

150 YEARS SINCE THE BIRTH OF POLISH MARSHAL JÓZEF PIŁSUDSKI (Part II)

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Marshal Piłsudski was one of those people who, giving everything to his people, rises above what is the special essence of a nation and thus integrates into the vastness of humanity.

Nicolae Iorga, May 1935

Abstract: *Part two of an extremely well-documented and exciting study of the life and political work of the great statesman Józef Piłsudski. Certainly, due to the unfortunate historical situation in which the second great world conflagration ended, from 1945 to 1989, neither in Warsaw nor in Bucharest about Piłsudski and the Romanian-Polish alliance was spoken much too little or biased. This, especially for fear of disturbing the "big brother" of the East, it is known that from his youth Tsarist Russia had punished the young Piłsudski with exile in Siberia. Analyzing his activity today, we can easily conclude that Piłsudski was the one who fully contributed to the building of close, mutually beneficial Romanian-Polish relations. We can say with certainty that even so far the fundamental documents in the archives, libraries and newspapers have not been highlighted on the subject.*

The new head of foreign affairs on the Polish side

On July 22, 1920, after the portfolio of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was occupied by Take Ionescu, a politician with rich experience and well trained, Alexandru G. Florescu reports to him how: "The armistice conditions set by Mr. Lloyd George, as a result of the intervention of Poland in addition to the Supreme Council, produced here an impression of stupefaction and special irritation. The line of withdrawal that was imposed on Poland is the one that had been established by the Supreme Council since December 8, 1919 and in which the Allies allowed Poland to establish its administration (...). The armistice also provided for an area of 50 km.

between both armies in a word along this line, but only up to the border of Eastern Galicia".



Take Ionescu, Ministry of Romanian Foreign Affairs from July 1920

Florescu also informed his superior that in Warsaw it was considered that England - everywhere else - was decidedly hostile to Poland. A conference was to be convened in London to examine the Russian question in its entirety with delegates from Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Galician envoys listened as informants.

In case of non-acceptance of the terms of the armistice by the Soviets, the Allies declared themselves obliged to come to the aid of Poland.

I mentioned above the impression of amazement and irritation caused by these conditions - mentioned the Romanian diplomat. The start against England was still huge. England at Gdantzig, England in Eastern Galicia, England in Lithuania, England seeking to thwart Poland's attempts to go hand in hand at the Warsaw Conference with Finland and Latvia, England not quite partial in the plebiscites in Warmia and Masuria, England lifting the blockade of Russia Sovietists, England being forced in the first months of the year to give advice either to conclude peace or to end the war, England not sending ammunition, England talking to Litvinov and Krasin,

England everywhere more decidedly opposed to Poland came this time with proposals of truce unbearable for the pride and aspirations of the Poles.

All of the above raised a great and justified concern for the minister plenipotentiary Al. Florescu. Those opinions, he said to the Bucharesters with some anxiety, but in time, must have been retained by Take Ionescu, who will realize, even better, the dangerous dimension of Bolshevism in this area and will pronounce without any ambiguity on the side Poland. This time in the direct dialogue he had in London a short while ago. At the same time, all the elements that Florescu learned from his counterparts quickly arrived in the country, where the Romanian leaders learned from this source that France, having to recognize the Soviets, had not accepted the proposal of Mr. Lloyd George, but still he had taken part and rallied in its elaboration.

"Poland was thus considered completely without support"

The respective state of affairs made Romania's intentions count in Warsaw, where they wanted their intentions to be known. Florescu wrote that there would be "many of those - politicians and people from society - who seek to touch us on Romania's intentions, to show the danger of Bolshevism for the whole of humanity, but especially for the immediate neighbors of the anarchic outbreak and keep asking us with a pained voice why don't we come to their aid". He also recalls that: "you could feel discouragement and hopelessness everywhere", which overwhelmed the Poles. The description of these facts, before the decisions that will be taken in Spa regarding Poland, helped Take Ionescu to formulate Romania's position - understandably favorable to Warsaw - and for the implementation of which he asks Titulescu to act as such on the spot, where he is.

The Romanian diplomat also reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that in Warsaw there were three currents that manifested themselves in the press and in the Diet: "some -- the extreme left -- (who) preferred direct negotiations with the Soviets; those on the right maintained their opinion of entrusted everything to the fate of the Allies, approving Grabski's approach, they also admitted accepting the conditions -- and between these two currents, the strongest manifestation was the rejection of the conditions and continuation of the fight to the extreme".

"The blow was very painful for those who dreamed of the borders of 1772 and who suddenly woke up with the headlands of the Niemen, the

Bug and the Zbrucz! And despite all this, with all the expressed desire to reject England's proposals, if would have penetrated into everyone's soul, most would have discovered the secret hope of a swift acceptance by the Soviets of the conditions, in order to avoid the advance of the Red armies, to save Warsaw from the occupation of the enemy and Poland from Bolshevism".

Blame for the defeat of the Polish armies

It did not throw himself on the insufficiency of the Command, on the decrease in morale of the fighters, but on England, which had dared to propose such conditions, and on Mr. Grabski, who had not been shy to accept them.

"Prince Sapieha gave the press the order not to attack England and (the) Allies from whom, thanks to a more moderate attitude, perhaps better peace conditions could be expected at the London Conference. Some newspapers presented the terms of the armistice more as simple military stipulations, which would not prejudice the final part, and demanded that the political parties and public opinion show decency, in order to be able to usefully influence, through this testimony of political maturity, the decisions of the Great Powers".

"However, not all the newspapers observed the same moderation - noted Florescu. Mr. Lloyd George was not spared, not least the President of the Council. The attacks against Mr. Grabski were as many indirect attacks against England. The President of the Council was accused of receiving terms of the armistice, had weakened Poland's situation both externally and internally. This was the argument of the left-wing newspapers, and those on the extreme left added to this accusation brought against the previous government for not having concluded the peace a few months ago, when it could have been concluded on terms better".

The right-wing forces attack the Head of State with particular vivacity

With undisguised sadness, the Romanian diplomat informed Bucharest that: "The right-wing newspapers in Poland retaliated that, if Mr. Grabski had to obey the decisions of the Allies, it was due to Mr. Piłsudski's reckless policy in Ukraine in particular. The head of state was thus attacked with a special vivacity".

"However, time was not to be lost in sterile discussions about the past. I will not fail in a close report to seek, only as a document of retrospective policy, to establish the answers that press upon everyone in this drama that could have endangered the very existence of Poland". Amazing and rare concern for a foreigner, be he a diplomat. And here is what followed. "After a week and more of waiting, the Soviets' answer was finally known. The answer had been intercepted in Warsaw, but not quite well deciphered. At first it was believed here that it was not really the Soviets' answer, but some kind of message, as they are used sometimes to send some of the leaders of Bolshevism to the proletariat".

This time the Soviets challenge England's right to intervene as an intermediary between Poland and Russia. He challenges - at the same time - Mr. Lloyd George's "right to speak on behalf of the League of Nations, of which Russia is not a member. He declares himself in favor of negotiating peace directly with Poland, assuring that "they will show better dispositions than the Allies, as they they will recognize more advantageous confrontations than those established in 1919 and which feel the influence of the Russian reaction". The Soviets rejected the proposal of the London Conference, the peace with Lithuania is concluded, and with Finland and Latvia it is to be concluded soon. In the given situation , Sir Horace Humbold advised the Polish Government to make a direct appeal for an armistice and peace to the Soviets. Warsaw's response was delayed not only by internal political disputes, but rather, Florescu aptly observes, because:

The old fame of Polish willpower was expected to appear

"Then the military circles still hoped for an improvement in the situation at the front. They stubbornly did not see the morale depression of the troops, the panic that had gripped some units, the insufficiency of reserves, the incompetence of the Command in some places, the lack of officers, the delay the arrival of the munitions. They did not see that even the fiery appeal of the Head of State, of the political parties, of the various associations had not produced the contingents of volunteers that the first start allowed to be glimpsed. The closer the red troops got, the less the enthusiasm. And the troops the Reds kept advancing, and they didn't advance after who knows what grueling battles, but without encountering even opposing troops in front of them. The Romanian diplomat's conclusion - issued on that date - was that the morale was broken in the ranks of the Polish army.

"And that's why a lot was counted - he wrote in Bucharest - on the reserves of volunteers, in order to be able to reawaken the enthusiasm and the old fame of Polish valor. During this time, Wilna, Lida, Brodno fell one after the other. The country's prominent leaders they feared that Red troops would soon pass through Lithuanian territory and attack the Poles in the rear. Well-informed foreign diplomats in Warsaw confirmed that regular Bolshevik troops had indeed entered Lithuania. The foreign chief regarded them as gangs, contradicting the English minister accredited to Poland".

Next comes the formation of the Witos government which had in its composition the head of the socialists Daszyński, Sapieha for foreign affairs, Skulski for internal affairs, Grabski for finance plus specialists from different parties. France and England sent a diplomatic-military mission to Warsaw with the task of studying the political and military situation in Poland. The mission was composed of Lord Abernon, the English ambassador in Berlin, Mr. Henkey and General Radcliffe on the English side, and Jusserand, the French ambassador to Washington, Signon and General Weygand, Marshal Foch's Chief of Staff, on the French side. Florescu's opinion was that: Poland especially needs the makeover of its soul because: "the foreign mission, apart from emboldening the Poles and sending a warning to the Soviets, could do nothing".



Wincenty Witos

Without being a trained soldier, like some of the Florești people of the last century and from which he was drawn, the Romanian diplomat considered that: "Poland needs men, ammunition, equipment, planes, tanks. And more importantly, it needs need to transform the souls of the

fighters. Time passes and in a few days the enemy may be at the gates of Warsaw and with him Bolshevism in the line of Poland". And the golden mouth that he proved to have more than once, made everything happen soon as he predicted.

The sacred union was made - under the given conditions - around the Head of State

"A few days before, in a meeting of the National Defense Council, the Head of State, (became) the target of many passionate attacks, asked for a vote of confidence, and he got it unanimously. It is true that he would have been it is inadmissible that, in addition to the difficult problem of Poland's very existence, a presidential crisis should also occur. What happened to Dmowski under the given conditions? He withdrew from the Council and remained <aside>". Specifying the difficult situation in which Poland was internally, from which only strikes were not absent, Florescu believes that if "from the final confrontations that were expected to take place and from which she would be victorious, Bolshevism would hardly penetrate the country. With a defeated Poland, low in her pride, reawakened from her dreams of aggrandizement, this security loses its power".

In the few pages of this report, the diplomat captures the entire struggles of Polish society seen - from the inside - worth as much information as the tens of thousands of pages that were written about the prologue to the outbreak of the historic battle on the Vistula, then continued with the miracle that took place and which the Romanian diplomat lived at the highest tension. We are surprised - even today - by the foresight with which Minister Florescu (inter)saw in the person of the supreme commander the turn that he continues to give him, reporting to Bucharest that Pilsudski is the one who bore the brunt of the war of non-independence, there is a suspicion that he will be the one which will stop everything at the edge of the precipice. Nothing to take away, nothing to add in this . The words judgment. The words of the Romanian diplomat constitute a medallion to be framed, including by Polish historians, especially by those who only today find out that these thoughts were put on the page, in Warsaw, during the fiery days of July 1920, by a Romanian, wonder they are still untapped today.

Although Mr. Pilsudski has recently been the object of passionate attacks, I still believe that his presence at the head of the State will be a sign that Poland will stop on the edge of the precipice. His popularity,

indeed very great still among the lower classes, will be able to be a strong bulwark against the dangerous currents. Very low in the upper classes, it represents for the lower ones the memories of a still recent revolutionary past and will perhaps be able to channel the unhealthy beginnings in the name of which the red armies seek to penetrate as deeply as possible into the heart of Poland¹.

The desperate situation of August 1920 in Poland The enemy at the gates of Warsaw

One of Minister Florescu's credible Warsaw interlocutors was Prince Sapieha, the head of foreign affairs, to whom the Romanian diplomat appreciated, among other things, his stubborn optimism - which was not true in any way regarding the stopping of the Bolshevik attack. From the reports of the military missions in Warsaw, it appears that where the Polish troops wanted to fight, they managed to keep the enemy in place, even drive him away. Where not, they advanced. His conclusions at the time were that: "the Polish soldier is indeed good, but the officer is often weak." "The escapes from military service are very numerous and sanctions are not taken" - the report mentions.



Eustachy Sapieha

"First the need to pass it on to others, then the need to retain as much as possible the Diplomatic Corps in Warsaw, where the situation not only internal but also of the Government - due to its special currents - forces it to

¹ AMAE, Fond 71-1920, Dosare Speciale (AMAE, Fund 71-1920, Special Files) vol. 35, pp.247-250

stay until the last moment". he gave assurances that "he will inform us of the moment from which the Government further declines its responsibility for our safety. We also find out what the atmosphere was like among the diplomats. These - in the great majority "would have liked to take shelter as soon as possible", the most lacking in courage being those of the neutral countries, the allies having concrete tasks in the communication between the governments, acted like brave men. As for Alexandru Florescu, he considered it appropriate, as a minister of a neighboring and friendly country, that his place is next to the allied heads of mission. But unlike his French, English, Italian and American colleagues, the Romanian minister not only did not have their logistics, but he did not even have a truck or a car, let alone a personal guard or his own soldiers: "like the English or the French" that he had taken as an example. And, when the French and English military missions decided to hasten the departure of the Diplomatic Corps from Warsaw, the Papal Nuncio (Ambrogio Damiano Achille Ratti - Pope Pius XI, from February 6, 1922 to February 10, 1939² - Pope Pius XI, - from June 7, 1929 Sovereign of the Vatican City State until February 10, 1939, as well as the Minister of Italy (to whom Florescu felt closer), stayed further in Warsaw in order not to leave it together with the Polish government until the last moment.

"Prince Sapieha was in no hurry to facilitate the departure of the Diplomatic Corps to Posen (Poznan) due to considerations related to the situation in the government. As I had the honor to telegraph to Your Excellency, there had been talk at the beginning of the possible stay of the government in Warsaw. It was assumed that Mr. Piłsudski had whose situation has become very difficult, he might be tempted, in order to improve it, to remain in the Capital with the elements of the left and extreme left and to set up, even with the Red armies in Warsaw, a government of peasants and socialists that would be could wrest from the Bolsheviki more advantageous peace conditions".

The dangers turned out to be quite high, especially through attacks planned even by the communists themselves. "Finally, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Railways and some services of a more scientific nature, of the Ministry of War, were moved to Posen (Poznan), the others were moved to Krakow. Among the initiated it was known that Mr. Piłsudski and Mr. Daszyński will never come to Posen, where various combinations aimed at overthrowing not only the government, but also (the) Head of

² <http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%81acina>

State were being planned. Understandably, these intentions were subordinated to the military situation."

"The conquest of Warsaw by the Bolsheviks - Alexandru G. Florescu also considered - would give Poland three governments, one communist in the Capital, another of the left and the extreme left, in Krakow, and a third more right-wing in Posen. In the latter city the foundations were laid for the formation of three divisions under the guise of the civic guard, but in reality with a purely military character, intended to defend Posnania against the Bolshevik invasion and possibly go to the aid of Warsaw, intended to defend perhaps other purposes as well. Dmowski who for a long time in Posen he was at the head of the movement to overthrow both the government and Pilsudski".

In contact with the head of the opposition, he allegedly told Florescu: "Quand nous aurons fini avec les bolschevistes, il faudra balayer toute la maison". To the reply of the Romanian diplomat that such a move would be dangerous, that it would shake Poland's situation even more and would perhaps delay the process of achieving Polish unity, Dmowski insisted: "Il faut absolument balayer la maison", a measure considered by Florescu a kind "delenda Carthago". In Dmowski's eyes, the Head of State was burdened with all the sins of Israel. In the sense that he would not be a perfect friend of the Allies because he looks at them through the prism of his hatred against Russia, that he would also be a partisan of the rapprochement policy between Poland and Hungary, respectively that he manifested himself as a protagonist of more extreme ideas in internal politics, that he would not have collaborated well with the French, etc.

Florescu did not hesitate to consider that "some of these accusations" would be accurate. And he refers to: "The resistance to give more effective leadership to the French officers, and that it contributed much to the disaster of the Polish armies. What a capable command means can be seen from the new turn which, at least for the time being, the course of operations around Warsaw seems to have taken, thanks to the more active initiative that was left to General Weygand in drawing up the city's defense plan".

"Prince Sapieha felt that Mr. Pilsudski's resistance could be defeated no matter how strong the opposition of the organizer of the Polish legions and the winner of Kyiv acclaimed by a delirious population."

"The Prince's belief was that the Poles must rely only on their own strength. Before appealing to others, a people must find within itself the

power to defend its existence, and the Poles had not given this proof. The strength of the national feeling had indeed recorded regrettable declines".

Hungarian help or intrigue?

Exactly at the time when the English prime minister "had thrown the heaviest accusations against Poland, two or three Hungarian people appeared in Warsaw who had come here to promise Hungarian help. Florescu proved to the Polish interlocutors that this was nothing but a intrigue, because the peace treaty of Versailles limited the Hungarian military forces, and Budapest did not take into account the opposition of Romania and Czechoslovakia. The intrigue was perhaps little said because, due to the lack of a common border, "help" was a word in the wind or a "suggestion strange", the Romanian diplomat also appreciated.

Florescu is not shy to propose to the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs that more work should be done on the Hungarian issue both in Paris, in London, in Rome, in Washington, including in Warsaw - where political circles and public opinion: "must be enlightened on the danger that it offers the illusion of being able to attract Hungary to the side of the Allies. The Allies have already committed the great mistake of the World War of imagining that Bulgaria will go with them. The mistake is repeated with Hungary". Moreover, the distinguished diplomat notes the fact that: "in Poland, the dogma of the need for a common front between this country and Hungary has penetrated deep into all layers of society, an aspect that in the years '38-'39 will be a kind of olive branch on which Beck he also presented it to King Charles II at the meeting he had with the Romanian sovereign in Galați, an approach that for a while affected bilateral relations, the failure of which the Polish minister blamed on his counterpart, Petrescu-Comnen, who would not have understood him the message.

Germany will never resign itself to its shrinking

It was one of the conclusions reached by the Romanian diplomat at that time and which will be maintained forever, when talking about the Polish-German dispute. At the time, it was also linked to the Russian and German danger to Poland. He wrote at the Sturdza Florescu Palace: "Russia can forget over time the rounding of its borders, especially if the rounding is done ethnically. There would be no solutions of continuity in its territory otherwise, while Germany will not resign itself to the cut that was

practiced by the Treaty of Versailles in her territory (emphasis mine - N.M.), leaving East Prussia cut off from the rest of the Reich. It is precisely the cause that started the Second World War. All her (Germany's) efforts will tend to bring it together again these two pieces. What foresight! A common border with Hungary would therefore not be a benefit, but rather a disadvantage for Poland". Let's not forget that this happened in 1939, Colonel Beck who ardently wanted to achieve that objective - immediately after Munich - Poland acting decisively in this direction, without even informing his Romanian ally, practically abolishing the Little Understanding.

The Romanian diplomat warned the Romanian authorities saying: "But the more Poland feels that the Allies also see the possibility of attracting Hungary to their side, the more difficult it will be to remove this fixed idea from the minds of the Poles".

Minister Florescu - in frontline conditions - on duty

Facing the Bolshevik attack, the first extraordinary envoy and Romanian minister plenipotentiary in Poland, Alexandru G. Florescu, did not leave the mission (he could easily return to Bucharest, where his family was, his life not being in any way threatened here). The Romanian diplomat decided to remain on duty, together with members of the Polish government, and acted for a better knowledge of the facts also from Poznan (Posen), where the members of the state leadership and the diplomatic corps were transferred, fulfilling his exemplary mission. He and the apostolic nuncio had the most modest living conditions, compared to his French or English colleague, the two of them lacking both a car and aides, professional companions, etc., etc. At the end of the military hostilities, Florescu returned to Warsaw, and on August 26, he will write three anthological reports that he will submit to Minister Take Ionescu. In them, the "analyst" describes what he experienced, with the feather of a shaved writer. At the same time, he captures some essential elements from the guidelines (directions of action) of the Polish leadership, which he renders with great finesse:

a). Poland needs peace (foreign minister Sapieha had told him that he would have been "very moved by the sympathy that Romania had shown to Poland throughout the war").

And also from Prince Sapieha, he learns about Warsaw's sincere desire to conclude peace with the Soviets, as Poland needed peace,

namely that this would also be the desire of the Allies, of all Allies. He also learns that "Poland has reduced its territorial claims under the condition that the Allies settle the question of Eastern Galicia and Danzig. Poland needs definitive confrontations and a well-clarified international situation in order to be able to consecrate itself in complete peace and safety in its economic and social organization and strengthening".

b). Danzig and Eastern Galicia would be the equivalent with which, in exchange for the sacrifices made, the Polish Government could present itself to public opinion. He reminds that Prince Sapieha does not admit a provisional government and a plebiscite for Galicia, although he would not be afraid of an electoral consultation. The atrocities committed by the Bolsheviks in the regions they temporarily occupied so deeply revolted the inhabitants, regardless of nationality, that they would certainly demand their annexation to Poland. There is even talk of a delegation of Zionists soon going to London to set forth their determined desire to see Eastern Galicia remain with Poland.

c). Regarding Gdanzig, "The Polish Government demands compliance with the Treaty of Versailles, that and nothing more. Sir Reginald Tower would be far from working in accordance with that Treaty. Since he has been Allied High Commissioner, he has worked more to make Danzig a free city of a free State. Now, the Treaty of Versailles gave Poland the external representation of the city, and gave her the post and railways and the use of the port. Danzig is also part of the Polish customs territory. Danzig has the same currency like Poland. But nothing of these precise stipulations has been carried out. And the Allies still have military contingents at Danzig."

d). The advance of the Polish troops would stop on the former line of defense of the Germans, as being a good strategic line, and which would begin about below Vilna, and, passing through Baranowicz, would go along the river Stopod, descending straight into Eastern Galicia. The question of Vilna and Grodno will not be discussed with the Bolsheviks, but directly with the Lithuanians.

e). The Russians abroad are stirring again. "This is since, with the Polish advance, the Russians in Paris, London, Rome began to stir again, insisting with all their heart that we should not be allowed to penetrate too deeply into the interior of Russia. These Russians, enlivened again by of General Wrangel's successes, they want him alone to have the credit for having cleansed Russia of the Bolsheviks, and they are now beginning to

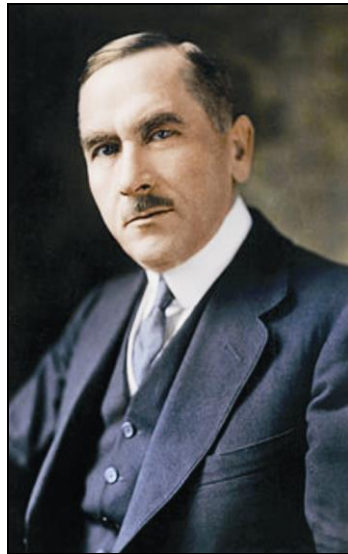
count on his imminent entry into Moscow. A collaboration with the Poles could give a reinforcement to the territorial claims arising from the advance of their troops. And this not the Russians want it".

"You didn't want to help us for the establishment of Ukraine, Prince Sapieha told me, and now this State that could have defended us against the Russian danger will go over to the other side."

f). In connection with the "territorial conditions imposed by the Soviets" (in Minsk), Sapieha stated that "they are indeed better than Lord Curzon's and that the Russians would be determined to recognize to Poland a fairly extensive region east of Brest-Litowsk and by Cholm (Chełm). This region is very sparsely inhabited, and might just serve for a systematic colonization easily accomplished thanks to the excess of an excessively prolific population like the Polish population." Also through the August 26 courier, Alexandru G. Florescu sends Take Ionescu the "retrospective look" regarding the consequences and lessons learned from the events that took place in Poland in the reference month.

The confrontation between the Polish right and the left is permanent "Dmowski and the right-wing parties wanted - after the August battle in Warsaw - for Poland's borders to be ethnically determined and to establish future close friendly relations with Russia, a precursor to a political alliance". Piłsudski and the left-wing parties "saw in Russia a dangerous neighbor of Poland, recalling the sufferings of the past, the tyrannical tendencies of the Muscovites. Hence the desire to build between Poland and Russia a "curtain of intermediate states", intended to defend Poland against expansion Russian. This policy, whose most prominent supporter is the Head of State himself, Mr. Piłsudski, is especially embraced by the left-wing parties. This policy was "the most popular".

"The two policies placed face to face contradict each other. Mr. Dmowski's contains a contradiction in itself. On the one hand it extends the Polish ethnic claims to a line that includes parts of Podolia, of Wolynia, of White Ruthenia, of Lithuania, i.e. Kamienec Podolski, Dubno, Rowno, Pinsk, Minsk, Wilna. And on the other hand, with all these territorial claims, Mr. Dmowski believed that friendship with Russia was still possible".



Roman Dmowski

"On his side were mostly landowners whose domains are in regions with mixed populations. They rejected the idea of creating a Lithuania, a white Ruthenia, a Ukraine." Partisans of this policy demanded that all white, Catholic Ruthenia should belong to Poland, leaving the entire Orthodox region to Russia. From Lithuania, this group demanded the part where the Polish element was more compact, although it did not constitute an absolute majority anywhere, leaving the rest of Lithuania to stick to Russia, being condemned to remain: "a kernel of latent enmity between Russia and Poland, a irredentism at every moment, by splitting both Lithuania and White Ruthenia into two pieces".

The ethnic side of Piłsudski's politics: less pronounced

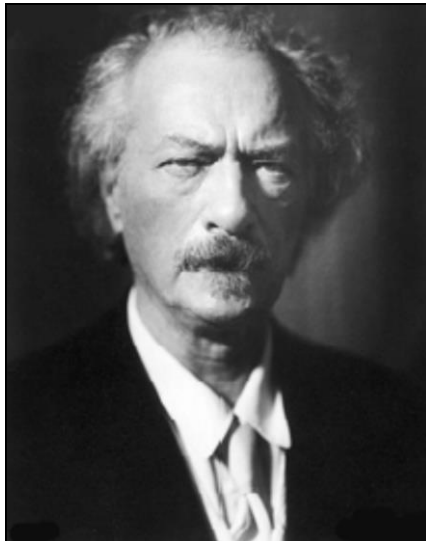
Commander Piłsudski's ethnic claims were much less, Florescu believed. The concept of the reborn Polish Head of State was not to annex the old Eastern lands of Poland, but to "let them govern themselves, but united with Poland, if not through a federative system, at least through political alliances. The difficulty was also here to establish the limit up to which the borders of Poland went. More modest at the beginning, they gradually expanded, as the chaos in Russia continued, as the Polish

armies also advanced. But in no case these fronts did not touch the Dmowski line. Poland was indeed ready to cede Wilna to a Lithuania united with it by federative or political ties, but not to an independent Lithuania or re-united with Russia." "Poland's borders narrowed the more closely these countries connected with her". "Even from Eastern Galicia, Piłsudski would have been ready to give a piece of land if through this sacrifice he could definitively win Ukraine for his part." The Romanian diplomat Alexandru Florescu considered that: "If all Lithuania, White Ruthenia, Ukraine, not to mention the Baltic States and Finland together, wanted to remain independent, Piłsudski realized that they were individually too weak, even if they were united, they would not they could still live like this, except by leaning on Poland". Some of the leaders of these states believed that Poland was called to help rebuild Russia, through a wise economic penetration, seeking to take the place of Germany. In other words, in Florescu's view Piłsudski was strengthening Poland's position to resist Russian enmity, disregarding the allogeneic element leaning towards Russia

Piłsudski's thesis came very close to Wilsonian principles, not removing Russia's enmity, but strengthening Poland's position to better withstand that enmity.

The Romanian minister in Warsaw also notes that the proposed policy did not sufficiently take into account the allogeneic element with a significant and conscious role: the Jewish element. The Jewish population was very numerous in Lithuania, White Ruthenia and the Ukraine, which had a greater inclination towards Russia than towards Poland. Poland managed, thanks in part to the Polish emigrants returned from America, to establish a class of industrialists and traders who over time partially eliminated and will be able to eliminate the Jews, Florescu believes. Also, through the agrarian reform, the Polish peasant, in turn, will be able to resist more successfully the "predatory tendencies of the Jews". Florescu emphasizes that the Allies' proposals of December 1919 regarding the front line between Poland and Russia, that of the Kingdom of Congress, which left Wilna, Grodno, Minsk, Pinsk, Rowna, Dubno outside Poland's borders, would not have been accepted by either a Pole. At the same time, the allies did not say anything as long as Poland did its own justice. The Poles were wrong because they did not demand by documents the reward of the Allies for the services rendered against Bolshevism

This is the conclusion of the analyzes of the Romanian diplomat, Alexandru G. Florescu, current even today. He also captured the unfolding - in their intimacy - of the relations established between Paderewski, Pilsudski and Dmowski, respectively the envy with which the prime minister and the head of foreign affairs looked at Piłsudski's popularity but also the need to achieve by force of arms what Dmowski had not achieved diplomatically in Paris. "The big mistake that the Poles made then is that they did not stipulate in precise agreements the reward they were due for the service they also rendered to the Allies. (Following the same line, such a reward should have also been demanded Romania at the moment it saved Hungary and Europe from Bolshevism! - N.M.)



Ignacy Paderewski

Mister. Paderewski was then in power. He considered himself to be the man above the parties, but in reality he was more inclined towards the right-wing ideology. "About that time, indeed, he began to look with some distress at the too great popularity of Mr. Piłsudski, the man of the left, and to smile with some complacency at the high dignity with which he was invested." "Mr. Paderewski was thus seeking to accomplish by arms what Mr. Dmowski had failed to accomplish through diplomacy in Paris. Mr. Dmowski had therefore tried to show that White Ruthenia and the Ukraine could not live as national entities, and that Lithuania on which England take control, unjustly claim regions where Poland was in the majority".

And a totally new fact: "And when, on the order of Mr. Ion Brătianu, I was reading to Mr. Paderewski the statement that the Ukrainian mission in Bucharest had given to the former Prime Minister to confirm Ukraine's friendly intentions towards Romania and to recognize the Dniester as the border definitive agreement between our country and Ukraine, Her Majesty was advising me that the Allies should not find out about this declaration and was paying particular attention to all the arguments against an independent Ukraine". "But Mr. Paderewski fell."

Foreign Minister Patek – considered to be a third-rate lawyer

"In the place of Prince Sapieha at Foreign Affairs, Mr. Patek was installed, a third-rate lawyer, more left-leaning, whom nothing showed fit to occupy the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, not even his previous appointment as Poland's representative in Prague. Mr. Patek quickly became Mr. Piłsudski's man and put his policy into practice."

In his policy towards Russia, Piłsudski tried to invite Romania as well

"I have shown above what was the policy of the Head of State towards Russia. I will add that no matter how much Poland followed the policy of the Allies, Mr. Piłsudski considered that outside of this policy Poland could pursue a policy of its own towards Russia. To such a policy the Head The state sought to invite Romania as well. He realized that the Allies had no policy in Russia or that they had several, and that thus our countries were called upon or in a position to impose their policy on the Allies."

"What an even greater temptation for Poland was to be able to carry out the policy of the intermediate states from now on in complete agreement between the Head of State and his Ministry, which the advancing Polish armies were calling to an independent life!"

And one more fact revealed by the Romanian diplomat and which historians don't really remember. "The Soviets had made a first peace proposal to the Polish government on December 22, 1919, but the proposal was conceived more in the form of a world manifesto and in such imprecise terms that it had not been taken into account." This in the situation where:

"Ever since then, the Soviets sought to lull the Poles' vigilance. The vagueness with which this call was surrounded is one of the evidences showing that, faced with the shaken situation of General Denikin and

Admiral Kolczak, the Soviets were trying to gain a respite in order to prepare the attack today against Poland".

England stopped helping counter-revolutionary Russian generals only on January 28, 1920, when the peace proposals were specified.

It was a few days after Mr. Patek's trip to Paris and London. It is known that after the defeats of Denikin, Judenici and Kolceak, England stopped helping the counter-revolutionary Russian Generals. The exigencies of his domestic politics and his economic needs imposed upon him a new policy. "Mr. Lloyd George had answered Poland's requests for help with a refusal. And when asked for advice, either to continue the war or to conclude the peace, the English Prime Minister maintained a perfect reserve which many interpreted as an exhortation to to make peace". England did not want to get involved even with an advice, thus declining any responsibility. "England, which had started the talks with Litfinov, therefore observed the expectation. Mr. Bonard Law in the English Parliament did not hesitate to even inform Poland that England wanted not even a single advice to be asked of him on the question of peace with the Soviets"."While Poland therefore sought to solidarize the Allies with the decision they would have taken, the Allies, on the other hand, sought to decline any responsibility regarding any directive to be given."

"In particular, the Inter-Allied Conference in its meeting of February 24 (1921) had decided that "if the States neighboring Soviet Russia whose independence or autonomy were recognized by the Allies, would turn to them to ask for their advice on the attitude they would have- to be taken towards Soviet Russia, the allied governments would reply that they could not take the responsibility of advising them to continue a war which might harm their own interests". Indirectly, at those moments the Bolsheviks were being helped. "Of course, the urge to conclude peace arose more from all of this. However, alongside such an urge, these talks, the official declarations, the lifting of blockades, the refusal to send any more ammunition either on credit or even with payment, all were not than indirect aid given to the Soviets. We were quite far from a strictly neutral attitude. France was forced, in order not to cause a breach in its understanding with England, to follow his lead". Poland accepted the Soviet peace proposals according to Wilsonian principles

"Did the Poles listen to the call to conclude peace? Yes, because the Polish government responded to the peace proposals of the Soviets by

accepting them. But the Poles believed that the Allies, by not interfering in the matter of peace and war, were also denying their right to interfere in that of the terms of peace. Non-intervention in the first question implied non-intervention in the second. Reasoning in this way, the Polish government thought itself at liberty to fix its conditions in complete freedom."

Furthermore, Florescu believes that: "the chief mistake that the Polish government had made is that the use in establishing these unfortunate conditions formulated: "of erasing the traces of the crime of the partitions of Poland and renouncing all territorial rights arising from the acts of violence committed since 1772 against Poland." "The formula was wretched. The fact itself did not imply the restoration of Poland within the limits of 1772. Within these limits the Polish government wanted, in accordance with Wilsonian principles, the peoples to have the right to decide their own destiny. Poland's enemies they exploited this formula, these tendencies presented in an imperialist form. Everything that was socialist and even liberal thinking in the whole world did not hesitate to denounce to public opinion these exaggerated expansionisms".

A sign of chaotic politics: the Allies claim the right to secure Poland's eastern frontiers

"In the interval between the receipt of the peace proposal and the communication of the conditions to the Allies, they, once more forgetting their declarations of non-interference, thought they had the right to remind the Polish Government of Article 87 of the Treaty of Versailles, which gave them and only them the right to fix the eastern frontiers of Poland". "A more chaotic policy could not be conceived" - emphasizes Minister Florescu. And, justifiably, he wonders: "What else today, when even the Allies leave the Poles face to face with the Soviets, does the threatening declaration with Article 87 matter? Will the Allies intervene today to reduce to the limits set by Lord Curzon the more broad that the Soviets want to recognize Poland?" "However, from all these contradictions and hesitations, the Polish government then unjustly concluded that the *fait accompli* would perhaps be the best policy with which even England, a country above all realistic, could come to terms."

The Allies would bow to the accomplished fact only through a conspiracy of silence

As I pointed out at the beginning, General Rozwadowski, returning around February 1920 from Paris, communicated to the head of the Romanian diplomatic mission in Warsaw his impression that the Allies would allow themselves to be beaten and that they would bow before the fait accompli. And when, by order of your Excellency's predecessor, I asked Mr. Patek, if she was aware of the impression made on the Allies by the peace conditions offered by the Poles to the Soviets, conditions communicated to them in advance, she gave me the haughty textual answer: "I don't even want to know about it (them)."

"I had myself sought from my fellow Allies the impression which these conditions had produced on their governments. None, but absolutely none, would give me an answer. Each told me that he did not know it: it was a conspiracy of silence perfect". "What encouragement given to Poland further to put the Allies in front of the fait accompli!". "At this time the Polish government had set to work to carry out its plan. As it had made a deal with White Ruthenia, granting her full autonomy within the Polish Republic, so it was making another deal with Petlura and his government." .

"The question of the eastern fronts of Poland thus seemed settled, without the intervention of the Allies and without a plebiscite. All that was needed was the consent of the Soviets; but here it was believed that a strong offensive, followed by a blow on the green table of negotiations, was of a nature to subdue the resistance of the Bolsheviks". It was clear to the Polish leadership that the Soviets did not seriously consider making peace. It was proved by the discussions that followed on the choice of the place as well as on the armistice, and the offensive that followed put the lid on any doubt".

The weakening of Poland also weakens Romania

"Poland had taken a great step into a momentum unbecoming of her powers. She tried to take advantage of the chaos in Russia to somehow revive the Poland of the past. In her fight against the Soviets, in her attempt to achieve a Ukraine she would have wanted to have partners".

"As much as Romania had worked openly in the matter of its relations with Ukraine, taking care not to offend Poland and clarifying their character,

Poland was working mysteriously. I showed this in special reports, as I pointed out how necessary at that time not to give the impression to the Ukrainians that they could only count on the support of Poland. In those moments, indeed, Poland sought to establish a State and an alliance with that State. By carrying out such a program Poland would have could think herself justified in passing over us, and not appreciating the importance of our friendship at its true value, or she would have tried to force us into this friendship by the fear we would have had of seeing too close a connection established with Ukraine. And since the necessity of Poland's friendship with Hungary was indulged in most Polish newspapers as well as in most thoughts of political men, I thought myself bound to point out the danger which a possible understanding between these tr those States would have had it for us, with whom each had an open issue: Transylvania, Bucovina, Bessarabia".

It is true that Florescu saw the respective danger as overcome, but he considered it necessary to "examine the consequences that the new state of affairs in Poland could have had on Romania's relations with this country, in the sense that a political connection is not desirable and this without any tension.

The miracle happened

It is the title of the first report from which we will present essential fragments, in fact the main ideas that Florescu wanted the Romanian decision-makers to know, being aware of the usefulness of correct knowledge of the events that had taken place on the Vistula and that they had personally experienced to the full. As external testimony, these reports can play an important role for Polish historians as well. Regrettably, until now they have not done it, they have not resorted to these texts. Suffocated, somehow, by pain, the Romanian minister in Warsaw reveals from the beginning: "The Polish army, beaten, fugitive, often without even a glimmer of hope to see themselves fighting again, retreating in disorder and hastily across hundreds of kilometers to the outskirts of the Capital, leaving men and material in the hands of the enemy, this army was nevertheless revived, brought back to new positions, began to defend itself, and even chased the enemy over the same hundreds of kilometers with the same speed, caught him on the pincer allocation, he takes tens of thousands of prisoners, cannons, ammunition and escapes not only a Capital, but an entire country, maybe even general peace".

Sapieha recognizes that a part of the Romanian gold from Kremlin was offered to Poland

On October 13, 1920, Alexandru Florescu informs the prime minister and interim minister of foreign affairs, General Averescu, about Poland's participation in the Little Understanding, following a conversation on this topic with Prince Sapieha, minister of foreign affairs. From the perspective of more than 90 years since the meeting took place, in the context of the signing of the Polish-Soviet peace treaty after the Battle of Warsaw, the formulation expressed by the Polish head of foreign affairs seems extremely important to us: "Regarding the gold that will be paid of Russia to Poland, the Foreign Minister told me that it was a gold that he would not touch with too much pleasure, for the parcel is also a little of our gold, and that he had even given instructions to the Polish delegation, should any difficulty arise in this regard, don't insist on acquiring the gold. I don't know how much sincerity such a statement can contain - the Romanian diplomat showed Bucharest - in any case if the Polish Government had the scruples to touch stolen gold, this matter presents a principled face, and it did not appear to be a possible precaution". It could be understood from Sapieha's statement that since then the Bolsheviks had started alienating the Romanian gold deposited in the Kremlin in 1917. Florescu further specified that it was "interesting the detail given to me by Prince Sapieha on this occasion, that according to the news that (he) has them, the Russians would have no more than 150 million available as gold, which would mean that our treasury was no longer complete as some believed"³.

Friendship between Poland and Hungary and the Little Entente

In relation to the topic he wanted to elucidate, in the perspective of a visit that Minister Take Ionescu was going to make to Warsaw, it follows that "the great friendship with Hungary distances Poland from the objectives of the Little Understanding" to which was also added the unchanged antipathy against the Czechs.

From the report on the subject of the Little Understanding, written by Alexandru Florescu, it follows that the interlocutor (Sapieha) did not hide

³ AMAE, Fond 71-1920, Dosare Speciale (Special Files), 1920, vol 35 p. 397

from him: "the sympathies of the Poles for the Hungarians, due to the chivalrous qualities of this people, the bravery of the Hungarian soldiers, the social relations of the past, as he did not hide from me nor the lingering resentment of the Poles against the Czechs. In these resentments, it would seem, however much the Poles have the right to complain about the behavior of the Czechs towards those of their countrymen who remained under their domination, that the whole feeling of the territory of Teschen is more alive felt".

From this part of the conversation, the Romanian diplomat was left with the vague impression that: "principle Sapieha would perhaps rely on Romania as the mediator better able to resolve this disputed territorial issue with the Czechoslovaks", gaining the conviction that as long as the state of mind from that time "The Little Understanding will hardly be able to gain the adhesion of Poland" will last. Moreover, Prince Sapieha was not shy to declare to the Romanian minister that: "as soon as the Little Understanding would only show an anti-Hungarian character, Poland would not be able to join her", openly speaking to him about reaching to an "alliance between Romania and Hungary, directed against Bolshevism", to which the impossibility of such an approach was demonstrated.

The Romanian minister in Warsaw, Alexandru G. Florescu, also noted that the interlocutor's keen desire to "base Poland on a close friendship with France and Romania, and added that, if he remains in the government long enough - - something that he seemed to be a bit doubtful - - he will try to give a more concrete form to the approach to France". "I understood that this is about the conclusion of a military convention, about which the Polish press often wrote with particular desire and insistence".

Repeatedly, the Romanian diplomat notes the subtle and permanent constant in Polish politics: "sympathy for the Hungarians, antipathy against the Czechs; the second (orientation) could be cured with time, the first is more difficult". It is easy to understand that in Warsaw's attention there was a much more pressing matter: the alliance against the Soviet Union today, against the Russian chaos of tomorrow.

The Romanian minister felt the need to bring new explanations regarding Polish foreign policy, especially in view of the visit of the Romanian minister of foreign affairs to Warsaw. He did it on October 15, 1920, demonstrating that this policy is like Arvinte's antierium, a continuous patchwork, because "when one seems to be resolved, another appears. When the latter in turn gives the appearance of being resolved, here it

breaks out a new difficulty. It could be said with good reason and with some irreverence that Poland's foreign policy brings with it the formula of Arvinte's predecessor".

Leaning on Poland, Lithuania can keep its independence

The Romanian soil in Warsaw knows how to draw from history the lessons of continuity, perennial. Likewise from the culture of a people. And that's why he states with conviction: "No matter how hard the Allies try to go hand in hand in matters that concern not only the peace of today, but also what of tomorrow, it is obvious that the question of Lithuania separates England from France. England thought that some financial facilities as well as an economic deterioration can quickly change the mentality of a people. The Lithuanian national feeling, which also makes its weakness, exists only in the peasant class, and it still presents itself more under the appearance of a demagogic hatred against the Polish landowner. In the classes of above, the Lithuanian is either a Germanophile or more particularly a Polonophile. What England sought was the acquisition by an economic penetration of a political influence. But England did not quite realize that by trying such a game aimed at weakening Poland she somehow touch France, was preparing an almost certain rapprochement of Lithuania with Germany. This was proved on the occasion of the Bolshevik campaign. Advice and pressures England could not fight the intrigues and help of the Germans". And then it is emphasized that "in the series of declines that England has recently suffered as a result of the Polish victory, the Vilnius issue is one of the most painful", making it clear that "Lithuania's isolation from Russia as well as the entry of the General Zeligowski in Wilna, with all the polite advice given to the Poles by both Great Allies, are received by France with special unofficial satisfaction".

The occupation of Vilnius was possible because "the Head of State - as Supreme Commander - did not take any precautions to thwart him".

Conclusion

Being part of a larger study regarding the activity of Romanian diplomats in Warsaw during the interwar period, this paper aims to present some aspects resulting from the reports sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from Bucharest, existing in the Romanian Diplomatic Archives,

written by the first envoy extraordinary and Romanian minister plenipotentiary, Alexandru G. Florescu. The information of this professional diplomat, who came from an old family from Wallachia, with great-grandfathers among the Romanian revolutionaries who worked with the Great Polish Emigration from Paris, was published in full in the monograph recently published in Bucharest, devoted to Marshal Piłsudski. The present study presents a series of novel aspects contained in the diplomatic reports of the first head of the Romanian Legation in Warsaw regarding the situation in Poland from 1920-1921, as well as about Polish foreign policy actions, especially in the eastern area of special interest for the state Romanian. The on-the-spot assessments drawn up by Minister Florescu for the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Sturdza Palace) are of great importance for Romanian, as well as Polish and universal historiography, the Romanian diplomat being an objective, equidistant eyewitness of the events that took place. Former minister plenipotentiary in Greece and diplomat in many capitals, including in Petersburg, director in the headquarters of M.A. S., their author knew how to draw the necessary conclusions, even very useful to Romanian decision-makers in bilateral cooperation, trying to make his judgment as objective and fair as possible. That is why he appeals with aplomb to the knowledge of the situation in Poland to the most truthful sources at the head of the Polish state, to conversations held with Generals Piłsudski and Rozwadowski, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prince Eustachy Sapieha and others. It should be remembered that before the Miracle on the Vistula in the report sent in July 1920 to Bucharest, the head of the diplomatic mission in Warsaw, Alexandru G. Florescu, report to decision makers in Romania: Although Mr. Piłsudski has recently been the object of passionate attacks, I still believe that his presence at the head of the State will be a sign that Poland will stop on the edge of the precipice. His popularity, indeed very great still among the lower classes, will be able to be a strong bulwark against the dangerous currents. Very low in the upper classes, it represents for the lower ones the memories of a still recent revolutionary past and will perhaps be able to channel the unhealthy beginnings in the name of which the red armies seek to penetrate as deeply as possible into the heart of Poland.

It would be worthy to compare this judgment and others from this study with those sent by other members of the Diplomatic Corps at that time on a diplomatic mission in Warsaw. Polish historiography must lean on these texts.