

THE PARIS PEACE TREATIES OF 1919-1920 HAVE RECOGNIZED THE DE FACTO EXISTENCE OF THE ROMANIAN NATIONAL UNITARY STATE

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Abstract: *In the Note to the Central Powers on December 1st, 1916, the Entente stated that “peace will not be possible as long as the reparation of violated rights and freedoms, the recognition of the principle of nationalities and the free existence of small states are not guaranteed.” It was, therefore, the firm commitment of the Allies to reorganize the European continent on the basis of the principle of nationalities. Under pressure from public opinion, protests by representatives of Austro-Hungarian nations, but especially due to documents adopted at the Congress of Nations of Austria / Hungary in April 1918, in June, President Wilson finally clarified his position on the issue of the independent states constitution and implicitly the dismemberment of the double monarchy. At the same time, in a document from May 20, 1918, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasized that “the independence of nation-states” was created thought itself.*

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World War I found a Europe troubled by the old unresolved issue of *nationalities* – a natural consequence of the fact that, for centuries, principles other than that of nationalities had dominated the theory and practice of the states’ formation. The three great empires of Europe, Austria-Hungary, Russia and Germany, held under oppression many nations or parts of nations to which they denied equal rights with the dominant nations, often minority (the case of Hungarians and Austrians compared to Slavs and Romanians – majority). The policy of denationalization systematically practiced in these empires has radicalized the national liberation movement.

In the **Note** to the Central Powers on December 1st, 1916, the Entente stated that “peace will not be possible as long as the reparation of violated rights and freedoms, the recognition of the principle of nationalities and the free existence of small states is not guaranteed.”¹

This unequivocal statement was repeated in the Joint **Note** of January 10th, 1917 regarding the aims pursued by the Entente in the war. It was emphasized, among other things the reorganization of Europe based on respect for nationalities; the restoration of Belgium, Serbia and Montenegro; the liberation of the Italians, Slavs, Romanians, Czechoslovaks from foreign domination, the rebirth of Poland.²

Therefore, it was about the firm commitment of the Allies to reorganize the European continent on the basis of the principle of nationalities.

In 1917-1918, in parallel with the radicalization of the national struggle for liberation in multinational empires, a series of programmatic documents have provided an ideological support to this phenomenon. In Russia, the *Declaration of the Rights of the People* of November 2/15, 1917 has animated the struggle of the peoples of Russia, a large number of free states establishing in a short time, including the *Democratic Republic of Moldova* on the territory of the former Bessarabia governorate.

For the oppressed nations of Austria-Hungary, the statement made by President W. Wilson to the US Senate on December 27/8, 1918 – *The 14 points* – has represented the most important ideological support for the post-war organization of the world based on *the principle of nationalities*. However, points 10, 11, 13, which referred strictly to Central Europe, provided only a *wide autonomy* for the nations of Austria-Hungary, the evacuation of Romania, Montenegro, and the reconstitution of Poland.

Under the pressure of the public opinion, of the protests of the representatives of Austro-Hungarian nations, but especially due to documents adopted at the Congress of Nations of Austria / Hungary in

¹ George Sofronie, *Le Principe des Nationalités et les Traite de Paix de 1919-1920*, Bucarest, F.d., Universul, 1937, p. 18.

² Manley O. Hudson, “The trial of the Kaiser”, in E.M. House, Ch. Seymour, *What really happened at Paris; the story of the Peace Conference*, New York, 1921, pp. 165-166.

April 1918, in June, President Wilson finally clarified his position on the issue of the establishment of independent states and, implicitly, the dismemberment of the double monarchy. At the same time, in a document from May 20th, 1918, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasized that *“the independence of nation-states” had been created by itself the best way to sanction these deeds is not creation, nor proclamation, but ascertainment.*³

This document recognizes the irreversible dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, recognizes as “acts of sovereignty” the decisions taken by bodies created outside the empire by subjugated nations (National Committees), considers these acts of sovereignty as been final, and all that remained for the future Peace Conference was the mission of “ascertaining them,” thus excluding the idea of the formation of new states by the Great Powers.

By the end of 1918, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was already history. The struggle for national liberation and the decisions of peoples’ self-determination drew a new map in this area of Europe long before the opening of the Paris Peace Conference. In November and December 1918, the Czechoslovak Republic, the Kingdom of the Serbs, of the Croats and Slovenes and the Republic of Poland appeared on the map of Europe. On November 12, after all the attempts to save something from the old empire failed, the Republic of Austria was proclaimed, and on November 16, the Republic of Hungary was established.

The extensive process of national self-determination also included Romanians under the rule of Russia, Austria and Hungary. Between March 27th and December 1st, 1918, Bessarabia⁴, Bukovina⁵,

³ Archive of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of France, Series: Paniers Pichon, vol. V, pp. 139-142.

⁴ In 1812 the Ottoman Empire ceded to the Russian Empire the eastern half of the Autonomous Principality of Moldova (between the Prut and the Dniester). The Russian-Turkish treaty was null and void because the Turks ceded a territory that did not belong to them and did not manage it.

⁵ The Northeastern part of the Autonomous Principality of Moldova traded by the Austrian, Ottoman and Russian Empires in 1774-1775 on gold, precious stones, money and other goods. The ruling prince of Moldova, Grigore Ghica, was assassinated by the Ottomans in collusion with Russia and Austria for his protests against this arbitrary act.

Transylvania, Crișana și Maramureș⁶, Banat⁷ were united with the Old Kingdom through the acts plebiscitary adopted by the Romanian nation. The Unification Documents from Chisinau, Czernowitz and Alba Iulia specified the territorial extent of the provinces that were to be united with the Country, as follows:

- Bessarabia its borders between the Prut, the Dniester, the Black Sea and the old Austrian borders;
- Bucovina – “its old borders to Ceremuș, Colacin and Dniester”;
- Transylvania, Banat between the rivers Mureș, Tisa and Danube and Wallachia.

It should be noted that the decisions taken by the representative bodies of the oppressed nations (national councils, parliaments, etc.) regarding the self-determination and the formation of independent states were acts of national sovereignty. These acts, representing the *national will*, took place in October - December 1918, before or simultaneously with the capitulation of the Central Powers; so the new states were formed on the ruins of Austria-Hungary at a time when the war was not even over.

The Peace Conference was faced with the new political and territorial realities in Central Europe resulting from the will of the peoples. British Prime Minister David Lloyd George was referring to this situation when he said that “Before the powers came to examine the Austrian peace, they were confronted with committed and irreversible deeds – the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire – at an unexpectedly rapid pace and in a completely irreparable manner”⁸.

On January 18th, 1918, the proceedings of the Peace Conference opened in Paris in the presence of delegations from 32 states. From the very beginning, in an aristocratic oligarchy, the representatives of the Great Allied and Associated Powers have applied a discriminatory treatment to smaller allies: “limited interest” states (small states) were not even allowed to participate in the debate on the treaties in which they were directly interested.

⁶ Counties in Northwestern Transylvania annexed by the Kingdom of Hungary.

⁷ County in southwestern Muntenia annexed by the Austrian Empire.

⁸ David Lloyd George, *Memoirs of the Peace Conference*, vol. I, Yale University Press, New York, 1929, pp. 50-51.

In this context, the Romanian delegation led by Ion I.C. Brătianu and composed of personalities such as Vaida-Voievod, Neagu Flondor, Ioan Pelivan, Constantin Coandă, Victor Antonescu and others, with whom were specialists in finance, economics, law, history, geography, arrived in Paris to support Romania's cause. On February 1st, 1919, the I.I.C. Brătianu presented Romania's position before the Conference. Making a wide incursion in the unfolding of the events of 1916-1917, Brătianu highlighted Romania's participation in the war against the Central Powers as one of the determining elements of the reconstruction of the historical borders. The second category of arguments in support of the national cause was related to the historical and ethnic rights of Romanians in the three provinces to unite with the Old Kingdom of Romania. It was shown, for example that in Transylvania, on the eve of the war, lived over 3 million Romanians, i.e. over 62.5%, the Hungarians being around 700 thousand, i.e. 15%, without Szeklers. Brătianu's demonstration also focused on the policy of denationalization and economic and political oppression, which explained the fact that Romanians lived 95% in villages, and Hungarians formed about 40% of the urban population. In the context of the worsening situation of the nations in Hungary and Austria during the war, the Romanians took power, preparing for the union: "Even since the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the Romanian deputies from all counties of Transylvania and Banat, composed of over 100,000 people, demanded in the imposing National Assembly in Alba Iulia on December 1st, 1918 the definitive union of Transylvania and the Romanian regions in Hungary, as well as that of Banat with Romania". Undoubted arguments in support of the cause of union with the Fatherland of Bukovina and Bessarabia completed the picture painted by I.I.C. Brătianu in front of the peace forum.

He specified that representatives of the minorities who lived for centuries with the majority Romanians understood to support the latter's aspirations for National-Political unity – the case of the Saxons, Poles, Jews. As for the Hungarians, he said that "no one can expect the defeated Hungarians to want to unite with a country that they have strived for hundreds of years to rule."⁹ The situation was also true for

⁹ Arch. M.A.E., London Fund, vol .34, tel. 1138/28 May 1918, London, signed Boerescu.

the Russians and minority Ukrainians in Bukovina. The mentality of “masters” and privileged was not compatible either then or in the years to come with the acceptance of the rules of an *equal status* to that of other minorities within a Romanian National State.

If the acts of capitulation of the Central Powers seemed to end the war, for Romania, the period that followed meant another great political-diplomatic-military effort, another great attempt to preserve in its entirety the national territory achieved by the Union of 1918. Hungary and Bulgaria, although they had signed the capitulation and the armistice conventions, refused to accept the situation and resorted to any means to regain the territories over which they considered themselves definitively masters. “It was – says Gheorghe Brătianu – the warlike agitation of the Hungarians beyond the line on which the armistice stopped the armies from Transylvania, which threatened the existence of the entire Romanian population in the counties of Arad, Bihor, Sălaj and Sătmar”¹⁰. Iuliu Maniu, the president of the Transylvanian Board of Directors, communicates daily in Bucharest the atrocities of the Hungarians. Pherechide informed Brătianu in Paris that “the official Hungarian organs take part in them; gangs arrive in armored trains or leave by special train”¹¹.

On March 20th, 1919, Colonel Vix, the Allied military representative in Budapest, handed over to the Hungarian Prime Minister, Count Károlyi, the order to withdraw his troops on a new demarcation line in order to protect the population of the Apuseni Mountains. Then the unexpected event of Károlyi’s resignation occurred and the rise to power of Béla Kun. “The new regime, says Brătianu, was only an annex of the Moscow Soviets, with which it had immediately established a close working relationship. Between the activity of the communists from the East and from the West, the situation of Romania became more and more critical”¹².

Indeed, 1919 was perhaps the most difficult year in the history of the assertion of the Romanian national unitary state. Simultaneously with the debate on the Peace Treaties in Paris, Romania defended its western border

¹⁰ Gheorghe Brătianu, *Acțiunea politică militară a României în 1919 în lumina corespondenței diplomatice a lui Ion I.C. Brătianu*, Bucharest, Cartea Românească Publishing House, 1939, p. 52.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 54.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 55.

against Bolshevik Hungary, the one on the Dniester in the face of Russian Bolshevik aggression and the south-eastern one against Bulgaria, which no longer wanted to leave Dobrogea. Ion I.C. Brătianu recorded then a worrying reality: “The ignorance of continental issues, as well as the fact that, for England, the great results of the war are achieved by annexing the colonies and destroying the German fleet makes our task very difficult”¹³.

The military conflict with Béla Kun’s Bolsheviks, who had amply proved General Smuts’s pacifist mission “that there was nothing left to do,” was a short one. On May 2nd, the Romanian troops were on the Tisza, i.e. on the alignment established by the 1916 Convention between Romania and the Entente as a border between Romania and Hungary. On May 20th, however, the reorganized Hungarian Red Army attacked the Czechoslovak front, breaking it; the Czech army retreated in disarray. At the same time, Soviet Russia, in collusion with Béla Kun, struck hard on the Dniester, attacking French troops and temporarily occupying Tighina. At the same time, at the Peace Conference, Bulgaria demanded Dobrogea in its entirety or possibly only southern Dobrogea. They used, according to a very coherent plan, the subversive movement in Dobrogea littered with agitators, gangs, pressure groups on allied military authorities, actual military actions and propaganda abroad. In Sofia, delegates from the “Dobrogea” chauvinist committees addressed memorials to the French government’s civil commissioner to support the Bulgarian demands for Dobrogea at the Peace Conference.

In Paris, Bulgarian diplomacy took advantage of the provisions of the treaty of September 25th, 1918 with Germany and Austria-Hungary by which all Dobrogea had been assigned to it. A few days later, Bulgaria capitulated, but the armistice agreement of September 29th, concluded without Romania’s participation, left Dobrogea – through a confusing wording – under Bulgarian, military and administrative occupation, thus stimulating Bulgarian irredentism.

The line of the state border between Romania and Hungary was decided by the Territorial Commission of the Peace Conference without consulting Romania and without its participation. Although it did not correspond to the provisions of the Convention between Romania and the Entente of August 1916 and differed from the territorial clarifications made in the Decision of Alba-Iulia from December 1st, 1918, it essentially corresponded to the ethnic

¹³ D. Preda, V. Alexandrescu, C. Prodan, *La Roumanie et la guerre pour l'unité nationale, Campagne de 1918-1919*, Bucharest, 1995, pp. 328-329.

principle, which led to its acceptance by the Romanian government. On December 1st, 1919, Clemenceau invited the Budapest government to send delegates to the Peace Conference. Led by Count Albert Apponyi, the Hungarian delegation arrived in Paris on January 7th, 1920¹⁴.

In his presentation to the Supreme Council on January 16th, Count Apponyi challenged the legitimacy of the Decisions on the Self-Determination of the Oppressed Nations of Austria-Hungary and argued for the need to hold “plebiscites” in all regions detached from Hungary, uniting themselves in unitary nation states.¹⁵ The proposal put forward by Count Apponyi, a prominent political figure in the former dualist empire, promoter and active supporter of the policy of denationalization and forced Hungarianization in Transylvania and other provinces ruled by Hungary, was neither new nor original.

It should be noted that all those who, in one way or another, regretted the disappearance of the great empires and tried to return to their old state of affairs challenged the plebiscitary nature of the self-determination decisions of 1918 that led to the establishment of unitary nation-states and proposed the organization of so-called “plebiscites” – which were nothing more than attempts to put pressure on the Peace Conference to amend the Peace Treaties or to delay their signing.

In support Count Apponyi’s thesis, the Hungarian delegation handed over to the Peace Conference a voluminous documentation, containing a large number of notes, memoirs and annexes, most of which referred to Transylvania. Obviously, the fundamental thesis was that of the need to restore the old Hungarian kingdom, considered as the only viable form of state in central Europe.

For example, in the memorandum entitled *The responsibility of the Hungarian nation in the war* it was claimed, despite all well-known facts, that in the Hungarian kingdom there was never any national problem, and that the “spontaneous revolution of nationalities” in Hungary was a evil influence of the

¹⁴ The Hungarian delegation consisted of 7 commissioners general, including Counts Bethlen and Teleki; 6 commissioners, including counts, Csaky Kalay and Walko; 38 experts; 6 political advisers belonging to different parties; a secretariat consisting of 15 officials. (A.I.C. Jond Minister of National Propaganda, vol. 77).

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

situation from Austria.¹⁶ Dropping all responsibility on Austria in terms of the outbreak of war, the disintegration of dualism and the abolition of the “Kingdom of Hungary”, it was shown that Austria was a “conglomerate of different territories”, while Hungary was, from the beginning, “a unitary state”, maintaining this character uninterruptedly.¹⁷

It should be noted that, attempting a so-called historical foundation, the authors of the memoirs stated that the territory of Hungary “as a whole fell under the rule of the Hungarians in the ninth century and in the first years of the tenth century” (it is not shown *how* it “fell” and *what it was* on that territory before the Hungarian invasion, stating that “the northern and eastern provinces, as well as Transylvania were, we can say, uninhabited”).¹⁸

The “specialists” who had compiled those memoirs mystified or even ignored their own written sources attesting to a feudal political organization and an intense economic life on the territory of Transylvania inhabited by Romanians, the fact that the Hungarian kingdom waged heavy wars to conquer “that country, that the land that is watered by the best rivers that gold is collected from their sand, that the gold of that country is the best gold, that salt and salt matter are extracted from it”, a country inhabited by “blahi”¹⁹ – as the Hungarian chronicles mentioned. The same “specialists” in the mystification of historical truth, resuming old Roesslerian theses, claimed that the Romanians arrived in Transylvania late, finding there a flourishing Hungarian civilization; however, they did not try to explain the fact that this whole theory was practically overturned – the *majority* character of the Romanians in all Transylvania, a character that the Hungarian memoirs recognized, although they substantially reduced the number of this majority. The falsification of some basic historical facts also appeared in the statement that the Hungarian Kingdom “was the oldest

¹⁶ Arch. MAE., France, Series A: Peace 1914-1920, Hungary, vol. 121-122. Notes de la Délégation hongroise, Mémoire intitulé “La responsabilité de la nation magyare dans la guerre”, annexa 34, f.11.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, Memoire entitled “The principles of the Austrian peace treaty cannot be applied to Hungary”, annex 40, f.I.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ The anonymous chronicler of King Bella about the installation of the Hungarians in Pannonia and the conquest of Transylvania, in G. Popa Lisseanu, *Izvoarele istoriei românilor*, vol. 1, Bucharest, 1934, pp. 73-117.

state in Europe”, in other words at that point the peoples of Europe would have known the so-called “state organization”²⁰.

In the *Memorandum on Transylvania* and the memorandum entitled *Instead of one three multinational states*, Count Apponyi’s delegation accuses Romania, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia of imperialism, because, “by virtue of the ‘principle of nationalities’, these states would have seized the millennial territory of Hungary”, in other words, the paradox was advanced that the achievement of the *national and political unity* of Romania actually means the exact opposite, that is the creation of a multinational state. The absurdity of this thesis verge

²⁰ In the post-Trianon period, the propaganda supported by Horthy Hungary especially abroad sought to demonstrate the injustice of the decisions of the Trianon Peace Treaty and the "necessity" of its annulment, having in the arsenal of arguments the "non-existence" of the national problem in the Empire. rights of all nations, religious "tolerance", "solidarity" around the emperor, etc. The falsification of the history of the Romanians and of the other subjugated nations supported this propaganda. In Romania, internationally renowned scientists such as Nicolae Iorga, A.D. Xenopol, Gh. Brătianu, Silviu Dragomir and many others fought this propaganda with scientific arguments; they were joined by numerous foreign specialists. I remember Ernst Gamillsheg, professor of Romance philology at Univ. from Innsbruck, a member of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences, who leaned with interest on the origin and character of the Romanian language. Fighting Rössler's theories - which brought the Romanians to Transylvania through the 15th century. In the 13th century, from the south of the Danube, Gamillsheg said: “According to Rössler, the origin of the Romanians is to be found in Thrace. Macedonia, Illyria, Moesia, Scythia, and only not there, where you actually meet the Romanians: on the land of ancient Dacia!” (Ernst Gamillsheg, Despre originea românilor, in „Revista Fundațiilor Regale, an VII, nr. 8/1940, p. 251-272). Likewise, the German geographer Heinrich Kiepert, professor at Univ. from Berlin, published in 1878 a study stating that the Romanian language is spoken on a territory that stretches between the "borders of ancient Dacia" (Lehrbuch der Alten Geographie, Berlin, 1878). The American Milton G. Lehrer, in his well-known work *Transylvania - Romanian land*. The Transylvanian problem seen by an American, (Complete edition edited by Edith Lehrer and Ion Pătroiu, Ed. Vatra Românească, Cluj-Napoca, 1991), pages exactly what the title of his book announces, written after a comprehensive research even in the years when the annexation of Northwestern Transylvania by Horthy Hungary was committed, with all its consequences (see for details, Viorica Moisuc, The Calvary of the Romanians in the struggle for liberation and national integration; vol II - being drafted).

on the ridiculous when it was stated that in Hungary the “spread” (correct – forced imposition) of the Hungarian language nullified the “question of nationalities”²¹. The centuries-old struggle of oppressed nationalities for national liberation, the harsh policy of the Hungarian state to strangle this struggle were well-known beyond the borders of the monarchy, provoking the disgrace of international public opinion.

Obviously, the theses supported by Count Apponyi’s delegation did not withstand even the simplest confrontation with elementary logic and the best-known historical facts. This explains why the foreign supporters of these theses were people linked by very material interests to the old empire or ignorant of the history and geography of Central Europe. For example, in the House of Lords, discussing in December 1919 and then in March 1920 the text of the peace treaty with Hungary, at least bizarre formulas were advanced, such as that of “corridors” between Hungary and all the “islands” where Hungarians and even Szeklers in Transylvania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia lived (Lord Bryce).²²

However, these views remained isolated. In the name of Foreign Minister Balfour, Lord Crawford, reporting on how the Peace Conference had carefully studied all the documentation presented by Count Apponyi, states: “I can never admit that the peace treaty with Hungary was drafted in a spirit of injustice against a defeated enemy, only for the purpose of reconciling the states that fought and suffered with us during the war. I do not think it would be right to accuse these states of such a policy in spite of centuries of suffering.”²³ The point of view of the government was supported by many speakers who stressed in their locutions that “a great injustice was removed when it was decided that Transylvania should be united with Romania”.

One of the formulas for the restoration of the old multinational state in Central Europe, this time under the auspices of Hungary, was the well-known project of the “Danube Confederation”. Its launch and discussions around this

²¹ Arch. M.A.E., France, Series A: Peace 1914-1920, Hungary, vol. 123 memoirs, “On Transylvania” and “Instead of one, three States of nationalities”, annex 6, f.19.

²² Roland E.L. Vaughan Williams, *The Hungarian Question in the British Parliament. Speeches, Questions. and Answers in the House of Lords and the House of Commons from 1919 to 1920*. With an introduction by Roland E.L. Vaughan Williams, K.C. London, Grant Richard, 1933, pp. 231-238.

²³ *Ibidem*.

project have undoubtedly been a difficult time in the history of negotiating a peace treaty with Hungary. Under the guise of a common economic organization, however, hid the threatening germs of an action that undermined the national sovereignty of Romania and the other Central European states – Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.

The consequences of applying such a plan were immediately noticed by Romanian politicians, and the diplomatic activity of Romania and its allied states – Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia – contributed, to a serious extent, to the abandonment of the plan to create a Danube Confederation. Efforts were thus focused, once again, on the central point of the negotiations, namely the conclusion of the peace treaty with Hungary.

Referring to this attempt to rebuild in a *sui generis* form the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, the American delegate, history professor at Yale University, Charles Seymour noted: “Such an idea could not have the slightest chance of success, the Danube peoples did not even want to hear about it. They had, in fact, freed themselves by their own efforts and instinctively feared any federation that might have led to the survival or restoration of this hated tyranny that had caused them so much suffering. The conference, Seymour said, had neither the right nor the power to impose a union on them, which they refused. By virtue of the proclaimed principle of the right of every people to dispose of itself, the Danube nations were the only ones able to decide their fate”.²⁴

On February 25th, 1920, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia presented a joint memorandum to the Peace Conference for the first time, which unquestionably accelerated the work. Thus, on March 3rd, the Supreme Council, which was operating in London, immediately discussed the treaty with Hungary.

On this occasion, Francesco Nitti, influenced by both Hungarian and German circles, called for a revision of the decision of 13th of June 1919 of the Peace Conference, implicitly on the borders of Hungary²⁵. The French delegation strongly opposed this bizarre request made by

²⁴ Charles Seymour, „La fin d’un empire: les débris de l’Autriche-Hongrie”, in *Ce qui se passa réellement a Paris en 1918-1919*, p. 81.

²⁵ Arh. M.A.E., fond 237, dos. 517, teleg., 1907/15 April 1920, from the Legation of Rome, signed by Em. Lahovary. It shows that Nitti is in favour of Hungary and even Germany, the report of the Romanian delegation to the Peace Conference on April 14th, 1920, signed D. Ghika.

the Prime Minister of Italy²⁶ and the English friends of Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia immediately published, on March 4th, 1920, in the big newspaper *Times* the discussions in the Supreme Council, revealing the strange attitude of Nitti²⁷. Thus was created a strong current of opinion against the idea of revising a decision taken by the Peace Conference, which, of course, could only serve the cause of Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.

On March 8th, 1920, when the Conference of Foreign Ministers and Ambassadors, chaired by Lord Curzon, resumed discussions on the treaty with Hungary it was decided not to revise either the territorial or other treaty clauses.²⁸

On May 6th, 1920, the Peace Conference, after studying for more than two months through its specialized commissions the documentation of Count Apponyi's delegation, handed him a letter of reply, signed by the President of the Conference, A. Millerand, pointing out that "it was impossible for the Powers to adopt the views of this delegation". The letter made extensive reference to "the part of Hungary's responsibility in the outbreak of world war and in general in imperialist politics followed by the double monarchy", to the strong internal crisis determined by the policy towards the nationalists. Rejecting the idea of organizing a plebiscite in the former territories ruled by Hungary, it was stressed that "the will of the peoples was expressed in October and November 1918, when the double monarchy collapsed and when the long oppressed populations united with their brothers, Italians, Romanians, Yugoslavs and Czechoslovaks. The events that have taken place since this date are just as much new evidence of the feelings of nationalities once subject to the Crown of St. Stephen. The late measures taken by the Hungarian Government to satisfy the aspirations of autonomy of nationalities cannot create illusions; they do not change the essential historical truth in any way, namely that, for many years, all the efforts of Hungarian politics have tended to stifle the voices of nationalities."²⁹ It was stated that the established borders would not be changed and "the Hungarian Government was invited to sign the treaty as it is"³⁰.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

²⁷ V.V. Tillea, *cited work*, p. 76.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 81-82.

²⁹ *A.I.C., Ministry of National Propaganda, vol. 77*.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

On May 16th, Count Apponyi protested against the Conference's decisions regarding Hungary and returned to the idea of a plebiscite, challenging the plebiscitary nature of the Union Decisions of 1918. Refusing to sign the peace treaty, the Hungarian delegation resigned. On May 17th, 1920, Count Teleki, the foreign minister, handed President Millerand a note announcing that Hungary would sign the peace treaty.

On 4th of June 1920, in the Grand Trianon, France, England, Italy, the USA, Japan, Romania, the Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian Kingdom, Czechoslovakia and nine other states, on the one hand, and Hungary, on the other, represented by G. de Benard and A. de Torda, signed the peace treaty.

On behalf of Romania, the Treaty of Trianon was signed by Dr. I. Cantacuzino and N. Titulescu; from Czechoslovakia, by E. Benes and S. Osuski; from Yugoslavia, by N. Pasić and Ante Trumbić.

The Romanian Parliament ratified the Treaty of Trianon on August 17th (Senate) and August 26th, 1920 (Chamber of Deputies).

The Romanian nation had obtained international recognition for its cause – the Great Union – for which it had fought for centuries, for which it had made countless sacrifices.

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In the period before the signing of the Trianon peace treaty, in Romania all the efforts of the Hungarian diplomacy, all the propaganda abroad, all the intrigues set up directly or through intermediaries by the Hungarian ruling circles to thwart the imposition of a just sentence at the Peace Conference were carefully followed. "Through intrigue, setting in motion all the English diplomacy, all the relatives of the magnates of high society in London sought to thwart the peace at Trianon," wrote the newspaper *Îndreptarea*, reproducing the statements of a foreign diplomat. In order to regain their European sympathies, they put at stake the entire national wealth: factories, mines, river and shipping companies, everything. For these services, they receive praise in Western newspapers that they trumpet around the world.³¹

³¹ *Îndreptarea* (*The right way* – Romanian newspaper), June 23rd and 24th, 1920.

Besides the confession of their satisfaction for the international recognition of the justice of the Romanian case, for the sentence “without right of appeal” pronounced in Paris, the signing of the treaty from Trianon offered scientists Nicolae Iorga and Sextil Pușcariu the opportunity to address nice words to the Hungarian people, to highlight its qualities, as well as the opportunity for friendly advice on the path of its future prosperity, of expressing sincere thoughts, full of hopes for the future of the relations between the two peoples. Speaking as a man “penetrated by ethical requirements, as well as the material needs of the time”, Nicolae Iorga showed that the Hungarian people had something else to do in the future “than to regain their borders abroad, namely: to rebuild his soul Inside – that is to change it – from the medieval it continues to be, in Modern, as it should be in its own interest.” This would allow it to see the impossibility of perpetuating, in the twentieth century, the “creations of the pontifical mandates of the year 1000”, to understand that the strength and greatness of a people does not consist in a “territory that it did not fill”, but in its “energy” – by which we mean the “boom of civilization” – which passes “beyond the very margins of a scattered national dwelling and beyond the borders of the state”. If “ the paralyzing concern [...] for revenge” made possible internally “Horthy’s criminal tyranny” – remarked, with full reason, the great historian –, the care for civilization proclaimed “a peace of mind based on the conscience of law for oneself but also for others. And then – concluded N. Iorga –, in the interest of the great human civilization, we can understand each other very good.”³²

In his turn, Sextil Pușcariu wrote, right after the signing of the treaty from Trianon, words full of confidence in the future of the Romanian people, in the “new life” to which it was called. At the same time, he had words of praise for the “healthy political instinct” of the Romanian people, which granted broad democratic rights to all nationalities and appealed to all Romanians, urging them to seek “points of contact” with their Hungarian compatriots, engaging “in common productive work”, all collaborating “in the field of science, arts, of the common economic interest and especially in the fight against the common enemy, against the non-Romanian or Romanian speculator.”³³

³² *Neamul românesc* (The Romanian People – Romanian newspaper), June 9th, 1920.

³³ *Dacia* (Romanian newspaper), June 5th, 1920.

