

OIL AND WAR IN ROMANIAN HISTORY DURING THE XX-TH CENTURY

Gheorghe BUZATU¹

Rezumat. *Petrolul a reprezentat un factor esențial în evoluția societății moderne, bazată pe utilizarea mașinilor cu motoare cu combustie internă. Extracția petrolului s-a intensificat, ca urmare a perfecționării tehnologiilor, iar prin rafinarea acestuia s-au obținut produse cu calități superioare. România s-a numărat printre primele țări producătoare de petrol, încă din secolul al XV-lea, iar de la mijlocul secolului al XIX-lea dispunea de rafinării moderne. Renumite companii petroliere din SUA, Germania, Marea Britanie au făcut investiții în exploatarea petrolului românesc. Războaiele mondiale din 1914-1918 și 1939-1945 au depins într-o foarte mare măsură de resursele petrolifere. "Aurul negru" din România a devenit un teren de dispută între marile puteri. În mai 1940, guvernele de la București și Berlin au semnat "pactul petrolului".*

Abstract. *As far as the evolution of the modern society was concerned – an evolution based on the usage of internal combustion engines – oil has represented an essential factor. As a result of improved technologies, the process of oil extraction has intensified. Furthermore, by refining oil, superior quality products were obtained. Ever since the 15th century, Romania ranked among the first oil-productive countries. By the middle of the 19th century, Romania already had several modern oil refineries. Famous oil companies in the United States, Germany, and Great Britain have made investments in the exploitation of Romanian oil. The World Wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 have largely depended on oil resources. The Romanian "black gold" has become a field of dispute between the great powers. In May 1940, the governments of Bucharest and Berlin signed "the oil pact".*

Keywords: oil, investment, refinery, oil companies, world war, oil pact

It is unnecessary to argue, here and now, *what petroleum represented or represents* for the evolution of the World at the beginnings of this century and millennium. I have no doubt that petroleum – or so-called „*the black gold*“ or „*the King*“ of contemporary economy, politics and world relations – had become a veritable *nervum rerum* for the development of modern civilization on the whole. Recently, Professor **Aymeric Chauprade**, a well-known French geopolitician, pointing out the place and the role of petroleum in contemporary world, surprised in this kind the key-elements of the *oil question* in this moment:

«En 1917, en faisant sortir les soldats des tranchées, le pétrole renversa le cours de la guerre. En 1945, la mobilité tactique rendue possible par le contrôle des ressources pétrolières se révélait déterminante dans les victoires américaine et russe contre l'Allemagne. En 1995, lorsque Belgrade cédait à Washington,

¹Prof. univ., Ph.D., Ovidius University, Constanța. Corresponding member of the Academy of Romanian Scientists (ghbuzatu@yahoo.com).

l'armée serbe, étouffée par un blocus continental et maritime, avait épuisé son carburant. L'oublierait-on aujourd'hui? En temps de guerre, l'accès à l'or noir reste un facteur clé de la victoire ...»¹

Specialized research has established that *petroleum* – also called, rightfully so, *black gold*, due to its qualities and the advantages it offers – has gained importance through a continuous and remarkable diversification of its utilization in the course of history, being present „everywhere, always universal and multiple, eternal and mysterious.“² In fact, petroleum has not always been as coveted and appreciated. Only in the last century did it become a product in great demand, absolutely necessary to the development of modern economic life, an important factor in international politics, and indispensable in time of war, causing frequent and vehement diplomatic and economic conflicts, „cold“ wars or armed conflicts, tensions and suspicions among states and nations.

¹Aymeric Chauprade, *Etats-Unis, Russie, Chine – Guerre pour le pétrole!*, in *L'Histoire*, Paris, 279/2003, p. 56. See also Gh. Buzatu, *România și trusturile petroliere internaționale până la 1929*, Iași, Editura Junimea, 1981; *idem*, *O istorie a petrolului românesc*, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 1998; *idem*, *A History of Romanian Oil*, I-II, Bucharest, Mica Valahie Publishing House, 2004/2006; Gavriil Preda, *Importanța strategică a petrolului românesc. 1939-1947*, Ploiești, Editura Printeuro, 2001; Gavriil Preda, Ilie Manole, Eugen Stănescu, eds., *Festung Ploiești*, I-II, Ploiești, Editura Printeuro, 2003-2004; Eugen Stănescu, Gavriil Preda, Iulia Stănescu, *Războiul petrolului la Ploiești*, Ploiești, Editura Printeuro, 2003; Gh. Ivănuș, Ion Ștefănescu, Ștefan-Traian Mocuța, Ștefan N. Stirimin, Mihai Pascu Coloja, *Istoria petrolului în România*, București, Editura AGIP, 2004; Gh. Ivănuș, Ion Șt. Ștefănescu, Nicolae Napoleon Antonescu, Ștefan-Traian-Mocuța, Mihai Pascu Coloja, *Industria de petrol și gaze din România. Tradiție și perspective*, București, Editura AGIP, 2008; Mihai Irimiea, *Istoria economiei naționale*, Ploiești, Editura Universității, 2005; Gh. Buzatu, *Războiul și problema petrolului românesc*, in *Istoria Românilor*, VIII, *România Întregită (1918-1940)*, coordonator Ioan Scurtu, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 2003, pp. 544-563; *idem*, *Petrolul românesc în anii celui de-al doilea război mondial*, in *Istoria Românilor*, IX, *România în anii 1940-1947*, coordonator Dinu C. Giurescu, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 2008, pp. 839-872; *idem*, *Petroleum and the World War of 1939-1945*, I-II, in *Euro-Atlantic Studies*, University of Bucharest/ Centre for Euro-Atlantic Studies, nr. 12/2008 and 13/2009; *idem*, *Sfârșitul petrolului ori un nou început?*, în *Historia*, May 2009, pp. 18-19.

²Cf. Jean-Jacques Berreby, *Histoire mondiale du pétrole*, Paris, Éditions du Pont Royal, 1961, pp. 9-10. According to René Sédillot, from the biblical times until the beginning of the modern age, petroleum was a product that was „good for everything“ – for lighting and heating, in wars, in constructions and as medicine, etc. (see René Sédillot, *Istoria petrolului*, translation from French, with a preface by Bujor Almășan, București, Editura Politică, 1979, pp. 28-55). Until 100-150 years ago, when the specific qualities of petroleum were identified – for the beginning for lighting and heating, afterwards that of ideal fuel –, the product had „too many utilizations“ but „none of them decisive“ (*ibidem*, p. 53). Once the latest progress was registered, petroleum was „proclaimed“ without any reservations *king of modern economy*, becoming, around the year 1900, *the basis of „the first industry“ of the world* (cf. Jacques de Launay, Jean-Michel Charlier, *Istoria secretă a petrolului. 1859-1984*, translation from French, with a preface by Gh. Buzatu, București, Editura Politică, 1989, p. 19).

At an international level, a real question of petroleum occurred at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, when the derivatives obtained from the extraction of „black gold“ began to be used for the first time as *fuel*. In the second half of the last century, kerosene alone – a product obtained through the distillation of petroleum or crude oil – was solicited most frequently at market, as it served pre-eminently for lighting. The other oil by-products that are in great demand and largely used today (*black oil* or *mazut*, *essences* or *gasoline*, *mineral oils*, *paraffin*, etc.) were very little known or had not been yet given a wide utilization. Moreover, towards the year 1900, even kerosene began to have a serious competitor in the gas lamp, so that the reduction of the crude oil production, already rather insignificant, was considered at a certain moment. Throughout the entire period until 1900, namely for as long as kerosene alone presented interest, as Delaisi showed in a famous work published after World War I, the extraction and processing of petroleum represented „the most pacific industry“, and no one suspected that it would „one day disturb the world peace“. ¹ The interest for petroleum increased suddenly, with the invention of the internal combustion engine in the last decade of the nineteenth century. As it is well known, in 1897 Diesel patented the engine, which has since been named after it, that functioned exclusively with black oil and that soon gained a large utilization in industry, the railway system, the mercantile marine and the navy. In the first decade of the twentieth century, due to the continuous improvement of the explosion engine functioning with essences, automobiles and aviation experienced an intense development. Coal, the solid fuel that in the second half of the twentieth century contributed substantially to the economic prosperity of Great Britain, Germany, and the U.S., began to have serious competition from the oil products. ² In the field of the energy producing factors of the world, the overthrow of coal by the liquid fuel – namely petroleum – was truly spectacular. Thus, it is sufficient to mention that already in 1930 over 26% of the world’s energy was provided by petroleum, while today the respective proportion has doubled. ³

The wide utilization that petroleum has gained – by virtue of the previously mentioned facts – at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century resulted in the rapid increase of the international demand for liquid fuel. In its turn, this resulted in the growing in leaps of the production of crude oil. Thus, while between 1857 and 1900 the world’s annual production of crude oil increased from 275 tons to 22.3 million tons, in 1921 it had already reached 104.9 million tons, amounting to 172.8 million tons in 1927. The increase

¹Francis Dealisi, *Le pétrole*, Paris, Payot, 1921, p. 35.

²Cf. Pierre l’Espagnol de la Tramerye, *La lutte mondiale pour le pétrole*, III-e édition, Paris, Éditions de la Vie Universitaire, 1923, p. 16.

³See Cesare Alimenti, *Il petrolio nell’economia mondiale*, Torino, Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1939, p. 67; *Lumea*, 5/1971, p. 16.

registered in comparison to the year 1900 represented therefore 500% in 1921 and approximately 1000% in 1927.¹

In the course of only a few decades from the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, petroleum has turned into one of the fundamental elements of modern economic life. It became – according to the felicitous expression of Anton Zischka – „the blood of economy“.² In the opinion of Cesare Alimenti, petroleum represents today the „keystone“ of industry and transportation and the first condition for the national defence of the states.³ Also, a famous Romanian specialized in fuels showed that, over four decades ago, petroleum represented „a permanent value, in demand at any time and by everyone. Without it energy, movement can not be conceived, without it life cannot exist“.⁴ Petroleum – Ward wrote in 1960 to the same effect – became „universal and international. All the countries began to frantically search for it in their ground, because it brings economic independence and wealth.“⁵ And the author of the first world history of „black gold“ wrote, recently, that contemporary civilization raised the precious liquid fuel and raw material to the rank of „king“.⁶ And, indeed, in our age, which is inconceivable without the existence of various types of engines that function with by-products obtained from crude oil, the English adage *Petroleum is the King*⁷ reflects an indisputable reality. Due to the great importance that it gained in modern economic life, petroleum has drawn more and more – ever since sometime around 1900 – the attention of both the states that were producers of liquid fuel as well as of those that were not. All of them were concerned with ensuring the quantities necessary first of all for a good development of their economic life. For the producing states, the issue did not present any difficulties, and some of them (especially the United States of America) used their advantage of owning rich crude oil reserves in order to extend their economic and political domination in various regions of the world. Other states, lacking crude oil resources, but being aware of the importance of „black gold“, carried on an intense activity of monopolizing large oil fields in the most diverse spots on the globe. In this respect, remarkable were, until World War I, the outspokenly offensive actions of Great Britain and Germany, and, after 1918,

¹Cf. Alexandru Topliceanu, *Lupta pentru petrol. Trustrile străine și politica României*, București, 1929, p. 6; *Moniteur du Pétrole Roumain*, Bucarest, no. 8/ April 15, 1931.

²Anton Zischka, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

³Cesare Alimenti, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

⁴G. H. Damaschin, *Problema combustibilului și politica de Stat*, București, Tip „Cartea Medicală“, 1924, p.1.

⁵Edward Ward, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

⁶Jean-Jacques Berreby, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁷Edgar Faure, *Le pétrole dans la paix et dans la guerre*, Paris, Éditions de la Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1939, p. 12.

those of France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy and Japan. On the other hand, the small producing states have promoted throughout time a policy that has continuously evolved, from an almost total indifference toward the fate of their own crude oil reserves to the adoption of more or less effective measures – according to the case – for defending their national wealth from the danger of foreign monopoly. As far as the small states that lacked liquid fuel, they could not afford to intervene in any way in the international oil policy, being content with obtaining the necessary quantities through purely commercial exchanges.

In the course of the twentieth century, the situation presented above conferred „black gold“ an important role in the political and economic relations among states. In Berreby's opinion, ever since 1901, „international politics has smelled like petroleum“.¹ Under the circumstances in which the actions of retracing new areas of influence intensified, petroleum became not only an *object of dispute* among the great powers, but also an indispensable *means* for reaching the goals pursued by each of them. Grasping precisely this situation, Henry Bérenger, commissary of France for liquid fuels during World War I, pointed out, in a diplomatic note delivered to the French prime minister Clemenceau in December 1919, the major significance presented by the possession of oil resources by each of the great powers in the modern age: „Those who will have oil will have the Empire! The Empire of the seas through heavy petroleum; the Empire of the air through the light essences, the continents through gasoline and kerosene; the Empire of the world through the financial power attached to a matter of the planet more precious, more charming, more dominating than gold itself!“²

As I have emphasized, the dominating force of petroleum at an international level did not occur suddenly. Petroleum became so coveted only gradually, as the technical and scientific discoveries pointed out more and more its immense qualities. Broadly speaking, this process can be considered closed around the year 1914, when petroleum was finally established among the great energy producers of the world. From that moment it became an important factor of international politics, causing frequent and fierce political, diplomatic and even military conflicts among states.

However, before becoming an important factor in international politics, petroleum was the object of economic disputes that always increased in intensity.

According to information offered by Nicolae Iorga and Constantin C. Giurescu, in Romania the extraction of oil – used for a long time for the

¹Jean-Jacques Berreby, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

²Pierre l'Espagnol de la Tramerye, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

lubrication of cart axels, the lighting of boyar courts or the treatment of certain diseases in people or animals – dates from very old times.¹ The oldest documentary information about the existence of oil fields refers to the ones in Moldavia (the region of Bacău). A document written on October 4, 1440 in the chancellery of princes Iliăș and Stephen, Alexander the Good's sons and his successors, related the village „Lucășești on the Tazlăul Sărat River, opposite from the black oil.“² After this date, the number of documentary sources that report the presence of „black oil wells“ in Moldavia increases. In 1646, the exploitations of black oil in the county of Bacău caught the attention of the foreign monk Bandini, who left a detailed description of these activities.³

Beginning with the sixteenth century there are mentions of black oil exploitation in Wallachia (the county of Prahova). The first one – dating from November 22, 1517 – certifies, among the borderline areas of the village of Secăreni (today's Țintea), the place called „la Păcuri“ („Black Oil's Place“).⁴ The first crude oil exploitations are mentioned only a few decades later. Thus, a deed from the eighteenth century certifies the fact that, in 1676, the freeholders in the village of Hizești-Păcureți, „as well as their parents (great-grandfathers, grandfathers and fathers) possessed, with full ownership, the Hirești domain on which there were oil derricks“. Taking into consideration the generations mentioned in the deed quoted above, it results that the beginnings of oil exploitation in Hizești can be established as far back as 1550.⁵

As we can see, the documentary sources from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries consistently use the term „black oil“ („păcură“) for the places with or the exploitations of petroleum or crude oil recorded on the territory of the Romanian Principalities. Research⁶ has established that the term „păcură“ – deriving from the Latin word *picula* and found in documents only in the Romanian language – comes to confirm that, in this region, there has been „a continual exploitation of the respective product from the Roman period until the

¹See N. Iorga, *Introduction*, in Mihail Pizanty, *Le pétrole en Roumanie*, Bucarest, 1931, p. 3; Constantin C. Giurescu, *Istoria Românilor*, III/2, București, 1946, pp. 559-561.

²Cf. *Documente privind istoria României*, seria A, *Moldova (veacul XIV-XV)*, I, București, Editura Academiei, 1954, p. 171; Constantin C. Giurescu, *op. cit.*, III/2, p. 561.

³Valerian Popovici, *Începuturile exploatării capitaliste și a „cerii de pământ“ în țările românești*, in *Studii și materiale de istorie modernă*, I, București, 1957, pp. 218-219.

⁴Cf. Constantin C. Giurescu, *Vechimea exploatării petrolului și a „cerii de pământ“ în țările românești*, in *Cibinium*, Sibiu, 1967-1968, pp. 15-16.

⁵Cf. Armand Rabischon, *Cucerirea petrolului în România de către fântânarii-moșneni (1550-1854) și mica burghezie autohtonă (1854-1896)*, I, in *M.P.R.*, nr. 22/1.XI.1925, p. 1804.

⁶Constantin C. Giurescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17; Constantin C. Giurescu, Dinu C. Giurescu, *Istoria Românilor din cele mai vechi timpuri și până astăzi*, București, Editura Albatros, 1971, p. 120, 156, 229.

present. It is very probable that, before the Romans, the Dacians knew black oil and used it...“

In the Romanian Principalities, oil exploitation was done for a long time (until the beginning of the twentieth century) through rudimentary means and methods. For centuries the so-called black oil „derricks“ (*puțuri*), „pits“ (*groape*) or „mines“ (*băi*) were used, being exploited by monasteries, boyars, freeholders or princes. Around the middle of the nineteenth century, oil derricks became very widely spread, many of which were drilled to a depth of over 250 m.¹ The black oil extracted in rudimentary conditions was sold by the *băieș* or *gropar* peasants in Moldavia and Wallachia. Beginning with 1780, the sources of the time attest to the export of the first quantities of black oil to Turkey and Austria. In the Danubian ports the price of the petroleum exported to Turkey became quite high around the year 1800 – 220 lei/100 kg.² In the fifth and sixth decades of the nineteenth century, important quantities of petroleum were sent to Austria and Russia. Thus, Moldavia alone exported to the two neighbouring empires around 348,000 *ocale* (435,000 kg), receiving 230 460 lei.³ Also around the middle of the nineteenth century there was an increase in the demand for petroleum, as a result of the intensification of the consumption of kerosene, a by-product obtained at the time through the distillation of crude oil. In a very short time, this derivate became widely used, at first for public lighting and then for home lighting as well. Beginning with 1840, the first oil distilleries were built (Lucăcești-Bacău), in reality small workshops where the distillation of oil was done in rudimentary boilers.⁴ The first oil refineries provided with modern equipment were inaugurated only in the second half of the nineteenth century. The first one was built in 1875 at Râfov, near Ploiești, by Teodor Mehedințeanu,⁵ and in 1858 it became the property of his brother, Marin Mehedințeanu.⁶ On the basis of a contract signed in October 1856 between Teodor Mehedințeanu and the city of Bucharest, this oil refinery obtained the exclusive right of providing the Wallachian capital with kerosene. The contract was put into execution on April 1, 1857 when, by replacing the colza oil with the products provided by the Râfov refinery, Bucharest became the first city in the world lighted entirely with distilled

¹V. Pușcariu, *Exploatarea petrolului*, in *Industria petrolului din România în 1908*, București, Tip. F. Göbl Fii, 1909, p. 67.

²Armand Rabischon, *op. cit.*, I, p. 1811.

³Cf. Valerian Popovici, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

⁴See Gh. Răvaș, *Din istoria petrolului românesc*, București, Editura de Stat pentru Literatură Politică, 1955, p. 28.

⁵Constantin M. Boncu, *Contribuții la istoria petrolului românesc*, București, Editura Academiei, 1971, p. 88 and the following.

⁶Apostol Mihai and Florica Dumitrică, *Despre începutul prelucrării petrolului în Muntenia*, in *Revista Arhivelor*, nr. 2/1967, p. 234.

oil.¹ In April 1858, oil lamps began to be used for the public lighting of the Moldavian capital, Iași,² and only in 1859 the procedure was introduced in the great European city – Vienna. In 1857, the total production of the Romanian Principalities amounted to 275 tons of crude oil. With this figure, Romania occupied the first place in the world statistics of oil production,³ before other great producers of liquid fuel, as follows: the U.S.A. (1860), Russia (1863), Mexico (1901), Persia (1913), etc.

Beginning with the drilling of the first oil derrick by the North-American „colonel“ Edwin L. Drake in 1859, a date unanimously accepted as having inaugurated the modern age of „black gold“ exploitation,⁴ petroleum was constantly under the attention of international economic organizations, which tried to obtain great profits from the capitalization of petroleum derivatives, especially of kerosene. We have shown that, toward the end of the nineteenth century, kerosene had a powerful competitor in the gas lamp and, only 40 years after Drake’s discovery, the oil industry was already experiencing depression. At that moment, the discovery of the internal combustion engine, with its multiple qualities and applications, again stirred the interest for petroleum, continuing to secure an „extraordinary empire that today – in the atomic era – is still ruled by it“.⁵ Liquid fuel was the product that favoured (through the unification of great capitals necessary for its research and extraction, through the construction of powerful industries, developed vertically and horizontally, for its processing, sale and transportation, etc.) the formation of powerful capitalist organizations,⁶ typical for the development stage at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Thus, the first capitalist trust – *Standard Oil Co.* – was founded precisely in the oil industry by John Rockefeller in 1882.⁷

The history of the trust *Standard Oil Co.* began, in fact, in 1859, when Rockefeller carried out his first operation with a modest capital of 5,000 dollars. It was only in 1870 that the company *Standard Oil of Ohio* was formed, which did not deal with the extraction but with the refining and transportation of oil. After 1870, the transportation of crude oil through pipe-lines knew an intense development in the United States. Rockefeller managed, in the course of only

¹Constantin Alimănișteanu, *Patruzeci de ani în industria petrolului din România. 1866-1906*, in *Convorbiri Literare*, no. 3-5/1906, p. 442.

²Valerian Popovici, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

³Cf. The American Geographical Society of New York, *World Geography of Petroleum*, Princeton University Press, 1950, pp. 22-23; M.P.R., no. 8/15.VI.1931 (Supliment).

⁴Cf. Daniel Durand, *La politique pétrolière internationale*, Paris, P.U.F., 1962, p. 5.

⁵Jean-Jacques Berreby, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

⁶Cesare Alimentini, *op. cit.*, p. 77; Karl Hoffmann, *Oelpolitik und angelsächsischer Imperialismus*, Berlin, Ring-Verlag, 1927, pp. 24-26.

⁷Henry Peyret, *La bataille des trusts*, Paris, P.U.F., 1954, pp. 21-22.

seven years, to secure his monopoly over the U.S. oil pipe-lines, which enabled him to subordinate most of the isolated internal producers.¹ In 1882, he organized the company in the form of a trust, which in the next three decades came to own 90% of the U.S. pipe-lines and 86.5% of the U.S. production.² Concurrently, the Company oriented toward winning foreign markets as well, so that around 1919 it dominated the commerce with kerosene in Europe and China.³

The domination of *Standard Oil Co.* over the main pipe-lines (the U.S.A., Europe, China, and others) began to be jeopardized precisely at the moment when it was close to its apogee, namely during the first decade of the twentieth century. At that time, a few powerful international oil trusts were created in Europe, which soon began to compete, either with each other or with the North-American trust, for the monopoly over the crude oil resources of the world and the division of the markets. Among these, a special place was held by *Royal Dutch-Shell*, founded in 1907 through the unification of the British interests represented by *Anglo-Saxon Petroleum* and the Dutch interests represented by *Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappij*.⁴ Under the leadership of Henry Deterding, nicknamed “Napoleon of petroleum”,⁵ the British-Dutch trust became in a short time the most serious competitor of the North-American trust. Closely supported by the British and the Dutch governments, *Royal Dutch-Shell* had important successes in the new oil policy it initiated, namely: parallel with the competition with the adverse organizations for the monopoly over the sale of oil products, it tried to secure its production centres by taking hold of as many oil fields on the globe as possible (in Europe, Asia, the U.S.).⁶ From this standpoint, the British-Dutch trust gained a serious ascendancy over *Standard Oil Co.*, which did not seriously engage in this direction until the end of World War I.⁷

Another important international trust, *Anglo Persian Oil Co. Ltd.*, was formed in 1909. It was created by the British company *Burmah Oil* with the purpose of taking over the exploitation of the immense 500,000 square mile concession, obtained in 1901 by the Australian William Knox d’Arcy from the shah of Persia.⁸ In 1914, through the intervention of Lord Fisher and of Winston

¹G. Damougeot-Perron, *La Standard Oil Company (1870-1925)*, Paris, Éditions Jean Budry, 1925, pp. 29-38.

²Pierre l’Espagnol de la Tramerye, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

³*Ibidem*.

⁴Pierre l’Espagnol de la Tramerye, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.

⁵R. Jouan, *Le pétrole, roi du monde*, Paris, Payot, 1949, p. 88.

⁶Cf. *A Petroleum Handbook (Compiled by the Members of the Staff of the Royal Dutch-Shell Group)*, London, 1933, pp. 348-356.

⁷G. Damougeot-Perron, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

⁸See details in Zuhayr Mikdashi, *A Financial Analysis of Middle Eastern Oil Concessions: 1901-1965*, New York – Washington – London, Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1966, pp. 10-15.

Churchill, the British government acquired an important stock (representing 56% of the trust's capital) which was going to secure its actual control over *Anglo Persian Oil Co. Ltd.*¹

As we have pointed out, towards the years 1900-1910 *Standard Oil Co.* had managed to establish a true monopoly over the European kerosene market, which, at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century began to be threatened by the development of the oil exploitations in Romania, Galiția and the Caucasus. Then, between 1901 and 1914 there were multiple attempts by some powerful European economic-financial groups (*Rothschild, Nobel, Deutsche Bank, Royal Dutch-Shell* and others) to concentrate the European interests against Rockefeller's monopoly. Parallel with these actions, an intense activity was carried on by the governments of some great European powers (Great Britain, Germany) that were directly interested in securing their independence as far as oil was concerned.² Assiduous efforts were made in this direction by Wilhelm II's Germany, which needed petroleum for achieving its expansionist plans. In fact, as early as 1897, the government in Berlin had made a proposition to Russia for the closing of an oil agreement directed against *Standard Oil Co.*³ In the same direction, the officials in Berlin closely supported the joint interests of *Deutsche Bank, Disconto Gesellschaft, Dresdner Bank, S. Bleichröder* in the oil exploitations in Europe and the Caucasus.⁴ The German governments also insisted on settling the differences between the two powerful oil interest groups gathered around *Deutsche Bank* and *Disconto Gesellschaft*, the latter allied with *S. Bleichröder*. Until World War I, the efforts made in this direction by the officials in Berlin were unsuccessful. The two groups continued their rivalry in matters of oil. They each created a holding company and these competed openly in the European markets. Thus, in 1904 *Deutsche Bank* founded *Deutsche Petroleum Aktiengesellschaft*, with ramifications on the entire continent.⁵ In the following year, the group *Disconto Gesellschaft-S. Bleichröder* created, in its turn, the company *Allgemeine Petroleum Industrie A. G.*, with important positions especially in Romania.⁶ In

¹*Ibidem*, pp. 15-16.

²Pierre l'Espagnol de la Tramerye, *op. cit.*, pp. 90.

³A. A. Fursenko, *Neftianîie trestî i mirovaia politika. 1880-1918 gody*, Moskva, 1965, pp. 139-141.

⁴Cf. Henri Hauser, *Les méthodes allemandes d'expansion économiques*, III-e éd., Paris, A. Colin, 1916, p. 88 and the following. For the positions gained in Romania, see Frederik Wirth, *Deutsche Arbeit und deutsches Kapital in der rumänischen Erdölindustrie*, Erkelenz, J. Brands'sche Buchdruckerei, 1927, pp. 24-42.

⁵Frederik Wirth, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

⁶See Dr. Nicolae N. Leon, *Die rumänische Petroleumwirtschaft unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Bergbaugesetzes („Nationalisierungsgesetzes“) vom 4 Juli 1924*, Bukarest, Bucovina, 1927, p. 82.

Europe, *Deutsche Bank* was the one that most closely served the plans of the German governments. The opponent group *Disconto Gesellschaft - S. Bleichröder* did not hesitate at certain moments – in 1900 in Romania and in 1911 in Germany – to ally itself with *Standard Oil Co.*¹ On the contrary, *Deutsche Bank* assumed the official German plans regarding the „liberation“ of the European kerosene market from Rockefeller’s domination. In 1905, at the initiative of *Deutsche Bank*, negotiations took place for the coalition of the European producers, which were finalized on July 25 through the formation of *Europäische Petroleum Union (E.P.U.)*, a true continental oil trust combining the interests of *Nobel*, *Rothschild* and *Deutsche Bank* against *Standard Oil Co.*² However, *E.P.U.* did not prove capable of reaching its goals, being constantly destabilized by serious contradictions. Moreover, the group was not able to acquire the quantities of oil necessary for covering Europe’s always increasing demands, in the case of the elimination of *Standard Oil Co.* After 1902, Russia’s production was definitively exceeded by that of the U.S., and Romania was producing yet too little to be able to satisfy the ambitions of *E.P.U.* In fact, in 1907, the latter was brought to terms and it entered into a cartel with *Standard Oil Co.*, valid for 8 years, from which *E.P.U.* attempted to secede prior to the agreed term. In 1919, a strong propaganda was started in Germany for the introduction of a state monopoly over the oil trade. A bill was even drafted in Reichstag, which seriously threatened *Standard Oil Co.*’s monopoly. Allied with *Disconto Gesellschaft*, the North-American trust immediately took the offensive. The voting of the bill was postponed and, in December 1912, the German Secretary of State for Finance addressed the North-American trust, asking it to continue supplying the Reich.³

In the last analysis, until the outbreak of World War I the German groups did not manage to „free“ Europe from the domination of *Standard Oil Co.* They registered important successes in strengthening their influence in Europe, managing to obtain far from negligible positions in the exploitation of the oil fields in Romania,⁴ Russia or Galiția. In 1912-1914, the German groups carried on an intense activity aimed at gaining positions in Turkey, which then owned the rich vilayets of Mossul and Bagdad. These efforts were finally successful only a month before the outbreak of World War I. Then, *Deutsche Bank*, together with *Royal Dutch-Shell* and *Anglo Persian Oil Co. Ltd.*, obtained a large concession in

¹A.A. Fursenko, *op. cit.*, pp. 214, 414-415.

²*Ibidem*, pp. 256-257; Karl Hoffmann, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

³A. A. Fursenko, *op. cit.*, p. 427.

⁴For the place occupied by the Germans in the Romanian oil industry see dr. Marcel Bibiri-Sturia, *Germania în România*, București, 1916, pp. 92-97.

the respective vilayets from the sultan's government. For the exploitation of this concession, the three groups formed *Turkish Petroleum Co.*¹

On the eve of World War I, the fight for supremacy among the four international oil trusts (*Standard Oil Co.*, *Royal Dutch-Shell*, *Anglo Persian Oil Co. Ltd.* and *E.P.U.*) had reached its climax. Ever since around 1910, each of these trusts had owned real „natural spheres“ of influence whose invasion had caused conflicts more than once.² In this context, it is clear that, among other things, the First World War, unleashed in the summer of 1914, was also caused by open or latent conflicts, accumulated over many years, brought about by the tendencies of the monopolistic groups to take over the oil fields around the world or to maintain their „spheres of influence“. During the course of the war, each party aimed at eliminating the other dangerous competitors; in the end, the great eliminated party – following Germany's defeat in November 1918 – was *E.P.U.* and, in its absence – after the war – the competition was between the trusts that had been „allies“ for a while – the British and the North-American.³

What was, during the pre-war period, the attitude of the governments of the great powers toward the oil trusts? With a few exceptions, they supported the offensive of the great trusts, which were already *international* only through the area of their preoccupations and dealings, but very *national* through their organization and the nature of their capital. In the respective period, the British cabinets distinguished themselves through their attitude, by lending substantial assistance to *Royal Dutch-Shell* and *Anglo Persian Oil Co. Ltd.* The explanation for this fact is not difficult to find. The force and the existence of the British Empire were based on its marine fleet. From the moment when the great advantages of using maze for operating the engines of the merchant and military ships became obvious,⁴ it was natural for the British governments to be interested – as the parent state lacked liquid fuel – in helping any initiative of the British citizens in the oil business, either within the empire or in other places on the globe. It goes without saying that the interest manifested by the governments in London in the oil issue increased with the application of the vast program of naval arming before World War I. Thus, when Winston Churchill took over the command of the Admiralty in October 1911, he found an extensive arming program, and the ships that were being built were going to operate on liquid fuels,

¹Cf. G. Damougeot-Perron, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-189.

²Cf. V. Iscu, *Răsboaele mondiale ale petrolului între marele organizațiuni de petrol de la înființarea lui „E.P.U.“ și până la războiul mondial din iulie 1914, al popoarelor*, Câmpina, Tip. George I. Gologan, 1915, p. 10.

³Cf. Pierre l'Espagnol de la Tramerye, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

⁴Lord Fisher, who commanded the British Admiralty for a long time, predicted as early as 1880 that, in matters of fuels for the supply of the fleet, there would be a shift from coal to petroleum (cf. *Petroleum Twenty-Five Years Retrospect 1910-1935*, London, Clayand Sons Ltd. 1935, p. 1).

which offered „inestimable“ advantages for the navy¹ regarding: speed, range of action, storage, etc. Churchill developed the program of his predecessors, which required that Great Britain secure its oil sources. Under these circumstances, the British government lent its full support to *Royal Dutch-Shell* and *Anglo Persian Oil Co. Ltd.* everywhere in the world. At Churchill's suggestion,² in 1914 the British government took over a large portion of *Anglo Persian Oil Co. Ltd.*'s stocks, from that moment becoming interested directly in the oil business. From then on, the respective trust became „the main fighting instrument in the official British oil policy“.³ This way, Great Britain was the first state⁴ that, realizing the great importance of petroleum, began to unreservedly replace coal with liquid fuel in the military and the merchant fleet. Churchill, under whose guidance this program was carried out, subsequently appropriated by the other powers (in order, Germany, the United States, France, and others), appreciated that the decision that had been taken was „formidable“: a fuel that Great Britain had in secure and sufficient quantities (coal) was being replaced with another (petroleum), found in various provinces of the empire or in other regions of the globe.⁵ In conformity with the situation presented above, in the following decades Great Britain promoted an openly expansionist oil policy, supporting the actions of the British citizens and of the conational trusts directed at taking over important oil fields in all the areas of the globe.

The example of Great Britain was closely followed by Germany, which, understanding the importance of petroleum, did not neglect to strengthen its positions in this area. We have mentioned earlier that, until 1914, the German oil trusts had important successes in this direction in Europe, the Caucasus, and Turkey, achieved, always, with the assistance and „under the direct advice“ of Wilhelm's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁶

In comparison to Great Britain or Germany, the governments in Washington carried on a different policy toward *Standard Oil Co.* until the First World War. In the U.S., the abuses committed by *Standard Oil Co.* – first of all the high prices established for oil products – gave rise to an intense campaign of the public opinion and of the various states of the Union against the Rockefeller trust. As a result, on July 2, 1890, president Benjamin Harrison signed the

¹Cf. Winston S. Churchill, *La crise mondiale*, I Paris, Payot, 1925, pp. 121-129.

²*Ibidem*, p. 133.

³Alexandru Topliceanu, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁴Cf. Dr. Paul Horia Suciuc, *op. cit.*, I, p. 130.

⁵Winston S. Churchill, *op. cit.*, I, p. 130.

⁶Vintilă I. C. Brătianu, *Petrolul și politica de stat*, București, Imprimeriile Independența, 1919, p. 10.

Sherman Act, which later was the basis of the entire U.S. antitrust legislation.¹ Article 1 of the above mentioned law declared „illegal“ any contract or economic-financial combination that would have restricted „the freedom of business and trade“.² On the basis of this article, the trust controlled by Rockefeller was declared illegal in Ohio in 1892, an example soon followed by other states as well, with the exception of New Jersey, where no restriction was imposed regarding *Standard Oil Co.*³ This fact allowed the rapid ascent of *Standard Oil of New Jersey*, which in 1899 increased its capital from 10 to 108.3 million dollars, and then the acquisition by this company of half or even the majority of the stocks owned by the other companies united in the trust, thus becoming a holding company.⁴ The change was only in the name, as it continued to operate as a trust. In fact, in 1907 it was fined for 1,462 contraventions (including the contraventions to the antitrust law) for the sum of 29.1 million dollars. Finally, on May 15 1911, the Supreme Court issued an order for the dissolution of the trust. Consequently, Rockefeller’s group was divided in 33 companies, among which *Standard Oil of New Jersey* remained the most powerful one.⁵ At the same time, John Rockefeller turned the actual leadership of the business into the hands of John D. Archbold. In 1917, Walter Teagle became the chief executive officer of *Standard Oil of New Jersey*.

In 1914, the group founded by Rockefeller was confronted, for the last time, with the antitrust measures dictated by president Woodrow Wilson at the beginning of his term of office. Afterwards, new events (the outbreak of the world war, the penetration of *Shell* in the U.S. market, etc.) caused a serious breach within the antitrust legislation. In April 1918, under Teagle’s new leadership, the trust obtained the first derogations from the *Sherman Act*. From that moment, the attitude of the Washington administration toward *Standard Oil Co.* contrasted deeply with that adopted in the previous period: the U.S. governments supported more and more firmly the trust’s policy of expansion abroad and they no longer „hindered“ its internal activity.⁶

It is worth mentioning that, although until 1918, the U.S. governments „persecuted“ *Standard Oil Co.* inside the country, they however supported Rockefeller’s actions abroad. Conclusive in this respect was the U.S. military intervention in Mexico, a country that between 1910 and 1919 represented an

¹Simon N. Whitney, *Antitrust Policies, American Experience in Twenty Industries*, I, New York, 1958, pp. 3-8; John Ise, *The United States Oil Policy*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1928, p. 225 and the following.

²Simon N. Whitney, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

³G. Damougeot-Perron, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

⁴*Ibidem*, p. 71.

⁵*Ibidem*, pp. 80-81; John Ise, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

⁶See Anton Zischka, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

„object of dispute“ between the powerful rivals *Royal Dutch Shell* and *Standard Oil Co.*¹ With the help of their governments, the two oil trusts provoked civil wars and revolutions, frequent coups d'état, etc. in Mexico,² finally reaching an agreement (Paris, 1919) directed against the president in office, a continuer of his predecessor, Carranza, who, in 1917, had nationalized the entire Mexican subsoil.³

As we have pointed out, until the First World War, not all the capitalist powers carried on an active foreign oil policy. With the exception of Great Britain, Germany and the United States, the actions of the other powers of the capitalist world (France, Italy, and others) did not have any effects at an international level until the outbreak of the conflict between 1914 and 1918.⁴ Japan was in the same situation, as well as Russia, which, although the owner of extremely rich oil fields, did not act as an active factor in the international oil policy, being rather a confrontation field for the great North-American, British, and German trusts or for the French-Belgian organizations.⁵

Therefore, the impetuous increase of petroleum's international role took place at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. For as long as it was used for lighting, oil represented a „pacific“ industry. The discovery of the internal combustion engines, which gained a very large application in the modern age, suddenly increased the importance of petroleum, transforming it into one of the main sources of energy on the globe, into the „idea fuel“⁶ of the twentieth century. As a result, crude oil became a product in great demand and extremely appreciated, especially due to its unequal reputation on the globe. The international oil trusts contended vehemently for supremacy over the main known oil reserves, managing, until the First World War, to take over important centres that were producing or that were possibly rich in crude oil in Mexico, Latin America, the Dutch Indies, the Caucasus, Persia, Turkey, Romania or Galiția. The division made then was not and could not be final. The tendencies of the great trusts to constantly expand their possessions, the appearance of new candidates, the always firmer reaction of the countries transformed in „battle fields“ for the international organizations, etc., caused permanent mutations and

¹Alexandru Topliceanu, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

²See Scott Nearing and Joseph Freeman, *Dollar Diplomacy. A Study in American Imperialism*, New York, B.W. Huebsch and the Viking Press, 1925, pp. 84-121; Frank Freidel, *Les États d'Amérique au XX-e siècle*, Paris, Éditions Sirey, 1966, pp. 86-87.

³Alexandru Topliceanu, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

⁴Cesare Alimenti, *op. cit.*, *passim*; Charles Pomaret, *La politique française des combustibles liquides*, Paris, Éditions de la Vie Universitaire, 1923, *passim*.

⁵A. A. Fursenko, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

⁶M. Baumont, R. Isay et H. Germain-Martin, *L'Europe de 1900 à 1914*, Paris, Éditions Sirey, 1966, pp. 354-355.

endless conflicts. The First World War was going to eliminate some of the serious candidates (the Germans) to the possession of the world's oil, but it showed signs of serious conflicts among the trusts that, for a while, were allied.

This was how, 15 years before the outbreak of World War I, the true power of petroleum manifested itself – in all its plenitude –, first of all as a source of energy and then as a raw material. Without having played a decisive role in the world politics of the time, as it has been maintained by most of those who have studied the matter,¹ petroleum represented however an important factor in the international life. The special importance of petroleum would later increase when, after the First World War, almost all the states and nations gained „full awareness“ of its value.²

In comparison to the world war of 1914-1918, the development of the conflagration from 1939-1945 depended infinitely more on the **petroleum factor**. Not only the admittance of those interested and involved, but also the evolution of the military operations as well as the numerous political-diplomatic measures, the economic policy of the belligerent states, the special concern of all the states for the preservation, exploitation, and conquering of the main oil resources everywhere in the world are categorical in this sense. Ample and thorough specialized studies have established with precision the fact that having/lacking liquid fuel depended greatly on the success/failure of the crucial military operations in Western Europe and the Eastern Front, in North Africa and Asia, in the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, or in the Pacific Ocean, the air battles on all the major theatres of war, and, at a global scale, the approaching or the failure of the 1945 victory.³ A French publicist was of the opinion that, if in 1914-

¹See the critique of these opinions in A. A. Fursenko, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

²Jean-Jacques Berreby, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-172.

³See, especially, Robert Goralski, Russel W. Freeburg, *Oil and War. How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in WWII Meant Victory or Defeat*, New York, William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1978, *passim*; Jean-Jacques Berreby, *Le pétrole dans la stratégie mondiale*, Paris, Casterman, 1974, *passim*; George Lenczowski, *The Middle East in World Affairs*, second edition, Ithaca (New York), Cornell University Press, 1956, p. 438 and the following; E. M. Friedwald, *Oil and the War*, London-Toronto, William Heinemann Ltd., 1941, *passim*; Benjamin Shawdran, *The Middle East, Oil and the Great Powers*, second edition, Boulder – London, Westview Press, 1985, p. 5 (petroleum – „the most decisive force in war“); F. Venn, *Oil Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century*, London, Macmillan, 1986, pp. 83-104; Maurice Levêque, *Le pétrole et la Guerre*, quoted edition, *passim*; Eugen Preda, *Miza petrolului*, quoted edition, *passim*; Constantin Croutziou, *L'importance du pétrole dans la vie économique*, Paris, Librairie Sociale et Économique, 1941, p. 28 (petroleum – „vim of the war“); Jaques de Launay, Jean-Michel Charlier, *Istoria secretă a petrolului*, quoted edition, pp. 79-88; René Sédillot, *Istoria petrolului*, quoted edition; *passim*; Henri Michel, *La*

1918, petroleum helped the Anglo-French-American allies „to win the war“, later, in the inter-war period, it caused them to „lose the peace,“¹ imposing itself as „master of peace and war.“² René Sédillot noticed remarked that, „**apparently, petroleum has greater responsibilities in unleashing the second conflict of the century than the first one.**“³ The development of the century’s conflagration conferred to some specialists like Pierre Renouvin and Jean-Baptiste Duroselle a fruitful and exemplary field of research in the history of international relations, confirming the extent to which their evolution between 1939 and 1945 depended decisively on the **profound** forces (the geographical factors, the demographic conditions, the economic and financial forces, the national and pacifist sentiments, nationalisms) or on the **actions of the state men.**⁴ Showing that, in 1935-1939, the world battle for the reserves of raw materials accentuated, the two French specialists pointed out that, more than the economic interests, the political preoccupations were the essence of the phenomenon, **the policy of raw materials being dominated by military and strategic reasons,**⁵ both on the eve of as well as during the world war, we add. Of the authors we have mentioned, the majority dealt especially with or talked also about the role and place of Romania as an oil possessing country in the plans of the belligerents, either in the initial period of the war, as objective of Germany, or later on as its „satellite“ (1940-1944) and adversary of the United Nations, or, in the end, as partner of the latter in the decisive assault on the Nazi Reich in Europe. The development of the hostilities proved to what degree the possession/lack of „black gold“ resources favoured/disadvantaged the two hostile camps, respectively the **Axis** powers (Germany, Italy, Japan and their allies) and the **Allied** powers, whose coalition was formed gradually between 1939 and 1941 (Great Britain, France, the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A., and China). Consequently, already from the beginning the world war unfolded, for each of the belligerent camps, under the sign of oil

drôle de guerre, Paris, Hachette, *passim*; Viorica Moisuc, *Diplomația României*, quoted edition, *passim*; Horia Brestoiu, *Acțiuni secrete în România*, quoted edition, *passim*; Maurice Pearton, *Oil and the Romanian State*, quoted edition, p. 223 and the following. During the war years, the successful works of Anton Zischka were published in Romanian, *Războiul petrolului*, București, Editura Cartea Românească, 1942; *Știința distruge monopolurile*, second edition, București, Editura Gorjan, 1942. From this last work we quote: „petroleum has become the blood of the war fleets and of automobiles, of airplanes and Diesel engines“ (p. 271). In *Războiul petrolului* the author demonstrated the role of **blood of economy** gained by „black gold“ (p. 14).

¹Cf. Edmond Bloch, *1919-1939. Le pétrole mène le jeu...*, Paris, G. Durassié et C-ie, Éditeurs, 1961, p. 119.

²*Ibidem*, p. 116-119.

³René Sédillot, *Istoria petrolului*, p. 228.

⁴See *Introduction à l'histoire des relations internationales*, quoted edition, *passim*; Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *Tout empire périra. Théorie des relations internationales*, Paris, A. Collin, 1992, p. 129 and the following.

⁵*Introductions...*, p. 85.

possession of penury. René Sédillot commented: „**From the beginning it is... obvious that petroleum was found in the camp of the Allies, not in the camp of the nations of the Axis. The latter concluded an iron pact: it is not an iron pact. From the beginning it is clear that, in the unfolding of the conflict, petroleum worked for the victory of the nations that already possessed it and for the defeat of the nations that lacked it. The stakes are down. Germany's – or Japan's – only chance would be a victorious express war: they would have to triumph in a few weeks. Otherwise, the lack of petroleum would annihilate their any hope of success. Or they would have to conquer as soon as possible important resources – the Caucasus in the case of the Germans, the Dutch Indies in the case of the Japanese. Without them, their cause is lost.**“¹ Jean-Jacques Berreby stated with good reason: „**More than the First World War, the war from 1939-1945 depended on petroleum, whose importance was essential.**“² In the unleashed battle, Romania, as subject, but especially as object, had an indisputable role. According to the statistics of the period, Romania obtained 2.2% of the world's crude oil production, being the sixth producer in the world and the second in Europe, following the United States, the U.S.S.R., Venezuela, Iran-Bahrein, and the Dutch Indies.³ The documents published after the war emphasized on the major role played by the question of Romanian petroleum in the great military and political-diplomatic decisions of the camps that warred against each other on the battlefield. From a multitude of information, we mention the declaration made by Herman Göring, the Marshal of the Nazi Reich, during his meeting in Berlin, on November 26, 1941, with Mihai Antonescu, the vice-president of the Council of Ministers and the titular of Bucharest's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, namely that petroleum, after the blood sacrifice on the Eastern Front, underlined the place and the role the oil represented „**the most precious contribution the Romania can bring to the common cause** (namely of the **Axis Berlin-Rome-Tokyo**, author's bold).“⁴

The outbreak of the hostilities, in September 1939, opened immediately and with utter brutality the issue of petroleum, both for the belligerents as well as the non-belligerents. The political and military observers of the events immediately agreed in this respect. Cesare Alimenti, a name known to the reader, spoke in

¹René Sédillot, *Istoria petrolului*, p. 228.

²Jean-Jacques Berreby, *Histoire mondiale du pétrole*, quoted edition, p. 207.

³Cf. Mihail Pizanty, *Aperçu général sur l'industrie pétrolière de Roumanie*, București, Editura Cartea Românească, 1940, p. 4; *idem*, *Privire retrospectivă asupra industriei petrolifere în perioada 1930-1939*, București, 1940, p. 6.

⁴*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, vol. XIII, London, HMSO, 1964, p. 844. While in Berlin, at the end of November 1941, Mihai Antonescu also met with Joseph Goebbels, Joachim von Ribbentrop, and Adolph Hitler.

1939 of the role of petroleum as „war weapon“,¹ and he was not alone.² In Bucharest, *Monitorul Petrolului Român*, noticing that exactly 25 years later the war cataclysm was ravaging the old continent again, wrote that the oil industry had become „a vital element for the means used by the modern war. More than in the past conflict, the derivatives obtained from crude oil can be partly replaced with synthetic products found in the raw materials that exist in abundance in many countries that have no petroleum or have an insufficient production. On the other hand, alcohol and benzyl, mixed in variable proportions in products obtained from crude oil, increase the quantities that can be utilized. The potential of aviation and of motorized armaments increased enormously in comparison to the past, requiring immense quantities of liquid fuel. Next to the food for the troops, ensuring the fuel for the engines that enable their movement and the flight of the planes appears as a primary concern.“³

The world war, unleashed on September 1, 1939 through Germany's attack against Poland, clearly divided the belligerents regarding the manner in which they approached or were confronted with the issue of petroleum. In fact, already from the previous period, Germany and Great Britain – as the Reich's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Joachim von Ribbentrop, remarked – had been on clearly antagonistic positions both as far as the German military supremacy on the continent, as well as regarding the redistribution of raw materials, Berlin claiming a place not only in Europe, but also in some of its old colonies.⁴ It goes without saying that, due to the war, these disputes became more critical, **the Axis** and **the United Nations** fighting a life-and-death battle in 1941-1942; in 1943 (Casablanca), the well-known formula of **imposing an unconditional capitulation** to Germany and its smaller or bigger allies was launched, which,

¹Cf. Cesare Alimenti, *Il petrolio nell'economia mondiale*, quoted edition, p. 62.

²See Stefan Th. Possony, *L'économie de la guerre totale*, quoted edition, *passim*; Edgar Faure, *Le pétrole dans la paix et dans la guerre*, quoted edition, *passim*; André Labarthe, *La France devant la guerre. La balance des forces*, Paris, Éditions B. Grasset, 1939, p. 10; V. Forbin, *Le pétrole*, Paris, 1940, p. 5 („those belligerents who can count on a sufficient reserve of oil products hold the forfeit of victory“). A decade after the outbreak of the hostilities, R. Jouan specified that petroleum had been „the soul of the military operations“, that „owning it, once the first surprises passed, played a capital, even decisive role in the fall of Germany and, especially, of Japan“ (*Le pétrole, roi du monde*, Paris, Payot, 1949, p. 155).

³„Zgomotul armelor a înlocuit acțiunea diplomaților“, in *M.P.R.*, no. 18/September 15, 1949, p. 1 185; *M.P.R.*, no. 23/1940, p. 1225 (preface by G. Macovei, dated September 1940, to the work by L. Mrazec *Le problème du pétrole en Roumanie par rapport au problème mondial en 1915*, also published in Romanian: *Problema petrolului în România față de problema mondială din 1915*, București, 1940); *M.P.R.*, no. 1/1941, p. 35; *M.P.R.*, no. 8/1941, p. 375; *M.P.R.*, no. 11/1941, p. 521.

⁴Cf. Joachim von Ribbentrop, *De Londres à Moscou*. București, Editura Cartea Românească, 1939, p. 3.

practically, meant that the confrontation could not end except with the elimination of one of the camps. In matters of petroleum, as we have mentioned, each of the two camps benefited from different situations. At a complete disadvantage, the countries of **the Axis** tried to buy some time, drawing up their political-economic and military-strategic plans in accordance with **the petroleum factor as well**.¹ Already in the first year of the conflict, „blocked“ on the old continent, Germany, besides its own oil resources and those (insignificant) of the occupied countries, or counting on the (totally insufficient) quantities obtained through modern procedures,² oriented towards Romania³ and benefited from the good relations established by Hitler and Stalin in the years 1934-1941. After the Reich's aggression took place on June 22, 1941, Stalin claimed that the Führer also intended to **conquer the Soviet resources of „black gold“**,⁴ and later, the operational plans of the Wehrmacht⁵ in the crucial year 1942 depended categorically on the intention of Hitler and the German High Command (*O.K.W.*) to capture the Caucasus.⁶ The basic principles of the economic policy of the Reich

¹Cf. Robert Goralski, Russel W. Freeburg, *Oil and War*, p. 324, 334. The Second World War proved „**the crucial connection**“ between petroleum and the national security of the states, the role of „**crucial pivot**“ of the liquid fuel in determining the general policy of all the states; Constantin Croutziou, *L'importance du pétrole dans la vie économique*, quoted edition, pp. 149-151 (about the role of **fuels** in the battle between Great Britain and Germany).

²*Ibidem*, pp. 77-80.

³In the years 1940-1944, Romania represented „**the main source for supply with oil products**“ for the Nazi Reich (cf. S. M. Lisičikin, *Neftianăia promișlennost stran narodnoi demokratii*, Moskva, 1960, p. 133). According to F. Venn, Romania, through the deliveries of oil products from 1939-1944, had „a substantial contribution to [the functioning] of the German war machine“ (cf. *Oil Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century*, quoted edition, p. 85).

⁴See I .V. Stalin, *Despre Marele Război al Uniunii Sovietice pentru Apărarea Patriei*, third edition, București, Editura PMR, 1952, p. 22 (from the speech made by Stalin on the radio on July 3, 1941: „...[Germany] **intends [in the war started on June 22, 1941] to conquer our land, bedewed with our sweat, to take our grain and our petroleum, obtained through our work...**“).

⁵For the activity of **O.K.W.** between 1940 and 1945, see a fundamental document, edited by the well known German historians Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, Andreas Hillgruber, Walther Hubatsch, and Percy Erns Schramm, *Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht (Wehrmachtführungsstab)*, I-IV, Frankfurt am Main, Bernard Graefe Verlag für Wehrwesen, 1961-1965. See also the **war directives** of Adolph Hitler, edited by Walther Hubatsch, *Hitlers Weisungen für die Kriegführung 1939-1945. Dokumente des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht*, Frankfurt am Main, Bernard und Graefe Verlag für Wehrwesen, 1962 (followed by the English and the French editions: Adolph Hitler, *Directives de guerre*, présentées par H.R. Trevor-Roper d'après Walther Hubatsch, Paris, Arthaud, 1965).

⁶Cf. Robert Goralski, Russell W. Freeburg, *Oil and War*, p. 174 and the following (chapter 11 – *Germany Bleeds for Oil: The Caucasus and Stalingrad*, with this **motto: „If I do not capture the petroleum in Maikop and Groznii, then I will have to end the war“**, A. Hitler, June 1, 1941).

Reich in the war years¹ or the plans regarding the area of the Near East and the Middle East were also inspired by the petroleum factor.² Today it seems totally strange that, in 1940-1943, acting in the North-African space, the German and Italian troops suffered from the lack of liquid fuel,³ although a few decades later... a „sea of oil“ was discovered in the area (Libya).⁴ The petroleum problem was no less stressful for Japan than it was for Germany or Italy.⁵ On the other hand, for Great Britain and France the petroleum question assumed different coordinates. Their possibility to „block“ Germany in the winter of 1930-1940⁶ offered them a different perspective, and at that stage they were studying plans of preventing the supplying of the Reich with resources from the U.S.S.R.⁷ and Romania.⁸ Based on our research, we have concluded that, in the first months of the war (September-December 1939), the *War Cabinet* in London, which assembled 123 times, gave special attention to the question of Romanian oil,⁹ which was dealt with and solved in connection with the **economic blockade**¹⁰ instituted by the Anglo-French allies with the purpose of „suffocating“ the Nazi Reich. In this sense, the British official history of the 1939-1945 war recorded that, in order to be able to carry on the hostilities, Berlin gave „great importance“

¹See Dietrich Eichholtz, *Geschichte der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft 1939-1945*, I, 1939-1941, Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1971, p. 168 and the following.

²See Andreas Hillgruber, *Die Zerstörung Europa. Beiträge zur Weltkriegsepoche 1914 bis 1945*, Frankfurt am Main – Berlin, Propyläen, 1989, p. 219 and the following; idem, *Deutsche Grossmacht- und Weltmacht im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Düsseldorf, Droste Verlag, 1979, *passim*.

³Robert Goralski, Russell W. Freeburg, *Oil and War*, p. 124 and the following (chapter 8 – „Mideast Oil and the Mediterranean“).

⁴*Ibidem*.

⁵„Le Combustible liquide au Japon“, in *M.P.R.*, no. 5/1941, p. 243 and the following; Robert Goralski, Russell W. Freeburg, *Oil and War*, p. 141 and the following (chapter „Japan’s Oil Gains“).

⁶Robert Goralski and Russel W. Freeburg insisted on the fact that the success of the **economic blockade** of Germany, depending on the accomplishing of the **naval blockade**, „exacerbated“ for Berlin the problem of liquid fuel for the entire course of the world war (cf. *Oil and War*, p. 38).

⁷Cf. Henri Michel, *La drôle de guerre*, p. 240-249.

⁸*Ibidem*, pp. 244-245; Sir Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, I, London, HMSO, 1970, *passim*.

⁹Cf. Gh. Buzatu, *Din istoria secretă a celui de-al doilea război mondial*, I, pp. 200-201.

¹⁰See W. N. Medlicott, *The Economic Blockade*, I, quoted edition, *passim*. About the preoccupations of the British Government to ensure the oil quantities necessary for the war, see D.J. Payton-Smith, *Oil. A Study of War-time Policy and Administration*, London, HMSO, 1971, *passim*; W.K. Hancock, ed., *History of the Second World War. United Kingdom Civil Series, Statistical Digest of the War*, London – Neudeln, HMSO and Kraus Reprint, 1975, pp. 87-94 (*Petroleum*). Relative to the determinant role of petroleum in the specification of the strategic plans of the British Empire during the war years, cf. Sir Charles Webster, Noble Frankland, *The Strategic Air Offensive against Germany 1939-1945*, vols. I/1-3, II, III/5, IV, London, HMSO, 1961. About the **blockade** of the first years of the world war, cf. Marion C. Siney, *The Allied Blockade of Germany 1914-1916*, The University of Michigan Press, 1957.

to ensuring the provisioning with steel from Sweden and oil from the U.S.S.R., Poland, and Romania.¹ It was to be expected that, planning the total blockade of the Reich already in the first days of the conflagration,² the London officials would investigate the sources of liquid fuel available to Hitler, among which were the Romanian ones.³ The common French-British plans elaborated in 1939 and 1940 had in view the destruction of Romania's oil region and the blocking of the land and sea transports in the direction of the Reich. The general evolution of the hostilities prevented the application of these plans.⁴ For the moment we shall mention that, on September 12, 1939, several members of the British *War Cabinet* made proposals meant to prevent the „oil stocks and the future oil production of Romania from getting into the hands of Germany.“⁵ A program was adopted expressing in essence the decision of Great Britain to immediately acquisition, in collaboration with France, all the quantities of liquid fuel that Romania had in stock and to sign firm contracts for the production of the next six months. Lord Halifax, the titular of the Foreign Office, admitted that the adopted measures could present a risk, namely that the Nazi Reich could be determined „to invade Romania.“⁶ In the following days, the *War Cabinet*, having in view the evolutions in Poland, opined that the *Wehrmacht* could intend to prolong its campaign in Romania as well, in order to capture its resources and to have access to the Black Sea, which, certainly, would have affected the entire south-east of the continent.⁷ With a view to Germany's intended operations, especially the **campaign in the West of Europe**, it was of great importance – specified the head of the Imperial General Staff in London – to prevent the immediate use by Hitler of the oil resources found in Galiția and Romania. The debates on the issue of Romanian petroleum were initiated at the recommendation of the Foreign Office and of the Imperial Defence Committee (IDC).⁸ The seriousness of the situation and the importance of the matter determined the *War Cabinet* to create a **special**

¹Cf. J. R. M. Butler, *Bolșaiia strateghiia*, I, *Sentiabr 1939-iun 1941*, Moskva, 1959, p. 86.

²*Ibidem*, p. 85.

³*Ibidem*, p. 87.

⁴Gh. Buzatu, *Din istoria secretă a celui de-al doilea război mondial*, I, p. 209.

⁵Great Britain, Public Record Office, Kew, London, 766, War Cabinet 65/1, War Cabinet 13 (39) (according to Arhivele Naționale ale României, Arhivele Istorice Centrale, București/ANIC, fund *Microfilme Anglia*, roll 7). See details in the fundamental work of W.N. Medlicott, *The Economic Blockade*, I, pp. 250-251. It is worth mentioning the belief of British public opinion in the period that the **economic blockade** represented the „secret weapon“ that could give decisive results in the war (cf. also V.G. Truhanovski, *Vneșneaia politika Anglii v period vtoroi mirovoi voini, 1939-1945*, Moskva, Nauka, 1965, p. 64). It mentions the example of the famous British historian Arnold Toynbee according to whom, in the winter of 1939-1940, the Allies had the conviction that, through the blockade, Germany could be forced into moderation (*ibidem*, p. 65).

⁶Great Britain, PRO 766, War Cabinet 65/1, War Cabinet 13 (39), September 12, 1939.

⁷Great Britain, PRO, War Cabinet 15 (39), September 14, 1939.

⁸*Ibidem*.

committee presided by Lord M. Hankey,¹ Minister without portfolio.² Great Britain intervened through certain private companies – *Royal Dutch-Shell*, *Steaua-British*, and *Phoenix Oil Co.*³ On September 16, 1939, the members of the British War Cabinet re-examined the issue of buying Romania's available stocks, John Simon, the Minister of Finance, considered unnatural the position of the trust *Royal Dutch-Shell*, which, although of integrally Allied affiliation, was, by virtue of the contracts already signed before the outbreak of the hostilities, supplying... Germany with oil derivatives.⁴ At the meeting from October 18, 1939, the issue of Romanian petroleum was again called forth,⁵ at a moment when the British „economic offensive“ in Romania had registered successes against the Reich,⁶ the effects being considered „catastrophic“ for Berlin (the level of the prices and the decrease of the exports to Germany).⁷ The issue of the Romanian oil derivatives continued to come to the attention of the *War Cabinet* a few more times: on November 3, 1939⁸ or on November 16, 1939,⁹ when Lord Hankey informed his colleagues that, the *Committee* that he directed monitored all the oil supplies that went to Germany; it did not ignore the fact that, compared to the successes registered by the Allies, Germany was exerting serious pressures on Bucharest, threatening it even with invasion.¹⁰ Appealing to statistics, the speaker estimated that the Reich could buy from Romania, in the first year of war, approximately 2-4 million tons of oil products, in which situation he recommended that the *War Cabinet* approve that Sir Reginald Hoare, the Minister in Bucharest, intervene so that the Reich should not benefit from deliveries that exceeded 1 million tons.¹¹ Constantly preoccupied with the economic blockade of the Reich, the British cabinet examined, on November 24, 1939, the general situation of Germany's supplies with oil products. The discussions were based on a report of Lord

¹See Stephen Roskill, *Hankey. Man of Secrets*, I-III, London, Collins, 1970-1974. Sir Maurice Hankey's committee was officially entitled **Preventing Oil Reaching Germany (POG)**, which says everything about its purpose (*ibidem*, III, p. 431). In connection with **Hankey Committee** (1939-1940), in the year 1940 and afterwards there functioned, with identical purposes, the so-called [*Sir Geoffrey*] *Lloyd Committee* (cf. Sir Charles Webster, Noble Frankland, *The Strategic Offensive against Germany 1939-1945*, I, pp. 158-159).

²Great Britain, PRO, War Cabinet 15 (39), September 14, 1939; Philippe Marguerat, *Le III-e Reich et le pétrole roumain*, pp. 168-169.

³*Ibidem*, p. 169.

⁴Idem, War Cabinet 15 (39), September 14, 1939; Philippe Marguerat, *Le III-e Reich et le pétrole roumain*, pp. 168-169.

⁵Idem, War Cabinet 50 (39), October 18, 1939.

⁶Cf. Phillippe Marguerat, *Le III-e Reich et le pétrole roumain*, pp. 168-169.

⁷*Ibidem*, pp. 170-172.

⁸Great Britain, PRO 766, War Cabinet 65/2, War Cabinet 69 (39), November 3, 1939.

⁹Idem, War Cabinet 85 (39), November 16, 1939.

¹⁰*Ibidem*.

¹¹*Ibidem*.

Hankey, proposing new measures for the increasing of the effectiveness of the economic „barrage“ instituted around the Reich, more precisely: 1) the firm control of the contraband trade in the Dardanelles; 2) the supervision of the acquisitions through neutral India and 3) of the other neutral countries; 4) the supervision of the Romanian exports; 5) instructions for Hoare to support the London mission sent to Bucharest; 6) the control of the grain barges used by the Germans for the transport of oil derivatives on the Danube.¹ Thus, Lord Hankey's report clearly defined the **place** of Romanian petroleum in the Allied economic strategy in the winter of 1939-1940. Germany, of course, did not take long, as we shall further see, to react.²

Naturally, under these circumstances, it was not surprising that, soon after the outbreak of the Second World War, Bucharest was „assailed“ in the most various manners on the theme of petroleum. On September 11-12, 1939,³ Premier Armand Călinescu met with the official representatives of Great Britain and France, Sir Reginald Hoare and, respectively, A. Thierry.⁴ On September 18, 1939, Călinescu received W. Fabricius, the German Minister in Bucharest.⁵ After the death of the prime minister, the discussions with the representatives of the great powers continued, on November 3, 1939, for example, when Grigore Gafencu and the Allied ministers tackled the question of the destruction of the oil industry „if the circumstances will require it.“⁶ In September 1939, in Paris, R. Franasovici engaged in negotiations with an American group, being questioned with brutality „whether we could stop all the oil deliveries to certain countries [Germany and Italy?!].“⁷ On the other hand, Berlin often intervened in Bucharest, soliciting the assurance of the oil deliveries to the Reich according to the war necessities,⁸ which remained a topical issue in the winter 1939-1940, to which

¹ *Idem*, War Cabinet 93 (39), November 24, 1939.

² Gh. Buzatu, *Din istoria secretă a celui de-al doilea război mondial*, I, p. 211.

³ See Viorica Moisuc, *Diplomația României*, p. 269.

⁴ Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe al României, București/ Arh. M.A.E., fund 71 England, vol. 40, f. 369.

⁵ See Armand Călinescu, *Însemnări politice*, p. 432. Details in Victor Slăvescu, *Note și însemnări zilnice*, II, p. 427-429 (The Premier relates the contents of the discussions with Fabricius which laid the basis for a future agreement – from May 1940 – based on the petroleum/armament exchange, p. 428).

⁶ Arh. M.A.E., fund 71 England, vol. 40, ff. 369-374; Viorica Moisuc, *Diplomația României*, p. 270.

⁷ Arh. M.A.E., fund 71 France, vol. 69 bis, f. 66 (telegram no. 565/Paris, September 8, 1939).

⁸ See the meeting Fabricius-Călinescu from September 15, 1939, in *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik 1918-1945*, Series D: 1937-1945, Band VIII, *Die Kriegsjahre*, I, 4. September 1939 bis 18. März 1940, Baden/Baden – Frankfurt/Main, P. Keppler Verlag KG, 1961, pp. 57-58

others were constantly added, especially the prevention of the sabotage of the petroliferous region by the Anglo-French.¹ In London, in August-October 1939, the Romanian Minister V.V. Tilea had intense negotiations with the leader of the Foreign Office, Lord Halifax,² the Romanian diplomat being often warned about the possibility of the extension of the German aggression from Poland towards Romania, situation in which – on October 17, 1939 – the destruction of the oil derricks and the ceasing of the oil deliveries to Germany were solicited.³ In December 1939, Tilea and Lord Halifax discussed the issue of a conjugated Germany-U.S.S.R. aggression against Romania,⁴ Bucharest's delegate inquiring about the validity of the guarantees from August 1939, but receiving a totally disappointing answer.⁵ The end of the year 1939 marked important successes for Germany as far as ensuring, through agreements,⁶ important oil imports from Romania, concretized in the economic agreement from September 29⁷ or those from December 21, 1939,⁸ interpreted by Berlin as „a new development“ of the understanding from March 23, 1939.⁹ For several months there took place a

(telegram no. 549/Bucharest, September 15, 1939, Fabricius to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

¹Arh. M.A.E., fund 71 Germany, vol. 78, f. 202 (telegram no. 39 665/Berlin, December 6, 1939), Crutzescu to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bucharest); *Ibidem*, ff. 188-189 (verbal note no. 7 125/November 18, 1939, Germany's Legation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bucharest).

²Great Britain PRO, London-Kew, FO – 23 852, *passim*.

³*Ibidem*, ff. 279-285 (the minute of Lord Halifax on the meeting with Tilea). Tilea replied that, in only six weeks, Germany could repair the destructions, but that the invasion of Romania would be „disastrous“ for the Anglo-French allies (*Ibidem*, f. 280).

⁴*Ibidem*, f. 338 and the following (minute of the discussion from December 4, 1939).

⁵Cf. Paul D. Quinlan, *Clash over Romania. British and American Policies towards Romania: 1938-1947*, Los Angeles, 1977, p. 57; Gh. Buzatu, *Din istoria secretă a celui de-al doilea război mondial*, I, p. 216-217.

⁶On September 13, 1939, King Carol II wrote in his *Jurnal* that „Gafencu is worried because he is afraid of Clodius's coming one of these days and making exorbitant requests [for export]“ (Carol II, *Între datorie și pasiune. Însemnări zilnice*, I, p. 431).

⁷See ADAP, Series D, vol. VIII, pp. 134-135 (telegram no. 673/Bucharest, September 29, 1939, Fabricius and Clodius to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs); *Ibidem*, pp. 315-316 (report of Claudius, Berlin/November 1939, about the agreement from September, 1939 through which the Reich delivered war materials to Romania in value of 100 million marks in exchange for 600 000 tons of oil products); *Ibidem*, p. 342 (report from November 21, 1939 of Wiehl); Philippe Marguerat, *Le III-e Reich et le pétrole roumain*, pp. 160-163, 178-179; Viorica Moisuc, *Diplomația României*, pp. 246-248.

⁸*Ibidem*, p. 250; ADAP, Series D, vol. VIII, pp. 726-727 (von Ribbentrop to Göring, Berlin/March 16, 1940 – about the agreement from September 21, 1939, which ensured monthly 130 000 ton oil deliveries, with the prospect of their increase, starting with March 1, 1940, to 200 000 tons per month).

⁹Viorica Moisuc, *Diplomația României*, p. 250.

constant **British and French counteroffensive**,¹ with manifest tendencies to limit or even stop, be it even through massive acquisitions, the Romanian oil deliveries to the Nazi Reich, to determine the big trusts' branches in Romania to reorient their exports.² Carried on especially at a commercial level, the Allied offensive had positive results,³ confirmed by the statistics regarding the Romanian exports of oil products to Germany and the British and French Empires in the period September 1939-March 1940.⁴ The decrease of the oil exports to the Reich,⁵ in the first months of the war, „alarmed“ the at one point the Ministry of Economy in Berlin, which acted immediately regarding its delegates in Bucharest,⁶ who – it appears – made efficient representations to the Romanian officials. According to Andreas Hillgruber, in the winter of 1939-1940, the Romanian oil exports to the Reich „were much under the rising requests of Germany,⁷“ but the causes had to do mostly with transportation.

On the eve and in the first phase of the conflagration from 1939-1945, the European protagonists (the British, the French, and the Germans) had in view a few **radical solutions** regarding Romanian petroleum, namely – **the destruction of the Ploiești area**⁸ or **the occupation of Romania**.⁹ Under completely different

¹Philippe Marguerat, *Le III-e Reich et le pétrole roumain*, pp. 168-178. The fact results from the French documents captured in the summer of 1940 by the German troops and which, after the war, reached Moscow, being returned to Paris in 1993. In 1939-1940, the Ministry of War in Paris, benefiting from the famous **Bureau 2** of the General Staff of the French Army, drew up various syntheses examining the German penetration in the Romanian economy (including, if not especially, in the area of petroleum). In this sense, we refer to the synthesis *La pénétration allemande en Roumanie* (from April 21, 1940, *Țentralnii Gosudarstvennii Arhiv Sovetskii Armii, Moskva/ ȚGASA, fund 375, ff. 108-156*) or *Activité allemande en Roumanie* (May 2, 1940, *ibidem*, f. 157 and the following). The last synthesis showed that the German expansion was „systematic“ at an economic and political level, preparing in fact the military intervention (*ibidem*). Under those circumstances, the Allied response was expected (cf. **Note sur la politique alliée roumaine**, My 1, 1940, *ibidem*, ff. 159-162) (see also Gh. Buzatu, *România în arhivele Kremlinului*, quoted edition, pp. 200-201).

²Philippe Marguerat, *Le III-e Reich et le pétrole roumain*, p. 169, 173, 175.

³*Ibidem*, p. 174.

⁴*Ibidem*, p. 177.

⁵According to the German statistics: from 70 000 tons in October 1939 to 60 000 tons in November 1939.

⁶*ADAP*, vol. VIII, p. 367 (telegram no. 835/ Berlin, November 30, 1939, Wiehl to Clodius).

⁷Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, Regele Carol și Mareșalul Antonescu*, p. 119.

⁸ȚGASA, Moskva, fund 198, opis 2, files 395-396, *passim*.

⁹See Galeazzo Ciano, *The Ciano Diaries*, p. 233 (entry from April 8, 1940: the decision of the German General Staff to occupy the Ploiești petroliferous area in case the U.S.S.R. attacked Romania).

different circumstances, the same scenario was being repeated that had been applied in World War I,¹ the objective being the same: the decision of the Anglo-French in 1916 to deprive Germany, in the conditions of the „total blockade“ they imposed on it,² of the possibility to procure oil products from Romania. As it was learned later on, on November 19, 1916, the Romanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Em. Porumbaru, addressed Premier I. I. C. Brătianu, informing him that the British Minister in Romania, Sir Barclay, had solicited that measures be taken so that the oil companies „proceed to the destruction of the oil, derricks, and refineries that they own. The Allied countries [England and France] promise to compensate the Romanian government for the losses that will result from this measure.“³ The British diplomat specified that his government attributed to the petroleum destruction issue „**primary importance, because the duration of the war** [the 1914-1918 world war] **depends greatly on it** (author’s bold).“⁴ As we know, the sacrifice asked by the Allies was accepted by the Romanian government: teams of specialists proceeded without delay, in the counties of Prahova, Dâmbovița, and Buzău, to the destruction of the 1 677 oil derricks (of which 1 047 in production), 26 refineries, tanks on oilfields and in factories, and to the burning of 827 000 tons of oil derivatives.⁵ Appreciating the exceptional importance of the oil resources, after the occupation of most of Romania, the German General Headquarters took measures for the immediate repair of the damages, beginning with February 1917 the first oil derricks being put back into service, and the production continued – and estimated as considerable.⁶ Although later the Allied ministers in Romania, especially Sir Barclay, gave repeated assurances that the Romanian government and the oil companies would be compensated for the destructions,⁷ after the end of the world war in 1918, there began the great spectacle of establishing **committees**,⁸ of **evaluating the damages**,⁹ and establishing the **method of payment** (compensations for/against the Romanian debts).¹

¹See Gh. Buzatu, *România și trusturile petroliere internaționale până la 1939*, quoted edition, p. 31, 39.

²Cf. Marion C. Siney, *The Allied Blockade of Germany 1914-1916*, p. 192.

³Apud „Istoricul chestiunii distrugerilor din 1916 (Actele și documentele oficiale)“, in *M.P.R.*, no. 24/1925, p. 1983-1988.

⁴*Ibidem*, pp. 1983-1984.

⁵*Ibidem*, pp. 1984-1985.

⁶See *M.P.R.*, no. 1/1919, p. 3-6; *M.P.R.*, no. 2/1919, p. 41 and the following; *M.P.R.*, no. 2/1919, p. 50 and the following; *M.P.R.*, no. 6/1919, p. 182-184.

⁷*Ibidem*.

⁸The first committee met on February 9, 1922, including L. Mrazec, I. Tănăsescu, and L. Wenger.

⁹In October 1922 the losses of the private companies were estimated to 9 980 527 pounds (cf. *Istoricul chestiunii distrugerilor...*, p. 1986), while the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the years 1922-1926, I. G. Duca, estimated the total value of the losses to 15 million pounds (see Arh. M.A.E., fund 71 England, 1921-1929, vol. 15/Press, ff. 48-49). On March 6, 1922, L. Mrazec

The experience of the First World War determined the governments in Bucharest, in 1939-1940, to be extremely cautious regarding the Anglo-French propositions of destruction of the petroliferous area, because, on the other hand, Germany was interested to prevent such an upshot and, in order to avoid it, planned even the conquering of Romania. In the previous pages we presented the opinions of Grigore Gafencu, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, according to whom Romania had finalized **all the technical and military preparations** in order to take action.² Numerous and extremely well documented studies published in the last decades invalidate such a point of view, proving that the preparations were minute and important, that the decision factors in Bucharest (the King, the governments, the General Staff) picked up on the signals of the Anglo-French, that studies were performed and hypotheses were analyzed, but that **there was no question of taking action**, the variant of the oil destructions being considered a *ultima ratio* in the case of a direct military aggression by the Reich, supported by the revisionist neighbours (especially Hungary and the U.S.S.R.). As between 1939 and 1940 Romania, in conformity with the general development of the hostilities, was not confronted with such a situation, it clearly inclined towards Germany, the solution of the oil destructions was **gradually eliminated by Bucharest**, and the Romanian authorities, while negotiating with the Anglo-French,³ established with the Germans effective measures to prevent the possible sabotages.⁴ In Bucharest it was often considered in the period 1939-1940

wrote a **report** that established the value of the losses to 15 537 389 pounds, compared to the sum of **8 872 998** pounds admitted by the Anglo-French (the National Library of Romania, fund Al. Saint-Georges, stock XCII/6, ff. 114-115).

¹See Arh. M.A.E., fund 71/1914, E/2, Compensations vol. 5, *passim*; *idem*, E/2, Compensations 7, vol. 76, *passim*; *idem*, fund 71/1914, E/2 Petroleum, vol. 231 (1916-'927), *passim* (especially about the negotiations of N. Titulescu in London in 1925-1926); *idem*, fund 71/1914, E/2 Petroleum, vol. 232 (1928-1933), *passim* (the conventions signed by N. Titulescu with the British on November 1, 1926 and the French and Belgians on November 8, 1926, ff. 221-230); *idem*, fund 71/1914 – E/2 Petroleum, vol. 233 (1934-1940), *passim*; A.N.R., the Royal House fund, file 21/1925, *passim*; the National Library of Romania, fund Al. Saint-Georges, stock CCCLXVIII/15, *passim*; *M.P.R.*, no. 22/1926, pp. 21663-2165; „Rezolvarea problemei despăgubirilor pentru distrugerile din ordin“, in *M.P.R.*, no. 24/1926, pp. 2291-2295; *M.P.R.*, no. 1/1927, pp. 35-38; *M.P.R.*, no. 7/1929, pp. 621-623.

²Cf. Gregoire Gafenco, *Préliminaires de la Guerre à l'Est...*, p. 327 and the following (chapter XIII – *L'agonie de la neutralité roumaine*).

³They considered at the time that Romanian oil was „of supreme importance“ for the German war economy (cf. Hammerton and collaborators, *The Second Great War*, II, London, 1945, p. 557, 566).

⁴See, in this sense, Horia Brestoiu, *Acțiuni secrete în România. În preajma și la începutul celui de-al doilea război mondial*, quoted edition, *passim*; *idem*, *Impact la paralela 45. Incursiune în culisele bătăliei pentru petrolul românesc*, Iași, Editura Junimea, 1986, *passim*; Viorica Moisuc, *Diplomația României*, p. 267 and the following. An very important role in preventing the sabotages was played by the agents of the famous military espionage and counterespionage service

defending the neutrality of the country¹ implied measures for saving petroleum from destruction by the Anglo-French.² There is no need, of course, to discuss here the French-British preparations, examined and presented in detail in the mentioned works signed by Viorica Moisuc and Horia Brestoiu, as well as in the **memoirs** left by King Carol II, Armand Călinescu, Victor Slăvescu, Grigore Gafencu, or in various works published even in the first phase of the world war³ on the basis of the interesting revelations made by Berlin after the capture, during the military fall of France in May-June 1940, of the French documents, especially in La-Charité-sur-Loir. As we have already mentioned, the respective documents were capitalized towards a propagandistic purpose in Berlin and, at the end of the world war, they were captured from the territory of the Reich by the forces of the Red Army and were transported and deposited in Moscow, where we had the possibility to study them in 1992.⁴ Based on the existent documentation, we can establish that there were several plans regarding the destruction of the Romanian petroliferous area in a manner as systematic as possible, to avoid, as in 1916, an action that would allow the Germans to repair the damages without too much delay. Under those circumstances, the so-called **Léon Wenger plan** from October 1, 1939 prevailed, a plan that, on October 18, 1939⁵ was recommended to the

Abwehr, under the command of Admiral W. Canaris (*ibidem*, pp. 272-273), which enjoyed the cooperation of M. Moruzov, the head of the *Romanian Secret Service* (Horia Brestoiu, *Acțiuni secrete...*, pp. 247-252).

¹Soon after the audience that Carol II had granted him on August 28, 1939, Colonel Gerstenberg informed Berlin, while the war **had not started** yet, that the King of Romania „**rejected the Anglo-French sabotage offer against the oil fields in Romania, given the neutrality of the country**“ (apud Horia Brestoiu, *Impact la paralela 45*, p. 105). Carol II wrote in his *Jurnal* that Gerstenberg had come with a message – a „serious“ one, in fact „an attempt of intimidation“ – from Göring: the adoption of a neutral position in case of war (cf. Carol II, *Însemnări zilnice*, I, p. 415).

²See the opinion expressed in the daily paper *Timpul* from July 28, 1940 (apud *Acestea erau garanțiile anglo-franceze. Planurile de distrugeri ale Aliaților în regiunea petroliferă și pe Dunăre*, București, Institutul Grafic „Arta“ [1940], p. 13).

³*Acestea erau garanțiile anglo-franceze. Planurile de distrugeri ale Aliaților în regiunea petroliferă și pe Dunăre*, quoted edition, *passim*; Paul Allard, *Les plans secrets de G.Q.G. pendant la Guerre*, quoted edition, *passim*; Rudolf van Wehrt, *Astfel s-a făcut războiul*, București, Editura Cartea Românească, f.a., *passim*.

⁴See Gh. Buzatu, *Românii în arhivele Kremlinului*, cap. IX – „Arhive pierdute, arhive capturate, arhive regăsite“ (p. 167 and the following). We studied the respective files only a year before they were restituted, through an agreement, to the French government (December 1993): see ȚGASA, Moskva, fund 198, opus 2, file 295, 203 pages (entitled *Roumanie: Destruction des puits de pétrole*); idem, file 396, 229 pages (*Rumänien: Mission Wenger*).

⁵ȚGASA, Moskva, fund 198, opus 2, file 395, ff. 129-146 (*Rapport sur la destruction de l'industrie pétrolière*; two photocopies of the document, in Horia Brestoiu, *Acțiuni secrete...*, pp. 64-65). The plan of the former director of the French-Belgian consortium *Petrofina*, which controlled *Concordia* in Romania, stipulated **two variants** – the first one a **rapid destruction** (executed in 24 hours) and a **methodical destruction** (in 10-30 days), paralyzing the production in

government in Paris by General Maurice Gamelin, the French Chief of Staff.¹ **The Wenger plan** had in view the destruction of the oil derricks and the blocking of the Danube line in order to drastically reduce or interrupt the Romanian-German fluvial connections.² In order to attain their objectives, the French and British governments maintained close diplomatic contacts,³ and the secret services in London and Paris, as we have found, took action,³ as did, on the other hand, Admiral Canaris's *Abwehr*, to counteract the Western plans.⁴ Under this last aspect, the documents published under the care of Cristian Troncotă⁵ prove to be truly fundamental. They prove that Mihail Moruzov, the head of the *Romania Secret Service*, was the one that **initiated**, at the end of October 1939, an „informative collaboration“ with the counterpart service of the German army (the *Abwehr*), headed by Wilhelm Canaris. In general, the collaboration had in view the entire **Eastern Europe**,⁶ but mainly – with reference to the period of the Second World War – Moruzov had in view the economic area, being known the major interest of the Reich in the Romanian agricultural and subsoil products.⁷ In

a proportion of 90% and the means of transportation (cf. *Acestea erau garanțiile anglo-franceze...*, quoted edition, p. 7; Horia Brestoiu, *Impact la paralela 45*, pp. 111-112). A coordinating „general staff“ was constituted (Roger Sarret, Pierre Angot, Jacques Pierre Coulon, etc.), which established contacts, on the Romanian territory, with the group of officers of the *Intelligence Service* (Colonel Colin Gubbins, Major Garfit Watson, and Ted Masterson). The French-British plan was communicated to the General Staff of the Romanian army (*ibidem*, p. 113). In their preparations, the British gave attention to the „actions of sabotage“ in the petroliferous area (the adopted common plan had in view that „especially the oil derricks, the production, transportation, and refining equipment needed to be destroyed“, in *Acestea erau garanțiile anglo-francezilor...*, p. 6), without ignoring the paralyzing of the traffic on the Danube (see Horia Brestoiu, *Acțiuni secrete...*, p. 115 and the following). On the Romanian side, at the level of the General Staff, we know that intense preparations were made (cf. Viorica Moisuc, *Diplomația României*, p. 289), but, under the circumstances of the Reich's pressures and the orientation of Bucharest towards Berlin, of the Canaris-Moruzov **collaboration** in 1939-1940 precisely in the petroleum area, they were in no way materialized nor disclosed (see Horia Brestoiu, *Acțiuni secrete...*, p. 172 and the following).

¹Apud Paul Allard, *Les plans secrets...*, p. 39; Horia Brestoiu, *Acțiuni secrete...*, pp. 95-96 (photocopy).⁴

²Paul Allard, *Les plans secrets...*, p. 40. The strictly secret telegram no. 1 114 from September 28, 1939 sent by Adrien Thierry to his Center in Paris pointed out the following: „In my opinion, we have a decisive interest to realize, without delay, a blocking of the Danube, so that the fluvial traffic between Romania and Germany may be completely interrupted“, which „would mean for us an advantage at least equivalent to the destruction of the oil fields, because it would paralyze at the same time all the oil and cereal transports“ (apud *Acestea erau garanțiile anglo-franceze...*, p. 9).

³*Ibidem*, p. 41 and the following; Ian Colvin, *L'amiral Canaris*, Paris, 1952, pp. 204-205; Henri Michel, *La drôle de guerre*, p. 240 and the following.

⁴See Horia Brestoiu, *Acțiuni secrete...*, *passim*.

⁵See Cristian Troncotă, *Mikhail Moruzov și Serviciul de Informații al Armatei Române. Studii și documente*, București, Editura I.N.I., 1996, p. 177 and the following.

⁶*Ibidem*, p. 300 (doc. no. 47).

⁷*Ibidem*, pp. 302-303.

the discussions held in Berlin by the special delegate of the R.S.S., Major C. Gh. Ionescu-Micandru, the proposition of collaboration made by Bucharest was received with „great satisfaction“ by the Germans.¹ It was established that the connections, without having an official character,² should be maintained directly between the two intelligence services,³ and the *Abwehr* should delegate with this purpose Major Dr. Hans Wagner to Bucharest.⁴ On November 8, 1939, Wagner arrived in Bucharest for a short visit,⁵ and during the discussions he revealed Berlin's attention the observance by Romania of the principles of neutrality, as well as for the fulfilment with the utmost correctness of the obligations assumed towards Germany. The **Abwehr's** delegate did not conceal the fact that Germany would soon make new proposals for „an economic cooperation as close as possible with Romania.“⁶ Returning to Romania on November 22, 1939, Wagner – with special messages from the Reich's Marshal Göring and Admiral Canaris – expressed the “considerable importance” of the cooperation between the R.S.S. and the *Abwehr*,⁷ insisting directly on the concern for the common supervision of two objectives: **the port of Giurgiu** and the **Ploiești region**, for which special people were delegated.⁸ Both objectives were inspected and discussions were held at the *Second Section (Intelligence)* of the Romanian General Staff, the main preoccupation being to **avoid the sabotage acts** towards the oil industry and the Danubian oil transports.⁹ On December 8, 1939, Moruzov had the surprise of receiving in Bucharest Admiral Canaris himself, who communicated to him from the first moment, in very categorical terms, the purpose of his visit and the possible reaction of the Reich in case Romania did not carry out the oil deliveries.¹⁰ We extract from a **note** written by Moruzov soon after the departure of the eminent guest: „**First of all, the German High Command and government are in a state of extreme irritation due to the considerable importance that is given to the possible sabotage actions in Romania, having in view that this country – at this time – is the only source of supply for the Third Reich, especially with petroleum. Secondly, I considered it necessary to see personally whether the measures taken by the Romanian authorities for the prevention of the sabotage acts are sincere and sufficient, in order to offer**

¹*Ibidem*, p. 310 (Report of C. Gh. Ionescu-Micandru, doc. no. 48).

²*Ibidem*, pp. 313.

³*Ibidem*.

⁴*Ibidem*, p. 314.

⁵*Ibidem*, p. 320-324 (Report of Ionescu-Micandru on the visit, doc. no. 49).

⁶*Ibidem*, p. 323.

⁷*Ibidem*, p. 336 (Report from December 4, 1939, doc. no. 55).

⁸*Ibidem*.

⁹*Ibidem*, pp. 336-344.

¹⁰We extract from the **note** written by Moruzov himself (*ibidem*, p. 351, Note of Moruzov from December 11, 1939, doc. no. 58).

Germany the necessary security and reassurance in this matter (author's bold).¹ On May 28-30, 1940, Admiral Canaris returned to Bucharest,² after the collaboration of the Romanian-German secret services for the protection of the petroliferous area and of the fluvial and land transports towards Germany had proven effective, preventing the sabotage acts. Not without good reason, at the conference from May 29, 1940, the head of the *Abwehr* thanked King Carol II and M. Moruzov, expressing, for the „invaluable assistance“, the appreciation of Adolph Hitler and „the entire Germany.“³ Also, M. Moruzov travelled to Berlin,⁴ Berlin,⁴ as well as to Paris and London.⁵ In the meantime, Bucharest received numerous signals from Berlin, from Hitler and Göring personally, both of whom declared themselves more than once impressed with the „loyalty“ proven by the Romanian officials regarding the economic collaboration⁶ and who, precisely because of that, committed themselves to guarantee the „territorial integrity of Romania“⁷ in the face of all the dangers, including the Soviet one.⁸ Received at the beginning of March 1940 in Berlin by General Wilhelm Keitel, the head of the **O.K.W.**, M. Moruzov was shown the appreciation of the former **„for the spirit of complete loyalty in which the collaboration between the German and the Romanian intelligence services is taking place, regarding the issue of the security of the petroliferous regions and the transports from Romania to Germany** (author's bold).“⁹ The assistance of the **R.S.S.** proved substantial in discovering and preventing the sabotage acts on the Danube¹⁰ or ignored the German illegal weapon transports destined for the guarding of the refineries,¹¹ just as it cooperated in the application of a common Romanian-German plan for the protection of the petroliferous area in case of a possible Anglo-French attack.¹² Everything unfolded normally, and M. Moruzov's credit in Berlin was permanently consolidated, until the unforeseen occurred: in June 1940, during the decisive battle for France, the German troops captured important political-diplomatic and military archives of Paris. From the immediate examination of the funds discovered in La-Charité-sur-Loire, the Germans had irrefutable proof about

¹*Ibidem*, p. 352 (doc. no. 59).

²*Ibidem*, pp. 445-450 (Note of M. Moruzov, doc. no. 106).

³*Ibidem*, p. 447.

⁴*Ibidem*, pp. 419-421 (Report, doc. no. 92).

⁵*Ibidem*, pp. 389-397 (doc. no. 77), 407-415 (doc. no. 90), 416-419 (doc. no. 91), 421-425 (doc. no. 92).

⁶*Ibidem*, p. 368 (doc. no. 62).

⁷*Ibidem*, p. 369 (doc. no. 63).

⁸*Ibidem*.

⁹*Ibidem*, p. 391 (doc. no. 77).

¹⁰*Ibidem*, pp. 425-430 (doc. no. 93).

¹¹*Ibidem*, pp. 440-441 (doc. no. 103).

¹²*Ibidem*, pp. 437-438, 438-439 (doc. nos. 100-101, from May 16, 1940).

the **double game** of M. Moruzov, namely that, while in the winter of 1939-1940 he had assisted the *Abwehr* in the mentioned operations, he had not ceased the collaboration with *Deuxième Bureau* or with the *Intelligence Service*.¹ From **that moment**, we can consider that Moruzov's destiny was determined; as it is well known, he was arrested upon the installation of Ion Antonescu's regime and executed by the Legionaries at Jilava in November 1940. Previously, in the night of July 24-25, 1940, Major Hans Wagner solicited M. Moruzov, after the publication in the Romanian press of some of the secret documents discovered in La-Charité-sur-Loire regarding the French-British preparations for the destruction of the Ploiești petroliferous area and the blocking of the Danube traffic, to urgently proceed to the identification and expulsion from Romania of the people involved in the deal. This was immediately carried out,² but for the head of the *R.S.S.* it was, however, too late.³

Without suspecting such an unfolding of events, M. Moruzov continued in the meantime to show himself loyal to the „German card“. Thus, no later than May 20, 1940, in a meeting with Manfred von Killinger,⁴ the future Minister of the Reich in Bucharest, he presented himself unconditionally as a Germanophile and supporter of the immediate collaboration between Berlin and Bucharest. Moreover, Moruzov assured the special delegate of the Reich that, in case the U.S.S.R. came to close to the region of Ploiești, he would personally direct the

¹See M. Moruzov's report on the visit to France in which he inserted the confessions of Colonel Rivet, the head of the supreme French military espionage organism, in the sense that: „The informative material that the French Intelligence Service has – especially on Germany – **is in majority the material procured by our Service** (author's bold)“ (apud Cristian Troncoță, *Mihail Moruzov*, p. 407, doc. no. 90). In London, as well, the head of the *Intelligence Service* congratulated him „**for the informative activity of our Service**“ (author's bold) (*ibidem*, p. 416, doc. no. 91).

²*Ibidem*, pp. 481-482 (doc. no. 126).

³In July 1940, Fabricius met with General Ion Antonescu, who declared that he had asked King Carol II to dismiss M. Moruzov, a „traitor“. Fabricius stood up for the head of the **R.S.S.** (cf. ANIC, the Collection *Microfilme S.U.A.*, roll T 120-175, frames 137 086-137 088, telegram no. 1 142 from July 9, 1940, Fabricius to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin).

⁴In April 1940, he was received by King Carol II, to whom he presented data regarding the role of Romanian petroleum in the continuation of Germany's war. The sovereign did not reject the importance of the issue, but he insisted on the Soviet danger in Bessarabia, alluding to the possibility, in case of emergency, of the defending of the petroliferous region by the Reich (cf. *ADAP*, Series D, vol. IX, pp. 134-135, report from April 14, 1940, Bucharest, Manfred von Killinger to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Von Killinger recommended to his Center to pay serious attention to the collaboration of the *Abwehr* and the *S.D.* with the *Romanian Secret Service* and *General Security* for the protection of the Romanian petroliferous area from possible sabotage (*ibidem*, p. 135).

destruction of the area.¹ On May 17, 1940, while in Paris, Wenger officially presented to the Ministry of Public Works the purpose of his mission in Romania, asking the proper quarter to take action.² In the same sense, on May 15, 1940, A. Thierry, the French Ambassador to Bucharest, received the text relative to the destruction plan, at the same time with the assurance that he would return to Romania after 12 days, but that it was not necessary to wait for him in order to take action.³ The fall of France, the efficiency of the German countermeasures, and Romania's fears regarding the immediate prospects of the war determined the quashing of the Wenger file.⁴

In the meantime, in Bucharest and Paris, in Berlin, Moscow, and London, in Rome and Washington, sensation was created⁵ by the revelations made, first of all by the German and Romanian agencies, about the attempts of the British, at the beginning of April 1940, to block the Danube,⁶ primarily the area of the Iron Gates.⁷ The discovery made at Giurgiu did not allow for any doubts that the

¹See Larry L. Watts, *Romanian Cassandra. Ion Antonescu and the Struggle for Reform, 1916-1941*, New York/Boulder, Columbia University Press, 1993, p. 214; Gh. Buzatu, *Din istoria secretă a celui de-al doilea război mondial*, II, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 1985, p. 97.

²ȚGASA, Moskva, fund 198, opis 2, file 395, ff. 75-77.

³*Ibidem*, p. 78.

⁴Among the documents found in the original Wenger „file“, we mention: *Roumanie – Destruction des puits de pétrole. Pièces antérieures à la guerre* (ȚGASA, fund 198, opis 2, file 395, ff. 168-203); *Mission Wenger – Pièces de base* (*ibidem*, ff. 72-167; *idem*, file 396, ff. 4-191); *Pétroles – Lutte contre les achats roumains* (*ibidem*, ff. 192-229); *Note sur une politique du pétrole en Roumanie pendant sa neutralité*, study by L.W. dated November 6, 1939 (*ibidem*, ff. 59-75); the study *La politique pétrolière en Roumanie*, dated February 7, 1940 (*ibidem*, ff. 129-142); **bulletins** regarding the maritime traffic and the oil exports of Romania in 1939-1940 (*ibidem*, ff. 143-158); the synthesis *Sur une politique économique en Europe Orientale*, April 4, 1940 (*ibidem*, ff. 163-167); *Note au sujet de la Mission Wenger*, November 24, 1939 (*ibidem*, ff. 39-41); the official record of the „Wenger meeting“ from December 28, 1939 which resulted in the decision to initiate an action that would paralyze the oil production and transports in Romania (*ibidem*, ff. 13-24). It also results from these documents that, in the **month of May 1939**, the French official circles tackled the issue of the oil destructions in Romania (*idem*, fund 198, opis 2, file 395, ff. 170-172).

⁵See Horia Brestoiu, *Acțiuni secrete...*, p. 167 and the following.

⁶About the preparations for the operation, details in Horia Brestoiu, *Acțiuni secrete...*, pp. 143-167; Paul Allard, *Les plans secrets...*, pp. 42-44. On April 3, 1940, a convoy arrived at Giurgiu, formed of several tug boats and barges (**Britannia, Elisabeth, King George, Scotland, Lord Byron, Thermond**, etc.). On the ships, served by predominantly British crews, there were important quantities of armament, with regard to which the Romanian government decided initially to „seal them on board“. Informed, the German Minister in Bucharest, Fabricius, intervened immediately, soliciting firm measures for the blocking of the operation of dynamiting certain sections along the Danube and, especially, of the sluice gates (Horia Brestoiu, *Acțiuni secrete...*, pp. 163-164; Viorica Moisuc, *Diplomația României*, p. 289).

⁷On April 10, 1940, the U.S. Minister to Bucharest, F. M. Günter, transmitted to the Secretary of State Cordell Hull that the information about the intentions of the British had been intercepted by the Nazi spies, who had pervaded Romania (apud National Archives of the U.S.A., Washington,

purpose of the planned operation was „the blocking of the Romanian oil from being transported to Germany.“¹ Consequently, strict measures were imposed for the supervision of the Danube traffic, both by Romania as well as by Yugoslavia.² At one point, it was said that Germany asked Hungary for the right to patrol on the Danube,³ but later on the rumour was denied by Berlin,⁴ which declared itself satisfied with the prompt intervention of the Gh. Tătărescu government.⁵ In March-May 1940, the delegates of the Reich to Bucharest (Fabricius, von Killinger, Clodius, Neubacher), concomitantly with the efforts to reach a **Petroleum Pact** with Romania (**Ölpakt**),⁶ finally realized on May 27, 1940,⁷ discussed with King Carol II,⁸ with the Romanian Premier,⁹ and with the Minister of Foreign Affairs¹⁰ the issue of preventing the Anglo-French sabotaging of the oil industry and transportation. The strictly financial-economic issues were discussed by the German delegates with Victor Slăvescu and Mircea Cancicov, the Romanian Ministers of Endowment and of Economy, and the negotiations

D.C., Record Group 59, Department of State, Box No. 2 113, telegram no. 118). See the special reports written by Gunther to Hull). In this period, Gunther was closely following the statistics registering Romania's oil exports – the monthly quantities and the countries of destination (cf. *idem*, Box No. 2 115 A, telegram no. 221/Bucharest, May 21, 1940, Gunther to Hull).

¹*Idem*, Box No. 2 113 (telegram no. 95/Belgrade, April 9, 1940, Lane to Hull). At the end of March 1940, Clodius met with Premier Tătărescu, discussing among other things the issue of the oil exports to Germany. They agreed that the transportation was difficult, that measures were necessary from both sides for the prevention of sabotage (cf. *ADAP*, Series D, vol. IX, pp. 39-42, report from Bucharest/March 30, 1940, Clodius and Fabricius to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Killinger informed Berlin about the sabotage on the Danube planned by the British (*ibidem*, pp. 134-135, the mentioned report from April 1940).

²National Archives, Washington, Record Group 59, Box No. 2 113 (telegram no. 122/Bucharest, April 12, Gunther to Hull).

³*Idem*, Box No. 2 112 (telegram no. 76/Budapest, April 12, 1940, Montgomery to Hull).

⁴*Ibidem* (telegram no. 940/Berlin, April 12, 1940, Kirk to Hull).

⁵*Ibidem* (telegram no. 31/Sofia, April 13, 1940, Earle to Hull; telegram no. 127/Bucharest, April 14, 1940, Gunther to Hull); *idem*, Box No. 2 114 (telegram no. 1 027/Berlin, Kirk to Hull). The U.S. Department of State drew up a synthesis about the British attempts of sabotage on the Danube for the period April 4-11, 1940 (*ibidem*, 7400011/2384).

⁶See *ADAP*, Series D, vol. IX, p. 35 (telegram no. 400/Bucharest, March 29, 1940, Fabricius and Neubacher to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

⁷*Ibidem*, pp. 375-377 (secret report from Bucharest/May 28, 1940, Neubacher to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs); Viorica Moisuc, *Diplomația României*, pp. 293-294. See the complete text of the *Petroleum Pact* in Mircea Mușat, Ion Ardeleanu, *România după Marea Unire*, II/2, București, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1988, pp. 1082-1084. Cf. also Margot Hegemann, *Die Grenze...*, p. 75 and the following.

⁸*ADAP*, vol. IX, p. 285 (telegram no. 712/Bucharest, May 16, 1940, Fabricius to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

⁹*Ibidem*, pp. 39-42 (the mentioned report of Clodius and Fabricius from March 30, 1940).

¹⁰*Ibidem*, pp. 354-356 (telegram no. 790/Bucharest, May 25, 1940, Fabricius to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

took place in the period February-March 1940, with certain periods of crisis.¹

Some of the agreements signed in the meantime were temporary (March 1939).² At one point, Berlin's delegates left Bucharest, and on May 27, 1940 the famous **Petroleum Pact**, also known as the **Armament-Petroleum Pact**,³ was signed by Cancicov and Neubacher, establishing that Romania would deliver to the Reich the quantities of oil the latter was entitled to as state dues, and the Reich would send weapons, including those captured in Poland. For the exchange, the parties did not make payments in cash,⁴ although prices were established on the basis of which the transactions were made. On May 22, 1940, Victor Slăvescu and H. Neubacher signed a convention, according to which the prices of the oil products were established at the level reached in March 1940 (the average price of 3 826 lei/ton), which during the war registered several adjustments.⁵ Mention should be made that, in May and June 1940, in direct relation with the favourable evolution of the *Wehrmacht's* operations on the Western Front, King Carol II and his ministers proved more and more conciliatory towards Berlin's solicitations, including or rather especially regarding petroleum,⁶ officially admitting the cooperation of M. Moruzov with the German secret services for the safety of petroliferous area against the sabotages planned by the Allied agents.⁷ Under these circumstances, on June 21, 1940, therefore on the even of the official capitulation of France, Minister Fabricius received from the Tătărescu government the text of a declaration that reconfirmed the assurances from May 1940, namely that Bucharest was decided to „strengthen and extend the collaboration“ with Berlin, collaboration imposed by „the geopolitical circumstances of Romania“ and by the „new European order“. ⁸ A „rapid organization“ of this collaboration was intended, both at a political as well as an economic level.⁹ As we have shown at the beginning of this chapter, **Romania began its orientation towards the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis**, the neutrality proclaimed in September 1939 being **abandoned** unilaterally by Bucharest.¹⁰ This

¹Cf. Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, Regele Carol și Mareșalul Antonescu*, pp. 119-120.

²Viorica Moisuc, *Diplomația României*, p. 278; Philippe Marguerat, *Le III-e Reich et le pétrole roumain*, pp. 189-191.

³Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, Regele Carol și Mareșalul Antonescu*, p. 120.

⁴*Ibidem*.

⁵See ANIC, the Ministry of Industry and Petroleum fund, file 41/1943, f. 2.

⁶See *ADAP*, Series D, vol. IX, pp. 382-383 (telegram no. 808/Bucharest, May 29, 1940, Fabricius to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs); *ibidem*, pp. 383-385 (report of Manfred von Killinger, Berlin, May 29, 1940).

⁷*Ibidem*, pp. 383-384.

⁸See *ADAP*, Series D, vol. IX, pp. 543-544 (text transmitted through telegram no. 957/Bucharest, June 21, 1940, Fabricius to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

⁹*Ibidem*.

¹⁰Gregoire Gafenco, *Préliminaires de la Guerre à 'Est...*, pp. 343-344.

did not save Greater Romania from the border disaster, just as it did not save King Carol II's regime.

Romania's renouncing of its neutrality¹ was only apparently a voluntary act, act, initiated by the rulers in Bucharest. The decision to orient towards Germany, maintaining *de jure* and *de facto* a **statute of non-belligerence** for longer than one year (May 1940-1941), took place in a certain context of the evolution of the hostilities on the European continent and with immediate repercussions on all the states, belligerent or not.² King Carol II, who had a decisive role in establishing the new orientation, confessed in his *Diary*: „...**The danger to reattach [Romania] to Germany is great, but, if fatality is pushing us in this direction, it is better we do it at the eleventh hour.**“³ With regard to the context, King Carol II did not hide the consequences of the fall of the Allies on the Western Front, Great Britain remaining alone in the decisive confrontation with the Nazi Reich, benefiting, for a short time, of Italy's support: „The policy that I have wanted to carry on for the last ten years [since he had come to the throne of Romania] – wrote Carol – is collapsing, a policy of becoming friends with England, in which the latter gave me, however, no help [?!], but this collapse also comes with the first serious blow given to the British prestige [by Hitler].“⁴ In the immediately following period, Romania found itself in the position of a patient; it was amputated, without any hesitation, losing, through the will of the winners of the moment (Germany, first of all) and due to the foolish desires of the small or big neighbouring imperialisms, in less than three months, a third of its territory and as much of its population, Romanian in its majority, respectively 100 000 square kilometres and 7 million inhabitants.⁵ In the summer of 1940, the territorial

¹As it was pointed out in the period by N. Daşcovici, eminent specialist in international law, for Romania, neutrality had established the situation in which it had „nothing against any of the present belligerents“ (cf. *Neutralitatea României*, quoted edition, p. 14). A complete analysis of the internal and external situation of Romania on the eve and at the beginning of World War II, in Mircea Muşat, Ion Ardeleanu, *România după Marea Unire*, II/2, *passim*. With reference to the abandoning of neutrality, *ibidem*, pp. 1085-1086.

²Cf. Gh. Buzatu, *România şi războiul mondial din 1939-1945*, pp. 10-11.

³Cf. Carol II, *Între datorie şi pasiune. Însemnări zilnice*, II, 1939-1940, edition of Marcel-Dumitru Ciucă and Narcis Dorin Ion, Bucureşti, Editura Şansa, 1996, p. 177.

⁴*Ibidem*; *idem*, *În zodia satanei. Reflexiuni asupra politicii internaţionale*, first edition, Bucureşti, Editura Universitaria, 1994, pp. 134-135. About Carol II's attempt of „adaptation to reality“, see Constantin I. Kirişescu, *România în al doilea război mondial*, I, ed. by Gh. Buzatu, Bucureşti, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 1995, pp. 110-111.

⁵Gh. Buzatu, *România şi războiul mondial din 1939-1945*, p.11; Constantin I. Kirişescu, *România în al doilea război mondial*, I, p. 116 and the following.

territorial seizures done to Romania's disadvantage depended to a great extent on the **petroleum factor**, intending to obtain either **closeness** to the Ploiești area (by the U.S.S.R.), either the ensuring of the security of the region (by Germany) against Moscow's expansionistic plans or the possible sabotages planned by the British.

For Hitler – as he declared to Ciano on October 1, 1939¹ – the agreement of the „spheres of influence“ in Romania, concluded after August 23, 1939 between Germany and the U.S.S.R., functioned fully and, if Bucharest dared to make the wrong move, then the Führer would use „every means“ to try to mobilize Moscow, Budapest, and Sofia in order to „liquidate the Romanian issue.“ As it is known and has been established, Romania did not confront the Reich in any way, which, in the summer of 1940, did not stop the latter from supporting one after the other the pretensions of the U.S.S.R., Hungary, and Bulgaria with regard to Romania. Kremlin acted with priority, on June 26-27, 1940, after having obtained Berlin's approval, which had imposed on it a moderation of its pretensions.² By occupying Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina or the Herța Region, the forces of the Red Army got unacceptably close, from Adolph Hitler's point of view, to the region of Ploiești.³ The fact was all the stranger as it had been done **with the approval** of the Führer! Italy, and even Germany, felt threatened by the risk of losing the Romanian oil.⁴ Robert Goralski and Russel W. Freeburg, frequently quoted in the previous pages, observed with good reason that **there was no coincidence between** the Soviet aggression against Romania in June 1940 and the moment when Hitler decided irrevocably to **attack the U.S.S.R.** in the shortest time possible.⁵ As we know, in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler had insisted on German necessity for **vital space (Lebensraum)**, to the detriment of the East-European countries, including the U.S.S.R.: „...**We begin where it** [Germany's traditional foreign policy] **was ended six hundred years ago. We are ending the eternal march of the Germans towards the south and the west of Europe and are**

¹See *The Ciano Diaries*, p. 154; G. Cioranescu and collaborators, *Aspects des relations russo-roumaines. Rétrospective et orientations*, I, Paris, Minard, 1967, pp. 153-154; Andreas Hillgruber, ed., *Les entretiens secrets de Hitler. Septembre 1939-Décembre 1941*, Paris Fayard, 1969, p. 47.

²Initially, the U.S.S.R. had intended to impose on Romania through a note of the nature of an ultimatum, to immediately „transmit“ not only Bessarabia, but also the **entire Bukovina**, but after Hitler's intervention it reduced it's pretensions only to the **north of the province** (cf. G. Cioranescu and collaborators, *Aspects des relations russo-roumaines*, I, p. 158-159; Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu, *Bătălia diplomatică pentru Basarabia. 1918-1940*, Iași, Editura Junimea, 1991, pp. 149-150; Ion Constantin, *România, Marile Puteri și problema Basarabiei*, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 1995, pp. 64-65).

³Cf. Henri Michel, *La Seconde Guerre mondiale*, I, 1939-1943, Paris, PUF, 1968, p. 288; Robert Goralski, Russel W. Freeburg, *Oil and War*, pp. 59-60.

⁴*Ibidem*, p. 61.

⁵*Ibidem*.

looking towards the East. We are putting an end to the pre-war colonial and commercial policy and inaugurating the territorial policy of the future [...] First we can only think of Russia and the limitrophe countries that depend on it (author's bold) ..."¹ The intention „to liquidate“ the U.S.S.R. was not abandoned by Hitler even at the moment when he decided to sign with Stalin the pact from August 23, 1939.² During the secret meeting from November 23, 1939 with the main commanders of the *Wehrmach*, the Führer confessed: „I asked myself for a long time whether I should **begin with an attack in the East, and then in the West** (author's bold).“³ But since he was liquidating the free Polish state, consequently being involved in a conflict with the Western powers, Hitler promised firmly: „**We will be able to start against Russia when we are free in the West** (author's bold).“⁴ In May-June 1940, at the height of the victorious campaign in the west of the continent, Hitler made known his intentions – as General Alfred Jodl, the head of the operation section of the *O.K.W.* – to attack the U.S.S.R. in the near future.⁵ Immediately after the capitulation of France, on June 25, 1940, General Franz Halder, the Chief of Staff of the German terrestrial forces, recorded in his journal the Führer's declaration from that day, namely that he oscillated between a landing on the British Isles and „an attack in the East (the attack of the U.S.S.R. – Gh. B.).“⁶ According to Andreas Hillgruber, Hitler decided as early as June 21, 1940 to prepare the invasion of Russia.⁷ In the following weeks, the military intentions of the Reich were specified in Berlin, so that, on July 22, 1940, the commander of the terrestrial troops, von Brauchitsch, expressed Hitler's decision in the same firm terms: „The Russian issue will be solved **offensively. We must draw up the plan of the operation** (author's bold).“⁸ Nine days later, in Berghof, at a meeting with his generals, Hitler stated: „...**Russia must be liquidated. Deadline – the spring of 1941. The sooner we crush Russia, the better** (author's bold).“⁹ Consequently, extensive preparations were made at the level of *O.K.W.*, so that, on December 18, Hitler signed **war**

¹Apud Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, translated by Maria Florea, București, Editura Pacifica, 1993, p. 465; see also Gh. Buzatu, *Din istoria secretă a celui de-al doilea război mondial*, I, p. 69.

²*Ibidem*, I, pp. 69-70.

³Apud *Istoriia Velikoi Otecestvennoi voini Sovetskogo Soiuza 1941-1945*, vol. I, Moskva, 1960, p. 351.

⁴*Ibidem*.

⁵D. M. Proektor, *Agressia i katastrofa*, second edition, Moskva, 1972, p. 189; Gh. Buzatu, *Din istoria secretă a celui de-al doilea război mondial*, I, p. 70.

⁶Cf. F. Halder, *Voennii dnevnik, 1939-1942 gg*, II, Moskva, 1969, *passim*, (the entries from July 3, 4, 5, and 18, 1940, p. 29, 31, 37, 52). References to Romania (the entries from July 9, 11, and 14, 1940, p. 41, 45, and 47).

⁷Cf. *Hitlers Strategie. Politik und Kriegführung 1940-1941*, Frankfurt am Main, Bernard und Graefe Verlag für Wehrwesen, 1965, p. 449.

⁸F. Halder, *op. cit.*, II, p. 60.

⁹*Ibidem*, pp. 80-81 (note on the military meeting from July 31, 1940).

directive no. 21 for the attack of the U.S.S.R. no later than May 15, 1941 (**Operation „Barbarossa“**).¹ Resuming the issue of the occupation of the Romanian historical territories by the forces of the Red Army, we shall find that the Soviet aggression led to a „cold war“ between Bucharest and Moscow, which lasted until June 22, 1941.² The Kremlin's move displeased Hitler profoundly, the more so as, after June 28, 1940, the Ploiești petroliferous area entered in the radius of action of the Soviet aviation or, in case of a Romanian-Hungarian conflict, caused by Budapest, the Führer was afraid that Soviet Russia could intervene and simply occupy the eastern part of Romania. It is true that, through the secret protocol of the non-aggression pact of August 23, 1939, Bessarabia was recognized as being under the U.S.S.R.'s „sphere of influence.“ Then, on June 28, 1940, Moscow also occupied Northern Bukovina, the Herța Region, and a few eyots on the Danube, which for Hitler was equal with a „betrayal“ by Stalin,³ but, on November 10-13, 1940, while visiting Berlin, V.M. Molotov, the head of the Soviet government and diplomacy, explained categorically to the Nazi leaders the plans of Kremlin to not renounce the **expansion in the south-east of Europe**,⁴ although it was also interested in the „vast East-Asian space.“ Hitler found yet another argument to justify his preparations for the „liquidation of the Russian danger,“⁵ and the **petroleum factor** returned obsessively in his calculations.⁶ In Berlin, the Führer did not conceal from Molotov – on November 13, 1940 – his

¹Cf. Gh. Buzatu, *Din istoria secretă a celui de-al doilea război mondial*, I, pp. 71-72; William L. Shirer, *Le Troisième Reich des origines à la chute*, Paris, Stock, 1967, pp. 848-849; Henri Michel, *La Seconde Guerre mondiale*, I, p. 228; Lieutenant-Colonel Eddy Bauer, *The History of World War II*, Leicester, Galley Press, pp. 157-164.

²Constantin I. Kirițescu, *România în al doilea război mondial*, Chișinău, Lyceum, 1997, pp. 59-60.

³Cf. Ion Constantin, *România, Marile Puteri și problema Basarabiei*, pp. 64-66; Hermann Weber, *Die Bukowina im zweiten Weltkrieg*, Hamburg, 1972, p. 11 and the following; Anatol Petrencu, *Basarabia în al doilea război mondial*, Chișinău, Lyceum, 1997, pp. 59-60.

⁴About the visit of V. M. Molotov to Berlin, see *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik 1918-1945*, Series D, 1937-1945, Band XI/1, *Die Kriegsjahre*, IV/1, 1. September bis 13. November 1940, Bonn, Gebr. Hermes KG, 1964, p. 448 and the following (the minutes of the meetings V. M. Molotov – Adolph Hitler from November 12, 1940, doc. no. 326, pp. 455-461 and from November 13, 1940, doc. no. 328, pp. 462-472; the minutes of the meetings Molotov – Hitler were published in a critical edition by the historian Andreas Hillgruber (see *Staatsmänner und Diplomaten bei Hitler*, I, 1939-1941, Frankfurt am Main, Bernard und Graefe Verlag für Wehrwesen, 1966 and the French edition – *Les entretiens secrets de Hitler*, quoted edition, pp. 399-307 (the meeting from November 12, 1940) and pp. 308-321 (the meeting from November 13, 1940). About the interest of the U.S.S.R. for the south-east of Europe, *ibidem*, p. 306, 321. In order to attract the U.S.S.R. towards the plans of the **Axis**, Hitler did not exclude its adhering to the **Tripartite Pact** (*ibidem*, pp. 306-307).

⁵Cf. G. Cioranescu, *Aspects des relations russo-roumaines*, I, p. 162.

⁶*Ibidem*; Gh. Buzatu, *Din istoria secretă a celui de-al doilea război mondial*, II, pp. 253-254, Robert Golanski, Russel W. Freeburg, *Oil and War*, p. 61.

satisfaction for the way in which he had distributed the U.S.S.R.'s „spheres of influence“ and mentioned especially Northern Bukovina ceded to Moscow beyond the limits of the „understanding“ from 1939.¹ The Soviet diplomat, on the contrary, replied that the U.S.S.R. was unhappy, because Germany **had guaranteed** the territorial integrity of Romania, which meant that Berlin had ignored Kremlin's interests in... the south of Bukovina.² Hitler replied to his guest that Bukovina had been a province of the Hapsburg Empire and, by accepting the seizing of its northern part, he had shown understanding towards the „Russian exigencies“, especially since, in cooperation with Italy, he had insisted in Bucharest, in June 1940, that Romania should cede Bessarabia. At that moment, the Führer motivated this way the presence of the **Axis** in the Romanian affairs: „...**Romania represents a real German-Italian interest by virtue of its oil resources** (author's bold) and its government asked Germany to protect it by air and by land from the terror of the British attacks. AS for the threat of a British landing in Salonika, Germany will not allow it, but it promises to withdraw its troops from Romania as soon as the war is over.”³ Regarding the new situation that the U.S.S.R. was facing, Molotov concluded that, precisely for that reason, Moscow did not wish “to stay away from the big issues of Europe and Asia.”⁴ As Joachim von Ribbentrop noted, Molotov's visit to Berlin and the exchange of opinions did not meliorate the Soviet-German relations.

On the contrary,⁵ in December 1940, he met with Hitler, who declared that, if in the Finland issue he was willing to give in to Moscow's pressures, he did not accept to discuss the statute of the Dardanelles and the situation of Bulgaria. His reason was as clear as possible: „**If Bulgaria was subjected to the Soviet military influence, then the Balkans and especially Romania and its oil resources would necessarily fall under Soviet tutelage** (author's bold).“⁶ This strengthened Berlin's conclusion that the decision the Führer⁷ had made in the

¹ Andreas Hillgruber, ed., *Les entretiens secrets de Hitler*, pp. 312-313.

² *Ibidem*, pp. 311-312.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 319.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 321.

⁵ Joachim von Ribbentrop, *Des Londres à Moscou*, p. 183.

⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 183-184.

⁷ In the letter from December 15, 1943 sent to Marshal Antonescu, Hitler wrote: „...Because, in November 1940, when Molotov arrived to Berlin, the discussions were not mostly about Germany's situation, but that of Finland, Romania, Bulgaria, and the issue of the Dardanelles. Very aware of its European responsibility to oppose the Soviet wish, Germany entered then in the bloodiest war of all times“ (Vasile Arimia, Ion Ardeleanu, Ștefan Lache, eds. *Antonescu-Hitler. Corespondență și întâlniri inedite (1940-1944)*, II, București, Editura Cozia, 1991, p. 130) (Further quoted as *Antonescu-Hitler*).

previous months to **liquidate the Russian issue** was the most convenient one.¹ Goralski and Freeburg concluded: „**It was not a coincidence that, a few weeks after refusing with repulsion Russia’s pretension in Romania, Hitler oriented irrevocably towards his invasion in the Soviet Union** (author’s bold).“² **THE ARITHMETIC OF PETROLEUM**, as the two authors suggestively point out,³ had a **predominant role** in defining the strategy of the Third Reich in 1940-1941, especially since Berlin was **interested not only in the oil resources of Romania, but, through the very objectives of „Operation Barbarossa“, aimed at drawing near the resources of „black gold“ in the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus.**⁴ As far as the **moment** at the end of 1940, more exactly Molotov’s visit and the sanctioning of **war directive no. 21**, we must mention the fact that the Reich had already managed to secure itself with regard to Romania: the action of Kremlin against Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina encouraged Sofia and Budapest, which immediately made territorial claims, equally supported by Germany, Italy, and the U.S.S.R. and, partially, by Great Britain; I. Gigurtu’s government, emanation of Carol II’s regime, engaged in continuation in the direction of the integration in the „new European order“ patronized by Adolph Hitler, yielded and, through the „agreements“ signed in Craiova (September 7, 1940) and Vienna (August 30, 1940), Southern Dobrodja (Cadrilater) and the north-west of Transylvania were „ceded“ to Bulgaria and, respectively, to Hungary.⁵ Beforehand, Romania renounced the French-British guarantees (July 1, 1940),⁶ it withdrew from the Society of Nations (July 11, 1940),⁷ and King Carol II addressed Hitler – on July 1, 1940 – asking him to send a military mission to „protect us in these times from this hardship.“⁸ Also, on July 6, 1940, Carol II informed, through the Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Manoilescu, that

¹Cf. William L. Shirer, *Le Troisième Reich...*, pp. 846-848; David Irving, *Churchill’s War*, New York, Avon Books, 1991, p. 378 and the following (Hitler’s war preparations against the U.S.S.R. intercepted by the British due to the deciphering machine *Enigma*).

²Robert Goralski, Russel W. Freeburg, *Oil and War*, p. 61.

³*Ibidem*, p. 63.

⁴*Ibidem*, pp. 53-67 (chapter 4 entitled „Russian Oil: The German Key“). Chapter 5 of the mentioned work („The Russian Campaign“, pp. 68-86) has I. V. Stalin’s words as a **motto**: „**The war was caused by engines and octane**“ (p. 68); William L. Shirer, *Le Troisième Reich...*, pp. 940-941.

⁵Cf. Gh. Buzatu, *România și războiul mondial din 1939-1945*, pp. 12-13; Constantin I. Kirițescu, *România în al doilea război mondial*, I, pp. 140-152. The cabinet that accepted and signed the documents of the territorial ceding is called „the government of the country’s grave diggers“ (*ibidem*, p. 134). See also Mircea Mușat, *Drama României Mari*, București, Editura Fundației România Mare, 1992, *passim*.

⁶Mircea Mușat, Ion Ardeleanu, *România după Marea Unire*, II/2, p. 1137.

⁷*Ibidem*, pp. 1159-1160.

⁸*Ibidem*, p. 1137. Hitler answered on July 15, 1940 (*ibidem*, pp. 1162-1164), and Carol II on July 26, 1940 (*ibidem*, pp. 1167-1171).

Romania was willing to initiate negotiations with Hungary and Bulgaria, in order to examine their territorial claims.¹ Further, Premier I. Gigurtu and M. Manoilescu visited Berlin (July 26-27, 1940)² and Rome.³ I. Gigurtu renewed Carol II's request for the sending of a military mission to Romania.⁴ Thus, Hitler did not miss the opportunity to reconfirm the Pharisaic character of his external orientation: he affirmed the political and territorial „disinterest“ of the Reich towards the Balkans,⁵ which was not true from an economic point of view. The countries in this area, specified the Führer, were for Germany the „ideal commercial partners“, for the exchange of agricultural and industrial products, and **„in Romania's case for petroleum“** (author's bold).⁶ Hitler himself revealed that the secret documents captured from the French – he referred to the archives from La Charité-sur-Loire – attested that London and Paris intended „to burn the Balkans“, which he could not accept, acting for the peaceful solving of the problems of South-Eastern Europe.⁷ Hitler urged to the solving of the „differences“ between Romania and Hungary and Bulgaria, and, as far as the Reich, he stated that he „would closely examine its interests“, acting to „defend them“ with weapons.⁸ Mention should be made that, in the draft of the note on the the meeting in Berghof, those interests were specified: **„the supply with petroleum and cereals“** (author's bold).⁹

In the following weeks, around the Vienna dictate, Franz Halder wrote in his **Journal** on August 27 and 28, 1940 that the Reich was determined to intervene at a military level to „defend its interests in the petroliferous area [Ploiești].“¹⁰ In August 1940, Italy and especially Germany were deeply involved in imposing the „solution“ of the **Vienna dictate**, and so the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the two powers of the **Axis**, Galeazzo Ciano and Joachim Ribbentrop, asserted themselves as **authors of the odious document**.¹¹ Also theirs was the formula

¹*Ibidem*, pp. 1147-1148.

²*Ibidem*, pp. 1175-1187.

³*Ibidem*, p. 1187; *The Ciano Diaries*, p. 279.

⁴Andreas Hillgruber, ed., *Les entretiens secrets de Hitler*, p. 174 (the minute of A. Hitler's meeting with I. Gigurtu and M. Manoilescu, Berghof, July 26, 1940).

⁵*Ibidem*, p. 177.

⁶*Ibidem*, p. 178.

⁷*Ibidem*, p. 179.

⁸*Ibidem*, p. 181.

⁹*Ibidem*, p. 181, note e.

¹⁰Franz Halder, *Voennii dnevnik*, t. 2, pp. 116-118.

¹¹See details in: Aurică Simion, *Dictatul de la Viena*, second edition, revised and completed, București, Editura Albatros, 1996, *passim*; Mihail Manoilescu, *Dictatul de la Viena. Memorii. Iulie-august 1940*, edition of Valeriu Dinu, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 1991, *passim*; Valeriu Pop, *Bătălia pentru Ardeal*, edition of Sanda Pop, Nicolae C. Nicolescu, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 1992, *passim*.

„Szeckler inlet“ that extended the area ceded to Hungary all the way to the surroundings of the city of Braşov,¹ where the Reich could be only 1-2 hours away to keep the Ploieşti area under the control of its motorized forces, in the case of a Soviet aggression against Romania² or an air attack initiated from Great Britain's bases in the Mediterranean Sea.³ Ribbentrop and Ciano offered to the betrayed and subjugated Romania, the second day after the dictate, **the territorial guarantee** of Berlin and Rome for the integrity of the state that was practically brought back to the form of Smaller Romania **prior** to 1916, a fact that deeply upset Moscow, which, seeing its imperialist pretensions severed in the South-East, did not cease to protest, accusing Berlin also of... violating the pact from August 23, 1939.⁴ The fall of Greater Romania marked the end of the regime of Carol II,⁵ II,⁵ not before entrusting the formation of a new government unto General Ion Antonescu, who officially became **the leader of the Romanian state** (1940-1944) and ensured the maintaining of the monarchic system by bringing back to the throne King Michael I (1927-1930, 1940-1947), the son of the sovereign who had just abdicated and left in exile.⁶

Under General Ion Antonescu's regime, Marshal beginning with August 1941,⁷ the government formed first in collaboration with the Iron Guard (September 1940 – January 1941), and then the preponderantly military one ensured the *sui generis* integration of Romania in the system of the states of the **Axis** Berlin-Rome-Tokyo.⁸ For almost four years, until August 23, 1944, Romania

¹In the memorandum sent to Hitler in September 1943, Marshal Antonescu examined the circumstances in which the dictate from August 30, 1940 „came into being“: the ensuring of Germany's military objectives, first by creating the **Szeckler corridor**, which „descended towards the Romanian oil“ (apud Vasile Arimia, Ion Ardeleanu, Ştefan Lache, eds., *Antonescu-Hitler. Corespondenţă şi întâlniri inedite (1940-1944)*, II, p. 108.

²Cf. Aurică Simion, *Dictatul de la Viena*, pp. 317-318; Mircea Muşat, *Drama României Mari*, p. 149.

³Cf. Andreas Hillgruber, ed., *Les entretiens secrets de Hitler*, p. 319.

⁴Prince Michael Sturdza, *The Suicide of Europe. Memoirs of...*, Boston-Los Angeles, Western Islands Publishers, 1968, pp. 171-174.

⁵Constantin I. Kirişescu, *România în al doilea război mondial*, I, p. 157 and the following; Paul D. Quinlan, *The Playboy King. Carol II of Romania*, Westport-London, Greenwood Press, 1995, pp. 208-218; Mircea Muşat, *Drama României Mari*, pp. 234-236.

⁶See Gh. Buzatu, *România şi războiul mondial din 1939-1945*, pp. 16-17.

⁷A. Hitler was reassured by the fact that I. Antonescu had accepted to receive a German military mission, whose main purpose was **to defend the Ploieşti petroliferous area**.

⁸*Ibidem*, p. 19.

Romania maintained its **statute of satellite, not occupied country**¹ of the Powers of the Fascist **Axis**, next to which it participated to the hostilities in 1914-1944, for the liberation of Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina, the Herța Region, and the eyots in the area of the Danube Mouths and, equally, for the destruction of the Communist danger.² On the Eastern Front, Romania's war, which broke out simultaneously with that of Germany and its allies on June 22, 1941, was fought in parallel,³ the hostilities being initially engaged against the U.S.S.R., and then the state of belligerence extended to the rest of the United Nations, first of all to Great Britain (1941)⁴ and the United States (1942).

In the context of Romania's integration in the system of the **Axis**, the arrival of the German military mission – also followed, in order to appease the susceptibility of „duke“ B. Mussolini, by an Italian aviation group – had a special significance. Requested as early as July 2, 1940 by King Carol II from Wilhelm Fabricius,⁵ General Ion Antonescu, newly installed as head of the government, resumed the solicitation, insisting in the same sense, on September 7, 1940, during a meeting with the German air military attaché in Bucharest, Colonel A. Gerstenberg.⁶ Also, on September 13, 1940, receiving the Ministers of Germany and Italy in Bucharest, Wilhelm Fabricius and, respectively, O. Ghigi, Ion Antonescu requested the assistance of Romania's „guarantors“ in defending the

¹Willingly or not, this confusion still persists: Romania did not fall in the category of the **states occupied** by any of the powers of the **Axis**, concretely by Germany (cf. Gh. Buzatu, *Din istoria secretă a celui de-al doilea război mondial*, I, p. 328 and the following, chapter 15 – „Statutul internațional al României între 1939 și 1940“. Mention should be made here, in connection with the subject in discussion, Joachim von Ribbentrop's letter addressed on July 20, 1944 to Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, the commander of the W. „**To treat Romania as an occupied territory, as various German for a occasionally tend to do, is, naturally, not possible** (author's bold)“ (*ibidem*, p. 332).

²See Marshal Ion Antonescu, *Un ABC al anticomunismului românesc*, I, edition of Gh. Buzatu, Iași, Editura Moldova, 1992, *passim*; Ioan Scurtu, C. Hlihor, *Complot împotriva României, 1939-1947*, București, Editura Academiei de Înalte Studii Militare, 1994, p. 32 and the following; Alesandru Duțu, Mihai Retegan, eds., *Armata Română în al doilea război mondial*, I, *Eliberarea Basarabiei și a părții de nord a Bucovinei (22 iunie-26 iulie 1941)*, București, Editura Militară, 1996, p. 138 and the following.

³Cf. Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, Regele Carol și Mareșalul Antonescu*, p. 275.

⁴Recording that on December 7, 1941, at twelve o'clock, the state of war „between small Romania and the immense power“ occurred, the Marshal wrote: „Great Britain has not known the tragedy and humiliations of foreign occupation for centuries. We have gone for two thousand years, not only in the course of time, but also during the same century, from battle to battle, from occupation to occupation, from tragedy to tragedy. Great Britain has been fighting for centuries for new conquests, we are fighting to defend ourselves“ (apud Ion Șuța, *România la cumpăna istoriei. August '44*, București, Editura Științifică, 1991, p. 394).

⁵See Margot Hegemann, „Einige Dokumente zur «Deutschen Heeresmission in Rumänien» (1940-1941)“, in *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Osteuropas*, vol. 5, Berlin, 1961, p. 315.

⁶Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, Regele Carol și Mareșalul Antonescu*, p. 133-134.

petroliferous area from the danger of „possible [enemy/British] air attacks.“ Consequently, on September 15-17, 1940, General Kurt von Tippelskirch, the future famous military historian of the world war of 1939-1940, arrived in Bucharest, where he was received by Antonescu himself.¹ It was agreed that the main stationing area for the mission would be the petroliferous one, more precisely within the perimeter Bucharest – Ploiești – Buzău – Brașov.² Later, as a result of the discussions held in Bucharest, von Tippelskirch wrote a report,³ on the basis of which, on September 19, 1940, Berlin decided to send a military mission to Romania. The next day, General W. Keitel, the head of the *O.K.W.*, signed the directive that specified the assignments of the German Military Mission.⁴ It is interesting that, among the „real assignments“ of the Mission of the the land forces, which were not supposed to be divulged neither to Bucharest nor to its own troops, the main ones were „**the defending of the petroliferous region from the attack of a third power, as well as from destruction,**“ and then the instruction of the Romanian army or the preparation of the mobilization of the German and Romanian forces in case of a war „imposed“ by the U.S.S.R.⁵

Numerous historians would later consider that the arrival of the German Military Mission coincided with the beginning of Romania's occupation by the Third Reich.⁶ Other studies gave nuances to the issue of Romania's statute in the years of World War II, showing that there was no question of an **occupation, but of the installation of German domination in Romania**, its placing **among Berlin's satellite states**, a regime that remained in force until August 23, 1944, which was something completely different.⁷ Anyway, at that time, in September-

¹Cf. Margot Hegemann, *Einige Dokumente...*, pp. 322-325, doc. no. 9 (the note of the meeting).

²*Ibidem*, p. 324.

³*Ibidem*, p. 326 (doc. no. 11, from September 18, 1940); *ADAP 1918-1945*, Series D, Band XI/1, pp. 108-110 (doc. no. 75).

⁴Margot Hegemann, *Einige Dokumente...*, pp. 328-329 (doc. no. 13); Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, Regele Carol și Mareșalul Antonescu*, pp. 134-135.

⁵*Ibidem*; Margot Hegemann, *Einige Dokumente...*, pp. 328-329 (doc. no. 13); Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, Regele Carol și Mareșalul Antonescu*, pp. 134-135.

⁶See Ilie Ceaușescu and collaborators, *România în anii celui de-al doilea război mondial*, I, București, Editura Militară, 1989, pp. 319-322. In the dummy of the academic treatise *Istoria României*, vol. VI (București, Editura Academiei, 1968) it was asserted: „«The Military Mission» behaved like a true occupation army in a defeated country (p. 645).

⁷Cf. Gh. Buzatu, *Din istoria secretă a războiului mondial*, I, p. 328 and the following (see above, in the note). The well known American historian Keith Hitchins also wrote: „To save appearances, they (the forces of the Mission – Gh. B.) were destined to participate in the instruction and reorganization of the Romanian army. The German officials expected them, however, to fulfil their «real» missions, namely to protect the Romanian oil fields against the attack of a third power and to prepare both the German forces, as well as the Romanian ones for the war with the Soviet Union, were it to occur...“ (*România. 1866-1947*, București, Editura Humanitas, 1996, p. 488). Mihail Sturdza, the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Legionary-Antonescu government in 1940,

October 1940, the receiving of the German Military Mission in Bucharest complicated Romania's relations with the Western Powers,¹ especially with Great Britain.² Both the British government,³ as well as the American one⁴ declared that they did not recognize the validity of the Vienna Dictate in the issue of Transylvania. On November 20, 1940, R.A. Butler, Undersecretary of State of the Foreign Office, declared in the House of Commons that the British government no longer viewed the Romanian government „as having full control of its own country or of its foreign policy.“⁵ Having in view the evolution of the Romanian-German relations, during the same time the British government gave permission to Sir Reginald Hoare, the British Minister in Bucharest, to work, at his discretion, on breaking the relations with Romania.⁶ On the other hand, Washington decided to block the Romanian goods in the U.S.A.⁷ At the same time, signals were being registered from Ankara about the position of Turkey, which considered that Romania had „totally“ lost its independence.⁸ Prior to the suspension of the official relations between Bucharest and London (February 1941 and December

was in the best position to specify the international statute of Romania during the world war: „**There was never an occupation of Romania**“ (cf. *The Suicide of Europe*, p. 173). Another contemporary, General Platon Chirnoagă, wrote after the war in his position of a historian: „*They* (the units of the Mission – Gh. B.) *were not occupation troops, but were on Romania's territory with the same title and mission that the American troops have been for so many years in Europe and in other parts of the world: safety from Russia* (Chirnoagă's italics)“ (*Istoria politică și militară a războiului României contra Rusiei Sovietice. 22 iunie 1941-23 august 1941*, third edition, Iași, 1997, p. 66).

¹Cf. Paul D. Quinlan, *Clash over Romania. British and American Policies towards Romania: 1938-1947*, Los Angeles, A.R.A., 1977, pp. 66-67.

²See Great Britain, PRO, FO – 371/24 996, *passim*.

³Paul D. Quinlan, *Clash over Romania...*, p. 65.

⁴Cf. Stephen Fischer-Galati and collaborators, eds., *Romania between East and West: Historical Essays in Memory of Constantin C. Giurescu*, Boulder/New York, 1982, pp. 372-373.

⁵Apud Elisabeth Barker, *British Policy in South-East Europe in the Second World War*, London, Macmillan, 1976, p. 76; V. F. Dobrinescu, Ion Pătroiu, *Anglia și România între anii 1939-1947*, București, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1992, p. 101. The British historian Maurice Pearton concluded however that, after the arrival of the German troops, „Romania remained a sovereign state (author's italics)“ (*Oil and the Romanian State*, quoted edition, p. 226).

⁶David Britton Funderburk, *Politica Marii Britanii față de România. 1938-1940*, București, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1983, pp. 162-163. The recommendation of the Foreign Office succeeded the arrest of and the instituting of legal proceedings against certain British citizens who worked in the oil industry, on September 25, 1940, an issue that affected the diplomatic relations between Bucharest and London. Lord Halifax, the head of the Foreign Office, threatened then with the „breaking of the diplomatic relations“ (cf. V. F. Dobrinescu, Ion Pătroiu, *Anglia și România...*, pp. 95-96).

⁷Maurice Pearton, *Oil and the Romanian State*, pp. 225-226.

⁸Cf. Eliza Campus, *Din politica externă a României. 1913-1947*, București, Editura Politică, 1980, p. 558.

1941)¹ and Washington (December 1941 and June 1942),² a *National Romanian Committee* was constituted in Great Britain on November 29, 1940, led by the Romanian Minister in London, V. V. Tilea,³ who, precipitated, hurried to communicate the press the news about the resignation in block of all the people in his Legation, as a sign of protest against the „political assassination“ practiced in Bucharest.⁴ In the meantime, Romania had announced its firm orientation towards towards the fascist **Axis**, established on November 23, 1940 through the signing of the protocol of adhering to the Tripartite Pact.⁵ General Ion Antonescu, for instance, declared for the Italian newspaper *La Stampa* from September 25, 1940: „I will go with the **Axis**, because our political and economic interests coincide, because for our security there is no possibility to separate ourselves from Italy and Germany and because Romania does not fall into the Anglo-French economic sphere.“⁶ The government of the U.S.S.R., considering the excellent relations with with Germany at that time, initially had no objections towards the arrival of the German Military Mission.⁷ But Joachim von Ribbentrop sent the German Embassy a special telegram about informing his Soviet counterpart V.M. Molotov about sending the Mission to Romania. We extract the following passage from the telegram: only at the request of the Romanian government and „considering our interest in maintaining the peace and order in the Balkans **and to protect our interests regarding petroleum and cereals** against any attempt of trouble from England, we declared ourselves willing to answer the Romanian invitation. As the Soviet Union is aware, we **have a vital interest towards these territories** (author’s bold), which we could not leave to be put in peril by the British [...] Considering our friendly relations, we wanted to communicate this to the Soviet government...“⁸ V. M. Molotov, was, indeed, officially contacted by W. von Tippleskirch, the counsellor of the German Embassy in Moscow.⁹ It is well known in what manner, in November 1940, Adolph Hitler „explained“ to V. M Molotov, who was in Berlin, the interest of Germany and Italy regarding Romanian petroleum.¹⁰ In a telegram from October 10, 1940, Joachim von Ribbentrop had written that it had been „the great interest of Germany and Italy“

¹Ion Ardeleanu and collaborators, eds., *23 august 1944...*, I, p. 336 (doc. no. 249).

²*Ibidem*, p. 337 (doc. no. 251).

³Cf. V. F. Dobrinescu, *Emigrația română din lumea anglo-saxonă*, Iași, Institutul European, 1993, p. 95. The Committee was followed by two other formations with pretensions of „cabinet in exile“. *Romanian Democratic Committee and Free Romanian Movement (ibidem*, pp. 98-99).

⁴*Ibidem*, pp. 93-94.

⁵Cf. Ion Țuța, *România la cumpăna istoriei*, pp. 393-394.

⁶ANIC, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, file 325/1940, f. 149.

⁷Cf. Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, Regele Carol și Mareșalul Antonescu*, p. 136.

⁸Ion Ardeleanu and collaborators, eds., *23 august 1944...*, I, p. 129-130 (doc. no. 98).

⁹*Ibidem*, p. 137-138 (doc. no. 103).

¹⁰*ADAP 1918-1945*, Series D, Band XI/1, p. 470 (doc. no. 328).

to send the Mission in Romania in order to ensure the undisturbed oil production and to prevent the sabotage attempts from England.¹ Also, Karl Ritter, the Ambassador at the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, transmitted by telephone on October 10, 1940 to Minister W. Fabricius instructions regarding the final form of the communiqué about sending the Military Mission to Romania; also, measures needed to be taken at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bucharest for the instruction in a certain sense of the Romanian representations abroad: „most importantly, the action needs to acquire a new anti-British note and in no case an anti-Russian one.“² On the same day, a directive signed by Hitler³ established the the purposes, functioning and organization of the German Military Mission in Romania.⁴ On October 22, 1940, a *protocol* was signed, which established the statute of the German troops in Romania.⁵ Mention should be made that, in November 1940, with the occasion of his first visit to Berlin, General Antonescu met with Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, the head of the *O.K.W.*, both of them agreeing that, besides the forces of the Mission, the Reich should also send to Romania an armoured division.⁶

Both before and especially after the outbreak of the War in the East, the Romanian and German authorities gave a maximum of attention to fortifying the oil, within which Ploiești had become a veritable *nervus rerum*.⁷ A fundamental German document like *The Journal of the High Command of the Wehrmacht*

¹*Ibidem*, p. 237-238 (doc. no. 169). Mention should be made that, having under their attention the prospect of breaking the diplomatic relations with Romania, the British Legation in Bucharest established „measures for the preparation of the sabotages and of the political resistance“ (V. F. Dobrinescu, *Emigrația română...*, p. 84). About the British sabotage network in Romania in 1939-1940: George Beza, *Misiune de război. Al II-lea război mondial*, București, Editura Niculescu, 1994, pp. 30-33.

²Ion Ardeleanu and collaborators, eds., *23 august 1944...*, I, pp. 134-135 (doc. no. 101).

³*ADAP 1918-1945*, Series D, Band XI/1, pp. 239-240 (doc. no. 171).

⁴About the German Military Mission in Romania: D. Șandru, I. Saizu, „Unele aspecte privind consecințele economice ale prezenței trupelor germane în România (1940-1944)“, in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie „A. D. Xenopol“*, Iași, t. IV/1967, p. 117 and the following.

⁵Ion Șuța, *România la cumpăna istoriei*, pp. 100-101. About the arrival and the purpose of the German Military Mission, details in Platon Chirnoagă, *Istoria politică și militară a războiului României...*, p. 65 and the following; A. Simion, *Regimul politic din România în perioada septembrie 1940-ianuarie 1941*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1976, p. 121 and the following; Horia Brestoiu, *Impact la paralela 45°. Incursiune în culisele bătăliei pentru petrolul românesc*, Iași, Editura Junimea, 1986, p. 283 and the following; James Dugan, Carroll Stewart, *Ploiești. The great Ground-Air Battle of 1 August 1943*, New York, Random House, 1962, p. 24 and the following; John Sweetman, *Ploiești Oil Strike*, New York, Ballantine Books Inc., 1974, p. 33 and the following.

⁶A. Simion, *Regimul politic din România în perioada septembrie 1940-ianuarie 1941*, pp. 128-129.

⁷See James Dugan, Carroll Stewart, *Ploiești...*, *passim*; Raymond Cartier, *La Seconde Guerre mondiale*, II, Paris, Paris-Match, 1966, p. 100.

(*Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht*), published after the war by a group of historians,¹ offers the most conclusive data about the strategic importance of petroleum in the military actions of the Third Reich in the years 1940-1945.² It is understandable why Hitler made special preparations, as early as the winter of 194-1941, for the fortification of the areas in Romania considered neuralgic: Ploiești, the perimeter Constanța-the Cernavodă Bridge and the port of Giurgiu.³ In 1941 and 1942, during the frequent meetings of the German and Romanian leaders, the petroleum question was never neglected. In this period, after having entered the planetary war, the United States gradually assumed the role not only of political and military leader, but also of coordinator and executor of the ample operations against the *Axis* in the world, with the exception of the Soviet-German front.⁴ Consequently, Romania was engaged with land forces far inside the U.S.S.R, and at home it had to withstand in 1942-1944 the assaults of the Allied aviation (especially the American one). Received by Adolph Hitler and Joachim von Ribbentrop in September 1942, at Jitomir and Vinnița, Mihai Antonescu, the Romanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, found the right opportunity to point out the „contribution“ of his country to the cause of the *Axis*, from a military, political-diplomatic, and economic point of view. As the meeting took place in the period of the notorious successes of the German forces, the visitor did not hesitate to present to the Führer a book with a flattering dedication: „The man on whom depends the honour of a century, the peace of Europe and the justice of my Country.“⁵ At the same time, Mihai Antonescu did not conceal from his German counterpart that, at the Bend of the Don and in the region of Stalingrad, the winter combat disposition of the Romanian troops was „one of the most dangerous.“⁶ Regarding the contribution to the common cause, the Romanian diplomat considered relevant the deliveries of liquid fuel. Compared to the armament promised by Germany to Romania, „I pointed out, he dictated, having returned to Bucharest, that [...] we delivered petroleum in **extremely large quantities** (author’s bold) exceeding 6 700 000 tons for the *Axis* and [of

¹Percy Ernst Schramm, Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, Andreas Hillgruber, Walter Hubatsch, and Donald S. Detwiler.

²See *Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht (Wehrmachtführungsstab)*, vol. I-IV, Frankfurt am Main, Graefe Verlag für Wehrwesen, 1961-1965, *passim*; republished in eight volumes, München, 1982 (in the Collection of the Center for European History and Civilization of the Iași Branch of the Romanian Academy).

³Cf. Constantin Chiper, „Orașul Ploiești – obiectivul strategic al coalițiilor beligerante în cel de-al doilea război mondial“, in Ilie Manole, ed., *Societate și Armată în Europa secolului XX*, București, 1995, p. 137.

⁴Eddy Bauer, ed., *The History of World War II*, Leicester, Galley Press, 1984, *passim*.

⁵See the minute dictated by Mihai Antonescu regarding the meetings at Vinnița, in Jean Ancel, ed., *Documents Concerning the Fate of Romanian Jewry during the Holocaust*, IX, New York, 1986, p. 458 (doc. no. 176).

⁶*Ibidem*, p. 447.

these] 5 500 000 tons for Germany...“¹ On September 23, 1942, in Vinnița, being received by Adolph Hitler, Mihai Antonescu insisted on the „most dangerous“ situation in which the Romanian troops in the Stalingrad region were. He received from the Führer numerous assurances and promises, including that – probably the only one carried out – „he will send fighter planes for our defence and will establish a network from the Bulgarian Black Sea coast to our coast and [for the defence of the region] of Ploiești with this purpose.“²

After the America air attack from June 12, 1942 against Ploiești and Constanța, which was rather a warning, the Romanian and German military authorities³ strengthened the defence of the Ploiești-Valea Prahovei area.⁴ According to the available data, in the years 1943-1944 the Brigade 5 of the Romanian Army (regiments 7 and 9) and Division 5 of the German Army (regiments 180 and 202) which totalled 82 batteries, including 14 projecting batteries and 15 Würzburg stations for tracking enemy aircraft, plus air squadrons, hydrogen filled war balloons, „Nebeltopf“ fog generators, and an ambush and alarm Service.⁵ General Kuderna, commander of Division 5, coordinated all the troops in the area; in fact, the great „Protector“ was General Alfred Gesternberg,⁶ the Air Military Attaché in Bucharest, who, under the circumstances of the collapse of Antonescu’s regime on August 23, 1944, assumed the command of the German forces found in Romania at the time.⁷ A few days after the famous Allied Allied air raid of August 1, 1943 against Ploiești, the Nazi semi-official organ *Völkischer Beobachter*, pointing out that Romanian petroleum represented “a raw material of military importance”, gave assurances that Romania would defend „by every means“ this „great resource“, in cooperation with its „German comrades“.⁸ Ploiești became this way a central point of the so-called Adolph Hitler’s **fortress of Europe**, the best defended, but also the most targeted by the enemy (the forces of the United Nations)⁹ and, consequently, the most vulnerable. The British

¹*Ibidem*.

²*Ibidem*, p. 457. See also the German minute of the meeting, in Andreas Hillgruber, Hrsgb., *Staatsmänner und Diplomaten bei Hitler*, II, quoted edition, p. 129 (doc. no. 13).

³Constantin Chiper, *Orașul Ploiești – obiectivul strategic...*, p. 317.

⁴Vasile Berheciu, „Sistemul de apărare antiaeriană din zona strategică Valea Prahovei în anii 1943-1944“, in Ilie Manole, ed., *Societate și Armată...*, p. 133 and the following.

⁵*Ibidem*, pp. 133-134.

⁶Cf. James Dugan, Carrol Stewart, *Ploiești...*, p. 25.

⁷See Gh. Buzatu and collaborators, *Din istoria unei zile*, Iași, 1979, p. 105 and the following.

⁸ANIC, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers fund, file 2106/1944, f. 58 („V.B.“ from August 5, 1943).

⁹According to Leon Wolff, Ploiești represented for the Allies „the No. 1 priority objective in the entire Europe of the **Axis**“ (cf. *Low Level Mission*, New York, Arno Press, 1972, 1972, p. 190). See also Constantin Chiper, „Orașul Ploiești – obiectivul strategic...“, in Ilie Manole, ed., *Societate și Armată...*, pp. 136-140; Vasile Berheciu, „Sistemul de apărare antiaeriană din zona

Premier Winston Churchill himself considered that, within **Europe's Fortress (Festung Europa)**, the „**tap root of the German power**“¹ was in the Ploiești petroliferous area.² We extract the following lines about the **Ploiești fortress** from an already familiar work: „*Hitler endowed it with a powerful anti-aircraft defence: 40 buried batteries, each of them provided with six 88 cannon, plus lighter batteries, hundreds of machine guns, «Messerschmidt» 109 squadron patrols, totalling 52 airplanes, and on the neighbouring airdromes, another 60 fighter planes. THE ENTIRE ENSEMBLE FORMED «FESTUNG PLOIEȘTI», 'THE PETROLEUM FORTRESS' – THE GREATEST CONCENTRATION OF FIRE IN THE ENTIRE EUROPE!*“ (Horia Brestoiu's bold).³

Just as the military, territorial, political and diplomatic aspects or those regarding the caducity of the Vienna arbitrage, *the financial-economic issues* were constantly on the agenda of the Romanian–German relations between 1940 and 1944, especially since Germany was at all times greatly interested in the Romanian cereals and petroleum, which were absolutely necessary for the continuation of the war effort. It is not an exaggeration to assess that, beginning with September 1940 until August 23 1944, the issue of Romanian petroleum was on the agenda of the relations between Bucharest and Berlin, affecting them. Moreover, we can state without out reticence that, in the period we are referring to, the Romanian-German relations, the contacts at the level of Hitler and Antonescu were marked – as was the world war in general – by the odour of petroleum.⁴

strategică Valea Prahovei în anii 1943-1944“, in *Societate și Armată...*, pp. 133-136; Jip Rotary, „Bombardment de la 1 august 1943: victorie sau înfrângere?“, in *Societate și Armată...*, pp. 140-143; Gheorghe Bobble, „Acțiunile trupelor de jandarmi pentru salvarea cetățenilor și stingerea incendiilor produse de bombardamentele americane (1943-1944)“, in *Societate și Armată...*, pp. 144-145; Aurel David, Șerban Pavelescu, „Organizarea apărării antiaeriene în zona petroliferă Valea Prahovei în perioada 1942-1944“, in *Societate și Armată...*, pp. 146-148.

¹Apud James Dugan, Carrol Stewart, *Ploiești...*, p. 3; Alesandru Duțu, Florin Constantin, „Raidul american asupra Ploieștiului din 1 august 1943. Mărturie inedită“, in *Revista Istorică*, no. 7-8/1991, p. 412.

²James Dugan, Carrol Stewart, *Ploiești...*, p. 33.

³Horia Brestoiu, *Impact la paralela 45*, p. 292.

⁴See Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, Regele Carol; și Mareșalul Antonescu, passim*; Vasile Arimia and collaborators, eds., *Antonescu-Hitler*, I-II, *passim*. According to the Romanian historian Viorel Roman, **Romanian petroleum played „a central role“ in the East-European plans of A. Hitler** (cf. *Rümänien im Spannungsfeld der Grossmächte*, II, 1878-1944, Offenbach, Dr. Dieter Falk Verlag, 1989, p. 154).

Andreas Hillgruber and Aurică Simion studied the contents and the significance of the Romanian-German economic agreement signed on December 4, 1940 in Berlin by C. Greceanu, the Minister of Romania in Germany, and V. Dimitriuc, Under-Secretary of State of the Ministry of National Economy for petroleum questions, on the one hand, and Carl Clodius, on the other hand.¹ The document, consisting of eight points, named *protocol*, established for ten years the framework of the economic cooperation between Berlin and Bucharest, regulating the receiving of credits from Germany and the quantum of the interest, and – separately, per articles – it set the conditions for each area (agriculture and forestry, industry, communication lines and means of transportation, the banking and credit system, commercial relations, etc.). One of the most important articles (#7) established fixed prices for the products delivered by Romania (first of all, cereals and petroleum) and, moreover, assured Berlin that the Romanian market would constitute a „positive outlet“ for Germany during the war.² The agreement was signed at a moment when the German offensive for the strengthening of its positions in Romania had already begun – concomitantly in metallurgy, shipyards, commercial companies (*Malaxa, Reșița, Metrom, Cugir, Șantierele Navale Galați, Astra, Hunedoara, Agromex, Dunarex*, etc.)³ – in the oil industry or marked a signal that encouraged the respective action.⁴ Berlin was concerned, first of all, with the acquisitioning, partially or integrally, of the shares of the companies belonging to the citizens/firms in the occupied states (Czechoslovakia, Holland, Belgium, France),⁵ among which were *Petrol Block* (which also had interests in *IRDP*), *Concordia*, *Colombia*,⁶ *Astra Română*,⁷ *Foraky*, *Steaua Română*, *Explora*, etc.⁸ The only company that made an exception to a certain extent was the *Romanian-American*; in 1940-1941, it was under the „protection“ of a special commissary of the Minister of National Economy, and beginning with

¹A. Simion, *Regimul politic din România...*, pp. 156-165; Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, Regele Carol și Mareșalul Antonescu*, pp. 197-198.

²A. Simion, *Regimul politic din România...*, pp. 159-160.

³*Ibidem*, pp. 163-164.

⁴*Ibidem*, pp. 161-163; D. Șandru, I. Saizu, *Cu privire la acapararea petrolului românesc...*, p. 10 and the following; Maurice Pearton, *Oil and the Romanian State*, quoted edition, p. 227 and the following. According to the British historian, the agreement of December 4, 1940 was equal with a plan „for the reorganization of the entire economy of Romania under German auspices“ (*ibidem*, p. 228).

⁵*Ibidem*, p. 229.

⁶About these companies, see *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik 1918-1945*, Series E: 1941-1945, Band II, 1. März bis 15. Juni 1942, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1972, pp. 467-468, doc. no. 273.

⁷Branch of Bataafsche Petroleum Matschappij (**Shell**), where a Dutch was placed in charged, who was however devoted to the Reich – Rost van Tonningen (A. Simion, *Regimul politic din România...*, p. 162; Maurice Pearton, *Oil and the Romanian State*, p. 230).

⁸*Ibidem*, pp. 229-230.

October 1941 the German tutelage was consolidated,¹ as, at a superior level, an agreement had been realized between *Standard Oil Co.* and *I. G. Farbenindustrie* to mutually watch over the protection of their interests in the two belligerent camps.² After the economic agreement from December 1940, the German offensive in the petroleum industry intensified, especially through the creation, on March 27, 1941, of the transnational company *Kontinentale Öl A.G.* Germany's efforts, recorded in numerous other specialized works,³ are considered to have been crowned by the agreement between *Kontinentale Öl A.G.* and *Astra Română* from May 1941, which, in Andreas Hillgruber's opinion, „sealed the penetration of the German capital in the Romanian oil industry, where it gained an important position, if not even a dominant one (author's italics).“⁴ There is no need to specify that, during the war years in the East (1914-1944), things did not stagnate, the situation of the German companies and interests in the oil industry were constantly being consolidated,⁵ as was the German control.⁶

Without being able to delimit exactly the nature of the capital invested in the oil industry in the war period, we shall appeal to the data communicated in 1945 by *Monitorul Petrolului Român* for the respective year:⁷

Origin of the capital	Total (million lei)
Romanian	3 840.9
American	1 728.0
Belgian	480.7
British	3 161.7
Swiss	170.1
French	1 495.9
Italian	533.5
Dutch	228.9
U.S.S.R.	1 759.9
Other capital	647.0
TOTAL	14 046.5

¹*Ibidem*, p. 236.

²D. Șandru, I. Saizu, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

³See James Dugan, Carroll Stewart, *Ploiești...*, p. 25; D. Șandru, I. Saizu, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-12 (with interesting details based on unpublished documents from the Romanian archives).

⁴Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, Regele Carol și Mareșalul Antonescu*, p. 195.

⁵Maurice Pearton, *Oil and the Romanian State*, p. 232 and the following; D. Șandru, I. Saizu, *op. cit.*, *passim*; A. Simion, *Preliminaries politico-diplomatic...*, pp. 148-150.

⁶Maurice Pearton, *Oil and the Romanian State*, pp. 232-237. Which, as the British historian remarked, did not exclude the German-Romanian rivalry in the field (*ibidem*, pp. 237-238).

⁷ Cf. *M.P.R.*, nos. XI-XII/1945; Victor Axenciuc, *Evoluția economică a României...*, I, p. 286 (table no. 265).

As we can see, the Romanian and the British capital had the supremacy, being succeeded by **the soviet capital**, namely by the one that, through the decree law published in *Monitorul Oficial* on July 19, 1945, was taken from the German origin and transferred to the U.S.S.R.¹ This way, indirectly, we are able to establish the percentage of the German capital, certainly considering not only those transferred to the Soviet occupier of Romania, but also the proportions that in 1940-1944 were held in the British-Dutch, French or Belgian spheres.

In the first part of the year 1941, in the context of Germany's preparations for the operation „**Barbarossa**“ against the U.S.S.R. of June 22, the petroleum question was the most often attacked issue as part of the contacts between Berlin and Bucharest: on February 6, 1941, with the occasion of the meeting between the new German Minister to Romania, Manfred von Killinger, with the head of the Second Office of the General Staff of the Romanian Army; on June 11, 1941, at the meeting of General Ion Antonescu with the military and diplomatic leaders of the Reich, headed by Hitler in Munich;² the memorandum presented to the Führer in Munich and dated June 11, 1941,³ containing assurances regarding the consolidation of German-Romanian industrial collaboration, framework in which Romania could become „a supply centre for the entire European region“, with its raw materials and cheap labour.⁴ Also, during the preparation of the military operation in the East, on May 23, 1941, Hitler's Headquarters designated General Ritter von Schobert as supreme commander of the German armed forces in Romania and established his attributions, including the subordination of the German Military Mission of Erik Hansen, whose main role was to „secure the petroliferous region.“⁵ In March 1941, Antonescu was received by Hermann Göring, at the „Belvedere“ Palace in Vienna.⁶ At the Reich marshal's request, the

¹This capital constituted the first contribution of the U.S.S.R. to the establishing of the company „Sovrompetrol“ of 1945-1954.

²See *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, Series D 1937-1945, XII, *The War Years. February 1-June 22, 1941*, London, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1962, pp. 996-1006 (doc. no. 614); Andreas Hillgruber, ed., *Les entretiens secrets de Hitler*, pp. 590-603 (doc. no. 81, Schmidt's minute); *Antonescu-Hitler*, I, pp. 93-105 (doc. no. 15). Later, Ion Antonescu expressed – through Mihai Antonescu – his dissatisfaction with the discussions with Joachim von Ribbentrop (*Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, Series D, XII, p. 1025, doc. no. 626).

³*Antonescu-Hitler*, I, pp. 89-92 (doc. no. 14).

⁴*Ibidem*, p. 92.

⁵*Ibidem*, p. 87 (doc. no. 13); *DGFP 1918-1945*, Series D, XII, p. 864 (doc. no. 544, W. Keitel's directive 44780/41).

⁶*Ibidem*, pp. 221-227 (doc. no. 126, Schmidt's minute on the meeting from March 5, 1941).

discussions were concentrated **only on the petroleum issue: the supply of the Reich and the Wehrmacht, Germany's resources (the only ones: Romania and Russia),¹ the place and role of Romania in the supply of the Reich for the moment and in the future, the increase of the oil production and the discovery of new reserves,² the possibility of enemy air raids (British and Soviet!) against the Ploiești petroliferous region.³**

Only a few days before the anti-Soviet aggression, Adolph Hitler, according to those convened in Munich, addressed Ion Antonescu in order to inform him of „the final decision“ taken with respect to the moment of the attack. It was June 18, 1941⁴ and the Führer signed **one of the most eloquent documents documents in the war period, in which he recognized the essential role of the Romanian petroleum in the leading and development of the hostilities.** From the point of view of the **O.K.W.**, the German forces in Romania (the 11th Army and the Land, Navy, and Air Mission) together with the Romanian Armies (2nd and 3rd) formed the group of the **Allied forces**, under the general command of Ion Antonescu, and for that the Führer established the **initial mission in the war**, which consisted in:

„1. Defending the Romanian territory against the invasion of the Russian forces.

Along this line, special attention should be given to the defence against the air raids, against the actions of the paratroopers, and the sabotage actions in the petroliferous area, VITAL FOR THE COMMON LEADING OF THE WAR, against the port of Constanța and against the bridge across the Danube.“⁵

The intention was to create some bridge heads east of the Prut and, then, to begin to offensive. Under such circumstances, the mission of the Romanian air military forces was multiple, but **first of all** there was **„the question of ensuring the security of Romania AND ESPECIALLY OF THE PETROLIFEROUS REGION“** (author's bold).⁶

The evolution of the military, political-diplomatic and financial-economic events and processes until August 23, 1944, when Romania deserted from the fascist Axis, integrally confirmed the opinion included in

¹*Ibidem*, p. 221.

²*Ibidem*, p. 222.

³*Ibidem*, pp. 226-227.

⁴*Ibidem*, pp. 1047-1049 (doc. no. 644).

⁵*Ibidem*, p. 1048; *Antonescu-Hitler*, I, p. 108 (doc. no. 16).

⁶*Ibidem*, p. 109.

Hitler's message from June 18, 1941:¹ THE QUESTION OF ROMANIAN PETROLEUM WAS AND REMAINED VITAL FOR THE NAZI REICH ENGAGED IN A GENERAL AND TOTAL WAR.

During the campaign in the East, the petroleum question – as we have already mentioned – was constantly on the agenda of the Romanian-German relations.² On July 27, 1941, after the liberation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, Hitler asked Antonescu to cooperate at a military level with the German troops, across the Dniester and in the area of the Bug. The war would decide „the fate of Europe for centuries.“³ Ion Antonescu, convinced that he was serving „not only the Romanian nation and the Romanian populations across the Dniester, but also the commandment of civilization and the need to consciously fight for the building of Europe's new fate“, decided immediately to assure the Führer, through the letter from July 31, 1941, that he would continue the fight „till the end“ next to the Nazi Reich.⁴

Under the new circumstances, Berlin and Bucharest reached important agreements.⁵ It is not by accident that all the known Romanian documents register register the fact that all the bilateral agreements were advantageous for Germany.⁶ Germany.⁶ The Romanian officials, most often Mihai Antonescu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs after June 29, 1941, negotiated intensely with Berlin's delegates, in the petroleum questions especially with Manfred von Killinger, Hermann Neubacher, Carl Clodius, General Georg Thomas from the *O.K.W.*, and others.⁷

¹Unpublished information regarding the preoccupations of the High Command of the **Wehrmacht** for the ensuring and the transportation of Romanian petroleum to Germany with a view to the war with the U.S.S.R., in ANIC, roll 500, *passim*.

²See especially Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, Regele Carol și Mareșalul Antonescu*, p. 193 and the following (Chapter „Relațiile economice Germano-Române, în special livrările de petrol“).

³*Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, Series D 1937-1945, XIII, *The War Years. June 23, 1941 – December 11, 1941*, London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1964, pp. 225-227 (doc. no. 159); *Antonescu-Hitler*, I, pp. 115-117 (doc. no. 21).

⁴*Ibidem*, pp. 117-119 (doc. no. 22); *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, Series D, XIII, pp. 266-267 (doc. No. 167).

⁵Numerous documents that attest to this reality are published (integrally or fragmentarily) in the **Annexes** of the present volume.

⁶See Jean Ancel, ed., *Documents...*, IX, pp. 197-213 (doc. no. 85 from September 17, 1941 – **Rapport asupra avantajilor acordate Germaniei prin Acordurile comerciale și de plăți de la începutul războiului, septembrie 1939 și până astăzi**). Oibly from the export of oil products, because of the difference in prices, Romania registered in two years losses in a value of 90 million marks/5.4 billion *lei* at the day's exchange rate (*ibidem*, pp. 198-199).

⁷*Ibidem*, p. 216 and the following (the note of the M. Antonescu-H. Neubacher conversation, September 22, 1941); *ibidem*, p. 238 and the following (the note of the M. Antonescu-Carl Clodius conversation, October 17, 1941); *ibidem*, p. 249 and the following (the note of the M. Antonescu-Manfred von Killinger conversation, in the presence of councillor Steltzer, November 10, 1941); *ibidem*, p. 251 (the note of the M. Antonescu-H. Neubacher conversation, November 15, 1941).

What did the Reich's delegates ask for? It is not difficult to imagine: **first of all for PETROLEUM!** On November 10, 1941, for example, von Killinger, speaking in the name of Field Marshal W. Keitel, asked that Romania respect the economic agreements and, this way, „make the sacrifices of a close collaborator of Germany“, these pretensions determining the reply of the leader of Romanian diplomacy, namely that Marshal Antonescu had engaged in war, but he intended „to defend the rights of Romania as well.“¹ Around the same time, on November 19, 1941, von Killinger, organizing a press conference at the Legation with German journalists, did not conceal the fact that: „We need many things, especially petroleum.“² At the end of November 1941, Mihai Antonescu, in order to sign Romania's adhering to the Anti-Comintern Pact,³ travelled to Berlin, where he was received separately by Hermann Göring,⁴ Joachim von Ribbentrop,⁵ Ribbentrop,⁵ Adolph Hitler,⁶ and Joseph Goebbels.⁷ The reader suspects, of course, that the terms that some of the most used terms in the meetings were: Führer, Marshal, war, sacrifices, economic agreements, and, among them – **petroleum**. Mihai Antonescu, for instance, told the Minister for the Reich's Propaganda: „I assume that I am not telling you anything new [...] when I insist especially on our contribution in petroleum, cereals, and cattle, since the beginning of the war, in September 1939, until today...“⁸ To Joachim von Ribbentrop, the Romanian diplomat imputed the solution of the 1940 Vienna dictate, when Germany intervened in order to reserve for itself the Romanian oil and to protect its strategic position;⁹ however, the war, the expenses of the German Military Mission in Romania, and, especially, the inequity of the

¹*Ibidem*, p. 249.

²*Ibidem*, p. 253.

³Cf. A. Simion, *Preliminarii politico-diplomatice...*, p. 154 and the following.

⁴Jean Ancel, ed., *Documents...*, IX, pp. 257-266 (doc. no. 101, note dictated by Mihai Antonescu about the reception at the Reich's Reich marshal); *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, Series D, XIII, p. 844 and the following (doc. no. 505, German minute of the Mihai Antonescu-Hermann Göring meeting); *Antonescu-Hitler*, I, pp. 132-140 (doc. no. 30, Mihai Antonescu's minute).

⁵*Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, Series D, XIII, pp. 870-876 (doc. no. 513, the German minute of the meeting); Jean Ancel, ed., *Documents...*, pp. 269-276 (doc. no. 104, note dictated by Mihai Antonescu); *Antonescu-Hitler*, I, pp. 140-147 (doc. no. 31, Mihai Antonescu's minute).

⁶*Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, Series D, XIII, pp. 891-894 (doc. no. 519, the German minute of the meeting); Andreas Hillgruber, ed., *Les entretiens secrets de Hitler*, p. 676 and the following (doc. no. 94, the German minute); Jean Ancel, ed., *Documents...*, IX, pp. 277-285 (doc. no. 105, the note dictated by Mihai Antonescu regarding his conversation with the Führer Adolph Hitler); *Antonescu-Hitler*, I, pp. 147-153 (doc. no. 32, Mihai Antonescu's minute).

⁷Jean Ancel, ed., *Documents...*, IX, pp. 286-300 (doc. no. 106, the note dictated by Mihai Antonescu).

⁸*Ibidem*, p. 293.

⁹Jean Ancel, ed., *Documents...*, p. 272.

commercial exchanges with the Reich had caused a serious economic and financial situation, the country being threatened with inflation and disorder; the only solution was for the Reich to immediately deliver gold and foreign currency for the Romanian imports.¹ Mihai Antonescu's commentaries succeeded von Ribbentrop's statements, who appreciated Romania's military contribution to the anti-Soviet war, but then asked Bucharest to supply Germany with „petroleum, black oil, and cereals, in order [for the Reich] to be able to continue the war.“² As for Adolph Hitler, appreciating the fanatical leader that was Marshal Antonescu,³ pointed out that, on the Eastern Front, **„the Romanian people made sacrifices not only of an economic nature, but blood sacrifices as well** (author's bold).“ That was also the reason for which the Führer agreed that Romania, in the East, should receive „limitless rights and powers; take as much as you want“⁴ – he urged. It is known, however, that Bucharest was not going to accept such a thing.⁵ There is no doubt however that Mihai Antonescu proved as eloquent as possible in front of Hermann Göring, whom he told about the sacrifices of the Romanian army and about the rich supplies with oil;⁶ the continuation of the exports required gold and foreign currency for financing; the reserves were threatened with exhaustion, and, in case of victory, Mihai Antonescu risked to observe that Germany would reserve for Romania advantageous conditions in the petroliferous regions in... Russia.⁷ The Reich marshal did not refrain from making making promises (gold, foreign currency, oil pipe lines, etc.), being loquacious even in the question of north-western Transylvania occupied by Horthy: „Have faith and patience.“⁸ But, certainly, Hermann Göring pleaded the best **in the petroleum question**. From the beginning, the Reich marshal observed – as we deduce from the German minute of the meeting – that the issue had gained **„an unexpected importance“**.⁹ Noting, with good reason, that Hitler's Germany and Antonescu's Romania **„can together win or lose the war“**, the Reich marshal declared ruthlessly: **„Immediately after the blood of its soldiers, the most important contribution that Romania can bring to the common cause is therefore PETROLEUM.“**¹⁰

¹*Ibidem*, p. 270; *Antonescu-Hitler*, I, p. 142.

²*Ibidem*, p. 141.

³*Ibidem*, p. 152.

⁴*Ibidem*.

⁵Cf. Reihhard Rurup, ed., *Voina Ghermanii protiv Svetskogo Soiuzu 1941-1945*, Berlin, Argon, 1992, pp. 77-78 (Hitler presents to Göring the limit of Antonescu's pretentions in the East).

⁶Jean Ancel, ed., *Documents...*, IX, pp. 257-258; *Antonescu-Hitler*, I, pp. 133-134.

⁷*Ibidem*, p. 134.

⁸*Ibidem*, p. 139.

⁹*Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, Series D, XIII, p. 844.

¹⁰*Ibidem*.

Thus, Hitler, as well as Ribbentrop and Göring¹ insisted on the exceptional importance of the Romanian resources and deliveries of oil for the continuation of Germany's war efforts. They were joined by Field Marshal Keitel, who addressed Bucharest many times with requests for petroleum,² as for instance on October 29, 1942, when he personally telegraphed Marshal Antonescu in these grave and pressing terms: „In the name of the Führer, I appeal to Your Excellency and solicit Your personal intervention for the extreme acceleration of the deliveries of black oil, necessary for fighting the war in the Mediterranean, to the Italian naval forces. The situation in Africa is extremely precarious due to the lack of supplies. [...] With comradely respect, I remain devotedly Yours.“³ At a different level, Manfred von Killinger, the German Minister in Bucharest, was no more reticent; on the contrary. In his note regarding his conversation with the Nazi diplomat from January 23, 1942, Mihai Antonescu recorded: „[Manfred von Killinger] came to intervene for the increasing of the petroleum and black oil quantities at export [to Germany]. He showed me that our export has been very weak lately.“⁴ On January 5, 1942, von Killinger and Neubacher had informed the the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin about the situation of the Romanian exports of oil products for the month of December 1941. Of a total of 287 196 tons, the destinations of the exports were established as follows:

¹On May 6, 1942, the Reich marshal addressed Ion Antonescu personally with requests regarding fuels (Jean Ancel, ed., *Documents...*, IX, p. 398).

²Cf. Iosif Constantin Drăgan, ed., *Antonescu, Mareșalul României și războaiele de reîntregire*, III, Cannaregio/Veneția, Nagard, 1989, pp. 259-262 (message from May 2, 1942, doc. no. 81). Compare with the message from June 28, 1944 (ANIC, the fund of the Ministry of the Oil Industry, file 1/1942, f. 26). Addressing the Romanian leader, Keitel most often consulted with von Ribbentrop, whom he informed in October 1942 about „the great importance of the deliveries of Romanian oil for the fighting of the war“ (idem, the collection *Microfilme S.U.A.*, roll 607, frames 1796472-1796473).

³ANIC, the collection *Microfilme S.U.A.*, roll 39, frame 1 796 405.

⁴Jean Ancel, ed., *Documents...*, IX, p. 337 (doc. no. 123). Similar measures, in Berlin or in Bucharest, were taken by: Clodius on January 17 or May 5, 1942 (*ibidem*, p. 333, 394-395; *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik 1918-1945*, Series E: 1941-1945, Band I, 12. Dezember 1941 bis 28. Februar 1942, Göttigen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1969, pp. 258-260, doc. no. 144, report no. 144 from January 18, 1942 for Ribbentrop; *ibidem*, pp. 392-393, doc. no. 217, secret report signed by Wiehl from February 9, 1942); Neubacher on March 10 and April 15, 1942 (*ibidem*, p. 389, 390-391); Neumann on May 15, 1942 (*ibidem*, pp. 396-397); General Reinecke (Iosif Constantin Drăgan, ed., *Antonescu...*, III, pp. 253-255), but especially the same Manfred von Killinger (*ibidem*, *passim*; *ADAP 1918-1945*, Series E, Band I, pp. 7-10, doc. no. 7, telegram no. 4 202 from December 13, 1941 regarding the discussions with Mihai Antonescu relative to the economic issues; *ibidem*, pp. 142-144, doc. no. 79, report from January 1, 1942). Manfred von Killinger, in his actions, was most often instructed by Joachim von Ribbentrop (cf. *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik 1918-1945*, Series E, Band I, pp. 127-128, doc. no. 68, telegram no. 1 338 from December 30, 1941; *ibidem*, pp. 480-482, doc. no. 255, February 18, 1942).

142	297
tons.....	The Reich
29 524 tons.....	The Wehrmacht
15 171 tons.....	The Protectorate of Czech and Moravia
4	951
tons.....	Slovakia
14 219 tons.....	Switzerland (through Germany)
206 162 tons.....	total for Germany
70	098
tons.....	Italy
7	119
tons.....	Bulgaria
2	417
tons.....	Greece
1	400
tons.....	Serbia¹

Manfred von Killinger and Hermann Neubacher often discussed with Marshal Antonescu the file of the German-Romanian economic exchanges, the first place being occupied, at the beginning of 1942, by the petroleum question.² In August 1943, Joachim von Ribbentrop sent several telegrams to Berlin to Hermann Neubacher, asking him to personally discuss with Marshal Antonescu the issues of increasing the oil deliveries at export, the reconstruction of the refineries in the Ploiești area after the Allied bombings, etc., considering the „decisive“ importance of liquid fuel for fighting the war.³

Bucharest often received messages from the Romanian negotiators in Berlin, who had become exasperated with the amplitude of the German pretensions and the brutality of the pressures exerted. Thus, on January 14, 1942, through the Romanian Legation in Berlin, N. Răzmeriță communicated from the capital of the Reich that the economic and financial discussions (including in the question of petroleum) had been „drastic“, so that „we could consider ourselves close to the point of interrupting the negotiations at this time.“⁴ In the

¹ADAP 1918-1945, Series E, Band I, pp. 171-172 (doc. no. 93, telegram no. 41).

²Ibidem, p. 182-184 (doc. no. 98, telegram no. 63 from January 6, 1942).

³ANIC, the collection *Microfilme S.U.A.*, roll 9, frames 182486-182488, 182497-182498.

⁴Jean Ancel, ed., *Documents...*, IX, p. 332.

development of the ever more advanced military operations on the territory of the U.S.S.R., in the last months of the year 1941 Hitler communicated to Antonescu that their reason consisted, among others, also in the liquidation of the Soviet air bases that could threaten the Ploiești petroliferous area.¹

A new message, probably the most significant one in the entire history of the war, came from Berlin to Bucharest on December 29, 1941: the Führer informed Marshal Antonescu about the level of leadership of the land forces after the first failures in Russia, inviting him to participate with new units to the offensive in the East, planned for the spring of 1942.² In the final part of the Führer's letter there was a paragraph that, possibly, explained the reason for the sending of the document:

„Finally, I ask You one more time, Marshal, to do everything possible to place at the disposal of our common war THE THING WITH WHICH ROMANIA CAN CONTRIBUTE THE MOST: PETROLEUM AND GASOLINE.“³

1942 was the year of the great summer offensive of the German and Allied troops (Romanian, Hungarian, etc.) in the south-east of the U.S.S.R., in the directions of Stalingrad and the Caucasus.⁴ The preparation of the offensive launched on June 28, 1942 (operation „Blau-Braunschweig“),⁵ involved a series of actions concretized at military and political-diplomatic levels in Bucharest.⁶ Naturally, the economic sector was not neglected, as it was an area in which the concern for the ensuring of the oil resources necessary for the war predominated.⁷ Under those circumstances, Hitler, Keitel and von Ribbentrop intervened. Answering a letter dated May 6, 1942 from Hermann Göring, Ion Antonescu gave new assurances that Romania would export „without any circumspection“ the oil

¹*Antonescu-Hitler*, I, pp. 119-120, (doc. no. 23, the letter from August 14, 1941); *ibidem*, pp. 130-131 (doc. no. 28, the letter from October 5, 1941). See also the answers of Marshal Antonescu (*ibidem*, pp. 121-122, 122-124, 131-132).

²*Ibidem*, pp. 154-158 (doc. no. 33); *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik 1918-1945*, Series E, Band I, p. 113-116 (doc. no. 63).

³*Ibidem*, p. 116; *Antonescu-Hitler*, I, pp. 154-158 (doc. no. 33).

⁴Cf. A. Hitler, *Directives de guerre*, the edition of Walther Hubatsch and H.R. Trevor-Roper, Paris, Arthaud, 1965, p. 143 and the following (doc. no. 41, **War directive** no. 41 of A. Hitler, April 5, 1942).

⁵Cf. Gh. Buzatu, *Din istoria secretă...*

⁶See *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik 1918-1945*, Series E: 1941-1945, Band II, doc. nos. 39, 91, 95, 97; *ADAP 1918-1945*, Series E: 1941-1945, Band III, 16. Juni bis 30. September 1942, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1974, doc. nos. 18, 19, 36, 47, 85.

⁷*Ibidem*, II, doc. nos., 110, 192, 495.

products in the direction of the Reich, and that would be done by sacrificing the internal consumption.¹ The Marshal was pleased that Herman Göring appreciated Romania's war efforts in flattering terms, which, in compensation, wrung the assurances of the Leader of the Romanian State in the sense that „we shall continue with increased efforts until total victory is obtained.“² In September 1942, at the height of the offensive of the troops of the **Axis** towards Stalingrad or in North Africa, Marshal Antonescu assured Field Marshal W. Keitel regarding the efforts made to ensure the oil products necessary to Germany and Italy, where Romania had delivered over 6.4 million tons in the years 194-1942.³

The failure of proportions of the **Axis**'s forces at Stalingrad and in the Caucasus in the winter of 1942-1943, resulted in the catastrophe of the Romanian 3rd and 4th Armies,⁴ caused serious political-diplomatic and military tensions between Bucharest and Berlin.⁵ Marshal Antonescu personally addressed Adolph Hitler,⁶ as well as Field Marshal Erich von Manstein, the commander of the armies of the **Axis** west of Stalingrad (the Group of the „B“ Armies).⁷

In **1943-1944**, the economic aspects (and, in the context, if not primarily, the petroleum question) persisted on the agenda of each of the last Hitler-Antonescu meetings.⁸ In this interlude,⁹ on December 15, 1943, a message was

¹Jean Ancel, ed., *Documents...*, IX, pp. 398-399 (doc. no. 148).

²*Ibidem*, p. 398.

³Iosif Constantin Drăgan, ed., *Antonescu...*, III, pp. 267-268. On October 29, 1942, Keitel addressed Ion Antonescu again, insisting on the acceleration of the black oil deliveries (A.N.R., the collection *Microfilme S.U.A.*, roll 39, frame 1 796 405).

⁴Cf. Cornel I. Scafeș and collaborators, *Armata Română 1918-1945*, București, Editura R.A.I., 1996, p. 49 and the following.

⁵Cf. Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, Regele Carol și Mareșalul Antonescu*, p. 188.

⁶See Iosif Constantin Drăgan, ed., *Antonescu...*, III, pp. 293-294 (doc. no. 113, the telegram of Ion Antonescu to Colonel Ion Gheorghe, the Romanian Military Attaché in Berlin, November 22, 1942, 23:20 hours); *Antonescu-Hitler*, I, p. 193 (doc. no. 45, the telegram from November 23, 1942, as answer to the one from the day before, pp. 190-191, doc. no. 43).

⁷Iosif Constantin Drăgan, ed., *Antonescu...*, III, pp. 317-324; *Antonescu-Hitler*, I, pp. 199-210 (doc. no. 49, letter from December 9, 1942); *ibidem*, pp. 211-214 (doc. no. 50, von Manstein's answer, December 15, 1942).

⁸We are referring to the meetings from September 2 and 3, 1943 (apud Andreas Hillgruber, Hrsgb., *Staatsmänner und Diplomaten bei Hitler*, II, pp. 301-311, 311-314, doc. no. 38-39); February 26 and 27, 1944 (*ibidem*, pp. 348-354, 355-359, 360-363, doc. nos. 44-46); March 23 and 24, 1944 (*ibidem*, pp. 389-397, 398-406, doc. nos. 50-51, Schmidt's minutes; see also the notes dictated by the Marshal to Colonel Radu Davidescu – *Antonescu-Hitler*, II, pp. 143-149, doc. no. 71) and August 5, 1944 (apud Andreas Hillgruber, Hrsgb., *Staatsmänner und Diplomaten bei Hitler*, II, pp. 481-484, 484-501, doc. nos. 63-64; *Antonescu-Hitler*, II, pp. 176-194, doc. no. 84 – Schmidt's minutes; *Antonescu-Hitler*, II, pp. 166-176, doc. no. 83 – note dictated by Ion Antonescu; *ibidem*, pp. 195-204, the account of General Titus Garbed).

⁹Various information of the greatest interest for these years, in ANIC, the collection *Microfilme S.U.A.*, rolls 33, 607, 611, *passim*. A Berlin report from July 5, 1944 analyzed the situation of the

sent by Adolph Hitler to Ion Antonescu, which clearly reminds of Georges Clemenceau's famous cablegram from December 15, 1917 to the president of the United States regarding the absolute necessity for liquid fuel in the war, as well as for the blood of the soldiers,¹ namely:

„...MARSHAL, BECAUSE THE WAR IN THE EAST IS VERY HARSH AND VERY DIFFICULT, LET US RECOGNIZE WHAT AWAITS ALL OF US IF WE DO NOT WIN THIS FIGHT. THAT IS WHY IT MUST BE WON! BUT THAT IS POSSIBLE ONLY IF WE RENOUNCE ANY POINT OF VIEW THAT DIVERTS OUR ATTENTION AND DEDICATE OURSELVES TO ONE SINGLE IDEA: WHAT CAN STRENGTHEN OUR FORCE AND WHAT CAN BE OF HELP TO OUR SOLDIERS? EACH TON OF OIL THAT WILL BE SAVED IN ROMANIA WILL REPRESENT A SUPPORT FOR THE WAR FOUGHT BY GERMANY, THEREFORE FOR OUR COMMON FUTURE. BECAUSE IT DOES NOT GO TO GERMANY TO BE WASTED THERE, BUT PUTS OUR TANK DIVISIONS IN MOTION, OUR FORTIFYING SERVICES, THUS USING THE BATTLE FRONT (author's italic and bold).“²

Until the last moment of Romania's defection from the camp of the Axis, the economic agreements with Germany and their application were under the attention of the leaders in Bucharest.³

We shall mention, however, that in the interrogation given in Moscow to Marshal Ion Antonescu by the representatives of the NKVD in April 4, 1946, he declared among other things that:⁴ „In the period of Germany's and Romania's war against the Soviet Union, the oil extracted by Romania was transported mainly to Germany and partially to Italy, Turkey, and Bulgaria. In total, 4,400,000 tons of petroleum were extracted annually in Romania in this period, of which

oil industry in the entire south-east of Europe, and regarding Romania it registered in an alarmed tone the decrease of the exports from 269 200 tons (March 1944) to 92 000 (June 1944) (idem, roll 607, frames 1792745-1792746).

¹See Gh. Buzatu, *România și trusturile internaționale de petrol până la 1929*, p. 13.

²*Antonescu-Hitler*, II, p. 135.

³See, for example, the data examined in the government's meeting from June 16, 1944, under the presidency of Mihai Antonescu (A.N.R., the fund of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, file 79/1944, ff. 1-28). Earlier, in the cabinet meeting from May 15, 1944, Mihai Antonescu, commenting the financial disaster predicted by Gheron Netta, the Minister for Finance, specified in his turn that, if the existing situation lasts for six more months, „we will tumble, overturning the whole village and the entire wealth of the people“ (apud V. Liveanu and collaborators, *Din cronica unor zile istorice*, București, Editura Academiei, 1971, p. 26).

⁴Apud Alina Tudor, Șerban Pavelescu, „Mareșalul Antonescu: Alte interogatorii“, in *Magazin Istoric*, no. 10/1997, pp. 29-30; Teodor Mavrodin, *Mareșalul Antonescu întemnițat la Moscova*, Pitești, Editura Carminis, 1998, pp. 180-182.

3,000,000 tons were sent to Germany. The entire oil industry of Romania was in the hands of the British, American, Dutch, Belgian, and French companies. This way, it was the British and the American oil producers that were ensuring Germany's petroleum." And in continuation: „The deliveries of Romanian oil to Germany were done in conformity with the economic convention signed before I came to power. In November 1940, at my first meeting with Hitler, a new economic convention was concluded between us, according to which the Germans delivered to Romania «Messerschmidt-109» airplanes, tanks, tractors, anti-aircraft and anti-tank artillery, machine guns and other weapons, receiving from Romania – petroleum, gasoline, and bread. Besides that, in the spring of 1941, at the meeting in Vienna with Goering I convened with him verbally that Romania should try to increase the oil deliveries and in exchange it would receive petroleum equipment from the Germans. This convention had a general character and later it was developed and concretized through negotiations...“¹

After the fall of Antonescu's regime,² during and after the „trial“ of the cabinet of Marshal Antonescu from May 1946, the opinion was accredited that all the 1940-1944 governments had no other role than the enslaving of Romania to the Nazi Reich, under all aspects (ideological, political-diplomatic, economic, military, etc.). Such a reality, contradicted by the specialized studies,³ was however amply expounded in the **Bill of Indictment** presented in the opening of the sessions of the „People's Court“ in Bucharest on May 6, 1946, several compartments being significantly entitled: „the treason“ and „disaster“ of the country, the „plunder“ policy promoted exclusively to the advantage of Hitler's Germany, etc.⁴ The document included such considerations: „...Hitler needed maintenance for his troops, destined to attack the Balkans and then the Soviet Union, and Antonescu's servants gave it to him in abundance; he needed the *Romanian oil* (author's italics) and had it until the exhaustion of our resources of wealth;⁵ he wanted our cereals and had them until the starvation of the population; he wanted the slave work of the Romanian hands; he wanted complete control of the Romanian industry and commerce; he wanted control over the entire economic sector, and all these were placed at his disposal by the Antonescu

¹*Ibidem.*

²Ion Ţuţa, *România la cumpăna istoriei*, p. 175 and the following.

³Cf. A. Simion, *Preliminarii politico-diplomatice...*, *passim*.

⁴See Marcel-Dumitru Ciucă, ed., *Procesul Mareşalului Antonescu. Documente*, I, Bucureşti, Editura Saeculum I. O./Editura Europa Nova, 1995, p. 63 and the following (**Bill of Indictment no. 1** from April 29, 1946, read in the public session of the „People's Court“ on May 6, 1946).

⁵We point out that, exactly at the same time, the government in Bucharest and the organizers of the „trial of the great national treason“ witnessed the real exhaustion of the country by the occupant power – the U.S.S.R.!

government.¹ Also, Alexandru Voitinovici, the head judge of the „People’s Court“, questioned Ion Antonescu: „With regard to the economic servitude, after the arrival of the Germans [in Romania, October 1940], what was your role in this economic servitude?...“ The answer of the main accused, very short, was as precise as possible: „The economic servitude was done by my predecessors and I found a given situation. And this situation we tried to meliorate.“² Marshal Antonescu repeated in his *The Last Word*: „...I did not premeditate and plan the receiving of the German fifth column on the territory of the country [...] With regard to the servitude of the country’s wealth, I am being unjustly accused of this. Had you allowed me, I would have shown you the economic laws, I would have shown you what good coverage the currency had [...] I saved the foreign capital, the telephones and the matches. I did not have laws of vassalage towards Germany, but of equality...“³ However, at the end, the sentencing of Antonescu’s ministers and, especially, Antonescu’s sending before the firing squad were done on the basis of their pleading guilty of the „country’s disaster“, of „crimes against humanity“, and of „war crimes“.⁴ In the special case of Ion Antonescu, it was recorded that – at military and political-economic levels – he enslaved „unscrupulously and ruthlessly the country and its wealth to Hitler and his clique. Thus, immediately after coming to power, Ion Antonescu and his ministers did nothing else but work for the interests and purposes of Hitler’s Germany.“⁵ The studies of historians, and we are referring to those who had the possibility to study integrally the files of the „trial of the great national treason“, proved the groundlessness of such accusations.⁶ In fact, during the „trial“, the accused themselves claimed the inconsistency of the accusations,⁷ and, in 1948, Mircea Vulcănescu, in *The Last Word* pronounced before the Court of Appeal in Bucharest, demonstrated systematically the absurdity of the theories about the „plundering“ of the country for the profit of Germany between 1940 and 1944 or about its political and economic „subjugation“ to the Reich. He dedicated a separate chapter to the economic and financial agreements and protocols from March 23, 1939, December 4, 1940, January 1942, January 1943, and February

¹*Procesul Mareşalului Antonescu. Documente*, I, p. 90.

²*Ibidem*.

³Apud Gh. Buzatu, *România cu şi fără Antonescu*, Iaşi, Editura Moldova, 1991, p. 335.

⁴See *Procesul Mareşalului Antonescu. Documente*, I, p. 188 and the following.

⁵*Ibidem*, p. 115.

⁶See especially Ioan Dan, „*Procesul*“ *Mareşalului Ion Antonescu*, Bucureşti, Editura Tempus, 1993, pp. 171-183; Gh. Buzatu and collaborators, *Procesul şi execuţia Mareşalului Ion Antonescu*, Alexandria, 2009, *passim*.

⁷*Procesul Mareşalului Antonescu. Documente*, I, p. 188 and the following.

1944.¹ According to Mircea Vulcănescu, the agreements and protocols signed with Berlin's delegates were realized on the basis of the principles imposed and consistently followed by Marshal Antonescu, namely:²

„1. Nothing will be exported to Germany before having reserved the necessary quantities for the internal consumption and before having reserved the export quantities necessary to cover the imports necessary for the country, which it cannot procure from Germany;

2. The exchanges will be done in a balanced manner, at fixed prices; each price increase from one side must be compensated by a corresponding increase on the other side. A momentary exceeding in one sense or the other is admitted, but it must be compensated in the course of the contractual year;

3. For covering the exports, we shall receive merchandise necessary to the market and the investments of the state; agricultural tools, machines, parts, but also rents, movables and redemption of external debts;

4. Petroleum, the material necessary for the war, will be exported in exchange for armament;

5. The net financing effort, made to cover these exchanges, will be covered with gold and free foreign bills.“

Relative to the „exhaustion“ of Romanian economy by Germany (cereals, petroleum, etc.),³ Mircea Vulcănescu revealed completely different realities than those circulated by the Communist authorities in Bucharest.⁴

The exactness of the situation presented by Mircea Vulcănescu was discussed again in the published materials, with the occasion of the debates around the issue of the Nazi gold. Based on sources from the National Bank of Romania and of some unpublished documents,⁵ it was reconfirmed that, according to the Romanian-German economic and commercial agreements from 1940-1944, besides the military technology received in exchange (mainly) for the exports of cereals and petroleum, Bucharest conditioned and obtained from Berlin the payment in gold of the executed deliveries. Consequently, during the war years, Germany delivered to Romania: 3.4 tons of gold in 1940; 14.3 tons of gold

¹Cf. Mircea Vulcănescu, *Ultimul cuvânt*, the edition of Marin Diaconu, București, Editura Humanitas, 1992, p. 63; *idem*, „Ultimul cuvânt“, the edition of Virgil Ierunca, in *Ethos*, Paris, no. 4/1983, p. 20 and the following.

²*Ibidem*, p. 50; *idem*, *Ultimul cuvânt*, the edition of Marin Diaconu, pp 67-68.

³*Ibidem*, the Humanitas edition, pp. 69-71.

⁴*Ibidem*, pp. 70-71.

⁵Apud *Evenimentul zilei*, București, December 8, 1997, p. 3.

in 1942; 29.9 tons of gold in 1943, and 10.3 tons of gold in 1944; in total, therefore, 58.1 tons of fine gold (in the form of ingots or coins). Therefore, at the moment when Ion Antonescu's regime was overthrown, Romania possessed the greatest reserve of gold in its history: 244.9 tons.¹ At the „trial“, in *The Last Word*, Antonescu mentioned that, August 23, 1944, he left in the safes of the National Bank of Romania 49 carloads of gold gathered in time of war, in comparison with the previous peace time, credited only with 16 carloads of gold.²

Numerous Romanian and foreign historians have insisted on the difficulties suffered by the economic relations during the war years.³ On the other hand however, the conditions are no longer valid for taking literally the official and semi-official propagandistic materials elaborated and published after August 23, 1944 relative to the subjugation of the Romanian economy by the Third Reich under Antonescu's regime.⁴

The events that took place in Romania in August 1944 and their consequences were analyzed by historians thoroughly and under multiple aspects (military, political-diplomatic, economic, propagandistic, etc.). It is not necessary, therefore, to go into details here.⁵ It is sufficient to point out that, after the stabilization of the Romanian-German front against the Soviet one on the disposition Kutu-Paşcani-Târgu Frumos-Iaşi-Chişinău-Dubăsari-the Dniester line all the way to the Black Sea, in May 1944, both camps had under their attention mainly the defence/respectively the conquering of the fortified line Focşani-

¹*Ibidem*; Daniel Pavel, „Banca Națională a României deține 60 tone de aur nazist“, in *Național*, București, December 5, 1997, p. 3; *Adevărul*, București, December 3, 1997, p. 20. The subsequent evolution of the gold stock at the National Romanian Bank: 53,1 tons of gold in 1953; 111 tons of gold in 1969; 64,6 tons of gold in 1972; 118,7 tons of gold in 1983; 42,4 tons of gold in 1987 and, in 1997, 93,4 tons of gold.

²Cf. Gh. Buzatu, *România cu și fără Antonescu*, p. 335.

³See, in this sense, Costin C. Kirițescu, *Sistemul bănesc al leului și precursorii lui*, II, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 1997, pp. 503-531; D. Șandru, A. Karețchi, I. Saizu, „Dificultăți în «colaborarea» româno-germană (1940-1944)“, in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie „A.D. Xenopol“*, Iași, vol. XXIII/1986; Gh. Buzatu, I. Saizu, „Apariția și dezvoltarea contradicțiilor dintre regimul antonescian și Germania hitleristă“, in Gh. Buzatu and collaborators, eds., *Români în istoria universală*, III/1, Iași, 1988; I. Saizu, „Ion Antonescu despre relațiile economice româno-germane (1940-1944)“, in Mihai Timofte, ed., *Concepte și metodologii în studiul relațiilor internaționale*, II, Iași, Antheros, 1998.

⁴See *Rezultatele «colaborării» economice cu Germania și ale participării noastre la războiul hitlerist*, București, 1945 (special references to the industry of petroleum, pp. 9-11).

⁵See considerations and the updated bibliography in Gh. Buzatu, *România și războiul mondial din 1939-1945, passim*; Ioan Scurtu, Gh. Buzatu, *Istoria Românilor în secolul XX*, București, Editura Paideia, 1999, *passim*.

Nămoloasa-Brăila and the petroliferous area of Ploiești, both of them having at stake the preservation of their disposition or, on the contrary, the creation of propitious conditions for future actions. On August 5, 1944, when he visited Hitler for the last time, at Rastenburg, Marshal Antonescu, at the direct question of the Führer regarding the continuation of the battle till the end alongside Germany, specified categorically that an answer would imply the guarantee of the *O.K.W.* that the *Wehrmacht* would guarantee the existing line of the front in Romania and, also, **the security of the petroliferous region.**¹ In the German defence plans, indeed, the Ploiești area and the transportation means for the oil derivatives were in the centre of attention in the spring of 1944.² As the suspected and expected moment of the offensive of the Ukrainian 2nd and 3rd Fronts in the region Iași-Chișinău was drawing near (20 August, 1944), the German and Romanian military authorities were concerned in July-August 1944 about the security of the Ploiești area.³ On the other side, the Allied aviation continued its raids over the petroleum targets,⁴ while the Soviet High Command (*Stavka*), preparing the operation against the German-Romanian forces (the „Southern Ukraine“ Army Group), aimed first of all at a concentric action at Iași-Chișinău for the capturing of the German Army 6 and the concomitant development of the offensive on the direction of the line Focșani-Nămoloasa-Brăila.⁵ The events on the front in Moldavia, after August 20, 1944, offered the opportunity and not the cause for the action of the political forces in Bucharest,⁶ which on the afternoon of of August 23, 1944, three days earlier than the established plan, carried out the coup d'état, marked first by the arrest of Ion and Mihai Antonescu.⁷ From the first moment of Romania's defection, from Germany's point of view, the events in Bucharest and the Allies offensive conditioned each other mutually. The fall of Antonescu's regime automatically led to the breaking of Romania's alliance with the Nazi Reich and its last satellites in Europe and to the enrolling of the Romanian troops in the forces of the United Nations in the final war against

¹Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, Regele Carol și Mareșalul Antonescu*, p. 250.

²Cf. Percy Ernst Schramm, Hrsgb., *Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht (Wehrmachtführungsstab)*, IV/7, 1. Januar 1944-22 Mai 1945, München, Bernard und Graefe Verlag, 1982, p. 783 and the following.

³*Ibidem*, pp. 802-803.

⁴Cf. Sir Charles Webster, Noble Frankland, *The Strategic Air Offensive against Germany 1939-1945*, III/5, *Victory*, London, 1961, pp. 225-229.

⁵See P. A. Jilin and collaborators, eds., *Osvoboditelnaia missiia Sovetskih Voorujennih sil v Evrope vo Vtoroi Mirovoi voine. Dokumenti i materialy*, Moskva, Voennoe Izdatelstvo, 1985, pp. 39-40 (doc. no. 17 – the directive from August 2, 1944 of the Soviet *Stavka*, signed by I. V. Stalin and A. I. Antonov, for the offensive of the 2nd and 3rd Ukrainian Fronts – **Operation Iași-Chișinău**).

⁶Gh. Buzatu, ed., *Actul de la 23 august 1944 în context internațional. Studii și documente, passim*.

⁷Idem, *România și războiul mondial din 1939-1945*, p. 155 and the following.

Germany (August 1944 – May 1945).¹ Under the military and political-diplomatic conditions that occurred, *Stavka* established in Moscow, on August 1944, as a fundamental objective for the Rodion Malinovski's 2nd Ukrainian Front the occupation of the rest of Romania, with the Ploiești petroliferous region in the centre of attention.² The capturing of the petroliferous area by the Soviets spared the Western Allies from supplementary efforts: after August 23, 1944, the units of the 15th Air Force were no longer mobilized for the bombing of the oil targets in Romania.³

The preferences won by the Allies through Romania's defection from the **Axis** were strengthened through the disadvantages caused to Germany and its satellites. The prestigious daily paper *New York Times* had every reason to consider, a few hours after the arrest of the two Antonescus in the Royal Palace in Bucharest, that, „**From a political and military point of view, Romania's desertion from the Axis represents a major triumph for the Allies.**“⁴ The British Premier Winston S. Churchill, caught by the events in Italy, wrote in his *Memoirs* that would gain international celebrity, that Romania's action had determined „**a complete overthrow of the military situation.**“⁵ The great European and extra-European commands and chancelleries, the international public opinion reacted promptly after Romania's turn, admitting quasi-unanimously its major significance for the development of the hostilities at a military, political-diplomatic, economic, and propagandistic level. The bulletins published in Washington by the *Joint Intelligence Committee (J.I.C.)* stated right away that, on the war theatres in France and Romania, Germany had suffered „a series of disconcerting military overthrows.“⁶

The defence German system in South-Eastern Europe had suffered a „complete disintegration.“⁷ The Reich was deprived of at least 30 divisions, but no less serious was, from an economic stand point, **the loss of the petroliferous region of Valea Prahovei.** From this area, the Reich had covered at least 28% of its consumption of liquid fuel, after August 23, 1944 being deprived of „**the most**

¹*Ibidem.*

²Cf. P. A. Jilin and collaborators, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 55 (doc. no. 30).

³Sir Charles Webster, Noble Frankland, *The Strategic Air Offensive against Germany 1939-1945*, III/5, p. 229.

⁴See no. 31 624 from August 24, 1944, p. 11.

⁵Cf. Winston S. Churchill, *Mémoires sur la Deuxième Guerre mondiale*, VI/1, Paris, Plonk, 1953, p. 86. Harold Macmillan, the future British Premier, met Churchill on August 28, 1944, at Modigliani (Italy), being in an „excellent state of mind, due most of all to the latest news from the battlefields and the surprising events in Romania“ (see *War Diaries. Politics and War in the Mediterranean. January 1943-May 1945*, London, Macmillan, 1985, p. 510).

⁶Cf. J. I. C., *Weekly Summary*, no. 85/August 24, 1944 (F. D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York, *Map Room Papers*, Container no. 233).

⁷Idem, no. 86/August 31, 1944, ff. 6-8.

precious“ source.¹ In Washington, the *Office of Naval Intelligence (O.N.I.)* estimated in similar terms the consequences of the coup d'état in Bucharest. A synthesis of the service from September 6, 1944, considering that the importance of the Romanian oil had been „enormous“ for Germany, predicted that the loss of the respective source by Berlin would constitute „a serious physical and moral blow.“²

Andreas Hillgruber investigated the **catastrophe** of the German troops in Romania after the blow of August 23, 1944.³ The well-known historian David Irving described the facts with accuracy.⁴ Both with the regret of losing an important ally in the person of Marshal Ion Antonescu as well as with the unpredictable military and political-diplomatic consequences, the Führer was shocked by the prospect of the lack of the Romanian oil resources.⁵ Another famous British specialist, John Erickson, considered: „**Romania's defection on August 23 changed the military defeat of Germany into a catastrophe.**“⁶ For Leon Wolff, a historian we have mentioned previously, the loss of the refineries in Ploiești in August 1944 coincided with the moment when „the German war machine began to collapse.“⁷

We should ask ourselves, at the end, what did the disaster caused by Hitler's loss of the Romanian petroleum consist in? According to the data used by Andreas Hillgruber, Romania's oil deliveries in the **period January 1939-July 1944** to Germany, the German armies on the fronts, and the Protectorate of Czech and Moravia amounted to **11 632 000 tons.**⁸ According to the reliable sources we have often used in the pages above, this quantity represented, on the whole, **1/3 of the general consumption of the Reich during the world conflagration of 1939-1945.** Therefore, it was not an exaggerated quantity, nor was it insignificant! Anyway, it was sufficient to ensure the leading of the operations at a continental scale, and not only that. The significance of the contribution in oil of Antonescu's Romania was best emphasized by one of the key personages in Germany, the

¹*Ibidem*, ff. 18-19.

²Cf. *The ONI Weekly*, vol. III, no. 36/September 6, 1944, p. 2785 (F. D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York, *Map Room Papers*, Container 223).

³Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, Regele Carol și Mareșalul Antonescu*, p. 261 and the following.

⁴See David Irving, *Hitler's War (1942-1945)*, London, Macmillan, 1983, pp. 692-694; *idem*, *Hitler's War*, abbreviated edition, New York, Avon Books, 1990, pp. 679-681.

⁵*Ibidem*, p. 797.

⁶John Erickson, *The Road to Berlin. Stalin's War with Germany*, vol. 2, London, Widened and Nicholson, 1983, p. 360.

⁷Leon Wolff, *Low Level Mission*, quoted edition, p. 222.

⁸See Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, Regele Carol și Mareșalul Antonescu*, pp. 290-291 (tables 5 and 6).

former Minister of the Reich's Armament, Albert Speer, in a dialog with Jacques de Launay¹.

UNFORTUNATELY, ROMANIA, ENGAGED AFTER AUGUST 23, 1944 UNTIL MAY 12, 1945 IN THE WAR AGAINST GERMANY AND ITS LAST SATELITES, IN THE CAMP OF THE UNITED NATIONS (THE ROMANIAN TROOPS WERE „INTEGRATED“ IN THE GREAT UNITS OF THE U.S.S.R.), DID NOT BENEFIT IN ANY WAY FROM THE SITUATION THAT SUPERVENED. WE CANNOT ASSERT THAT ROMANIA *WON THE WAR* NEXT TO THE GREAT ALLIES, BUT *IT CERTAINLY DID LOSE THE PEACE!*

THE WAR OF 1941-1944 AND PETROLEUM REPRESENTED THE ESSENTIAL CAUSE OF THIS CATASTROPHE.

¹See *23 august 1944: O cotitură hotărâtoare pentru sfârșitul războiului*, Magazin Istoric, București, no. 12 (129)/December 1977, p. 15.