industriale pe care au experimentat-o atât România, cât și Lituania, în perioada dintre cele două războaie mondiale, amândouă au rămas state cu economii preponderent agrare. Măsurile luate în

domeniul dezvoltării agriculturii în aceste două state au avut însă rezultate semnificativ diferite. Spre sfârșitul perioadei interbelice, agricultura Lituaniei era caracterizată drept „una dintre cele mai eficiente din Europa de Est”, în vreme ce agricultura României a rămas „ineficientă și țărănească”. Folosind metoda analizei istorice comparative, acest studiu compară, evaluează și analizează evoluția agriculturilor României interbelice și Lituaniei interbelice, cu scopul identificării acelor variabile care explică eșecul celei dintâi și succesul, chiar dacă „succesul relativ”, al celei din urmă.

Keywords: interwar, Romania, Lithuania, agriculture, development, comparison

After the First World War, Romania and Lithuania found themselves, from the point of view of their agriculture too, in similar conditions. They both had been essentially agrarian societies, in need for agrarian reforms, with a large part of their population dependent for subsistence upon agriculture, while the agricultural sector had used primitive methods, with a low supply of machinery, fertilizers or chemicals. After the implementation of different agricultural reforms in the interwar years, by the end of the 1930s, Romania's agriculture was characterized by stagnation and failure, an 'inefficient and peasant agriculture'¹ – despite some progresses, while Lithuania's was considered, 'one of the most efficient in Eastern Europe'² – despite some shortcomings.

The systematic comparison of these two cases aims at explaining and identifying the causes of these different outcomes. Within this comparative analytical framework, a similar-systems approach is used, which refers to selecting cases that have 'numerous historical, social, and other contextual variables in common. These variables are then held constant, and the contextual variables that differ across the cases are analyzed with the expectation that they will explain differences in the outcome to be explained'.³ Analyzing qualitatively and quantitatively the profile of the two agricultures, this paper will present both their common and different traits in an attempt to identify the elements that explains the different outcomes despite the resembling starting conditions and the similar reforming measures.

¹ Keith Hitchins, „Romania”, *The American Historical Review* 97, No. 4 (Oct. 1992): 1071

² Richard Crampton and Ben Crampton, *Atlas of the Eastern Europe in the twentieth century* (London: Routledge, 1996), 97

³ Sunita Parikh, *The politics of preference: democratic institutions and affirmative action in the United States and India* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 13

Accepting Derek Howard Aldcroft's perspective, this paper defines the European periphery in economic terms, which limits the interwar periphery of the continent to the 'marginal or peripheral countries which failed to participate fully in the drive to modern economic growth through to 1914'. Thus, the European interwar periphery included underdeveloped, non-industrialized and poor countries, that by 1918 had one half or more of their population dependent on agriculture, and an income per capita of less than 50% of those of the advanced states of the western European core. According to this economic definition, both Romania and Lithuania belonged during the interwar period to the European underdeveloped periphery.⁴

After the First World War, Europe witnessed a political reconfiguration, and apart from Spain and Portugal, the interwar European peripheral states were newly constituted states as a result of the postwar agreements. In this context, Lithuania declared its independence from Russia on February 16, 1918, becoming a state quite small in terms of size and population. According to the 1923 census, Lithuania had 2,029,000 people⁵, and a territory of 55,670 square kilometers. In 1939, after the reintegration of the Vilnius region, according to Soviet estimation, Lithuania had about 2.9 million people.⁶ Although independent from 1877, in the aftermath of the Russian-Romanian-Ottoman war, Romania doubled its size and population through its unification with Banat, Transylvania, Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, and became the second largest state in Eastern Europe.⁷ From 130,177 square kilometers and over 7 million people in 1912, Romania became *Greater Romania* with 295,049 square kilometers and over 15.5 million people in 1920⁸, the tenth largest country in Europe, in terms of territory, and the eighth (in 1930), in terms of population.⁹

⁴ Derek Howard Aldcroft, *Europe's third world: the European periphery in the interwar years* (Aldershot- Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 1-3.

⁵ Piotr Eberhardt, *Ethnic groups and population changes in twentieth-century Central-Eastern Europe : history, data, analysis* (Armonk: Sharpe, 2003), 39-40

⁶ Joseph Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the two World Wars* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992), 368-369

⁷ R.J. Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century – And After* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 107

⁸ Rothschild, 281

⁹ Ion Alexandrescu, Ion Bulei, Ion Mamina and Ioan Scurtu, *Enciclopedia de Istorie a Romaniei* (Bucuresti: Meronia, 2000), 306

	Year	Territory km²	Population
Romania	1912	130,177	> 7 million
	1920	295,049	>15.5 million
	1930	295,049	> 18 million
Lithuania			
	1923	55,670	> 2 million
	1939		2.9 million

If Lithuania was a poor country in terms of natural resources, Romania was one of the most favored Eastern European states in this regard. Lithuania had been an agricultural land before the First World War and remained so during independence.¹⁰ Lowland plains and hilly uplands characterize the country's landscape. She has very few natural resources other than agricultural land (about two thirds of the country) and forests.¹¹ Romania, on the other hand, was richer in natural resources with valuable and easily accessible mineral resources¹², but despite this characteristic, she remained an agrarian economy and a peasant society throughout the interwar period.¹³

At the end of the war, Romania and Lithuania were agricultural societies, and the majority of the population was rural and worked in the agricultural sector. The emergence of the new East-European independent states provided the opportunity and the political and social necessity to adopt and implement radical agrarian reforms, which were initiated and managed by the state and driven both by political and economic objectives. In Lithuania, the moderate land reform involved expropriation of land, mostly from the large private estates, compensations and land redistribution. The recipients of the land were the landless peasants, soldiers that fought in the war, or smallholders able to demonstrate a need

¹⁰ Alfonsas Eidintas, 'The presidential republic', in *Lithuania in European politics : the years of the first republic, 1918-1940*, eds. Alfonsas Eidintas, Vytautas Žalys and Edvardas Tuskenis (New York : St. Martin's Press, 1999), 116.

¹¹ Centre for Co-operation with Non-members, *Investment guide for Lithuania* (Paris: OECD, 1998), 17

¹² In 1918, Romania was the world's fifth largest producers of oil, and the largest producer in Europe next to Russia. Robert Bideleux, Ian Jeffries, *A history of Eastern Europe. Crisis and change* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 126

¹³ Rothschild, 8-11

for more land. This process began in Lithuania in 1920-1922¹⁴ and by the end of the 1930 there were about 287,000 family farms. From 1,149 large estates with an average size of about 2,400 hectares that existed before the war, only 443 'large' estates with an average size of 247 hectares remained, while the average size of a peasant farm was of 15 hectares.¹⁵ Between 1923 and 1926, 38,700 landless peasants and 26,400 small landowners were given land. Thus, the number of the landowners of Lithuania grew with 18%, while 13% of the peasants added plots to their holdings. On average, new farmers received 9.4 hectares, and small holders 3.5 hectares.¹⁶ In Romania and Lithuania, the land reforms involved a whole-scale redistribution of land owned by a minority, in general members of the old ruling elite that in Lithuania held 40 % of the all cultivated land¹⁷, or 26.2% of the entire state's territory.¹⁸ The landowners were now perceived as oppressors of the peasants that had worked as agricultural laborers for them. In Romania, the large farms of more than 100 hectares represented 8.1 million hectares of agricultural land after the war. Due to the expropriation process, this number declined to 1.9 million hectares in 1930. However, if in Lithuania the average size of a farm was in 1930 of 15 hectares, in Romania in the same year it was of 3.8 hectares.¹⁹

According to Keith Hitchins, the main characteristic of the Romanian economy at the beginning of the 20th century was '*the peasant agriculture*, a system of production carried on by individual peasant families on small holdings'. The Romanian agriculture 'was primitive in technology and methods, and burdened by overpopulation and debt, conditions perpetuated in large measure by a concentration on the production of grain for export'.²⁰ Between 1917 and 1921, Romania implemented the most radical land reform in Eastern Europe, which gave

¹⁴ Alexandra Ashbourne, *Lithuania: the rebirth of a nation, 1991-1994* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 1999), 14

¹⁵ William H. Meyers and Natalija Kazlauskienė, „Land reform in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. A comparative analysis”, in ed. Stephen K. Wegren, *Land Reform in the Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1997), 87-88

¹⁶ Alfonsas Eidintas, „The nation creates its state” in Eidintas, Žalys and Tuskenis, 46.

¹⁷ Robert Gerwarth, *Twisted paths : Europe 1914-1945* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 274

¹⁸ Darunas Liekis, *1939: the year that changed everything in Lithuania's history* (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2010), 27

¹⁹ Centre for Cooperation with Non-members; Organization for Economic cooperation and development, *Review of agricultural policies. Romania* (Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2000), 75.

²⁰ Hitchins 1992, 1069

land to more than 1.4 million peasants. The agrarian laws implied expropriation of land, redistribution and reimbursement. When the land reform was complete, the government had distributed 5.8 million hectares of land (of which 3.7 million hectares arable land). Peasants owning 10 hectares, or less, controlled 60% of Romania's tilled land. Former owners (aristocracy, religious institution, foreign or domestic landowners) received for their expropriated land reimbursement in long-term bonds, while peasants were required to pay 65% of the expropriation costs over twenty years.²¹ However, the land reform aggravated a persistent problem – the fragmentation of land. The Law on agricultural reform passed on July 21, 1921 specified that only holdings of more than 100 hectares²² were to be expropriated, but that the agricultural land should not be divided into plots of less than two hectares (one hectare in mountain areas). Despite this provision, economic and demographic conditions determined the fragmentation of the plots. The rural population rose due to a high natural increase, and, having no other employment options, the small holders had to continue farming. As a result, small plots were divided between family members. Not only inheritance, but also the partial sales determined the further fragmentation of land. As a result, in 1930 farms of less than 10 hectares represented 90% of the total number of farms. To counteract land fragmentation, in 1937 was adopted a law stipulating that rural property should not be divided through selling or inheritance into plots of less than two hectares. The effects of this law were negligible.²³ Thus, the problem of small holdings characterized Romania's agriculture throughout the interwar period, and the development of Romania's agricultural sector was ultimately inefficient. The small plot could not economically sustain the family. According to estimation, while the average size plot of peasant land was of 3.8 hectares, a family to be economically independent needed a plot of minimum five hectares.²⁴ Adding to this elements the corruption and protracted lawsuits that followed the land reform, one could have the

²¹ Rachel Sabates-Wheeler, *Cooperation in the Romanian countryside : an insight into post-Soviet agriculture* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005), 9-10.

²² In 1926, The National Peasants Party wrote in its program about expropriating all holdings of over 100 hectares, but this measure was not carried out. Keith Hitchins, *Romania: 1866-1947* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 370

²³ *Review of agricultural policies. Romania...*, 75

²⁴ In Lithuania, a ten hectares plot was considered as the minimum sufficient to sustain a family. Alexander Statiev, *The Soviet counterinsurgency in the western borderlands*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 37

reasons which lead to its failure and to maintaining an un-egalitarian land ownership.²⁵

<i>Farm size in hectares</i>		<i>Lithuania in 1930 Percent of total farms</i>		<i>Romania in 1939</i>				
				<i>Percent of total farms</i>		<i>Percent of total arable land</i>		
< 5		18.6		< 1	18.5	1.6		
				1-3	33.6	11.1		
				3-5	22.8	15.3		
5-10		27.4		> 5				
10-50	10-15	51,2%	20.7				25.1	72
	15-20		11.5					
	20-30		11.8					
	30-50		7.2					
50 and over		2.8						

Source: Adapted from William H. Meyers and Natalija Kazlauskienė, “Land reform in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. A comparative analysis”, in Wegren, 88; and from Rachel Sabates-Wheeler, *Cooperation in the Romanian countryside: an insight into post-Soviet agriculture* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005), 10.

Despite the common feature represented by the fact that large estates were split up into peasant holdings, the emerging structure in Lithuania and Romania was different. In Lithuania – as well as in the other two Baltic states – the farming was organized in middle size peasant holdings of 10-50 hectares, while in Romania – as well as in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland – the polarization remained, with large estates on the one hand and small peasant holdings on the other.²⁶ Although after the implementation of the land reform, peasant properties of less than ten hectares represented in Romania over 60% of the arable land of the country, by 1939 about 50% of the arable land was own by 8% of the landowners. Many peasants lost their plots, or sold parts of them,

²⁵ Rachel Sabates-Wheeler, 9-10

²⁶ Ulf Jonsson, Anu-Mai Köll and Ronny Pettersson, „What is wrong with a peasant-based development strategy. Use and misuse of historical experiences”, *The transformation of rural society in the third world*, eds. Magnus Mörner and Thommy Svensson (London: Routledge, 1991), 71-72.

unable to pay the expropriation costs. Besides the excessive division of land, other problems such as overpopulation, lack of farm implements and draft animals, low supply of machinery, fertilizers, chemicals, seeds and breeding stock characterized Romania's interwar agriculture and resulted in keeping many of the rural inhabitants in poverty and ignorance.²⁷ From the moderate reforms governments did introduce in the interwar period in order to solve these problems – such as support for cooperatives, an expansion of rural credit, and the promotion of industrial crops – benefited almost exclusively the relatively small number of prosperous peasants.²⁸

In Lithuania, in 1930, about 51% of the land represented properties of 10 to 50 hectares, 45% properties of less than 10 hectares, and only 2.8% properties of over 50 hectares.²⁹ In 1939, the richest 2.6% of farms (over 50 hectares) owned 16.1% of the agricultural land, while the poorest 45.5% (less than 10 hectares) owned 17.2%.³⁰ Despite the land reform, by 1940 half of the Lithuanians had plots smaller than 10 hectares – the minimum sufficient to sustain a family – and survived by working as sharecroppers, while the landless agricultural workers represented 21.3% of the Lithuanian rural working population. In Romania, despite the land reform, many remained landless, or with plots of less than 5 hectares – the minimum sufficient to sustain a family. Moreover, the land reform was concerned only with the distribution of land. It did not provide the peasants with animals, tools, machines or credits that would have secured the efficiency of the agriculture, and in addition, the peasants were subjects to multiple local and national taxations, which diminished their net income.³¹

Following the land reform, the Lithuanian agricultural sector was dominated by middle-sized farms, which led to an increased productivity. Agriculture production included rye, oats, barley, wheat, potatoes and flax. Nevertheless, in response to demands in export markets, farmers gradually shifted from grain production to dairy products (bacon, sugar beets and fodder).³² As the structure of the agricultural production shifted emphasis from grain to livestock, incomes grew with the export of the agricultural products.³³ Prior to the land reform, the productivity rates were low and

²⁷ Sabates-Wheeler, 10.

²⁸ Hitchins 1992, 1069.

²⁹ Meyers and Kazlauskienė, 88.

³⁰ Statiev, 37.

³¹ Hitchins 1994, 354.

³² Eidintas, „The presidential republic”, 117.

³³ Eidintas, „The nation creates its state”, 50.

agricultural methods primitive.³⁴ About 60 % of the Lithuanian peasants lived in hamlets, and not in individual farmsteads, which negatively affected the agricultural productivity. In the areas where the individual farmsteads were predominant, the agricultural productivity was relatively higher than in the areas where the estates dominated. After the implementation of land reform, the hamlets disappeared and the agricultural productivity increased as the peasants learn to rely on their own talents.³⁵ In Romania, despite the climate and soil that favored the agriculture, and despite the size of land and population involved in agriculture, the productivity remained very low, representing only 48% of the European average.³⁶

At the beginning of the 1920s, the material basis for the Lithuanian agriculture was weak, by comparison with the Western states or even with the neighboring Latvia or Estonia. After the implementation of the land reform, for each 100 hectares of land there were 1.28kW of engine power (compared with over two in Estonia or Latvia). The absence of financial institution able to support peasants and agriculture affected the agricultural development. The solution provided to agriculture's problems was the cooperative movement. In 1927, there were 2,089 cooperatives concentrating in the agricultural sector and sales of production. The unions of cooperatives were heavily subsidized and supported by the state. The state support gave these monopolies the control over 80% of Lithuanian exports.³⁷ There were cooperatives in the fields of milk, sugar beet, meat, flax processing, as well as credits and insurance cooperatives.³⁸ Organizing the farmers in cooperatives represented a solution to a number of problems: the need to base the agricultural production on individual family holdings; the need of mechanization; the need to increase production. Many peasants had small farms and lots; many lived in remote settlements and had neither machinery, nor other means of production. Thus, the main benefit of the interwar cooperative was that it provided means of production for the farmers.

³⁴ Ashbourne, 14.

³⁵ Eidintas, „The nation creates its state”, 46.

³⁶ Rothschild, 285.

³⁷ Liekis, 28.

³⁸ Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nation, *Strengthening and developing voluntary farmers' organizations in Eastern and Central Europe* (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1994), 16.

In Romania, the origins of the cooperative movement, as in Lithuania, are to be found in the 19th century.³⁹ Peasants started to organize themselves into the so-called leasing cooperatives (*obsti de arendare*), especially after 1907, but the participants were the prosperous peasants, while the poor ones were not influenced or affected by the movement.⁴⁰ The law on the organization of cooperatives of March 28, 1929 was designed to encourage free association of peasants and to limit the control exercised over the cooperatives by the government. However, only the wealthy peasants could meet the requirements for becoming members in the cooperatives. Neither land-leasing cooperatives, nor those designed to encourage peasants to group their farms into single economic units and to work their land together were successful. Three main elements explain the failure of the cooperative movement in interwar Romania. First, the peasants were not prepared for this kind of measures, and they perceived the government attempts to organize smallholdings into cooperatives as instruments to deprive them from the land they obtained with great difficulty. Second, the law was addressing to the well-to-do peasants, the only who could make the contribution required for membership. And third, the cooperative movement was not adequately financed and supported by the state.⁴¹

In Lithuania, with the land reform, the large estates were replaced by progressive cooperative organizations of small producers. Encouraged by the state, the cooperatives played an important role in changing the production structure in agriculture, from cereals to dairy and livestock products which were exported (bacon, butter, eggs, meat).⁴² The cooperatives were widespread, efficient, and largely responsible for the fact that Lithuania produced in the interwar period 10% more food that she needed.⁴³ Romania's inability to change the structure of agricultural production was the main explanation for the agricultural stagnation according to Aldcroft. Romania continued to produce cereals, especially wheat and maize (82% of the total arable land was cultivated with cereals

³⁹ David Turnock, *The Romanian economy in the twentieth century* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 181-182.

⁴⁰ Hitchins 1994, 181-182.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 369-370.

⁴² Aldcroft, 101-102

⁴³ Crampton, 103-104

in 1938). In addition, government policy did little to assist agriculture that was mainly interested in encouraging industry.⁴⁴

After the war, the Romanian governments constantly encouraged the industrial development of the country, and by the end of the 1930s, the Romanian industry had the capacity to satisfy the domestic needs for textile, food or chemicals, but she had not the capacity to supply the machines and equipments needed in the industrial sector. Despite the industrial growth, the structure of economy did not change significantly, and by the end of the 1930s only 10% of the active population was engaged in industry. The Romanian market was unable to absorb the industrial or agricultural goods that her economy produced. Romania's population, consisting mainly of poor peasants, could not buy the industrial domestic products. The domestic market for the Romanian agricultural products was very small, therefore the agriculture had to export its large surplus of grain, and since the Romanian peasants were not in the position to buy the industrial domestic products, the Romanian industry too had to rely mainly upon exports. For instance, Romania exported 80% of its production of oil industry and 70% of the production of forestry industry.⁴⁵ In Lithuania, on the other hand, the industrial branches were oriented to the domestic market and were quite successful in producing basic consumer goods, while the luxury goods, machines and industrial equipments were imported.⁴⁶

Preserving the prewar patterns, Romania exported mainly grain, animals and wood. Together with oil, these made up to 90% of Romania's exports. Up to 1927, grain constituted 50% of Romania's total exports. During the depression and after, the export of grain decreased to an average of 25% per year, the Romanian government encouraging the export of petroleum products to compensate for the loss of grain markets. An agricultural country, Romania exported mainly raw materials at low prices and imported mainly industrial products at high prices.⁴⁷ Romania's economic relationship with Western Europe was clearly one of dependence. Essential to the country's well-being was the sale of large quantities of agricultural products and other raw materials. Dependence on

⁴⁴ See for instance, David Turnock, „The pattern of industrialization in Romania”, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 60, Issue 3 (Sep 1970): 540-559.

⁴⁵ Hitchins, 1994, 362-372.

⁴⁶ Eidintas, 'The presidential republic', 118.

⁴⁷ Hitchins 1994, 362-372

exports discouraged reforms in agriculture because it tended to reinforce the traditional structures of inefficient, peasant agriculture.⁴⁸

The lack of diversification of the Romanian economy diminished its ability to respond to the international depression. Largely dependent upon exports of grains, Romania was deeply affected by the collapse of the international market. In Western Europe, the prices of the agricultural products decreased, while new tariffs had been imposed on Romanian agricultural products in order to protect the domestic farmers.⁴⁹

During the entire interwar period, Lithuania tried to expand her relations with the western powers – Great Britain, France or Italy – but received little attention or support from them. With Great Britain, Lithuania developed important trade relations and, in the 1930s, the UK became her most important foreign trade partner, displacing Germany.⁵⁰ Lithuania exported especially agricultural products (bacon, butter, and eggs), processed food, flax and timber to Great Britain and Germany, and imported from them raw materials and manufactured goods. However, Lithuania maintained an even or favorable balance of trade, and between 1923 and 1930 the value of exports grew from 147 million litas to 333 million litas. In the 1920s, Lithuania exported mostly butter, livestock, timber, and flax; in the 1930s, the economy added meat and bacon to its main exports. Thus, in Lithuania, the foreign trade stimulated agriculture. In 1938 exports of livestock and livestock products represented 56% of total exports, butter exports increased from 524 tons in 1924 to 17,413 tons in 1939.⁵¹ Romania, on the other hand, maintained the prewar pattern, exporting mostly agrarian surpluses and mineral resources, trading little with her Eastern European political partners (Yugoslavia or Czechoslovakia).⁵² The most important trade partners for Romania in the interwar period were France, Great Britain, Italy and Germany.⁵³ Concerning the Romanian-Lithuanian economic relations during the interwar period, they were insignificant.⁵⁴

After the war, the Lithuanian governments started to put the basis of industry in Lithuania and to reorganize the agricultural sector. Between

⁴⁸ Hitchins 1992, 1071

⁴⁹ Hitchins 1994, 362-372

⁵⁰ Vytautas Žalys, „The return of Lithuania to the European stage“, in Eidintas, Žalys and Tuskenis, 64.

⁵¹ Eidintas, „The presidential republic“, 116-118.

⁵² Rothschild, 8-11.

⁵³ Crampton and Crampton, 119.

⁵⁴ Silviu Miloiu, *Romania si Tarile Baltice in perioada interbelica* (Targoviste: Cetatea de Scaun, 2003), 116.

1924 and 1939 the national income grew in average with 5% per year; the industrial production increased annually at about 7.5% and agriculture at slightly over 2%.⁵⁵ Although important, Lithuania's agricultural developments represented only a relative success. On the one hand, Lithuania exported as much butter per head as the Dutch and Irish, though not as much as the Danes, the Estonians and the Latvians. Lithuania's standard of living was higher than Poland's and substantially greater than the Soviet Union's. In addition, Lithuania's exports and imports by value per capita were relatively underdeveloped and her economy was heavily dependent on the export of processed farm products to a relatively limited number of western states. Productivity, although increased, remained lower than in the other Baltic States and represented only two thirds to three quarters of the average European figure in 1931-1935.⁵⁶ However, for Lithuania, the interwar years represented not a period of economic boom, since, according to Darunas Liekis, 'dependency on agricultural exports because of overproduction meant the whole economy relied on foreign policy and national economy priorities of the importers of Lithuanian produce.'⁵⁷

Both Romania and Lithuania remained essentially agrarian economies during the interwar period. One of the common economic features is represented by the fact that a large proportion of their population was dependent on agriculture for their subsistence. In Romania, according to the 1930 census, 78.2% of the population was dependent on agriculture, compared with 7.2% working in industry or 3.2% in trade. Romania's population was overwhelmingly rural. Out of the total population of 18,052,896, in 1930, 78.9% lived in villages.⁵⁸ Similarly, approximately 75% of Lithuania's population was dependent on agriculture, in 1923, and only about 10% worked in industry, commerce, transport, communication or credits.⁵⁹ In 1936, 77% of the active population in Lithuania worked in agriculture, 7% in industry, 2% in commerce, 1% in transportation and 13% in other economic sectors.⁶⁰ For comparison, the population dependent on agriculture represented in England and Wales 5% (1931), in Germany 20% (1933), in Austria 26% (1934), in France 28% (1934),

⁵⁵ Eidintas, „The presidential republic”, 116.

⁵⁶ Thomas Lane, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 13-14.

⁵⁷ Liekis, 28.

⁵⁸ *The 1930 Romanian census*, in Alexandrescu, Bulei, Mamina and Scurtu, 308, 326

⁵⁹ Lane, 9

⁶⁰ Crampton and Crampton, 97

in Denmark 30% (1930), in Sweden 30% (1930), in Yugoslavia 76% (1931).⁶¹ In the mid-1930s, about 85% of the Lithuanians were living in rural areas, while 'urban' meant officially a locality of over 2,000 people.

	Year	Population by economic sector (%)				
		Agriculture	Industry	Commerce and banking	Transportation, communications	Others
Romania	1930	78.2	7.2	3.2	1.7	9,7
Lithuania	1936	77	7	2	1	13

Despite the progresses, by western standards Romania and Lithuania's agriculture was highly inefficient during the interwar period. They were both heavily dependent on exports and therefore sensitive to the events in the international economy. The agriculture remained the main sector of the two economies, but the productivity remained low, the land was overpopulated and fragmented, the techniques and methods used were primitive, the population was ignorant, and the sector was not efficiently financed. The land reforms accelerated some problems, including the fragmentation of land. The main problem of the agriculture was to find solutions to raise its efficiency. Lithuania found the solution in product base diversification, the cooperative movement having an important part in making it viable. The specialization of production that characterized the Lithuanian agriculture in the interwar period, namely a concentration on dairy, meat and eggs production secured, according to some scholars, 'the great success story of the Lithuanian agriculture' after Lithuania's incorporation in the Soviet Union.⁶² Romania, on the other hand, maintained the prewar production pattern, and although adopted a series of measures designed to finance and make the sector efficient, their effects were negligible. Considering the low starting point and the performance of the other Eastern European countries, Romania included, Lithuania's interwar agriculture was 'one the most efficient in Eastern Europe', a 'relative success'. A relatively large number of bigger holdings, the

⁶¹ Dudley Kirk, *Europe's Population in the Interwar Years* (New York, Gordon and Breach, 1969), 200.

⁶² Lane, 78

cooperative movement and the government assistance helped to make Lithuanian agriculture one of the most successful in Eastern Europe. However, by Western standards, her agriculture remained highly inefficient. Romania's agriculture, on the other hand, was highly inefficient, by Western standards, by East-European standards, or even by Balkan⁶³ standards. The shortcomings of the Romanian agriculture were explained through a series of factors such as the limits of the land reform and its implementation, the growing of population, the fragmentation of the peasant property through partial sales and inheritance, the crisis in the international market, or the Romanian government priorities.⁶⁴ Derek Howard Aldcroft even concludes that the land reform was largely the cause of the poor performance of Romania in the agricultural sector in interwar Romania.⁶⁵

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⁶³ Aldcroft, 87. For Aldcroft the Balkan states were Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Albania and Romania, the Eastern Europe included Romania, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, while the Baltic States were treated separately. Aldcroft, 3-4

⁶⁴ Hitchins 1994, 353

⁶⁵ Aldcroft, 87

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HENRI H. STAHL'S CONCEPTION OF HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY AND THE BUCHAREST SCHOOL OF SOCIOLOGY

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This paper has been presented at the First International Conference on Nordic and Baltic Studies in Romania: *Romania and Lithuania in the Interwar International Relations: Bonds, Intersections and Encounters* hosted by the Romanian Association for Baltic and Nordic Studies, Târgoviste, May 19-21, 2010.

Abstract:

The Romanian school of sociology founded by Dimitrie Gusti was a favorable medium for elaborating theoretic ideas. The school became a cradle for at least two prominent theoreticians (Henri H. Stahl and Traian Herseni) whose conceptions are worth of attention not only from sociologists but for the theoretically minded historians, too. We should keep in our mind that according to the methodological attitudes of the Bucharest school field researches were highly encouraged. It means that any generalizations, theoretic suggestions or entire conceptions produced by the followers of Gusti were solidly based on empirical data. Stahl started to elaborate his conception of tributalism in the 1960s. Coincidentally, at this period the international discussion about the so-called Asiatic mode of production revived so the Stahl's theoretic ideas were well-timed. Stahl was not the only Romanian scholar who got involved in the discussion, but his conception was more original: according to him, tributalism should be treated as something different from Oriental despotism although there were some obvious similarities between the two. Despite the fact that the majority of Romanian historian community ignored the Stahl's innovative conception, there were some attempts in Romania as well as abroad to elaborate (Daniel Chirot) or at least to popularize (Miron Constantinescu, Constantin Daniel) his ideas.

Rezumat:

Școala românească de sociologie fondată de Dimitrie Gusti a avut consecințe majore și diverse nu numai asupra mediului academic, dar și asupra vieții sociale și politice din România, mai ales în perioada interbelică. Întrucât în acest articol mă voi referi în mod deosebit asupra aspectelor vizând mediul academic, pot menționa că din acest punct de vedere consecințele au fost chiar pe termen mai lung. Din acest punct de vedere, școala bucureșteană de sociologie poate fi tratată

ca un mediu favorabil pentru formularea și elaborarea perspectivelor teoretice. Aceasta a devenit leagănul formării a cel puțin doi teoreticieni proeminenți (Henri H. Stahl, Traian Herseni) ale căror concepții sunt demne nu numai de atenția sociologilor, dar și de a istoricilor cu aplecare către teorie. Trebuie să ne reamintim că potrivit aplecărilor metodologice ale școlii bucureștene, cercetările de teren erau puternic încurajate. Aceasta presupune că toate generalizările, sugestiile teoretice și concepțiile realizate de urmașii lui Gusti sunt bine susținute de date empirice. Această afirmație se încadrează foarte bine în concepția teoretică a lui Stahl. Sociologul român a început să-și elaboreze concepția sa asupra tributalismului în anii '60. Este tocmai perioada în care dezbateră internațională cu privire la așa-numitul mod asiatic de producție renăștea, așa încât ideile teoretice ale lui Stahl au fost binevenite. Stahl nu a fost singurul care s-a implicat în aceste dezbateri, acestuia adăugându-i-se cel puțin Ion Banu, Iosif Natansohn și Natalia Simion. Principalul avantaj al contribuției lui Stahl a fost mai multă originalitate: potrivit acestuia, tributalismul al trebui tratat ca fiind diferit față de despotismul oriental, deși au existat anumite similarități între acestea. În ciuda faptului că majoritatea comunității românești de istorici a ignorat concepția inovatoare a lui Stahl, au existat câteva încercări atât în România, cât și în străinătate de a elabora (Daniel Chirot) sau cel puțin de a populariza (Miron Constantinescu, Constantin Daniel) ideile sale.

Keywords: Romanian school of sociology, Dimitrie Gusti, H.H. Stahl, tributalism

The Romanian school of sociology founded by Dimitrie Gusti had various and considerable consequences not only for academic but also for the interwar social and political life of Romania. Because within the limits of the current paper I'm going to focus especially on the academic aspects, I can add that from this point of view the consequences were even more long-termed. First of all, as the American sociologist Bogdan Denitch (1929-) has once written, this school created in Romania „a well-developed prewar tradition of rural sociology of the French school“¹. The second important moment is that scholars which belonged to the Bucharest school of sociology were concentrated on research of village communities from the various points of view (social conditions, social activities etc.)². The result of those interdisciplinary researches was the publication of a series of monographs. Such a methodological strategy enabled to accumulate wide

¹ B. Denitch, „Sociology in Eastern Europe: Trends and Perspectives“, *Slavic Review* 30, no. 2 (1971): 329.

² More at Z. Rostás, „The Bucharest School of Sociology“, *Est Central Europe* 27, no. 2 (2000).

basis of empirical data concerning social reality of Romanian rural life in the present and the past³.

It is also important to emphasize that the Bucharest school of sociology was not only that institution which encouraged field researches, but it also became a favorable medium within which new theoretic ideas were formulated and elaborated. We can state without any hesitation that this school was a cradle for at least two prominent theoreticians (Henri H. Stahl, Traian Herseni) whose conceptions are worth of attention not only for pure sociologists but at least for theoretically minded historians, too. Keeping in our mind that field researches were highly encouraged, it is natural that in this case we deal not with speculative theoreticians but with those whose theoretic suggestions or entire conceptions are produced by generalizing numerous empirical data. This statement is especially applicable toward the theories of Stahl, whose role in this respect is the main topic of my paper.

Henri H. Stahl was one of the most prominent collaborators of Dimitrie Gusti and he participated actively in the vast interdisciplinary enterprise of creating monographs dedicated to Romanian villages⁴. Soon after the Second World War, he had already begun to elaborate generalizations⁵, but his work was interrupted by political reasons.

We should not forget that Stahl was a Marxist sociologist and so was his theory of historical sociology. That means that in order to estimate his theoretic contribution adequately, we should put it in an adequate theoretic context of main trends in Marxist historical sociology of a certain period. Stahl seriously started to clarify his theoretic ideas in the 1960s, when sociology in Romania has just revived as an academic subject. In late 1950s and first half of the 1960s the famous Romanian historical sociologist published a fundamental monograph in three volumes in which he represented the basic social structures of Romanian rural society in the most exhaustive way⁶.

³ More at A. Vosyliūtė, "Kaimo žmonės: problemos ir lūkesčiai", *Ekonomika ir vadyba: aktualijos ir perspektyvos* 11, No. 2 (2008), 258-259.

⁴ H. H. Stahl, dirigée par. *Nerej, un village d'une région archaïque* (Bucurest, 1939).

⁵ Stahl, *Sociologia satului devălmaș românesc* (Bucurști, 1946).

⁶ Stahl, *Contribuții la studiul satelor devălmașe românești*, vol. 1-3 (București, 1958-1965). In 1969, an abridgement of Stahl's work was published in French: *Les anciennes communautés villageoises roumaines; asservissement et pénétration capitaliste* (Bucurest, Paris, 1969). In 1980, an American sociologist Daniel Chirot (with his wife) translated this abridgement into English: *Traditional Romanian village communities: the transition from the communal to the capitalist mode of production* (Cambridge, 1980a).

I would like to remind readers that exactly in late 1950s a new wave (the so called second round⁷) of discussion about the ambiguous Marx's concept of the *Asiatic mode of production* was revived. In 1957 Karl August Wittfogel (1896–1988) published his widely famed and much criticized book „Oriental despotism“⁸. In the same year, a historian from Eastern Germany Elisabeth Charlotte Welskopf (1901–1979) published a book about social relations in the Ancient East and Greek-Romanian world.⁹ Additionally, the Russian non-orthodox Marxist theoretician Yuriy Semionov (1929–) published an article in which he criticized the official Marxist-Leninist unilinear schema of socioeconomic formations.¹⁰ The texts mentioned above and the subsequent ones provoked a vivid discussions for many years in the European communist countries and the USSR as well as among Western Marxist historians and anthropologists. Some Romanian scholars also got actively involved into the discussion (besides Stahl himself, I can enumerate at least three more: Ion Banu, Iosif Natansohn, Natalia Simion¹¹) and attitudes as well as ideas of some of them were known far beyond Romanian border¹². In this context, I should state that the contribution of „national margins“ of the USSR to this international academic Marxist issue was very modest. Actually, there were no simultaneous texts of Lithuanian historians considering the subject at all. Only in the 1980s the first very cautious and indirect attempt to deal with

⁷ „The first round“ took place in 1920s – 1930s. For more information look: A. M. Bailey and J. L. Llobera, eds. *The Asiatic Mode of Production: Science and Politics* (London, Boston, 1981), J. Bratkiewicz, *Teoria przedkapitałistycznej formacji społecznej w kulturach orientalnych: interpretacja badań i polemik* (Wrocław, Warszawa, Kraków, Gdańsk, Łódź, 1989), 134-171, Ю. И. Семёнов, *Политарный («азиатский») способ производства: Сущность и место в истории человечества и России* (Москва, 2008), 330-332, В. Н. Никифоров, *Восток и всемирная история* (Москва, 1975), 171-181.

⁸ K. A. Wittfogel, *Oriental despotism; a comparative study of total power* (Yale University Press, 1957).

⁹ E. C. Welskopf, *Die Produktionsverhältnisse in Alten Orient und in der griechisch-römischen Antike. Ein Diskussionsbeitrag* (Berlin, 1957).

¹⁰ Ю. И. Семёнов, „К вопросу о первой форме классового общества (в порядке дискуссии)“, *Учёные записки Красноярского государственного педагогического института* 3, вып. 1 (1957).

¹¹ I. Banu, „Asupra formațiunii sociale „asiatice“, *Revista de filozofie* 13, № 2-3 (1966): 213-229, 319-335, Banu, „Asupra formațiunii sociale tributare („asiatice“)“, in *Sensuri universale și diferențe specifice în filozofia Orientului Antic*, ed. I. Banu (București, 1967), vol. 1, 15-36; I. Natansohn and N. Simion, „Despre existența așa-numitului „mod de producție asiatic“, *Revista de filozofie* 13, № 2-3 (1966): 228-238.

¹² For example, the famous Arabian-French Marxist scholar and ideologist Samir Amin criticized Ion Banu's conception of Asiatic mode of production (tributarism). S. Amin, *Class and Nation, Historically and in the Current Crisis* (New York, London, 1980), 68-69.

the issue occurred¹³ and only in the late 1980s and in the 1990s the idea was considered and advocated in a series of articles written by two Lithuanian historians: Alfredas Bumblauskas (1956–) and Edvardas Gudavičius (1929–)¹⁴. Concerning the Moldavian contribution to the issue of the Asiatic mode of production it was quite late and modest either but, on the other hand, very original. In the 1970s the prominent Moldavian medieval historian Pavel Sovetov (1927–1991) created the conception of the „typological row of feudalism“ as a response to the idea of the Asiatic mode of production which he rejected¹⁵. Despite the fact that officially Sovetov declared his hostility toward the conception of the Asiatic mode of production¹⁶, the alternative conception which he proposed in general was very akin to the previous one.

Keeping in our minds all this international context we can return to Stahl's theoretic conceptions. At first, having enormous quantity of empirical data about Romanian village communities at his disposal the Romanian historical sociologist introduced a theoretic approach which

¹³ E. Gudavičius, „Europos ikifeodalinė visuomenė (tarybinė istoriografijos duomenys)“, *Lietuvos TSR Mokslų Akademijos darbai*. A serija, 85, t. 4 (1983): 82-90.

¹⁴ A. Bumblauskas, „Kur buvo Lietuva feodalizmo epochoje?“, in *Europa 1988: Lietuvos persitavarkymo sąjūdžio almanachas* (Vilnius, 1989), 153-172; E. Gudavičius, „Visuomenės formacijos“, *Lietuvos žinios* 1 (1991); Gudavičius, „Lietuvos kelias į pasaulio istoriją“, *Lietuvos istorijos studijos* 2 (1994): 94-100; Gudavičius, „Pastumtos kortų kaladės“ dėsnis“, *Lietuvos istorijos studijos* 4 (1997): 35-43.

¹⁵ П. В. Советов, „Общее и особенное в типологии феодализма на Руси и в Дунайских княжествах (проблема «государственного феодализма» и его роли в период генезиса, развития и разложения феодальной формации)“, *Известия академии наук Молдавской ССР*. Серия общественных наук 2 (1986): 51-57, 3 (1986): 42-49; Советов, „Общее и особенное в развитии феодализма в Молдавии в сравнение с Россией и другими странами Европы и Азии (проблема «государственного феодализма», государственной собственности и эксплуатации)“, В *Общее и особенное в развитии феодализма в России и Молдавии. Проблемы государственной собственности и государственной эксплуатации (ранний и развитой феодализм): чтения, посвященные памяти академика Л. В. Черепнина. Тезисы докладов и сообщений*, Кишинев, 5-7 апреля 1989 (Москва, 1988), 76-91; Советов, „Типологические пути развитого феодализма и турецкое завоевание Юго-Восточной Европы (к вопросу о типологических сдвигах в Молдавии)“, В *Юго-Восточная Европа в эпоху феодализма. Резюме докладов Кишинёвского симпозиума 1973 г.* (Кишинёв, 1973), 84-93; Советов, „Типологические аспекты молдавского феодализма (в период турецкого ига и в проектах вступлении в подданство России, Польши и Австрии)“, В *Карпато-Дунайские земли в средние века* (Кишинёв, 1975), 125-197; Советов, „Общее и особенное в развитии форм молдавского феодализма (какова была в XVI – начале XVIII в. основная тенденция развития податного иммунитета)“, В *Молдавский феодализм. Общее и особенное (история и культура)* (Кишинёв, 1991), 149-212.

¹⁶ Советов 1988, 78-80.

could explain the peculiarities of Romania's pre-capitalist society¹⁷ in more adequate way than the orthodox unilinear Marxist schema which prevailed in Romanian historiography of that time (the 1960s). Stahl consistently criticized the prevailing trend of Romanian historiography and rejected the interpretation of Romanian pre-capitalist society as feudal¹⁸. In the 1970s – early 1980s Stahl further elaborated and universalized his conception of tributalism¹⁹.

The Romanian scholar has distinguished five „classic“ formations (primitive communal, slave, feudal, capitalist, socialist)²⁰. Additionally, Stahl tends to differentiate one more: oriental despotism²¹. The Romanian sociologist categorically opposed the unilinear approach to social development. He also criticized the determinist approach to social evolution, i.e. the statement that every society moves by the only possible way toward capitalism²². According to Stahl, the fact that feudalism is located chronologically exactly before capitalism does not mean in itself that feudalism is pre-capitalist, i.e. that it evolves inevitably toward capitalism²³. In Stahl's opinion this course occurred only in some regions of the world (Western Europe) and under specific circumstances which are external in respect of feudalism (industrial revolution, colonial policy, primary accumulation of capital)²⁴. Therefore, he supports the view that alternative ways of social evolution exist²⁵. According to Stahl, if one wants to interpret social history adequately from the point of view of historical materialism, one should research every case as thoroughly as possible and separate technological processes from relations of production (modes of exploitation)²⁶.

¹⁷ H. H. Stahl, *Contribuții la studiul satelor devălmașe românești*. Vol. 3: *Procesul de aservire feudală a satelor devălmașe* (București, 1965), 7-26; Stahl 1969 (see also the English translation of Stahl's work: Stahl 1980a, 12-33, 211-220).

¹⁸ H. H. Stahl, *Controverse de istorie socială românească* (București, 1969), 62-123.

¹⁹ H. H. Stahl, „Comentarii la problema „orînduirii tributale românești“, *Viitorul social* 6, № 4 (1977): 702-710; Stahl, „Analiza sociologică a orînduirii „tributale“ românești“, *Viitorul social* 7, № 3 (1978): 534-541; Stahl, *Teorii și ipoteze privind sociologia orînduirii tributale* (București, 1980b); Stahl, „Note pentru o sociologie a feudalismului românesc“, *Viitorul social. Revistă de sociologie și științe politice* 10, no. 4 (1981): 699-706.

²⁰ Stahl 1980b, 26.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 191.

²² *Ibid.*, 52-56.

²³ *Ibid.*, 190.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 51.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 56-58.

²⁶ H. H. Stahl, *Probleme confuze în istoria socială a României* (București, 1992), 58.

Stahl states that mode of production should not be confused with socio-economic formation. The Romanian scholar underlines that there are three social phenomena which should not be merged: mode of production (*mod de producție*), mode of production's exploitation (*mod de exploatare a producției*) and type of formation (*tip de orânduire*)²⁷. In case of capitalism, mode of production and mode of exploitation are intermingled in an indistinguishable way, but in other cases they are separate phenomena²⁸. For example, according to Stahl, in case of tributalism „tributal mode of production“ does not exist (the communal mode of production prevails instead²⁹) – there is only a „tributal mode of exploitation“³⁰. The Romanian scholar also argues that even several modes of production coexist within the same formation but one of them is dominant³¹. The mode of exploitation of the dominating mode of production determines the type of formation. In some cases, the prevailing mode of production remains the same despite the fact that modes of exploitation change³².

Stahl is also inclined to emphasize the importance of mode of exploitation from another point of view. He insists that to explain the rotation of formations only by a shift of corresponding modes of production means a vulgarization of materialistic approach to historical development. He gives an example of such an interpretation. Since the base of peasant's exploitation is their bounding to ground, tithe and corvée some historians treat the societies in which the enumerated phenomena exist as feudal. The Romanian scholar produces a counterargument stating that these forms of exploitation can also be found in ancient Roman and in late Byzantine societies (i.e. so called *colonatus*) but, according to Stahl, one does not treat these societies as feudal. In case of the genuine feudalism, in Stahl's opinion, the forms of peasant's exploitation already mentioned coexist with a ruling class which is consolidated in a shape of feudal ladder based on seignior-vassal relations. These feudal lords have their own economic base which should be differentiated from the mode of production. According to Stahl, it is this structure which constitutes the mode of exploitation in case of feudalism. This is a social aspect of formation which should be treated as an element of superstructure³³.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 173.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 58.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 174.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 173.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 59-60, 173.

³² *Ibid.*, 173-174.

³³ *Ibid.*, 62.

In addition to the six „fundamental“ formations³⁴ that have been mentioned before, the Romanian scholar distinguishes one more which he names as tributal (orînduirea tributală). Stahl treats it as a variant of oriental despotism³⁵. The latter differs from tributalism, first, by the functions of state. In case of oriental despotism, state interferes more into the life of direct producers by organizing large-scale public works (building and maintaining the irrigation system etc). On the other hand, communities of direct producers in both cases are exploited by raising a tribute³⁶. This characteristic is common to both subtypes of the formation. Nevertheless, in case of tributalism the communities of direct producers are considerably less controlled by state (ruler). This is the main difference between oriental despotism and tributalism.

The Romanian sociologist also produced a wider definition of tributal mode of exploitation in his main theoretical work. These are its main characteristics according to him:

1. Ruling class appropriates surplus product from villages possessing property in common (satele devălmașe) in a centralized way;
2. Appropriation of the surplus product takes the form of tribute since quantity of extracted product and terms are fixed in advance and extracted products go directly to ruler's treasury at first;
3. Rights of ruling class are entirely fiscal and exploitation is purely parasitic because exploiters do not intervene into the process of production at all³⁷.

According to my analysis of Karl Marx's texts, there are two important points when one attempts to define the type of social structure of any society from the Marxist point of view:

1. The aspect of exploitation of mode of production is manifested as a direct relation between owners of production conditions and direct producers;
2. Relation of subjugation and domination (mode of exploitation) is manifested as property relation which in its turn should be understood as socioeconomic power (which permits to realize one's title toward any property)³⁸.

Let me consider now to what degree Stahl's definition of tributal mode of exploitation is acceptable and sufficient from the Marxist point of view.

³⁴ I.e. primitive communal, slave, feudal, capitalist, socialist and oriental despotic/Asiatic.

³⁵ Stahl 1980b, 191.

³⁶ Ibid., 156-160.

³⁷ Stahl 1980b, 192.

³⁸ N. Babinskas, "Concept of tributalism: a comparative analysis of S. Amin, J. Haldon and H.H.Stahl's approaches", *Revista Română pentru Studii Baltice și Nordice* 1 (2009): 77-80.

We should keep in mind the conclusions drawn after reconstructing Marx's conception of mode of production (which includes mode of exploitation as an essential element of it)³⁹. First, I can make out the relation between exploitative subject and productive/obligatory unit from Stahl's definition. Second, I will consider the relation between means of production and a direct producer: the relation is not direct but mediated by community. Third, a ruling class consists of ruler's agents entirely; their social power is determined by status. Thus, according to my classification of modes of production⁴⁰, one can find all necessary characteristics of mode of production in Stahl's definition of tributal mode of exploitation.

Now let's proceed to the critique of some points of Stahl's conception. It is the concept of formation (orînduire) which is the most important one in Stahl's works. As it was already mentioned above, it includes both mode of production (mod de producție) as technical processes of production (what I tend to name productive/obligatory unit⁴¹) and mode of exploitation, i.e. mode of surplus product extraction, as well as some social structures which, according the Romanian sociologist, are no less important when one wants to identify a type of formation (for example, feudal hierarchy based on seignior-vassal relations in case of feudalism⁴²). The latter are elements of superstructure⁴³. Mode of exploitation, according to Stahl, determines a type of formation since mode of production is able to endure for a long time without any changes, meanwhile modes of exploitation change. According to Stahl, there are, first, technical processes which include the concept mode of production (also labor organization since Stahl talks about mode of production of villages possessing common property [sat devălmaș], i.e. productive/obligatory unit). An American historian and Marxist theoretician of British origin John Haldon considers such a

³⁹ See *Ibid.*, 77-80.

⁴⁰ Here is my classification of pre-capitalist mode of production:

1. Owner of land is a ruler/state and productive/obligatory unit is a community of Asiatic/Slavonic type;
2. Owner of land is a ruler/state and productive/obligatory unit is an individual household of direct producer;
3. Owners of land are private and productive/obligatory unit is a community of Asiatic/Slavonic type;
4. Owners of land are private and productive/obligatory unit is an individual household of direct producer (see *Ibid.*, 80).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁴² The approach to feudalism as an hierarchic structure based on seignior-vassal relations was criticized very convincingly by British medievalist Susan Reynolds, see *Fiefs and Vassals: the Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford University Press, 1994).

⁴³ About importance of this element look: see Stahl 1992, 62.

definition of mode of production as misleading. I tend to agree with Haldon. It is a so-called fetishizing of organizational forms. The conception of mode of production of this kind includes only a productive unit and excludes any wider set of relations of production⁴⁴. As already mentioned before, Stahl treats mode of exploitation as the most important element of *formation* that determines the type of formation. Conversely, Haldon considers mode of exploitation as the most important element of *mode of production* which determines the type of mode of production. The latter conception of mode of production (as my analysis of Marx's concept of mode of production has shown⁴⁵) is more similar to the conception of Marxism founder.

Despite the fact that the majority of Romanian historians ignored the innovative conception of Stahl, nevertheless there were some attempts in Romania as well as abroad to elaborate (Daniel Chirot) or at least to popularize (Miron Constantinescu⁴⁶, Constantin Daniel⁴⁷, Liviu Ștefănescu⁴⁸) his ideas. No doubt, the most interesting case is the book of American sociologist Daniel Chirot (1942–) published in the 1970s in which he made the original attempt to reinterpret social history of Valahia in the period 1250–1914⁴⁹. In his work, Chirot combined both Marxist methodologies (the theory of modes of production and world-system approach). His typology of early Valahia's social structure (the communal-trading political economy) was based on the Stahl's interpretation of social reality of Romanian ancestors⁵⁰. The importance and relevance of Chirot's text has been emphasized by the translator of his book into Romanian, Victor Rizescu⁵¹.

Nevertheless, the Romanian historians persisted to ignore the conception of American sociologist almost in the same way as they did

⁴⁴ J. Haldon, *The State and the Tributary Mode of Production* (London, New York, 1993), 53.

⁴⁵ See Babinskas, 77-80.

⁴⁶ M. Constantinescu, "Despre formațiunea social-economică tributară", *Probleme economice* 4 (1973): 51-68; Constantinescu, "Modul de producție tributar și orînduirea tributară", *Probleme economice* 11 (1972): 28-44; Constantinescu, *Schița unei teorii marxiste a formațiunii social-economice tributare* (București, 1974).

⁴⁷ C. Daniel, "Modul de producție tributar în Sumer" in Daniel, *Civilizația sumeriană* (București, 1983), 56-66.

⁴⁸ L. Ștefănescu, "Modul de producție feudal pe pămîntul românesc. Esența și aparențe", *Hierasus* 5 (1983): 279-296.

⁴⁹ D. Chirot, *Social Change in a Peripheral Society: the Creation of a Balkan colony* (New York, 1976).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 15-35.

⁵¹ V. Rizescu, "Postfață", in D. Chirot, *Schimbarea socială într-o societate periferică. Fomarea unei colonii balcanice* (București, 2002), 287-308.

with Stahl's. Only some economic historians which propagate Wallerstein/Braudel's approach to history dealt with Chirot's work and kept in their minds his views on early Valahian history⁵². This must be welcomed as an important trend in the contemporary Romanian historiography. Nevertheless, in my opinion, a combination of the two Marxist methodologies as proposed by Chirot is a more perspective way of reinterpretation. On the other hand, without any serious discussions about the pre-capitalist modes of production in medieval Valahia or Moldova one cannot treat the classic Marxist approach as being exhausted.

In conclusion, Stahl's conception of tributalism is an original and valuable contribution to the Marxist theory of history and a productive attempt to interpret the specific case of solitary society in a non-dogmatic way. It is vexatious and regrettable that any serious discussion about Stahl's conception of tributalism never took place in the Romanian historiography. It is even sadder and annoying that Chirot's (who treated H. H. Stahl as his teacher) conception was in general ignored in Romanian historiography either. Such an inertia and conservatism made a serious obstacle for Romanian historiography to revive from the Marxist theoretic and conceptual point of view.

No doubt, a wider discussion about Stahl's and Chirot's conceptions would have contributed to a reconsideration of the interpretations of the structure of pre-capitalist Romanians societies in more adequate and less dogmatized or clichéd way.

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⁵² F. Bonciu and B. Murgescu, "The World-Approach and Romanian Economic History", *Revue Roumaine d'histoire* 29, № 3-4 (1990): 275-289; *Ibid.*, "Considerații asupra abordării mondiale a proceselor istorico-economice", *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie A. D. Xenopol* 30 (1993): 523-547; B. Murgescu, *Istorie românească – istorie universală (600-1800)*. Ediția a II-a revăzută și adăugită (București, 1999), 42-49, B. Murgescu and F. Nițu, "Lumea românească în economia europeană până la 1859", in *Procesul de integrare a României în economia europeană Dimensiuni istorice și contemporane*, ed. Maria Mureșan (București, 2008), 17-47.

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THE POLISH-LITHUANIAN CRISIS OF MARCH 1938. SOME ROMANIAN AND WESTERN REACTIONS

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Abstract:

In March 1938, when the eyes of the entire Europe were trained on the events in Austria that culminated with the Anschluss, there was another conflict on the European continent that bothered the Western powers, and not only. On March 17, 1938 the Polish minister at Tallinn handed to the Lithuanian minister in the capital of Estonia a notification through which Warsaw asked Lithuania to establish immediate diplomatic relations without prior conditions. The Polish government considered this the only way to solve the problems related to the border between the two states without jeopardizing the peace. Lithuania had 48 hours after the delivery of the notification to accept the proposal without any debate or negotiation. Its rejection would have given Warsaw the right to ensure its objectives and interests by any means it deemed necessary. Great Britain and France reacted cautiously to this new crisis, hoping for a peaceful solution, in order to avoid the involvement of the League of Nations or the escalation of the events towards an open conflict between the two states. In its turn, Romania, as an ally of Poland, refrained from a possible involvement or condemnation of Warsaw's actions, a fact for which the Polish diplomats expressed their gratitude. But even if Lithuania conceded and the crisis died out, the Western countries, as well as Romania, had certain anxieties raised by the Polish-Lithuanian crisis which were to come true a year later. Poland's actions in March 1938 had created a precedent that other powers did not hesitate to follow and the country that, in the end, would lose everything was Poland itself.

Rezumat:

În momentul în care în martie 1938 privirile întregii Europe erau ațintiți asupra evenimentelor din Austria care au culminat cu realizarea Anschlussului, a mai existat un conflict pe continentul european care a nemulțumit puterile occidentale, și nu numai. La 17 martie 1938 ministrul polonez la Tallinn i-a înmănat

omologului său lituanian o notă prin care Varșovia solicita Lituaniei stabilirea imediată de relațiile diplomatice fără nicio condiție prealabilă. Guvernul polonez a considerat aceasta singura cale de a rezolva problemele legate de frontiera dintre cele două state fără a pune pacea în pericol. Lituania avea la dispoziție numai 48 de ore de la transmiterea notei pentru a accepta propunerea fără nicio discuție sau negociere. Respingerea sa ar fi dat Varșoviei dreptul de a-și asigura obiectivele și interesele prin orice mijloace pe care le considera necesare. Marea Britanie și Franța au reacționat cu prudență cu privire la această nouă criză, sperând într-o soluție pașnică, în scopul de a evita implicarea Societății Națiunilor sau escaladarea evenimentelor în direcția unui conflict deschis între cele două state. La rândul său, România, aliată a Poloniei, s-a abținut de la orice implicare sau condamnare a acțiunilor Varșoviei, poziție pentru care diplomații polonezi și-au exprimat gratitudinea. Dar chiar dacă Lituania a cedat și criza a încetat, țările occidentale, la fel ca și România, au nutrit anumite neliniști alimentate de criza polonezo-lituaniană, care se vor adevăra un an mai târziu. Acțiunile Poloniei din martie 1938 au creat un precedent pe care alte puteri nu vor ezita să-l urmeze, iar țara care, în final, va pierde totul va fi chiar Polonia.

Keywords: Poland, Lithuania, ultimatum, international crisis, Romania, Western Europe

After a rapid succession of political events in 1935-1936, 1937 was a relatively quiet year in Europe, with the rather isolated exception of the Spanish civil war. But things were about to change completely a year later, in 1938, which bore the mark, first of all, of two events that anticipated the evolution of European politics towards a great conflict: the *Anschluss* and the Sudeten crisis.

The Germans seemed prepared in the spring of 1938 to modify the national borders as established by the Treaty of Versailles. Thus, after they made certain of enlisting the support of Italy and the neutrality of Poland¹, on March 12, 1938, after a whole month of tensions and threats, the German troops crossed the border with Austria almost immediately after Berlin had addressed Vienna an ultimatum². The fact that, the day before, Great Britain had objected in most categorical terms against the German ultimatum and against the threat of using force if the requests made by

¹ Emilian Bold and Ioan Ciupercă, *Europa în derivă (1918-1940). Din istoria relațiilor internaționale [Europe Adrift (1918-1940). From the History of International Relations]* (Iași: Demiurg Publishing House, 2001), 196.

² Henry Kissinger, *Diplomația [Diplomacy]*, Trans. Mircea Ștefanescu and Radu Paraschivescu (Bucharest: All Publishing House, 1998), 282.

Berlin were not satisfied at once, had no effect³. In spite of having generated a profound concern in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe, the German action in Austria determined nothing else but protests and indignation in Great Britain, even if the final events of the Austrian crisis and Berlin's enforcement of the *Anschluss* took Europe by surprise⁴. As for the rest, nothing had changed. The British government did not even consider bringing into discussion the events in Austria before the League of Nations, reasoning that such a gesture would be completely useless⁵. This time the French agreed with the British. In their turn, they also thought that to put into motion the bureaucratic apparatus of the League would have been pointless⁶.

Coincidence or not⁷, during the crisis in Austria, there was another conflict in Europe that bothered the Western powers. On March 17, 1938, the Polish minister at Tallinn handed to the Lithuanian minister in the capital of Estonia a notification through which Warsaw asked Lithuania to establish immediate diplomatic relations without prior conditions. The Polish government considered this the only way to solve the problems related to the border between the two states without jeopardizing the peace. Lithuania had 48 hours after the notification was delivered to accept the proposal, and the mutual accreditation of diplomats had to take place until March 31, 1938 at the latest. The Polish proposal was not open for debate or negotiations and its rejection would have given Warsaw the right to ensure its objectives and interests by any means it deemed necessary⁸. Moreover, the Poles asked the Lithuanian government to open a railroad immediately and to resume the postal relations between the two countries, to reach a mutual understanding regarding the issues related to minorities, to sign a trade and customs agreement, to revoke the articles in the

³ E.L. Woodward and Rohan Butler, eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939* (hereinafter, D.B.F.P.), Third Series, vol. I, 1938 (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1949), doc. no. 39, 18-19.

⁴ Bentley B. Gilbert, *Britain Since 1918* (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row Publishers, 1967), 107.

⁵ D.B.F.P., Third Series, vol. I, 1938, doc. no. 57, 32.

⁶ *Ibid.*, doc. no. 72, 41-42.

⁷ See Anthony Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland 1921-1939. The Crisis of Constitutional Government* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 475.

⁸ Kenneth Bourne, D. Cameron Watt and Michael Partridge, general eds., *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print* (hereinafter, B.D.F.A.), Part II: *From the First to the Second World War*, Series F, *Europe, 1919-1939*, vol. 66, *Scandinavia and Baltic States, January 1938 - December 1938* (University Publications of America, 1996), doc. no. 32, 33.

Lithuanian Constitution that named Vilna [today Vilnius] the capital of the country and to urgently settle all border-related disputes⁹.

Apparently, the Polish ultimatum was the result of a controversial incident that took place at the Polish-Lithuanian border, somewhere near Transninkai, on the morning of March 11, when the Lithuanian border police shot a Polish guardian. In general, this type of incidents was solved within meetings between the local authorities. Such meetings took place with this occasion as well, the commander of the Polish troops in the region admitting to the fact that the unfortunate soldier who lost his life crossed, by mistake, the border between the two states¹⁰. Even under these circumstances, the Lithuanian authorities asked Warsaw to further discuss the matter in order to find alternatives and procedures that, in the future, would prevent other such incidents happening¹¹. As for the Polish party, the authorities in Warsaw apparently reacted disproportionately, giving the incident in Transninkai the significance of a challenge presented by Lithuania¹². Such a challenge could not be ignored, the direct consequence being the Polish ultimatum. The explanations of this gesture in historiography are diverse, but the most plausible seems to be that the Polish government tried to strengthen its position in front of Germany, which was more and more aggressive in its foreign policy, as Berlin also benefited from the "understanding" of the conciliatory Western powers¹³. Moreover, in its turn, the vicinity with the Soviet Union made the Polish leaders choose a certain expansionary policy and create influence areas to counterbalance, as much as possible, the eventual German and/or Soviet danger¹⁴.

Faced with Warsaw's ultimatum, the Lithuanians hesitated at first. Through their minister in Paris, they tried to contact the Polish

⁹ Ibid., doc. no. 34, 35. These additional requests were included in an annex to the Polish ultimatum. See the complete text in Robert A. Vitas, „The Polish Ultimatum to Lithuania. The Dispatch of Lithuanian Minister J. Baltrušaitis in Moscow”, *Lituanus. Lithuanian Quarterly Journal of Arts and Sciences* 31, No. 4 (Winter 1985), note no. 23, http://www.lituanus.org/1985/85_4_02.htm (April 12, 2010).

¹⁰ Robert A. Vitas, „The Polish-Lithuanian Crisis of 1938. Events Surrounding the Ultimatum”, *Lituanus. Lithuanian Quarterly Journal of Arts and Sciences* 30, No. 2 (Summer 1984), http://www.lituanus.org/1984_2/84_2_03.htm (April 10, 2010).

¹¹ Z. Wierzbowski, „La Pologne recouvre son indépendance (1914-1939)”, in *Pologne 1919-1939. Vol. I, Vie politique et sociale* (Neuchatel: Éditions de la Baconnière, 1946), 144.

¹² Vitas 1984.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Nicolae Dascălu, *Relații româno-poloneze în perioada interbelică (1919-1939) [Romanian-Polish Relations in the Interbellum Period]* (Bucharest: Romanian Academy Publishing House, 1991), 67.

government, proposing bilateral negotiations in a third country. Moreover, the Lithuanian diplomacy attempted to capitalize on the goodwill of the British government in order to determine the Polish to accept the offer and, in their turn, they asked for London's advice on using the mechanisms of the League of Nations to settle the differences with Poland¹⁵. The British regarded favourably to the Lithuanian offer, thinking that such an approach would lead to a peaceful and diplomatic solution to the dispute. As for the League's help, London thought that it would have been inefficient, because no action of the Assembly in Geneva could have taken place within the period mentioned in the Polish ultimatum¹⁶.

Actually, the British regarded with moderate optimism the end of the Polish-Lithuanian crisis, thinking that Lithuania had nothing to gain if it continued to interrupt de diplomatic relation with Poland, while accepting the Polish ultimatum would not have meant sacrificing any national interest. The lack of diplomatic relations and the continuous tensions could cause nothing but political frictions and poverty in the border districts, on both sides of the border. Moreover, even if the method chosen by Warsaw was not the most adequate, the Polish government wrote its ultimatum requests in a rather moderate manner, so that they would not affect Lithuania's independence, and the Polish media was asked to refrain from any comment that would disgrace Lithuania¹⁷.

In this context, the Lithuanian authorities decided to accept and satisfy Warsaw's demands, a fact regarded with quite a relief in London and Paris. However, there were also a few concerns. The Polish ultimatum and threats could very well constitute a dangerous precedent in the Baltic area. In the future, Germany could very well apply the same method to regain control over the port Memel. In this case, it was preferable, the more so, that the relations of the three Baltic states with Poland be as close as possible. The improvement of the Polish-Lithuanian relations would have been, from this point of view, extremely valuable, because it could support the British peace-making policy in Eastern Europe, as well as Warsaw's plans to build a new "*cordon sanitaire*" between Germany and the Soviet Union¹⁸.

Conversely, precisely the transformation of the Polish ultimatum into a precedent favourable to Germany or other great powers with interests in

¹⁵ B.D.F.A., Part II, Series F, vol. 66, doc. no. 31, 32.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid, doc. no. 34, 36.

¹⁸ Ibid., doc. no. 42, 47.

the region raised the concern of the public opinion in Romania as well¹⁹. Allied with Poland since 1921, Romania presented a dynamics of bilateral relations that experienced, during the interwar period, an ascending tendency, with the exception of some colder phases between 1933 and 1936 caused by the concerns and suspicions raised by the closer relation between Poland and Hungary, as well as by the fact that Poland maintained a prestige policy, meant to place it at the level of the great powers and to give it a certain tutelage over the foreign orientation of other countries, Romania included²⁰. Thus, Bucharest appeared to be, at least officially, extremely cautious as regards the Polish ultimatum to Lithuania.

Obviously, there are plenty of explanations for this attitude adopted by the Romanian authorities. The alliance with Poland was extremely important in the strained political context in Europe, and in particular in Eastern and Central Europe, especially since the political leadership in Warsaw often underlined the fact that Poland's borders with Germany and Romania were deemed to be final²¹. Furthermore, this attitude is accounted for by the lack of reaction from the Western powers, as well as by the fact that the *Anschluss* outshone, through its significance, amplitude and possible consequences appeared to be a mere settlement of the bilateral relations between two neighbouring countries, even if the method chosen by Warsaw to get such a settlement was debatable.

Thus, Bucharest's attitude regarding the Polish-Lithuanian crisis in March 1938 or, more precisely, the lack of a definite attitude, is not arbitrary. Even the media in Bucharest presented the events rather tersely and concisely, at least in the beginning. Within the context of the publication of the Polish ultimatum, we were unable to identify in important Romanian newspapers of that period but short accounts regarding the evolution of the dispute. Very few editorials or ample articles are to be found, obviously predominated, even so, by reports on the Polish position and less about the reaction or the point of view of the authorities in Kaunas²².

In this context, the only visible concern appearing through the lines of press releases was the escalation of the crisis and the outbreak of an open armed conflict. In such circumstances, a possible involvement of the Soviet

¹⁹ The fact is clearly emphasized in the Romanian media of that period. See, for example, the article *Relațiile dintre Polonia și Lituania inspiră îngrijorări* [*The Relations between Poland and Lithuania Raise Concerns*], in the newspaper *Universul* 55, no. 75, March 17, 1938, 15.

²⁰ Dascălu, 66.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 67.

²² We focused, first of all, on the accounts in the newspaper *Universul*, but the situation was also identical in the case of other important newspapers of the period.

Union, which was rumoured to be ready to guarantee the borders of Lithuania, as well as a possible reaction of Germany, that could take advantage of the situation to support the ultimatum demands made by Warsaw, and, then, to occupy the port Memel and its surrounding area under the pretence of protecting the German minority in that area, were scenarios considered by the Romanian public opinion²³.

Such scenarios seemed the more plausible as the political tensions between Warsaw and Kaunas were doubled by a quite consistent mobilization of the Polish troops at the border with Lithuania. The media in Bucharest even put forward the number of 60,000 Polish soldiers as being mobilized at the border and ready to intervene forcefully in case Lithuania refused to satisfy Warsaw's demands. Their task according to these reports was to occupy the capital Kaunas as soon as possible and to retreat only when all the Polish demands would have been satisfied²⁴. Moreover, the state of alert of the Polish army was supplemented by many demonstrations that took place all over Poland under the quasi-official slogan "Commander, take us to Kowno!"²⁵ The realistic possibility of such a Polish intervention in force determined Romanian journalists to speculate about the existence of an agreement between Poland and Germany so that, together, the two countries could obtain certain territorial conquests at the expense of Lithuania. This would lead to the settlement of their own bilateral disputes, that is, Poland would have agreed to renounce the Corridor and Danzig, getting, in exchange, a new corridor towards the sea through Lithuania and the port Memel²⁶.

The relaxation of the tension caused by the crisis and the possibility that the authorities in Kaunas might satisfy the Polish demands led to a further decrease in the interest, low as it was, shown by the public opinion in Bucharest as regards the settlement of the contentious matters between Poland and Lithuania. Practically, it was thought that, by settling this crisis, "Warsaw and Kovno would have one more diplomat and Europe one less concern", though Poland did not stand to gain all that much as a matter of prestige or position, while Lithuania lost what it did not have through this forced settlement of bilateral relations. On the other hand, in Romania it was thought that an actual improvement of the relations between Poland

²³ *Universul*, no. 77, March 19, 1938, 13.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 78, March 20, 1938, 12.

²⁵ Ion Constantin, *Polonia în secolul totalitarismelor 1918-1989 [Poland in the Century of Totalitarianisms 1918-1989]* (București: Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2007), 168.

²⁶ „Conflictul dintre Polonia și Lituania” [The Conflict between Poland and Lithuania], *Universul*, no. 79, March 21, 1938, 1.

and Lithuania could lead only to a consolidation of the position of the Baltic countries and to an expansion of Warsaw's influence in the region, with positive effects on the political stability of the region, within an agitated and tensed European context²⁷.

Finally, Bucharest's distant and reserved attitude regarding the Polish-Lithuanian crisis of March 1938 was not overlooked or left unanswered by Warsaw. The Polish political leaders transmitted to Romania their gratitude for the attitude adopted and for the fact that the Romanian diplomacy understood the reasons for the Polish actions, as it did not show any opposition against them²⁸.

Even so, the warning Warsaw received from the Western diplomacies – primarily the British one – which I could also identify in the Romanian public opinion, according to which the Polish ultimatum represented a precedent that Berlin could use in the future to expand its influence in the Baltic area to the obvious detriment of Poland, would remain valid and would come true a year later. On March 22, 1939 Lithuania signed an agreement with Germany meant to “strengthen” the relations between the two countries. Through this agreement, the Lithuanian government agreed to relinquish to Germany the sovereignty over the port city of Memel, practically an area of approximately 1,000 square miles, with a population of almost 154,000 people. Thus, Lithuania lost its only access to the sea, even if the German authorities agreed to guarantee a free zone in the port area. Moreover, no possible German compensation was provided for the huge investments made by Lithuania to modernize the port infrastructure and facilities in Memel. Even in these circumstances and despite the fact that the agreement was signed “half voluntarily, half involuntarily”, the Lithuanian government declared that, generally speaking, they were pleased to sign this document with Germany²⁹.

In this context, in spite of having received assurances on March 31, 1939 from Great Britain and France, Poland was going to be in an extremely unfavourable position. After the fall of Czechoslovakia and the new *Anschluss* through which the port Memel was regained, Germany controlled important territories at the northern and the southern borders of

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ See Florin Anghel, Nicolae Mares and Dumitru Preda, eds., *România-Polonia. Relații diplomatice, I, 1918-1939* [*Romania-Poland. Diplomatic Relations, I, 1918-1939*], Ministerul Afacerilor Externe, Direcția Arhivelor Diplomatice, Foreword by Mircea Dan Geoană, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania (București: Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 2003), doc. no. 93, 192.

²⁹ Albert N. Tarulis, *Soviet Policy toward the Baltic States 1918-1940* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959), 100.

Poland. The irony of history is that Poland was the one to contribute, through its action in 1938 to the dissolution of the Czechoslovakian state, as well as to the weakening of the position of the Baltic States, especially that of Lithuania.

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THE STATUS AND THE FUTURE OF BALTIC STATES AND ROMANIA IN THE STRATEGY OF WESTERN ALLIES IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR: A COMPARATIVE VIEW

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This paper has been presented at the First International Conference on Nordic and Baltic Studies in Romania: *Romania and Lithuania in the Interwar International Relations: Bonds, Intersections and Encounters* hosted by the Romanian Association for Baltic and Nordic Studies, Târgoviste, May 19-21, 2010.

Abstract:

The fate of Lithuania and Romania as well as future of the whole Central and Eastern European region was determined in the years of the Second World War. The common origin of their tragic and painful history was the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact – the secret deal between Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, which divided Central and Eastern Europe between two totalitarian regimes. In June 1940 the three Baltic States and a part of Romania were directly occupied and annexed by the Soviet Union. The main objective of this paper is to identify, analyze and compare the attitudes of the United States and Great Britain with respect to the annexation of the Baltic States and the Romania territory and discussed the post-war future reserved to them. During the early years of the Second World War (1940-1942) few interesting international discussions about possible post-war arrangement plans existed. The analysis of the Western attitude would enable us to give answers to certain questions: What could have been done by the Western states for the benefit of Central and Eastern European region; what have they, in fact, done and what did they avoid doing? The year 1943 witnessed the consolidation of the Western attitude with regard to Soviet Union's western borders, which resulted in the fundamental fact that Moscow did not intend to retract its interests in the Baltic States, Eastern Poland, North Bucovina and Bessarabia while the West did not intend to fight for these territories. Considering the fact that at the Teheran conference (1943) the Western states agreed upon turning the Baltic states into a Soviet interest sphere, the United States and Britain entered the Yalta conference (1945) with no illusions as to the fate of Central and Eastern Europe in general.

Rezumat:

Soarta Lituaniei și a României, ca și viitorul întregii Europe Centrale și de Răsărit, a fost hotărâtă în anii celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial. Cauza comună a acestei istorii tragice și dureroase a fost Pactul Molotov-Ribbentrop și anexa sa secretă – înțelegerea dintre Uniunea Sovietică și Germania nazistă care a pus capăt păcii din perioada interbelică și a împărțit Europa Centrală și de Răsărit între două regimuri totalitare. În iunie 1940 cele trei State baltice, precum și o parte a României, au fost ocupate și anexate în mod direct de Uniunea Sovietică. Principalul obiectiv al acestui articol este identificarea, analiza și compararea atitudinilor Statelor Unite și ale Marii Britanii – acele puteri occidentale care reprezentau punctul de vedere al democrațiilor occidentale și abordau viitorul postbelic – cu privire la anexarea Țărilor baltice și a teritoriului românesc. În primii ani ai celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial (1940-1942) au existat puține discuții interesante cu privire la aranjamentele postbelice. Analiza atitudinii occidentale ne va permite să dăm răspunsuri la câteva întrebări: ce ar fi putut fi făcut de statele occidentale în beneficiul regiunii Europei Centrale și Răsăritene?; ce au făcut acestea în realitate și ce au evitat să facă? Anul 1943 a fost martorul consolidării atitudinii occidentale cu privire la frontierele occidentale ale Uniunii Sovietice, ceea ce a avut ca efect următoarea atitudine fundamentală clară și expresă: Uniunea Sovietică nu intenționa să-și retracteze interesul său în ceea ce privește Țările baltice, Polonia de est, Bucovina de nord și Basarabia, în vreme ce Vestul nu intenționa să lupte pentru aceste teritorii. Având în vedere faptul că în cadrul Conferinței de la Teheran (1943) statele occidentale au atribuit Țările baltice sferei de interes sovietice, Statele Unite și Marea Britanie au mers la Conferința de la Yalta (1945) fără a-și face iluzii cu privire la soarta Europei Centrale și de Răsărit, în general.

Keywords: international politics, the Second World War, Lithuania, Romania, Baltic states, Great Powers

The Twilight of Interwar Peace Period

The political development of Europe between the two world wars was essentially influenced and conditioned by several key factors. First, the political system, formed as the result of the decisions of the Versailles Peace Treaty, with the League of Nations at its core. Second, the geopolitical-economic interests and the cultural-ideological priorities of the large states, the Great Powers. Third, the ability or inability of the medium or small European states to assist the League of Nations and the large states into maintaining stability and peace.¹

¹ Algimantas Kasparavičius, "Shared destiny: The Lithuanian state and diplomacy between the Two World Wars," *Lithuanian foreign policy review*, 13-14 (2004). 48-49.

The fate of Lithuania (as small state) and Romania (as medium state) as well as future of whole Central and Eastern European region was determined by the traditional power balance and geopolitical arguments. The geopolitical position of Central and Eastern Europe in the international system was rather complicated.

During all interwar period, Soviet Union and Germany were unsatisfied with the political system created in Europe by the Versailles Peace Conference. Primarily, Soviet and German revisionist goals were orientated towards neighbouring states Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia, while they treated the existence of Lithuania and the other small Baltic states only as a sign and manifestation of their temporary military and political weakness in an unfavourable international balance of power.² The geopolitical interests of Germany aimed at securing its spheres of influence across Central and Eastern Europe via the establishment of a system of German protectorates. Plans were made for the inclusion of the Baltic states into this ring of Germany-linked quasi-states (satellites). Soviet Russia viewed the Baltic countries as a bridgehead for the expansion of the world socialist revolution to the West. Eventually, the attitude of the Soviets changed - the Baltic States were seen as an important buffer against the capitalist threat.

During the interwar period, the Baltic States were rather weak to perform any constant geopolitical function because destructive ethno-nationalism prevented their elites to undertake designing of international politics even at the most elementary level. From a geopolitical point of view, the Western powers perceived all Central and Eastern European states as potential exchange objects in an eventual clash between the USSR and Germany.³ According to the French view, the new Baltic States together with some Central and Eastern European countries should have made up a belt of states from the North to the South of Europe that would separate and isolate Germany from Soviet Russia. The Great Britain (and partially the United States) projected the Baltic States both as a barrier and as a gateway to Russia. They sought not only to undercut German and Russian power, but also to create preconditions for them to accept liberal and democratic values. In this respect, the British model countered the

² Algimantas Kasparavičius, *The Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact and its Repercussions On Lithuania (Generalising Conclusions)*, (The International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania. Research works database), <http://www.komisija.lt/en/body.php?&m=1194863084> (May 2, 2010).

³ Česlovas Laurinavičius, Egidijus Motieka and Nortautas Statkus, *Baltijos valstybių geopolitikos bruožai. XX amžius* (Vilnius: LII leidykla, 2005), 407-408.

French one and as such, it undermined the potential of the Baltic States to perform the function of a geopolitical gateway.

Following the Nazi Germany's Anschluss of Austria in March 1938 and the occupation of Czechoslovakia in the middle of March 1939 rumours spread that Baltic States, Poland and Romania were to be the next in line. First loss of Lithuania was Klaipeda, her only seaport. On March 22, 1939 Germany tore away Klaipeda from Lithuania while signatories of Klaipeda Convention (the Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan) remained discreetly silent.⁴ These issues confirmed that Nazi Germany was aiming for much more than the leaders of Western democratic countries could offer, but no one had any ideas on how to stop it.

In late March 1939 and mid-April, the British Prime Minister announced the famous guarantees of Poland and Romania's sovereignty. Although these guarantees extended to state sovereignty, they did not contain any references to the territorial integrity of the states. The Soviets were asked to provide similar guarantees.⁵ These unilateral guarantees rather than serving their security created freedom of manoeuvres to Joseph Stalin and the Soviet Union. In the spring of 1939, Stalin agreed to open negotiations with Great Britain and France. On April 17, 1939, the Soviets proposed that the Soviet Union, Great Britain and France enter into a pact of mutual assistance. The Soviets raised demands for at least the role of a caretaker in Central and Eastern Europe. Under the pretext of efficient fight against the aggressor, Moscow asked for the right of intervention.

As a proof of such intentions on March 28, 1939 the USSR handed in to Latvia and Estonia notes, which in a threatening way conveyed the intentions to protect its interests at the Baltic Sea shores. These notes confirm that the Soviet Union treated at least two of the Baltic states - Estonia and Latvia - as the sphere of its national interests.

As regards Romania's international situation at this time, the main Soviet point of interest here was also territorial. Throughout the interwar period, Soviet Union had never recognized Bessarabia as a legitimate part of Romania and actively engaged in attempts to undermine this country by

⁴ *Lietuvos užsienio reikalų ministrai 1918–1940* (Kaunas: Šviesa, 1999), 351–354; John Hiden, "Introduction: Baltic Security problems between the two World Wars", in *The Baltic and the Outbreak of Second World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 14–15.

⁵ Winston Churchill, *The Second World War, Vol. I: The Gathering Storm* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1948), 322.

nurturing diplomatic disputes with the government in Bucharest over this territory.⁶

According to the British perspective, the three European Great Powers, with Poland's help if possible, were to guarantee those states in Central and Eastern Europe which lay under the threat of German aggression. Nevertheless, according to Winston Churchill's view, the biggest problem in 1939 was that "Poland, Romania, Finland, and the three Baltic States did not know whether it was German aggression or Russian rescue that they dreaded more. It was this hideous choice that paralysed British and French policy."⁷ The negotiations reached a seemingly unbreakable deadlock. The Polish and Romanian Governments, while accepting the British guarantee, were not prepared to accept a similar undertaking in the same form from the Soviet Government. A similar attitude prevailed in the Baltic States. The Soviet Government made it clear that they would only adhere to a pact of mutual assistance if Finland and the Baltic States were included in a general guarantee.

The modern Russian historiography upholds the position that the USSR aimed at stating and defending their geostrategical interests in the negotiations with Western states, but they did not meet with understanding from their partners. The Soviets had tried to conclude pacts with the West, which never materialized.

At the end of June 1939, with Britain and France rejecting Soviet ambition to treat its north-eastern neighbours as an object of international relations, the secret Russian-German negotiations took a more specific shape. On July 22, 1939, the newspapers in Moscow announced that formal economic negotiations between the Soviet Union and Germany had been resumed. The negotiations with Germany and the Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact of August 1939 created the opportunity for the Soviet Union to recover the western territories the Russian Empire had lost at the end of the First World War.⁸

⁶ Cristina Petrescu, "Contrasting/Conflicting Identities. Bessarabians, Romanians, Moldovans," in *Nation-Building and Contested Identities. Romanian & Hungarian Case Studies*, eds. Balazs Trencsenyi et al. (Budapest & Bucharest: Regio Books & Polirom, 2001), 170.

⁷ Churchill 1948, 325.

⁸ Christopher D. O'Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning, and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 33.

It became clear that Lithuania, like the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, would not be allowed the luxury of solving its own problems: their fate would be determined by powerful outside forces.⁹

The provisions of the August 23 and September 28 secret protocols of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact will soon be enforced upon the Baltic States. After the invasion of Poland, in September-October 1939 the Soviet Union forced Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to conclude Mutual Assistance Pacts which officially entitled the Red Army to set up military bases on the territories of these countries. Only Finland tried to resist to similar demands and consequently the Soviet Union attacked Finland thus starting the Winter War in November 1939. The war ended with territorial losses in March 1940, but Finland kept its independence. While in the first half of June 1940 the German troops were advancing towards Paris, the scope of Soviet claims on the Baltic States was rapidly extending. The Soviet Union accused Lithuania of breaking the agreement, and on June 14 Moscow submitted an ultimatum to Kaunas requesting to set up a pro-Soviet government in Lithuania and to allow an unlimited contingent of Russian troops to enter Lithuania. On June 15 Lithuania, having no other choice, accepted the terms of the Soviet ultimatum. On the same day, the Soviet Red Army completed the occupation of Lithuania and mounted its Sovietisation program. The following day, similar Soviet ultimatums were handed in to Estonia and Latvia, and on June 17 the two countries were fully occupied, as well.¹⁰

Bearing the marks of the international system which resulted into the Baltic States losing their independence, Romania also lost territories both in the east and the west. The Soviet Union claimed northern Bucovina and Bessarabia and the Hungarians claimed Transylvania. Following the same scenario applied to the Baltic States two weeks later, after receiving an ultimatum from the Soviet Union on June 26, Romania ceded Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina.

The international reaction to the territorial changes in 1940

Initially, the reaction of the Western states towards the occupation and incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union of June 1940 – June 1941 can be regarded as ambiguous. The neighbouring Sweden and Nazi

⁹ Saulius Sužiedelis "Thoughts on Lithuania's Shadows of the Past: a Historical Essay on the Legacy of War", *Vilnius. Magazine of the Lithuanian Writers' Union* (Summer 1999): 179.

¹⁰ *Полпреды сообщают... : Сб. документов об отношениях СССР с Латвией, Литвой и Эстонией: авг. 1939 г.-авг. 1940 г.* (Москва : Междунар. отношения, 1990), 334-335.

Germany were the first to take steps towards recognizing the incorporation of the Baltic States into the USSR. Interestingly, many European governments that were involved in the Second World War failed (or maybe were not interested) to express their own position regarding territorial changes in Europe.¹¹

Germany needed Romania as a partner for the oil resources badly needed by its war machine, and for this reason it desired to establish closer ties with Romania. At the same time, the Romanian Government publicly declared on July 1 that they had renounced the Anglo-French guarantees.¹²

The Great Powers were well informed about the situation and the moods in the Baltic States and Romania. This is confirmed by the published diplomatic and other official records.¹³ Among the Great Western powers, the initial USA reaction in 1940-1942 could be termed as mostly "pro Baltic", while Great Britain followed a more pragmatic policy in respect to the Baltic States and the territorial changes in Europe. The British politicians saw the need for an agreement with the Soviet Union after the calamity of France's defeat. There is certainly a faint echo of this attitude in the record of the War Cabinet meeting of June 17, where Lord Halifax presented Soviet actions as a strengthening of Soviet defences against Germany.¹⁴

The key declaration of United States regarding Baltic States was the statement by the Acting State Secretary Sumner Welles of July 23: "During

¹¹ From Lithuanian archival sources it is not possible to identify the position of Romania and Central and East European countries. Romania, Hungary and Bulgaria failed to express their official position regarding the occupation and incorporation of the Baltic States. Only in the 50's the pro-Soviet governments have officially accepted official Soviet accounts of true "people's revolutions" in the Baltic nations in the summer of 1940. In 1958, bilateral protocols were signed by the Soviet Union and Bulgaria (January 18), Romania (March 7), Hungary (March 14), and Czechoslovakia (June 30), regulating the settlement of mutual claims concerning Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. See more details in: William J.H. Hough, "The Annexation of the Baltic States and its Effect on the Development of Law Prohibiting Forcible Seizure of Territory", *New York School Journal of International and Comparative Law* 2 (1985), 437-438.

¹² "Great Britain and Rumania" (HC Deb July 17, 1940 vol. 363, c. 187), http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1940/jul/17/great-britain-and-rumania#S5CV0363P0_19400717_HOC_6 (April 20, 2010).

¹³ For example, there are 85 references related to Romanian issues and about 30 references regarding the Baltic States in the British parliament's transcript of 1940. See "Historic Hansard official reports of proceedings of both the House of Commons and the House of Lords", <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/sittings/1940> (April 20, 2010).

¹⁴ John Hiden, "British Policy Towards the Baltic States: 1939-1945", *Lithuanian historical studies* 9 (2004), 79.

these past few days the devious process whereunder the political independence and territorial integrity of the three small Baltic republics - Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania - were to be deliberately annihilated by one of their more powerful neighbors, have been rapidly drawing to their conclusion. From the day when the peoples of these republics first gained their independent and democratic form of government the people of the United States have watched their admirable progress in self-government with deep and sympathetic interest... The people of the United States are opposed to predatory activities no matter whether they are carried on by the use of force or by the threat of force."¹⁵

The United States officially announced to the global community that nonrecognition policy¹⁶ should be applied regarding the occupation of the Baltic States. It means that the same nonrecognition standard would be applied to Soviet Union as it had been applied to Japan, Germany and Italy.

On July 26, there was important statement of British authorities on the Baltic States. In the Cabinet, British Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax said that the annexation of Baltic States had taken place in the "course of the war and there was no certainty that it would be permanent."¹⁷

The most important declaration made by the British Prime minister Winston Churchill was related to the general political situation in Eastern Europe and could be applied both to Baltic states as well as Romania and Poland. On September 5, Churchill declared in an address to the House of Commons: "We do not propose to recognize any territorial changes which take place during the war, unless they take place with the free consent and goodwill of the parties concerned."¹⁸

¹⁵ "Statement by the Acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles on Baltic Republics, July 23, 1940", *Department of State Bulletin* 111. No. 57, July 27, 1940, 48.

¹⁶ It should be noted that the United States continued not to recognize the forcible annexation of Baltic States and maintained nonrecognition policy up to 1991, when the Baltic States finally restored their independence. The practical measures taken by the United States were consistent with this interpretation. The diplomatic and consular agencies of the Baltic Republics were allowed to continue their activities as representatives of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and steps were taken to protect Baltic assets in the United States. See more details at Lawrence Juda, "United States Non-recognition of the Soviet Union's Annexation of the Baltic States: Politics and Law", *Journal of Baltic Studies* 4 (1975): 272-290.

¹⁷ Edgar Anderson, "British Policy Toward the Baltic States 1940-1941," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 4 (1980), 328.

¹⁸ Richard Langworth, "Churchill and the Baltic, Part II: 1931-1950" (The Churchill Centre and Churchill Museum at the Cabinet War Rooms) <http://www.winstonchurchill.org/support/the-churchill-centre/publications/finest-hour/issues-37-72/no-53/853-churchill-and-the-baltic-part-ii-1931-1950> (April 20, 2010).

It is appropriate to make a brief mention of Soviet explanation of the territorial changes. The best representation of the Soviet position and its justification came as a spectacular episode of diplomatic conversations. On August 16, the Soviet Ambassador, Ivan Maisky, made a request to British Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax for the termination of the Baltic Legations in Great Britain. Halifax refused to acquiesce to I. Maisky's request and denounced the Soviet Union's aggression in the Baltic region. Ambassador Maisky responded by citing the allegorical story of the Siberian peasant Ivan. During Ivan's illness, his neighbours came and stole his property. After his recovery, Ivan forcibly took back that which had been stolen from him. "So now, Lord Halifax, who was the aggressor in your opinion, the peasant Ivan or his neighbors?"¹⁹

Britain and its allies had their own positive concept of how a greater part of the continent of Europe should be organized on the principles of freedom and equality. At the time, Great Britain favoured a more general idea of the reconstruction of post-war European regional federation/confederation, which could serve as a barrier between Germany and the Soviet Union. The first Polish-Czechoslovak émigré governments' declaration was issued soon on November 11. For solving the problem of a Central European Federation, the Polish government was interested in taking in Lithuania, Hungary and possibly Romania, in addition to Czechoslovakia.²⁰

Two months before the beginning of the German invasion of the USSR, the new British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden had raised the possibility of recognizing Stalin's territorial acquisitions obtained in 1939-1940. Churchill, Attlee, and other British officials were strongly resistant to any concessions, and for a time London refused to recognize the USSR's new boundaries.

On November 23, Romania signed the Tripartite Pact and joined Germany as an ally. These political decisions were influenced by the Romanian desire for protection against the Soviet Union. Romania entered the Second World War in June 1941, declaring war to the Soviet Union in order to recover Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina.

From this point we can see that the common dominant in Lithuanian and Romanian issues was non-recognition of territorial changes.

¹⁹ Ivan Maisky, *Memoirs of a Soviet ambassador, the War 1939-43* (London: Hutchinson, 1967), 139-140.

²⁰ Tadeusz Kisielewski, "Federalist Plans in Central and Eastern Europe and the Question of the Baltic States in the Context of Polish Politics during World War II," *Lithuanian Historical Studies* 9 (2004), 21, 28.

The early post-war planning 1941-1942

As in June 1941 Nazi Germany advanced eastward, the United States, Great Britain and USSR now finally had a common enemy. Under these circumstances, the leaders of Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States of America, known as "The Big Three", started cooperation talks. The Soviet Union was able to attract sympathy and support from the West, with the unintended result that the Soviet aggression of 1939-1940 was deemphasized. Nevertheless, hopes for the suppressed nations aroused with the Atlantic Charter, signed by US President Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill on August 14. The document was based on the principle of self-determination as regards the European territorial changes and forms of government. The Soviet Union also announced the acceptance of the charter's principles, but as the tide of the war shifted, the moral-idealistic principles of the Atlantic Charter could practically do little on behalf of Central and Eastern Europe. The attitude of the Great Powers towards this region started to be based on practical realities. It should be mentioned that the ultimate role on the worldwide stage was played not by the legal or moral arguments, but the international political coexistence.

From summer 1941, Romania's situation started to differ from the Baltic States: the first and main difference was that Romania was still independent and ruled by its own government, and even some lost territories were taken back. Another factor that influenced attitudes of Western powers, Romania was treated Nazi German ally and thus as a hostile country. According to the British position, Romania was regarded as an enemy state whose interests could easily be sacrificed to Moscow in order to speed Germany's defeat and to use diplomatic concessions from Stalin on other issues. The British Foreign Secretary Eden rejected the idea that Great Britain was politically and morally responsible for guaranteeing Romania's territory: "Romania rejected the British guarantee and chose to collaborate with Germany. Britain subsequently declared war on Romania and does not feel bound by obligations existing under its former guarantee."²¹

During the early years of the Second World War there were few interesting international discussions about possible post-war arrangement plans. It must be mentioned that the future of Baltic States and Romania

²¹ George Cioranescu, "The problem of Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina during World War II (Part II)", Radio Free Europe Research, December 2, 1981, Open Society Archives (OSA). RAD Background Report/329/ 53-3-12, 11-12.

were regarded and discussed according to a similar pattern. The issue of the Baltic States was seen as a constituent part of considerations regarding the complex problems raised by the war. The position regarding Central and Eastern Europe was based on a mixture of balanced pragmatism and expedience criteria.

In December 1941 Stalin raised the issue of British recognition of the Soviet Union's 1941 frontiers at his second meeting with British Foreign Secretary Eden.²² In response to this proposal, Churchill on January 8, 1942 wrote to Eden: "We have never recognized the 1941 frontiers of Russia except *de facto*. They were acquired by acts of aggression in shameful collusion with Hitler. The transfer of the Baltic States to Soviet Russia against their will would be contrary to all the principles for which we are fighting this war and would dishonour our cause. This also applies to Bessarabia and to Northern Bukovina, and in a lesser degree to Finland, which I gather it is not intended wholly to subjugate and absorb. Russia could, upon strategical grounds, make a case for the approaches to Leningrad... Strategical security may be invoked at certain points on the frontiers of Bukhovina [sic] or Bessarabia. In these cases the population would have to be offered evacuation and compensation if they desired it. In all other cases transference of territory must be regulated after the war is over by freely and fairly conducted plebiscites ..."²³

The negotiations in 1942 over the Anglo-Soviet treaty of alliance witnessed a fight between East and West over the Baltic States and other territories that were incorporated in the Soviet Union in 1940. The British position in these discussions is again characterized by pragmatism. Through the Anglo-Soviet draft proposal, Great Britain was ready to grant recognition to Soviet Union frontiers analogous to those obtained under the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact of 1939, thus sacrificing the vital interests of a considerable part of Eastern Europe. Largely due to United States pressure, the treaty was signed in May 1942, with no provision of recognition of the Soviet frontiers. In these negotiations of 1942, the Baltic States were only bargaining counters in relations with Soviet Union.

One of the most interesting discussion about the future of Central and Eastern Europe arose in 1942-1943 in the United States Department of State. The Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy was created on

²² Llewellyn Woodward, *British foreign policy in the Second World War*, vol. II (London, 1971), 226-233.

²³ Winston Churchill, *The Second World War. Vol III. The Grand Alliance* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1950), 694.

February 12, 1942, to prepare recommendations for President Roosevelt on post-war foreign policy. The chairman of the committee was State Secretary Cordell Hull and vice-chairman, Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles. In fact, Welles was one of the chief administrative officers of United States foreign policy. In spring 1942, Welles first offered a detailed outline of his vision of so-called East European Federation. It must be mentioned that the issue of the Baltic States was never discussed separately in this Committee – the status of Baltic States rose as a constituent part of considerations of complex problems. The future of Baltic States and Romania were seen and discussed as part of the same common block.

According to Welles' vision, an union or federation among Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria, the Baltic States, and possibly Finland, Greece, and Turkey might successfully check and contain both Germany and the Soviet Union and promote economic union and stability in the region. The committee subsequently discussed specific aspects, such as customs and monetary union as well as the elimination of borders. The members should seek to organize the nations in the region to provide a "strong and stable counterweight and buffer to Germany and Russia" so that the area would no longer "be a field for the intrigues and manoeuvres" of Berlin and Moscow.²⁴

The committee considered that the Russians might dominate the nations of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria, but Russian influence would be balanced within a federation by including "anti-Russian" nations such as Poland, Hungary, Austria, and Romania. The committee also supposed that the federation might even help facilitate the rebirth of the Baltic States as fully functioning, independent republics. Welles and the planners feared that if the Russians forcibly removed the Baltic region and Eastern Europe from post-war plans for a worldwide liberal economic system, the European reconstruction would be much more difficult and the efforts at creating a new order would be dealt a serious setback.

The members of committee acknowledged that active American participation in an East European Federation would represent a "departure from old conceptions" about America's vital interest. It was hoped that the creation of a federation would prove advantageous to the economic and security interests of the United States, not only through the promotion of free trade, but also by checking the territorial, political, and economic

²⁴ Minutes of the Advisory Committee on Post-War Policy, May 2, 1942, National Archives, Notter files, box 55, RG 59; O'Sullivan, 42.

aspirations of Germany, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain. Welles explained that the nations of the region might be bound together by "Articles of Confederation" which would include guarantees of individual rights and personal freedoms. The political structure of the federation would feature an American-style judicial system, a federal diet, customs union, and an intra-regional military force.

The plans about a possible post-war federation were discussed wider in Europe. It is worth mentioning that the head of the Polish government in London, General Wladyslaw Sikorski, during the meetings held in Washington and London in 1942 supported the idea of a federation and voiced the argument that "the annexation of Bucovina and Lithuania by the Soviet Union will deal a blow to the federation project, because cession of Bucovina and Lithuania would put Poland squarely in the Soviet pincers from north and south..."²⁵ But by early 1943, following the Red Army's success at Stalingrad, it became apparent that the Soviet Union might oppose all efforts to construct a federation.

1943 – year of the final decision

The year 1943 witnessed the consolidation of the Western attitude with regard to Soviet demands to the pre-war frontiers. The Soviet victories in 1943 opened the way to Central and Eastern European region. The participation of the Soviet Union in the final stage of the Second World War was an essential benchmark, which influenced the changes of US attitudes toward the problem of the Baltic States in 1943. The United States has long infused morality and idealism into its foreign policy. In October 5, 1943, President Roosevelt spelled out his plans for the upcoming Teheran conference. Regarding Poland and the Baltic States, the President argued that, when he should meet Stalin, he intended to appeal to him on grounds of high morality. He would say to him that neither Britain nor U.S. would fight Russia over the Baltic States, but that in Russia's own interest it would be a good thing to hold a second plebiscite in the Baltic countries.²⁶

When Hull returned from Moscow on November 15, he declared that the Baltic and Balkan States deserved the right of self-determination.

²⁵ *Foreign Relations of the United States (F.R.U.S). Diplomatic Papers 1944, Vol. IV, Europe* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1966), 124, 128.

²⁶ Richard A. Schnorf, "The Baltic States in U.S.-Soviet Relations. The year of doubts 1943-1946," *Lituanus. Lithuanian Quarterly Journal of Arts and Sciences* 12, No. 4 (1966): 59; Michail Miagkov, "SSSR ir JAV diskusija Baltijos valstybių klausimu 1941-1945 metais," in *Lietuva Antrajame pasauliniame kare* eds. Arvydas Anušauskas and Česlovas Laurinavičius (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos instituto leidykla, 2007), 159.

According to him, each state, regardless of its size, was sovereign and equal. Despite such high minded pronouncements, the real State Department assessments regarding Moscow were pessimistic. When encountering this state of affairs, Jan Ciechanowski, the Polish ambassador to the U.S., in the eve of the Teheran conference surmised "that, as far as could then be ascertained, America and Britain had to sacrifice the three Baltic countries and half of Poland to Russia for the sake of understanding with the Soviets."²⁷

The successful military actions of the Soviet Union guaranteed political predominance of the USSR in the meetings of "the Big Three". The main decisions on the future of the post-war Europe were made in conferences in Teheran and Yalta. The Soviet Union did not intend to retract its interests in Baltic States, Eastern Poland, North Bucovina and Bessarabia, while the West did not intend to fight for these territories.

At the Teheran conference (November 28–December 1) one of Roosevelt and Churchill's main concessions concerned post-war Poland. It was absolutely clear that if an agreement could be reached on Poland's eastern frontiers, Lithuania as well all other territories will be also reoccupied by the Soviet Union.²⁸ The Teheran agreements on Polish eastern border in fact determined the fate and the future territory of Lithuania. The issues pertaining to the Baltic States was never raised again at the highest level.

It could be noted that at the same time that in Romania both Marshal Ion Antonescu and Iuliu Maniu, the head of democratic opposition and a prominent old politician, tried to pull Romania out of a war that had virtually been lost, while nevertheless maintaining Romania's sovereignty over Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina.²⁹

In April 1944 the U.S. Department's Division of Southern European Affairs prepared a memorandum on Romania which stated that "the British and American governments might consider the desirability of reaffirming their expectation that Romania and the other Axis satellites should exist in future as independent [states] within reasonable frontiers... ..there is no indication that Moscow would permit

²⁷ Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 1266; Jan Ciechanowski, *Defeat in Victory* (New York: Doubleday & Co, Garden City, 1947), 228.

²⁸ F.R.U.S., *Diplomatic Papers. The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran. 1943* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1961), 594; *Советский Союз на международных конференциях периода Великой Отечественной войны 1941-1945 гг. Том II. Тегеранская конференция руководителей трех союзных держав – СССР США и Великобритании (28 ноября - 1 декабря 1943 г.) Сборник документов* (Москва, 1984), 151.

²⁹ Cioranescu, part III, 1.

this question to be opened."³⁰ Therefore the State Department also considered Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina virtually lost for Romania, taking a firmer stand only in case the Soviet Union would claim even more Romanian territory.

A few months later, on October 9, at Moscow Conference two leaders draw the infamous "percentages agreement" on the suggested influence of their states in Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary and Yugoslavia³¹ Thus, the U.S. and Britain entered the Yalta conference with no illusions as to the fate of the Baltic States in particular and Central and Eastern Europe in general. By February 1945, the position of the Red Army had already made the fate of Central and Eastern Europe a *de facto* reality.

These attitudes confirm my main proposition – the fate of Lithuania and Romania, as well as future of whole Central and Eastern European region was determined in the years of the Second World War as a consequence of traditional power balance and geopolitical arguments.

In the final years of the Second World War, the issue of the Baltic States did not occur on the list of the most important problems of the Western Great Powers' policy and was treated as an additional negotiating point. The policy of the West – not only in respect of the Baltic States, however, but of the states of the entire Central and Eastern European region – remained weak.

Epilogue...

The final changes which symbolically ended of Second World War reached Romania and the other Central and Eastern European countries in 1989, but they were finalized in 1990-1991 for the three Baltic States. Quoting the President of the European Parliament Jerzy Buzek: "Today we are a reunited and integrated continent because we have learnt the lessons of the Second World War, and the pact that allowed it to happen."³²

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³⁰ Memorandum by the Division of Southern European Affairs, Washington, (no day) March 1944 in: F.R.U.S. 1944, 146.

³¹ Winston Churchill, *The Second World War, Vol. VI: Triumph and Tragedy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1953), 198, 204.

³² "Speech of the President of the European Parliament Jerzy Buzek for 70th Anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact", Brussels, October 14, 2009, <http://www.ep-president.eu/view/en/press/speeches/sp-2009/sp-2009-October/speeches-2009-October-5.html> (April 15, 2010)

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The Status and the future of Baltic States and Romania in the strategy of Western Allies in the early years of the Second World War: A comparative view

THE SECOND CORPS OF ROMANIAN VOLUNTEERS IN RUSSIA

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This paper has been presented at the First International Conference on Nordic and Baltic Studies in Romania: *Romania and Lithuania in the Interwar International Relations: Bonds, Intersections and Encounters* hosted by the Romanian Association for Baltic and Nordic Studies, Târgoviste, May 19-21, 2010.

Abstract:

The situation of Romanian POWs has aggravated with the Bolshevik assuming of power. Following the Kiev occupation by Bolsheviks, the First Romanian Volunteers Corps has been disbanded and a great number of POWs remained on Russian territory with little possibilities to return to their native land. In these circumstances, the Romanians volunteers decided to depart for Moscow from where they hoped to leave for their country with the Romanian consul's support. However, the German authorities refused to allow their crossing through Ukraine and the volunteers had to cope with their staying in Russia. They set up a body of all officers in order to represent the Romanian cause both in Russia and in France: the Second Corps of Romanian Volunteers in Russia. This occasioned them to encounter other political-military forces acting in the Russian chaotic situation, a Lithuanian army corps included. The Romanians will continue their odyssey in their attempt to be evacuated through Vladivostok, they successfully fighting the Bolsheviks and finally returning to Romania. This paper elaborates over the fate of the Second Corps of Romanian Volunteers in Russia and their encounters with their Lithuanian, other Baltic and Czechoslovak fellows.

Rezumat:

Situația prizonierilor și voluntarilor români rămași în Rusia s-a agravat o dată cu venirea bolșevicilor la conducerea statului. După ocuparea orașului Kiev de către trupele bolșevice, Primul Corp al Voluntarilor Români a fost dizolvat și un număr mare de prizonieri a rămas pe teritoriul Rusiei cu posibilități mici de întoarcere în țară. Pentru că misiunea română nu mai putea funcționa voluntarii au primit o sumă de bani, apoi s-au îndreptat spre Moscova, de unde sperau să treacă în țară cu ajutorul consulului român. Autoritățile germane au refuzat, însă, permisul de trecere prin Ucraina și românii s-au văzut nevoiți să se reorganizeze pe teritoriul rusesc. În urma consfăturilor s-a hotărât ca românii să înființeze un organism

puternic al tuturor ofițerilor, care să reprezinte cauza românească atât în Rusia cât și în Franța. Astfel, a fost creat Al Doilea Corp al Voluntarilor Români. Situația de pe teritoriul rusesc era una confuză deoarece aici se afla un amalgam de forțe politico-militare, dintre care putem aminti Legiunea Cehoslovacă, Corpul Voluntarilor Români, un corp de lituanieni și mai multe corpuri de estonieni. La finele primei conflagrații mondiale toate corpurile de voluntari trebuiau să se retragă de pe teritoriul rusesc. Trupele urmau să fie evacuate prin Vladivostok. În aceste condiții, Legiunea Română a primit sarcina de a apăra Transsiberianul pe linia Zirna-Tulun-Nijin Udinsk-Bairanokov-Taișeț. Românilor, în misiunea lor de a apăra linia de cale ferată, s-au confruntat cu trupele bolșevice, pe care le-au învins. Datorită comportamentului lor dur românii au primit de la localnici numele de „Dikaia Divizia” (Divizia Sălbatecă). Cu toate acestea, situația generală era una dificilă. În condițiile în care polonezii fuseseră decimați de bolșevică, dintre letoni au scăpat doar aproximativ 500, iar cehoslovacii refuzau să mai lupte în Siberia, trupele române au ajuns în ariergardă, unde asigurau retragerea trupelor cehoslovace. În iarna anului 1920, s-au intensificat luptele dintre armata roșie și trupele de voluntari. Voluntarii români au respins în luptele de ariergardă armata bolșevică. Neputând învinge trupele române, bolșevicii au cerut armistițiul. Conform acestuia bolșevicii se obligau să rămână 50 de km. în urma trupelor de ariergardă și să înainteze spre răsărit doar în măsura posibilităților de retragere a Legiunii. Românii au rămas în ariergardă până la transferul complet al trupelor de voluntari în Transbaicalia.

Keywords: POWs, Russia, Romanian volunteers, Civil War, Bolsheviks

The Great War brought about an entirely new situation, generated by the existence of multinational empires, soldiers of the same ethnic origin being often part of the enemy camp. In this posture, among others, were also the Romanians living in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Therefore, once Romania joined the Entente in the war, the Romanians from abroad wanted to join the Romanian army in the conflagration and so the corps of volunteers were created.

The new international context, starting with the early 1918, placed the prisoners and the Romanian volunteers from Russia in a critical situation. Besides, the Bolsheviks' coming to power and the outbreak of the civil war deteriorated the problem of the Romanians, who, after the occupation of Kiev by the Bolshevik troops, were forced to leave the city. It is important to note that in Darnita, near Kiev, a center for receiving Romanian prisoners from the Russian territory was organized in 1917. In this place, also, the First Romanian Volunteer Corps was established which aimed at sending contingents to fight on the Romanian territory against the Central Powers. To make the recruitment of volunteers easier, the Minister of War empowered Lt. C.G. Pietraru to organize the Service of Romanian

Volunteers in Russia, Kiev, but the critical conditions in early 1918 caused the abolition of the Service. Moreover, the Romanian volunteers disguised as Russian soldiers moved to Chisinau and they passed in their country. In Darnita 10,117 volunteers, 396 officers and 9,971 soldiers were enrolled¹.

Taking into account the above-mentioned events, the First Romanian Volunteer Corps was dissolved and most volunteers went to Moldavia. Even so, a large number of volunteers remained on Russian territory, having extremely limited opportunities to return to the country. In these conditions, each volunteer received 1,000 rubles in advance, the pay for two months and went to Irkutsk. On their way to the established destination, the Romanians faced many difficulties, being arrested twice by the Bolshevik authorities as suspects, but released for lack of evidence. In addition, due to the proximity of the Central Powers' troops, the Romanian volunteers went to Moscow, hoping to receive assistance from the Romanian consul to enter their country. Nevertheless, the German authorities refused to let them pass through Ukraine and thus, the Romanian prisoners had to reorganize themselves².

As a result of the conferences in Moscow, it was decided that the Romanian officers meet in Samara, on June 5, 1918, to set up a powerful organization of all officers to represent the Romanian cause, both in Russia and in France³. Due to the fights between the Czechoslovakian and Bolshevik troops, the Romanian officers could not meet on June 5. The Romanian meeting took place only on August 3, 1918, in Chelyabinsk, where a National Committee led by Voicu Nitescu organized the former prisoners and formed the first regiment, the Volunteer Corps from Chelyabinsk, named "Horia"⁴.

The conference decided to create the Second Corps of Volunteers from Transylvania, Banat and Bucovina, having as its main goal to continue the fight next to the Allies, against the Central Powers. During this conference, the Romanian National Committee was organized, as part of the Romanian military and political executive from Transylvania and

¹ Marin C. Stănescu and Alexandru Roz, *Prizonieri și voluntari români din primul război mondial și Marea Unire din 1918*, [Romanian Prisoners and Volunteers of the World War I and The Great Union of 1918] (Arad: Vasile Goldiș University Press, 2003), 30-31.

² Direcția Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale Iași, Folder Victor Cădere, file 2, 16-17. (Hereafter A.N.I. instead of naming the folder, to simplify the quotation, as we refer only to this archive folder, held in two locations: the Department of Central National Archives Iasi and the Central University Library, „Mihai Eminescu”, Iasi).

³ *Ibid.*, f. 19-20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, file 1, 19.

Bucovina. The president of the Committee was Nitescu, responsible for Foreign Affairs N. Nedelcu, responsible for finances Simion Gogan, military chief Valeriu Dimbu and secretary Corneliu Vaida⁵.

On August 24, 1918, the Romanian National Committee signed an act of collaboration and mutual support with the Czechoslovakian National Committee, according to which the Romanian part undertook to organize a Corps of Romanian Volunteers in order to fight for the liberation of the territories that were part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. In their turn, the Czechoslovaks obliged themselves to provide support for the Romanian volunteers in achieving the common goal, that of destroying the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In case the Corps of Romanian Volunteers didn't have enough officers, they were to appeal to the Czechoslovakian military department. The Czechoslovaks engaged to provide food, clothes and weapons and to take care of the auxiliary technical units. In addition, the Czechoslovaks had to cover all the expenses for propaganda and recruitment. The Romanian National Committee worked out the internal regulations, organized courts and schools of officers, proposed officers to be advanced to the Czechoslovakian National Committee, with the participation and permission of the Romanian National Committee, based on parity. In the end, it is precisely specified that the Second Corps of Romanian Volunteers be under the supreme guidance of the Romanian National Committee or another organism which represented the Romanian government⁶.

The prisoners answered promptly to the *Call* given on August 15, 1918 by the Romanian Committee. The number of the volunteers was of almost 5,000 people; a battalion was organized in Kurgan and five others in Petropavlovsk. The large number of volunteers caused problems to the leaders, who couldn't provide food, clothes and shelter for the new-comers. To solve this problem, Nitescu went to Ekaterinburg, the centre of the Czechoslovakian National Committee. The meeting of the two parts didn't solve the problems of the Romanians. The Czechoslovaks confronted the same problems: lack of money or shelter for volunteers⁷.

The initial plan which foresaw the embarking and sending of the volunteers on the French front was abandoned, the Allies wanted to remake the Oriental front and continue the hostilities against the Central

⁵ Ibid., file 2, 25.

⁶ Ibid., file 19, 7; Voicu Nițescu, *Douăzeci de luni în Rusia și Siberia (anul 1917) [20 Months in Russia and Siberia (1917)]*, vol. III (Brașov: Tipografia A. Mureșanu-Brăniceanu, 1926), 125-128.

⁷ Nițescu, 129-133.

Powers⁸. To accomplish the plan, in Siberia were concentrated in 1918: 30,000 Japanese led by General Oi, 8,000 Americans led by General Graves, 50,000 Czechoslovaks, 3,000 Italians, 12,000 Poles, 3,000 Serbs, 12,000 Chinese, a corps of Lithuanians and more of Latvians⁹.

Internally, the corps of Romanian volunteers confronted difficulties caused by the lack of some well-trained and respected officers to impose themselves in front of them. This situation determined the Romanian National Committee to address the Czechoslovakian commandment, which, according to the convention signed on August 24, 1918, detached temporarily the Czech colonel Ed Kadlez to take care of the technical and military training of the Corps. The colonel received from the leaders the task to transport the Second Corps of Romanian Volunteers to Irkutsk, to complete their organization and military training. The mission was accomplished and, thus, at the end of 1918 the volunteers were already quartered in Irkutsk. Going east, the Romanians aimed at moving away from the fighting front with the Bolsheviks, disentangling the corps of the Russian internal fights and shortening the way to the free sea¹⁰.

Arriving in Irkutsk, the Romanian volunteers came into conflict with the Czech colonel Kadlez. In this context, General Janin, the chief of the French Military Mission and of the Allied Supreme Council, called for Nitescu to Omsk in order to explain the situation of the Romanian volunteers on the Siberian front. During the meeting, Nitescu emphasized the fact that the Romanian troops were going to interfere only in the areas where their interests coincided with those of the Allies. Moreover, at that moment, the main problem for Romanians was to repatriate all the contingents of volunteers. It is worthy to mention that, to accomplish their objective, the Romanian troops had to participate in guarding the Transsiberian, the only way to ensure the connection with the city of Vladivostok. Regarding the solving of the conflict between Romanians and Colonel Kadlez, General Janin put the Corps of Romanian Volunteers under the direct orders of the French Mission; a French officer was going to replace Colonel Kadlez¹¹.

The relations between the Romanians and the Czech colonel worsened during Nitescu's leaving for Omsk. In the meantime, Kadlez had formed his general staff of Czech and Russian officers. Besides, he involved

⁸ Ibid., 143-144.

⁹ Victor Cădere, „Însemnările șefului de misiune,” în *Stări de spirit și mentalități în timpul marelui război* [*The Notes of the Mission Chief, in Moods and Mentalities during the Great War*], eds. Ion Agrigoroaiei et al. (Iași: Editura Junimea, 2005), 141.

¹⁰ A.N.I., file 19, 8-9.

¹¹ Ibid, 9-10.

the Romanian troops in fights which weren't of interest for the Romanian volunteers. This turned into a memorial written by Voicu Nitescu and addressed to general Janin; this way the general was informed about the decision of the Romanians to change Colonel Kadlez. General Janin accepted the Romanians' request of replacing the colonel and he sent for the French officers Malgrat and Buinsse. However, the two officers didn't share the Romanians' ideas and sustained the activity of the Czech colonel, insisting that he remains to lead the Corps of Romanian Volunteers¹².

The irreconcilable conflict between the Romanian volunteers, on the one side, and the Czech colonel and the French officers, on the other side, can be interpreted also as a conflict of interests. The Romanian National Committee had as objective obeying the orders coming from the country and avoiding any other confrontation that didn't serve the Romanian national interests. The interest of the Czech colonel Kadlez was to work his way up using the Romanian troops in the fight against the Bolsheviks. The French also wanted to use the Romanian volunteers in the fight against the red troops¹³.

The situation of the Romanian volunteers became very difficult when Nitescu went to the country in January 1919 to repatriate the volunteers and prisoners of Siberia. Colonel Kadlez treated offensively the members of the Romanian National Committee in many occasions and denounced them, accusing them of being on the Austrian side, on the Bolshevik side and of lacking discipline in relation to the Allied commandment. The accusations were formulated in front of Admiral Kolceak and the French general Janin. The conflict ended on February 19, with the order of recalling to the post of the Czech colonel. After a few days of conversations between Colonel Kadlez, Major Malgrat and General Janin, however, the order was called-off. Besides, on February 23, 1919, General Janin announced in a telegram that he suspended the Romanian National Committee from leading the corps of volunteers. The Corps of Romanian Volunteers was going to be transformed into a Legion Corps acting under the orders of the French Military Mission¹⁴.

The Corps of Romanian Volunteers was transformed, on January 26, 1919 in the Legion of Romanian Volunteers from Transylvania and Bucovina. Beside the three battalions: the first Battalion called "Horia", the second Battalion called "Marasesti" and the Reserve Battalion, two other companies of machine-gun were organized, a company of pioneers and a

¹² Ibid., 10.

¹³ Ibid., file 2, 3-4.

¹⁴ Ibid., 5.

school for grenadiers. In March the crisis was already over and on May 10 the Romanian government informed General Janin that it accepted that the Romanian Legion of Volunteers fights for the Ally cause, under the orders of the French Military Mission. Thus, the Romanian battalions received the mission of assuring the security of Transsiberian on the battle line Taiset, Zima, Tulum, Nijniudnsk, being the rearguard of the Czechoslovakian troops which wanted to retreat towards Vladivostok¹⁵. Among the 5,000 volunteers quartered in Irkutsk, only 2,000 wanted to be part of the newly formed legion. Some of them repatriated in small groups, others returned in camps as prisoners, not as volunteers. The Romanian Military Mission, led by Victor Cadere, repatriated them one year later¹⁶.

With this date begins the last stage of activity of the Romanian volunteers in Siberia. Next to the Romanian volunteers fought around 50,000 Czechoslovaks, a division of Japanese, around 10,000 Poles in Krasnoyarsk, 3,000 Serbs in Chelyabinsk, two battalions of Americans and a number of Lithuanians. This mixture of troops had the mission to defend and maintain the safety of Transsiberian and fight against the Bolshevik troops.

In 1919, the Romanian volunteers, in their mission of defending the railway line, confronted the Bolshevik troops which they defeated. Due to their harsh behaviour shown during the fights, the Romanians were called "Dikaia Divizia" ("The Wild Division"), name given by the local people¹⁷. But the situation became difficult, the conditions in which the Poles, the first who came into contact with the Bolshevik army, were ploughed down, while around 500 Latvians got away and the Czechoslovaks refused to fight in Siberia. This way, the Romanians had to fight in rearguard, where they ensured the retreat of the Czechoslovakian troops¹⁸.

In the winter of 1920, the fights between the Red Army and the troops of volunteers intensified. The Romanian volunteers succeeded in beating off the attack of the red troops in the rearguard fights. Being unable to defeat the Romanian troops, the Bolsheviks requested a truce, obliging themselves to keep a distance of 50 km behind the rearguard troops and go east only keeping in mind the Legion's retreating possibilities. In any case, the Romanians stayed in rearguard until the complete transfer of the

¹⁵ Ibid, file 19, 12.

¹⁶ Ibid., 9.

¹⁷ Stănescu and Roz, 208.

¹⁸ Elie Bufnea, *Formațiile de voluntari, în Transilvania, Banat, Crișana, Maramureș 1918-1928, [Formations of Volunteers in Transylvania, Banat, Crisana, Maramurs, 1918-1928]* (București: Editura Cultura Civică, 1929), 129-130.

volunteer troops in Transbaicalia¹⁹. In the end, on May 10, 1920, in Vladivostok, the Romanian volunteers were decorated with 68 foreign decorations (French, English, Italian and Czechoslovakian) for the courage they proved in the confrontation with the Bolsheviks²⁰.

Thus, I consider that the activity of the Second Corps of Romanian Volunteers can be characterized as praiseworthy. Although they faced difficult moments caused by the Russian and Romanian armistices, the volunteer troops found possibilities to reunite and continue the fight for accomplishing the national ideal, next to the other Allied troops. Anyone's sacrifice in Russia cannot be forgotten and that is why it is important to remember the activity that the Romanian volunteers, next to their fellow-soldiers of other nationalities, carried on Siberian territory. The difficulties met in accomplishing the proposed goal had many causes such as, first, the Romanians' refusal to interfere in the internal Russian problems, but also their desire to fight only to support the Romanian cause. Through the successes against the Red Army, the Romanian volunteers gained the respect of the other missions, providing determination and courage appreciated by their both allies and enemies.

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¹⁹ Ibid., 130.

²⁰ A.N.I., file 19, 19.

BOGDAN MURGESCU, *ROMÂNIA ȘI EUROPA. ACUMULAREA DECALAJELOR ECONOMICE (1500-2010) [ROMANIA AND EUROPE. THE ACCUMULATION OF ECONOMIC DISPARITIES]* (IAȘI POLIROM, 2010), 526 pp.

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One of the topical issues that have bothered the Romanian society over the past twenty years – and even before that – is the causes of the economic gap between Romania and the West. When, why, how it emerged and is there any chance that Romania will finally catch up with the West? The point of reference is usually constituted by the developed western countries of France, Germany, Britain or the United States. Bogdan Murgescu, the Bucharest University professor and expert in economic history, is also asking himself these basic questions which are the bases of a fundamental research. If someone would have expected him given the long period of time the book covers to look the same sources, to use the same approach or to use the same frame of reference then he would be wrong. The book is not a synthesis book, but a research undertaking, the series of data he uses are collected and compared from many sources and well fitted into the narrative, while the comparison is not undertaken with the incomparable, but with Denmark, Ireland and Serbia, all of which were comparable by 1500 in terms of economic development with Romania. Moreover, the book is solidly rooted into the intellectual debate started by the Annales School, especially by Ferdinand Braudel, whose concepts the author refreshes, and into the tradition of Bucharest sociological school started by Dimitrie Gusti and continued by Henri H. Stahl and, in the West, by Daniel Chirot. In his quest for the material explanations of historical developments and in his *longue durée* perspective, the author seems to have been also influenced by the famous book of British professor Paul Kennedy *The Rise and fall of the Great Powers. Economic change and military conflict from 1500 to 2000*. The result is outstanding, the book being equipped with all the ingredients of a best-seller by its solid and vast documentation, strength of arguments, quality of writing and no last by the very topical questions it provides with well-thought answers.

It is not the scope of this short review to thoroughly assess the value and significance of this book, but rather to briefly look into the comparison it

makes with the Danish case. Nothing seems more different in Europe than Denmark, an example of successful story, and Romania, a country still striving to overcome its backwardness. By his analysis of Denmark's economic development, Bogdan Murgescu's book provides a good overview of the economic, social, cultural and political evolutions responsible for the Danish entry into the category of developed societies slowly during the second and third quarter of the 19th century and for Romania's failure to go past this challenge. One of the driving forces in this respect was not only the agricultural restructuring due to external and domestic economic and trade developments, but also to the great progresses in education, in agriculture and animal husbandry and in the cooperative movement strongly encouraged by Edward Tesdorpf, the chairman of the Royal Society of Agriculture between 1860 and 1888, and the famous reformer Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundvig. The comparison between Denmark and the other cases studied in his book provides Murgescu with arguments to support Lars G. Sandberg's argument that the human capital was the crucial factor responsible for the success or failure of the retarded countries during the 19th and 20th centuries (p. 199).

The book compares the cases of the four countries (Romania and Denmark included) during the early modern history, the 19th century, the inter-war period and the post-war time, but the comparison between Romanian and Danish road to modernity in late 19th century offers perhaps the best insights and the most fruitful conclusions to the author of this book. The overcoming of economic backwardness, concludes Murgescu, is possible, but the examples he uses prove that the preparation takes at least a generation and the breakthrough another one, which once again demonstrates the advantage of his *longue durée* and comparative approaches. However, to make this breakthrough one shouldn't expect some brilliant leadership or the providential man, but take the steps towards a gradual opening to the international economic channels and avoid the deep social polarization.

Thus, the book represents one of the most authoritative responses to Romania's long-term failures to overcome underdevelopment and, by virtue of examples it offers, the possibilities and choices it has to take the EU country in order to fully integrate into the European family. The case of Denmark and the differences between the two countries over the past a few centuries is again brought into discussion by the author of this book after a recent series of articles and a Ph.D. paper dedicated to the relations and reciprocal perceptions of the two countries by Oana Lăculeanu-Popescu.



Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania

Vilnius, 11 May 2010

Dear Participants and Guests of the Conference,

Let me convey my sincere and heartfelt greetings to the participants and guests of the first conference of Romanian and Lithuanian historians "Romania and Lithuania in the Interwar International Relations: Bonds, Intersections and Encounters".

I believe that this conference is important for the people of both countries going through the historical Discovery process that was accelerated after the fall of Iron Curtain. The phase we currently find ourselves in reflects the unquestionable fact that Lithuania and Romania are not undiscovered lands for each other any longer, but the process of awareness still has a long road ahead.

I am glad that on the margins of the conference the Lithuanian art exhibition "Crossroads. Lithuania: Sculpture in Photography" will be opened in the "Royal Court" National Museal Complex of Târgoviște.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Romanian Association for Baltic and Nordic Studies, Valahia University of Târgoviște, the Târgoviște Municipality, Vilnius University and the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania for their close cooperation in organizing these remarkable events. It is an excellent example of partnership between regions, universities and people of Romania and Lithuania substantially contributing toward deepening relations between the two countries.

Yours sincerely,

Audronius Ažubalis



Believe in Freedom

LITHUANIA
11 MARCH, 1990

Revista Română pentru Studii Baltice și Nordice (RRSBN) is a biannual peer-reviewed journal dedicated to publishing the results of research in all fields which are intertwined with the aims of *The Romanian Association for Baltic and Nordic Studies* such as:

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- The maximum length for consideration of an article is 6,000 – 8,000 words (including footnotes), and 700 words for a review.
- Please submit double-spaced papers in 11-point Book Antiqua font with 2 cm margins. Footnotes should be in 9-point.
- All research articles must include a 100-200 word English language abstract (and in Romanian or one of the Nordic and Baltic languages when applicable) and at least five English language key words.
- Submissions should include complete bibliographic references (including page numbers) in footnotes.
- Final bibliography should be inserted at the end of the article.
- For general rules of grammar, form, and style, authors should refer to *The Chicago Manual of Style* (The University of Chicago Press).
- All manuscripts will be subject to anonymous peer review, and will be evaluated on the basis of their creativity, quality of scholarship, and contribution to advancing the understanding of the regions concerned.