

Introduction

This volume is the result of conferences organized under the aegis of the research project *From Aristocrats to Proletarians. The Diplomatic Corps of Romania (1918-1947)*, funded by UEFISCDI and conducted between 2018 and 2020. It brings together the contributions of the project members as well as those of several Romanian and foreign specialists affiliated with prestigious research centers in the fields of diplomacy and history of international relations. The 18 studies not only propose original interpretations about the evolution of the Romanian diplomatic corps, but also use new sources and methods of investigation regarding the construction of the profession. The volume does not present the history of the diplomatic negotiations conducted by Romania in the first half of the 20th century, nor is it a history of the treaties and relations between states. It is a harmonic attempt, although composed of different perspectives, to reconstruct the organization and functioning of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, especially the professional routes, recruitment, training, roles, social relations and political involvement of Romanian diplomats.

One of the features of the diplomatic corps of Romania until the First World War was its aristocratic emblem. Coming mostly from important families of boyars (Cantacuzino, Ghica, Lahovari, Mavrocordat, Sturdza, Știrbey), the Romanian diplomats formed a category of special clerks of the Romanian government, enjoying privileges and immunity stipulated in international convention. In fact, the diplomacy before the First World War represented an attractive space for the descendants of noble families, who had studied abroad and could afford to cover, from their own money, the necessary expenses for a fine representation of Romania in the world¹. The diplomats' staff, which was relatively small before the Great War, began to enlarge as the Romanian state extended its network of diplomatic missions. Prior to the Balkan Wars Romanian Legations abroad had comprised 70 members, including both diplomats and consular staff. At the end of the First

¹ Rudolf Dinu, *Diplomația Vechiului Regat. Studii (1878-1914)* (București/Cluj-Napoca: Monitorul Oficial/Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2014), p. 184-185, 191-192.

World War their number had almost doubled. In 1920s only the Legations in Paris and Washington had about 30 employees, while later, in 1942, we can identify approximately 200 diplomats who activated in Home Headquarters and Foreign Diplomatic Service of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs².

After the First World War we find "new men" integrated into the Romanian diplomatic corps who came from the Romanian elite living in the territories which had recently become parts of the Romanian state. The people living in Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transylvania, have a professional advantage (they speak Hungarian, German, Russian) slightly different from that of the diplomats coming from the Old Kingdom, which the leaders of the ministry want to benefit from. In this context, there was a tendency to promote young people with good academic records, who didn't come from boyars or noble families. Thus, the field of diplomacy opened gradually to those from other social environments (sons of lawyers, bourgeoisie, small company owners and intellectuals). Nevertheless, the world of Romanian diplomacy continued to show preference for the descendants of the noble families and political representatives such as George Duca, (i.e. I. G. Duca's son, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Prime Minister of Romania in the interwar period). In many cases, the diplomats themselves encouraged their children to follow their careers, such as: George Cretzianu (Alexandru Cretzianu), Constantin G. Nanu (Frederic C. Nanu), Duiliu Zamfirescu (Alexandru Duiliu Zamfirescu) or Nicolae Mișu (Nicolae N. Mișu) and Grigore Bilciurescu (Grigore Gr. Bilciurescu)³.

Along with the increase in the number of Romanian diplomats, we can also observe, during the first decade of interwar period, a tendency of professionalization within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, as evidenced by Alexandru Murad Mironov in his study. Though the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued to choose people outside diplomacy to activate as leaders of foreign missions, as was the case with Nicolae Titulescu, most of the Legation chiefs already had diplomatic careers and vast experience in the profession (Alexandru G. Florescu; Dimitrie I. Gr. Ghica). Even in these cases, receiving a leading post in a sought-after mission (such as Paris, London or Rome) depended on factors such as the relationships of the diplomats with the executives of the Ministry and other political influences, as Ionel Doctoru notes, in the study on Constantin Diamandi. But at times, the legations that seemed less important and, therefore, less attractive

² See *Anuar diplomatic și consular 1942* (București: Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, 1942), p. 45-159.

³ See more details in the texts by Adrian-Bogdan Ceobanu and Adrian Vițalaru.

for Romanian diplomats, could be transformed into "observation points" and "negotiation areas", which could enhance the qualities of a diplomat. In this sense, the talks carried out by the Romanian diplomat Mihail Sturdza in Riga (in 1932) are interesting, as well as the activities of Vasile Stoica in Bulgaria and Grigore Niculescu-Buzești in Latvia (in 1939-1940).

During World War II more and more diplomatic missions were entrusted to people outside the diplomacy (as was the case of Dănilă Papp in the Vatican), although important legations, such as those in Rome or Berlin (see Raoul Bossy's case), were led by career diplomats. On one hand, Ion Antonescu's dictatorial regime needed professionals, in order to maintain close relations with the Axis allies, the efforts of plenipotentiaries with longer missions in Rome and Berlin, and sympathized by Mussolini and Hitler being essential for the Romanian diplomacy. On the other hand, Ion Antonescu brought forth new people, hoping that he could better control the diplomatic apparatus and the information relays. In this complex reality, the analyses in the volume privilege not so much the relationship between the "Conducător" and diplomats as officials of the regime, but the personal and professional paths, the inner sources of their decisions and positions, the network of personal relations and the relationship with the diplomatic center, embedded in the complexity of the rigors of a forceful regime.

With the rise of communism in Romania after World War II, another type of official entered the diplomatic corps, aided by purges and the Organization Law of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 1946. These diplomats distinguished themselves not by their specialized training in diplomacy but by their affiliation with the Communist Party, as evidenced by Irina Gridan in her study. Within this framework, the management of diplomatic missions was entrusted to some intellectuals ("academic diplomats"), such Tudor Vianu, Mihai Ralea, Gheorghe Vlădescu-Răcoasa, who fulfilled the ideological requirements of the Bucharest Government. At the same time, the diplomatic corps of Romania also began the process of "proletarianization". Several of the people that entered the diplomatic corps after 1946 had already worked in factories or plants⁴ and even some of those with university studies (Mihai Magheru), had no previous connection with diplomacy. Therefore, between 1945-1947, the diplomatic corps of Romania went through a massive and brutal process of transformation. Former career diplomats, perceived by the Com-

⁴ I. Calafeteanu, "Schimbări în aparatul diplomatic românesc după 6 martie 1945", in *6 martie 1945. Începuturile comunizării României* (București: Editura Enciclopedică, 1996), p. 179.

munists as exponents of the "old regime" of the gentry and the bourgeoisie, were removed from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They were replaced by people without experience in diplomacy and sometimes even university education, who "formed the backbone" of the Romanian Foreign Ministry led, since November 1947, by Ana Pauker. It was the end of an era, both in the history of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Romanian state.

In just half a century, the Romanian diplomatic apparatus underwent profound changes, both in reference to the social and cultural composition, as well as its structure and relation to the decision makers in Bucharest. The professionalization of this apparatus, its renewal under the impact of the Union of the provinces (Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transylvania) with the Kingdom of Romania in 1918 and the increasingly important role played by the specialization of labor, but also the persistence of political regimes influence on the diplomatic activity and the organization and functioning of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were dominant in the period covered by the volume.

Editors

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