

MARCH 27, 1918, THE UNION OF BESSARABIA WITH ROMANIA, THE FIRST LINK IN THE MAKING OF THE GREATER ROMANIA

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Abstract. There are, in the history of peoples, events of great significance and national value. Such an event was on March 27, 1918, when under extreme conditions, under foreign occupation, the Country Council (the legislative body of Bessarabia elected by the people) decided to unite the Romanian province between the Pruth and Dniester with the mother country, Romania.

The act of the union of Bessarabia with the country was reckoned by the great historian Gheorghe Buzatu, one of the astral moments of Romanian becoming, along with January 24, 1859, May 9, 1877 and December 1, 1918. The special significance of this event consisted in the fact that, the Union of the Bessarabian people, freely expressed in March 1918, opened the series of three fundamental moments, the plebiscite assemblies in Chişinău, Cernăuţi and Alba Iulia, through which the Romanian people made their full national unity.

The Revolutionary-National Movement in Bessarabia in the years 1917-1918, which culminated in the return of the Romanian land between the Pruth and Dniester, self-embedded in the Tsarist Empire more than 100 years ago, during the First World War, in close connection with the Russian revolution that broke out in the spring of 1917, but also with the extensive upheavals in the struggle for self-determination of the oppressed peoples of the three empires: Tsarist, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman. The goals, the stages, the committed institutions, the leading figures, the achievements, and the failures of nearly two years that ended in the unification of Bessarabia, are the main concern of our research.

The development of the Bessarabian national movement from a romantic stage since the beginning of the Russian Revolution (February 27, 1917) to the convening of the first Congress of the Central Committee of Bessarabia (June 1917), at a stage of revolutionary realism opened by the Military Congress which put in front of the Bessarabian Romanian society the task of establishing the Country Council and the national army (October 20, 1917), when all the efforts were made to coagulate in order to achieve autonomy, independence, and then the unification of Bessarabia with the country (March 27, 1918).

The objectives of the Country Councils activity were transposed into the work of all professional formations and institutions at the beginning, later political ones, predominantly being: the introduction of the Romanian language and the Latin grammar, together with a fundamental reformation of the education, the cultural and spiritual life and the Romanization of the school institutions, cultural and ecclesial ones, so that they can then proceed to appropriate measures to defend the autonomy proclaimed on December 2, 1917, and to establish union with the country. Tangentially, the study also addresses the more important aspects of the international

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echo of the union of Bessarabia with the country and the effects of this fundamental segment of national history, which unfortunately lasted only about 20 years.

Keywords: Basarabia; Republic of Moldova; Chişinău; autonomy; independence; union; national movement; Soviet; Committee; government; Country Council; directorate; federation; The Tsarist Empire; Russia; soldiers; workers; peasantry; students; cooperative; schools; administration; institutions; culture; Romanian language; Moldavian language; freedom; autonomy; independence; union; Romania.

The unification of Moldova between Pruth and Dniester with the kingdom and with the people they were integral to, 100 years ago, represents an historical act of great account and valor for the Romanian nation. This is all the more so since the totalitarian communist regime established in Moldova between the two waters, categorically forbade an objective treatment of the problem, allowing only one sole interpretation, in most cases anti-scientific, truncated, tendentious. “The captivity and the communist bareness exercised not only on Bessarabia but on all the U.S.S.R nations,” in the recent published *A history of Bessarabia* eminent historian Anatol Petrencu¹ wrote, “built the saddest memory with hard to erase trace in the human nature and the souls of people”².

The years of the First World War in particular, in which, since 1916 Romania was part of, participating, as it is known from August 15 together with the progressive powers of Entente, have inscribed in the history of Bessarabia, the creation of the Country Council, the proclamation of the Moldovan Democratic Republic, the rupture with the Russian Empire and the union with Romania³. Astral moment in the history of Romania, March 27, 1918, the day in which Bessarabia consolidates with the motherland opened the series of the three major fundamental events, which were spent in the glory year of Romania 1918, assured the realisation of the revolutionar process of accomplishment of the national unitary state on 1 December 1918, when Transylvania joined the Kingdom of Romania.

March 27, 1918 opened hereby, on the general background of the thoroughness of the battle of the nations enslaved by the Russian Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire for self-determination, fundamentals comprised of the *Fourteen Points (Woodrow Wilson)* on the future of Europe, a real rerevolutionary national movement with a romantic character in its first phase, a profound realism in the decisive phase of the practical realization of the union of Bessarabia.

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² Anatol Petrencu, scientific copy editor, *O istorie a Basarabiei*, Serebria Publishing House, Chişinău 2015, p. 6

³ Jipa Rotaru, publishing attendant, *Oameni și locuri între Prut și Nistru*, in *Captain Gh. V. Andronachi, Albumul Basarabiei în jurul Marelui Eveniment al Unirii*, Publishing House of the Romanian Association of Democratic Education.