

THE PRESENCE OF THE ROMANIAN ARMY IN BUKOVINA IN LATE 1918 AND EARLY 1919

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Abstract. In the past years, mostly on the occasion of the Centenary of the Greater Romania, several works have been published on the involvement of the Romanian Army in the achievement of the Great Union.

The recognition of the Great Union was possible through the efforts of the Romanian diplomacy internationally, during the Paris Peace Conference. Internally, the Union had to be defended against various subversive movements; an important role herein was played by the Romanian Army. Hence, various military operations were conducted in the years 1918-1920, mostly in the Bukovinian area, a province annexed by the Austrians as early as the end of the 18th century. In this respect, the use of documents kept in the The Centre for the Study and Storage of Historical Archives Pitești is more than necessary, especially the journals of operations pertaining to certain regiments.

Keywords: Romanian Army, Bukovina area, Great Union, Greater Romania, 1918-1920

Introduction

At the end of 1922, the Assembly of the Romanian Deputies was dominated by ardent debates regarding the answer to the Message of the Throne. Among those who took the floor, there was Iorgu G. Toma, one of the leaders of the national movement in Bukovina, in the first years of the 20th century. The Bukovinian deputy reminded the audience that on November 28th, 1922, they celebrated four years since the union of Bukovina and the Old Kingdom, an anniversary some had forgotten. The Bukovinian Romanians were very much aware of it, though: “in the intimacy of these souls of ours, we have felt again, the fourth time, the charm of those divine moments, the charm of the happy moments of our union with our Motherland”¹. Iorgu G. Toma continued his speech by reminding of the “wounds” left by the war and by the difficult situation of the province both during the world conflagration and in the last months of the year 1918. Starting from the words uttered more than 100 years prior, we aim in this text is to contribute to a better insight into the topic concerning the role of the Romanian Army in the consolidation and recognition of the Great Union, by

¹ “The Official Gazette of Romania” issue 8 of December 17th, 1922, pp. 93-99.

focusing on the events within the Bukovina area, where the Romanian Army was present as early as the last months of the year 1918 and the spring of 1919. In this respect, we propose to shed light on lesser known events regarding the military operations of the Romanian Army in Bukovina in the aforementioned period, and of the state of mind dominating the Bukovinian population and on the way in which they reacted and interacted with the troops of the Romanian Army.

In the past years, mostly on the occasion of the Centenary of the Greater Romania, several works have been published on the involvement of the Romanian Army in the achievement of the Great Union. From among them, it is worth noting the book of the historian Petre Otu¹; the volume edited by the historian Ion Solcanu²; or the volume coordinated by Horia Dumitrescu, Marian Moşneagu, Cornel Țucă, Dan Pintilie³. There is an increased interest for understanding the efforts of the Romanian Army for the defence of the Great Union, including through the organisation of conferences or through the publication of certain works addressing the public. The recognition of the Great Union was possible through the efforts of the Romanian diplomacy internationally, during the Paris Peace Conference. Internally, the Union had to be defended against various subversive movements; an important role herein was played by the Romanian Army. Hence, various military operations were conducted in the years 1918-1920, mostly in the Bukovinian area, a province annexed by the Austrians as early as the end of the 18th century. In this respect, the use of documents kept in the The Centre for the Study and Storage of Historical Archives Pitești is more than necessary, especially the journals of operations pertaining to certain regiments.

Historiography

The presence of the Romanian Army in Bukovina in late 1918 and early 1919 represented the topic of several works, both general and memoirs. The work penned by Constantin Kirițescu⁴ remains – even 100 years from its publication – a book of reference for Romania's participation in the First World War. Furthermore, in his book *The Romanian Army and the Union of Bessarabia and Bukovina with Romania 1917-1919*, the author Marin C. Stănescu⁵ analyses – among others – the reception of the Romanian troops in Bukovina and their advancement in the region. The historian also uses documents kept within the

¹ Petre Otu, *România în Primul Război Mondial*, Editura Litera, București, 2017.

² Ion Solcanu, *Un erou din Războiul de Întregire a României: Regimentul 9 Vânători*, Editura Junimea, Iași, 2018.

³ Horia Dumitrescu, Marian Moşneagu, Cornel Țucă, Dan Pintilie, *Divizia a VI-a Infanterie. Jurnal de operațiuni*, Editura Pallas, 2017.

⁴ Constantin Kirițescu, *Istoria Războiului pentru Întregirea României, 1916-1919*, vol. 2, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1989.

⁵ Marin C. Stănescu, *Armata română și unirea Basarabiei și Bucovinei cu România 1917-1919*, Constanța, 1999.

Central deposit of the Romanian Military Archives in Pitești, as well as works of the period. The author insists on the activities conducted by general Iacob Zadik in the last years of the year 1918 and the first months of the subsequent year. Furthermore, three years ago, the dictionary dedicated to the Romanian military commanders was published¹; it is a useful working tool for our researches. There are biographic sheets of important officers, such as Iacob Zadik and Alexandru Leca, involved in the military operations in Bukovina. In the same line, we would mention – for an overview – the volume of documents dedicated to the union of Bukovina with Romania² in order to understand better the events around the Great Union. We also note here the work written by Radu Economu³, dedicated to the same topic. Several memoirs and works of the period⁴ may help us understand the difficult situation recorded in late 1918. And not least, we mention the latest work published in the Romanian historiography penned by the historian Ion Giurcă, analysing the action and role of the 8th Division in Pokuttya⁵.

The Romanian Army in Bukovina around the union

It is well known that the end of World War I entailed several problems of the nations that have comprised the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. In case of the Bukovinian Romanians, their position was presented on February 21st, 1918, by the Bukovinian deputy Constantin Iosipescu-Grecul in the Chamber of Deputies within the Viennese Parliament. Consequently, the Ukrainian deputy Ilya Semaka presented in the Chamber of Deputies on March 6th the claims of the Ukrainians concerning the counties of Chernivtsi, Storojineț and Siret, too. After discussing the 14 points of Woodrow Wilson in the Viennese Parliament and mentioning “the possibilities of the nations within the Austro-Hungarian Empire of organising autonomously”, the deputy Constantin Iosipescu-Grecul requested autonomy for the 6 million Romanians within the monarchy⁶. At that point, Iosipescu-Grecul stated that the Romanians did not wish to exit the monarchy, while the leader of the Jews in Bukovina and Galicia, Benno Straucher stated that he would like to

¹ Valeriu Avram, Lucian Drăghici, Gabriel-George Pătrașcu, Ion Rîșnoveanu, *Războiul de întregire. Comandanți militari români (1916-1919)*, Editura Centrului Tehnic-Editorial al Armatei, București, 2016.

² *Unirea Basarabiei și Bucovinei cu România 1917-1918*, anthology by Ion Calafeteanu and Viorica Moisuc, Editura Hyperion, Chișinău, 1995.

³ Radu Economu, *Unirea Bucovinei cu România. 1918*, Editura Fundației Culturale Române, București, 1994.

⁴ *În cinstea ostașilor Diviziei a 8-a 1918 – 11 noiembrie 1919*, București 1920, Tipografia Clemența, Ion I. Nistor, *Zece ani de la Unirea Bucovinei 1918-1928*, Tiparul Bucovinei, Ion I. Nistor, *Amintiri bucovinene din vremea Unirii*, Iași, Editura Alfa, edition and preface by Doina and Liviu Papuc, 2000.

⁵ Ion Giurcă, *Trei luni în Pocuția. Acțiuni ale Diviziei a 8-a Infanterie, 23 mai-24 august 1919*, București, Editura Militară, 2019.

⁶ Daniel Hrenciuc, *Familia Flondor versus destinul Bucovinei istorice*, Editura Mega, 2018, p. 55

have the Austrian monarchy preserved; while the Ukrainian deputy Evgheni Petrusevic requested the union of all Ukrainians in one state¹. However, the projections for Bukovina did not stop here. A few months later, on October 16th, 1918, Emperor Carol I of Habsburg launched the manifesto “To my loyal nations”, where he actually proposed the organisation on federative bases of the former Empire into six independent states (Austrian, Hungarian, Czech, Polish, Yugoslavian and Ukrainian). The position of the deputy Iosipescu-Grecul was to wait for the decision taken during the Paris Peace Conference, while the claims of Ukrainians for Bukovina were ever more numerous; they wanted to annex the entire Bukovina to a Ukrainian state. This was the moment when the six Romanian deputies in Vienna formed a National Romanian Council presided by Iosipescu-Grecul, while for October 27th, they announced the organisation of the Assembly of Bukovinian Romanians, where they invited the Romanian mayors, advisors, deputies within the Diet of Bukovina and the Parliament of Vienna, State counsellors, etc.² On October 28th, 1918, Iancu Flondor asked governor Graf Von Etdorf to surrender the power and to repatriate in Bukovina the Romanian soldiers fighting in the Austrian army. Meanwhile, in Chernivtsi, Ukrainians within Regiment 41 occupied the military barracks and acted in order to seize power completely. Given that Governor Graf Von Etdorf was overwhelmed by this situation, the National Romanian Council requested assistance from the Romanian Army to stabilise the situation in Bukovina³.

Thus, after the request of the National Council of the Bukovinian Romanians addressed to the Romanian Cabinet, Division 8 Infantry⁴ was granted permission

¹ *Ibidem*, p. 56.

² *Ibidem*, pp. 58-59.

³ *Ibidem*, pp. 60-63.

⁴ The 8th Infantry Division was founded on April 1st, 1883, and the first commander of the Division was Brigadier General Dinca Iulius (The commanders were as follows, in chronological order: Ipătescu Grigore; General Berindei Anton, from December 1st, 1886; General Cantili Grigore, from March 1st, 1888; General Ipătescu Grigore, from April 1st, 1888; General Algiu Ioan, from December 1st, 1891; General Sachelarie Otton, from April 1st, 1893; General Pastia Mihail, from June 1st, 1894; General Scheleti Scarlat from November 1st, 1894; General Rasti Mihail, from April 1st, 1896; General Paladi Constantin, from April 1st, 1899; General Tell Alexandru, from August 1st, 1904; General Lambrino Alexandru, from April 1st, 1907; Brigadier General Rașcu Ioan, from April 1st, 1911; General Păstrașcu Ioan, from January 22nd, 1917; General Iacob Zadik, from February 12th, 1918). The division belonged to the 4th Army Corps and its residence was at Botoșani. At that point, it comprised Regiments 15, 16, 28 and 29 Dorobanți and the 8th Line Regiment. When it was founded, it was grouped as follows: Brigade 15 Infantry, based in Bacău, comprising the Regiments 15 and 28 Dorobanți; Brigade 16 Infantry, based in Fălticeni, comprising the Regiments 16 and 29 Dorobanți. After constitution, it was ascribed to the Division and Battalion 4 Hunters (The Centre for the Study and Storage of Historical Archives Pitești - from now on CSPMI-Pitești - Fund General Staff, file 514 Journal of Operations of the Eighth Division Infantry).

on October 23rd/November 5th, 1918¹ to cross the border of the Old Kingdom with Bukovina in order to re-establish the order in the localities. The historian Constantin Kirițescu presented the situation as follows: “In two days, the division was sent to war with the people they could gather rapidly. With many efforts, they made up three detachments: «Dragoș», «Alexandru cel Bun» and «Suceava», comprising 600 people each, with the soldiers within the infantry regiments 16, 29 and 37, to which they added the border guards and gendarmes guarding the border of Bukovina. Each detachment had just a few members of the cavalry, two batteries of artillery and a group of machine-guns. Overall, the division did not have more than 3,000 people with thin clothes on, without many supplies, but with the souls enriched by the historic mission ascribed to them.”²

Studies published so far have shown that – when this order was received – the units of Division 8 Infantry were in the residence garrisons, while the subunits of border guards, gendarmes and cavalry on the territory of the counties of Botoșani, Suceava and Dorohoi. Most of them were distributed for agrarian works and requisitions³. Hence, given that after the signing of the Bucharest Peace Treaty – based on Order 263 of the Great General Quarter – the Regiment of Divisionary March was dissolved, and the officers and the troop were discharged to the regiments of the Division. The process of army demobilisation determined the troops of the Division to withdraw in their garrisons of residence. On May 7th, 1918, the commander of the Division moved from Cleja to Botoșani, in the garrison of residence. Hence, the Eighth Division no longer obeyed the Second Army; it was now under the direct supervision of the General Staff⁴.

Thus, on October 24th, 1918, the order of the Commander of the 4th Army Corps, General N. Petală, was as follows: “It has been a year since, given the collapse of the Russian Empire, our Bessarabian brothers called us to them, to complete the liberation begun and to intertwine the whole and eternal union of two sister-countries. Today, the fate of the Romanian nation is on its road towards

¹ “Bukovinian delegates are coming, asking for the Romanian Army to intervene in Bukovina to calm down the Bolshevik trends that had begun manifesting” (CSPMI-Pitești, RIJO, file 4128 Journal of third Regiment Roșiori, f. 30).

² Constantin Kirițescu, *op. cit.*, p. 392-393; The Journal of Operations of the Eighth Division shows that at the moment of the mobilisation, the troops were as follows: Regiment 16 Infantry had 495 troop and 27 officers; Regiment 29 Infantry held 367 troop and 17 officers, while Regiment 27 Infantry, 231 troop and 12 officers. They also comprised detachments of border guards and rural gendarmes, as well as two batteries making up: 529 troop and 12 officers (CSPMI-Pitești, Fund General Staff, file 514 Journal of Operations of the Eighth Division Infantry, f. 50/v).

³ Dumitru Seserman, *Limitări militare impuse României prin pacea de la București (24 aprilie/7 mai 1918) și reluarea acțiunilor armatei române în Bucovina, Basarabia și Pocuția*, Editura Centrului Tehnic Editorial al Armatei, 2002, p. 33.

⁴ CSPMI-Pitești, Fund General Staff, file 514 Journal of Operations of the Eighth Division Infantry, f. 49/v.

accomplishment, and Bukovina is calling us a second time. Bucovina, our beloved Romanian land, torn off the Moldavian body more than two centuries before, raises its voice towards us and asks the help of our armies, to save it from the open fire from the moment the victory of our allies collapsed once and for all the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Our beloved king and the leaders of the country answered to this brotherly calling and I have chosen you, my soldiers of the 4th Army Corps, to take the word of peace and union to the Romanian land of Bukovina (...).”¹

The commander N. Petală ordered for Regiment 3 Border Guards to occupy – with the company dislocated at Burdujeni, during the night of November 5th-6th – the localities of Ițcani, Suceava in order to re-establish order. Hence, three power units were formed. The first was Detachment Dorohoi, commanded by Col. Dumitru Gheorghiu, the commander of Regiment 29 Infantry. The detachment comprised Regiment 29 Infantry; border guards and rural gendarmes; a fraction of Regiment 8 Roșiori; a group of motorcycle-mounted machine guns and a battery of artillery. The initial mission was to occupy the localities of Siret, to re-establish order and to maintain peace. The second unit was the one of Detachment Botoșani, commanded by Col. Victor Tomoroveanu, the commander of Regiment 37 Infantry, comprising Regiment 37 Infantry, border guards and rural gendarmes, a fraction of Regiment 8 Roșiori, a group of motorcycle-mounted machine guns and a battery of artillery, with the mission of advancing towards Siret, where it would receive new orders. The last unit was the one of Detachment Fălticeni, commanded by Col. Alex Rotaru, the commander of Regiment 16 Infantry, comprising: Regiment 16 Infantry, border guards and rural gendarmes, Regiment 3 Roșiori, a group of motorcycle-mounted machine guns and a battery of artillery. The actions of Detachment Dorohoi and of Detachment Fălticeni were to be coordinated by General Lecca Aristide (the commander of Brigade 16 Infantry) and by General Ion Neculcea (the commander of Brigade 14 Infantry). All of them accounted for around 3,000 people and they would all be making up a group called the Royal Romanian Troops in Bukovina².

This was a new mission; thus, it was necessary to coordinate the *modus operandi* and the conduct of the Romanian troops. General Iacob Zadik gave the following order³: “The troops will be considered as being in campaign; in their

¹ CSPMI-Pitești, fond Fourth Army Corps, file 339/142 – Historical Registry Fourth Army Corps, f. 81.

² Dumitru Seserman, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

³ Iacob Zadik (Born on December 8th, 1867-d.) went to the School of Military Sons in Iași, then he attended the courses of the School of Officers of Artillery, Genius and Navy in Bucharest. In 1905, he was appointed General Staff officer, and in 1913 he participated in the military operations in Bulgaria. During the First World War, he was appointed General Staff chief of the North Army (until December 5th, 1916), then General Staff chief of Army I, a position that he held until August 12th, 1917. He also held the position of General Secretary of the Ministry of Ammunitions and War Materials (September 1917- February 1918), while in the period February 1918- April 1920, the position of commander of the 8th Division (see Alexandrin Cuțui, *Generalul Iacob Zadik și eliberarea Bucovinei de sub dominația habsburgică*, in the vol. “Armata română și patrimoniul național”, Edit. centrului Tehnic-Editorial al Armatei, București, 2010, pp. 516-520).

actions, the units will be put in contact with the communal authorities; the main concern of the commanders and the troop is to re-establish peace in the localities; to protect the population against the gangs of perpetrators and to restore order, detachments will be sent that – after ending the mission – will return to their respective units. There will be no forced requisitions; everything will be paid in cash; the Romanian commanders will contact the Austrian commanders, explaining them the role of our troops; avoid challenging the Austro-Hungarian troops.”² At the level of the Office of Operations pertaining to the Eighth Division Infantry, the action of the Division was defined as follows: “The Eighth Division is in charge with occupying Northern Bessarabia (the county of Hotin) and Bukovina within its historical limits, thus ensuring peace and order inside and resisting at all costs the potential attacks from the part of our neighbours.”³

On November 8th,⁴ 1918, the actions were launched in the following order: Detachment Dorohoi advanced to Mihăileni, where it stationed overnight; Detachment Botoșani advanced to Vârful Câmpului, staying there overnight; *Detachment Fălticeni* acted at a fast pace, thus managing to occupy the localities of Suceava and Ițcani, and with a part of the forces, it restored order in Câmpulung. On the day the actions began, the commander of the Eighth Division issued a day order for the subordinated troops: “Soldiers! Fate had bestowed upon you the great luck of being the first to step on the priceless land of Bukovina. Be proud and shows yourselves worthy of the confidence entrusted in you! You are the defenders of the wealth and lives of the Bukovinian population. Show on all occasions, through your behaviour, the true brotherly love of the population that you support. May the step you take be fruitful and Godspeed!”⁵

Meanwhile, in Chernivtsi, two distinct actions were being carried out: the soldiers within the former Austro-Hungarian army left the units without any order, thus causing panic; on the other hand, authorities, soldiers and the Ukrainian

¹ Mihai-Aurelian Căruntu, *Un document inedit despre intrarea armatei române în Cernăuți (11 noiembrie 1918)* în „Suceava. Anuarul Muzeului Bucovinei”, XLIII, 2016, pp. 161-167.

² Dumitru Seserman, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

³ *Dare de seamă asupra operațiunilor executate de Divizia a opta în intervalul de la 27 octombrie la 2 noiembrie (1919)*, in the CSPMI-Pitești, fund General Staff, file. 4/6 (524), f. 242.

⁴ On November 3rd, 1918, the Ukrainians summoned a great assembly at Chernivtsi, which voted for dividing Bukovina by the ethnical criterion. The assembly of the Ukrainians decided that – when the city of Chernivtsi – the circumscriptions of Zastavna, Coțmani, Vașcăuți and Vijnița as a whole, the circumscriptions of Chernivtsi and Siret according to the majority determined at the last census and some localities in Storojineț, Rădăuți, Suceava and Câmpulung, with Ukrainian majorities, became national-Ukrainian territories, and the National Ukrainian Council took over the power over these territories. The situation had gotten out of coy formations (Constantin Ungureanu, *Bucovina în vâltoarea evenimentelor din toamna anului 1918*, in *Local și național la 100 de ani de la Marea Unire. Reflecții botoșănene*, coord. Adrian-Bogdan Ceobanu, Dănuț Huțu, Editura Argonaut, Cluj-Napoca, 2019, pp. 238-240).

⁵ Dumitru Seserman, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

population acted to take over power in Bukovina. The Ukrainians banished the Austrian governor, count Etdorf. Iancu Flondor learnt about the Ukrainians' intention of governing the northern part of Bukovina up to the Prut and sent a message to general Zadik to order the troops' arrival sooner. To mobilise the army, General Zadik renamed the Detachments as follows: Detachment Dorohoi was named *Dragoș*, after the name of the voivode who dismounted in Moldavia; Detachment Botoșani received the name *Alexandru cel Bun*, by reminding the soldiers about the courage acts of the former Moldavian prince; while Detachment Fălticeni was called *Suceava*. The three Detachments reprised their action, and until the evening of the 9th, they occupied the localities of Tereșeni, Siret and Hliboca¹.

On November 11th, 1918 the Romanian Army² entered Chernivtsi³. General Iacob Zadik addressed a proclamation to the population of this province, where he mentioned: "Upon answering to the summoning of the Bukovinian Committee, the Romanian Army, on the High Order of His Majesty King Ferdinand of Romania, stepped on the land of the Great Prince Stephen to protect the life, wealth and freedoms of the inhabitants, regardless of their nation and faith against the gangs of criminals who began their work of destruction in our beautiful country. Upon crossing the border set between us by a cruel fate more than a hundred years ago – a border that has failed to separate our hearts, though – the Romanian troops came to you, bringing their love and support, for the freedom of achieving the wishes born from the legitimate rights of peoples of being in charge of their fate. With these feelings in our hearts and with faith in the honesty of your requirement for assistance, we invite the Bukovinian people not to change for any reason the usual life and occupations. I, the undersigned, guarantee to any worker the free execution of their civic rights. I warn, at the same time, that I will repress with all severity any attempt at disturbing the order, acts of violence or disobedience of our orders."⁴

On November 11th, the main street of Chernivtsi was full of people; they all had come to welcome the Romanian Army. In three automobiles, there were General Zadik, accompanied by the head of the General Staff, Colonel Rovinaru and other officers, given that the headquarters of the commandments were in the house of Archbishop Artenie Berariu, in Ceahor, a rural commune 3 km away from Chernivtsi. General Zadik climbed the stairs of the National Palace – where

¹ *Ibidem*, p. 36.

² When the Romanian troops entered through the south of Bukovina, in villages and cities (Gura Humorului, Câmpulung Moldovenesc), the population welcomed them enthusiastically and cheered on the army, with flags and arches of triumph (CSPMI-Pitești, RIJO, file 4128 Journal of Regiment 3 Roșiori, f. 30).

³ Mihai Aurelian Cărunt, *Un document inedit despre intrarea armatei române în Cernăuți (11 noiembrie 1918)* in „Suceava. Anuarul Muzeului Bucovinei”, XLIII, 2016, pp. 161-167.

⁴ Ion Nistor, *Unirea Bucovinei. 28 noiembrie 1918. Studii și documente*, Editura Napoca-Star, 2010, p. 64.

he was welcomed by the president of the National Council Iancu Flondor, by father Dionisie Bejan and by the other members of the Council. Carried on the shoulders, with flowers thrown from the crowd and countless cheers like “Long live the Greater Romania”, “Long live the Royal Family”, General Zadik was taken to the automobile. The main square received a new name: the Union Square. The convoy – led by Iancu Flondor, General Zadik, officers and members of the National Council – head to the metropolitan residence. General Zadik ends his speech as follows: “May God help us accomplish our ideal: Long live His Majesty the King and the entire Dynasty!”. The population danced the traditional folk dance of the union (*hora*).¹

What was the military evolution after entering Chernivtsi?

The city of Chernivtsi was divided into three sectors and in each sector were assigned teams consisting of 1 officer, 1 graduate, and 7 soldiers. To maintain order in the city, the teams searched and lifted the weapons from civilian homes². A first confrontation with the armed Ukrainian gangs took place the very next day after the entry in Chernivtsi, when a subunit of Regiment 37 Infantry – sent scouting in the direction Chernivtsi-Mămăieștii Noi – was struck with fire on the eastern margin of the Luzan village. Confrontations took place, ending with the capturing of 17 prisoners, 6 machine-guns, 4 ammunition cases and several guns. The Romanian detachment recorded 1 dead, 3 wounded and 4 missing. After the interrogation of the prisoners, it was revealed that the Ukrainians – in their retreat – attempted a mobilisation of the population in Northern Bukovina. Hence, the Romanian Army rushed northward. A very clear division of the troops in the territory followed.

We find information about the military activity after the entry in Chernivtsi in the journal of operations of Regiment 16 Infantry. On November 1st/13th: “The Regiment accompanied by a battery of Regiment 12 Artillery and a section of moto-machine guns starts marching from the Barracks of Regiment 22 Landwehr from Chernivtsi in the direction of Schepenitz. At the bridge over the Prut, we have gotten the news that in Luzan, there were several gangs of Ukrainians. The Regiment marching surveyed the following villages: Kamperal, Nemnamajesti, Altmamajesti. On the outskirts of the Luzan village, the advanced elements stopped, while the battery of artillery fired 4 projectiles on the village and then it ordered the cease of the first elements, followed by detachments without any resistance”.³ After this moment, the authorities and the population calmed down, but the detachment continued the march with safety service toward Shypyntsi.

¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 65-67.

² CSPMI-Pitești, RIJO 1, nr. 3439, Regimentul 29 Infanterie. Copie după registrul Jurnale de Operații. 15 august 1916-10 aprilie 1920, f. 41.

³ CSPMI-Pitești, RIJO, file 3363, Copy of the historical registry and journal of operations of Regiment 16 Infantry, f. 87

There were discussions with the population to find out their state of mind. In Luzan, they discovered that at the sugar factory, there was a great military warehouse, but it was devastated by the inhabitants of the surrounding villages. Following the orders from the 8th Division, the Regiment conducted several scouting actions, starting with November 3rd/16th. In many of these scouting actions, measures were taken to support the population. The Ukrainians had retreated, the population had started to lay down the arms, and in some villages, the mayor and the gendarme received back-up. In other cases, Ukrainian committees were arrested, such as the one of Kolomyia. The eight Ukrainians were first sent to Shypyntsi, and from there to Chernivtsi.¹

On November 12th, the detachments operating in Northern Bukovina and Dniester occupied all the localities. The journal of operations of the Division stated that – in general – there was silence at that point, “the detachments proceeded to make and maintain order and to gather the weapons and ammunitions from the inhabitants”.² Throughout the following months, the objective was a clear one: keeping the order and defending the borders. In the telegram of December 14th, 1918 by Corps IV Army, general Prezan highlighted that it was not in our interest for an attack against Ukraine, but they had to be prepared for any attack. He also mentioned that measures had been taken to mobilise the fourth Division, meant to consolidate the troops of Bessarabia and of Northern Bukovina.³

The measures were necessary, because they received rumours according to which an attack of the Ukrainians against Bukovina was prepared. Given that in the area, the representatives of the English mission had arrived, too, they were oriented toward Galicia to discuss with the Ukrainian commanders. The report drafted up by Captain Jonson is more than eloquent: “the West Ukrainians keep having their eyes on Bukovina and their tendency is to occupy it by attacking it. The conditions set by them to see Bukovina occupied by American or English troops indicate precisely their intention, as well as their independence of launching an attack at any point. The fact exposed by the captain himself that he saw trains with troops and artillery going toward Bukovina confirms the first news learned by the Division, according to which the Ukrainians were preparing to attack Bukovina; and its failure to execute would be due to a piece of advice or to an agreement set by the English captain with the Ukrainian government. However, it seems that the agreement ended with the condition of the agreement troops occupying Bukovina”.⁴

¹ *Ibidem*, f. 88.

² CSPMI-Pitești, Fund General Staff, file 514 Journal of Operations of the Eighth Infantry Division, f. 52.

³ CSPMI-Pitești, Fund Great General Quarter, file 5, f. 2.

⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 11-12.

Under these circumstances, the demand was to supplement the troops, not to reduce them, as well as to organise as fast as possible the Bukovinian gendarmerie. Hence, in the 36 days from the entry in Chernivtsi, Division 8 Infantry set up the battle disposition, installed the border guards at the border and some others inside. To this action, 75 officers and 1,828 soldiers participated. However, 18,437 people from Bukovina were also “recruited”. The state of alert maintained until late January. Until the end of March 1919, the activity of the Division was reduced. It was limited to dislocations of units and subunits and to the execution of the campaign fortifications.¹

However, the Ukrainian issue was not the only challenge for the Romanian Army; so were the episodes of violence emerging in different states, maintaining restlessness and tension. For instance, on October 29th, 1918, Regiment 1 *Roșiori* got the order of stopping in the Lipcani area and of executing the order of disarming the neighbouring villages. On October 30th, the quarter of the Division was set at Lipcani.² After the departure of the Austrian troops and until the arrival of the Romanian troops, in a timeframe of 3-4 days, the villagers started robbing people. On the railways, the following rollingstock was found: 32 functional train engines and 28 broken engines; 310 closed wagons; 9 classes and 161 platforms. The region lacked barley, flour and oats. To bring peace back again, the Romanian Army decided to disarm the villages, to protect the railways, to monitor the Dniester, while the border guards occupied the entire border with posts.³ However, the Bolshevik gangs still created problems. In late November 1918, families of owners and officers in Kamianets-Podilsky requested consent to seek refuge to Hotin, to avoid the Bolshevik attacks. The Romanian Army was asked to intervene in stopping the violence caused by the Bolsheviks. This was also the case of the Ukrainian captain from Staraia Ușzica, who – accompanied by a delegate of the small landowners – requested on November 22nd assistance from

¹ Dumitru Seserman, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

² The troop disposition was as follows: Brigade 1 *Roșiori* with Regiment 3 Călărași settled in Kelmency; Regiment 1 *Roșiori* at Lipkani; Brigade 2 *Roșiori* with Regiment 9 *Roșiori* at Hotin; Regiment 4 *Roșiori* at Noua Sulița; Brigade 3 *Roșiori* at Soroka; Regiment 10 *Roșiori* available to Division 9. Regiment 40 Infantry, with a Battalion in the localities of Hotin, Briczani and Briceni (CSPMI-Pitești, RIJO 1, issue 1815, *Copy of the Journal of operations of Division I Cavalry, August 2nd, 1918-March 31st, 1921*, f. 134).

³ CSPMI-Pitești, *Copy of the Journal of operations of Division I Cavalry, August 2nd, 1918- March 31st, 1919*, RIJO 1, issue 1815, f. 134/v. The Ukrainian propaganda misconstrued the orders of the local authorities in this issue of the weapon regime in houses, too. Hence, those with weapons in their households were advised to give them to the city-hall; in its turn, the city hall would give them to the Army. This aspect was interpreted – in the key of the Ukrainian propaganda – as a fear of Romanian authorities of a potential riot from those who would have been enemies of the idea of union or as the fact that the Army no longer had enough weapons to fight the Ukrainians (see “Glasul Bucovinei”, year II, issue 73, 2/15 February 1919, p. 2).

the Romanian troops stationed in the area.¹ In order to protect as much as possible the areas affected by the Bolshevik attacks, on November 28th, the area was divided into three sectors: the left sector was occupied by Regiment 9 *Roșiori*, Battalion 3 of Regiment 40 Infantry and a battery of artillery on horseback; the central sector was occupied by Regiment 3 *Călărași*; and the right sector, where Battalion I of Regiment 40 Infantry was placed.²

Due to the length of the guard sector, the general reserve comprised as follows: Regiment I *Roșiori* at Noua Sulița; Cyclists Company at Lipkani; Battalion 2/40 Infantry and a battery of soldiers on horseback at Briceni.³

Throughout the month of November 1918, but also after this date, the Romanian troops were concerned with the acquisition of arms and ammunitions, as well as with the house searches to check whether the cattle on paper were actually owned by the household members. The cattle ownership control began after many complaints from the inhabitants who accused that the Ukrainians or other ill-intended persons stole their cattle or other goods from households. Hence, for instance, on November 20th, 1918, Battalion I of Regiment 37 Infantry returned to the rightful owners 24 cattle taken by the Ukrainians and distributed to the inhabitants. In another village, the Romanian villages searched the houses to find the harvest stolen by the inhabitants from their rightful owner.⁴ Another example is the one occurred on November 23rd, when Battalion III of Regiment 37 Infantry found at Rarancea a part of the goods stolen from an owner, Ștefanovici: 3 horses, 2 billows, 1 wagon of wheat, 6 carts of wood, 2 winnows. In two other villages in the vicinity, Mahala and Cotul Ostriței, they found another part of the goods belonging to another owner, Stammler: 1 seeder, 4 ploughs, 3 bags of corn flour, 1,000 kg potatoes, 20 bags of barley and a wagon.⁵

Toward the beginning of December, most troops stationed. In case of Regiment 37 Infantry, the state of the facts was the following: Battalion I stationed at Shypyntsi; Battalion II at Kotzman; while Battalion III at Luzan. A short period of the organisation of the Regiment with people from new contingents followed; they carried out individual instructions, practical instructions for grenadier specialists, machine-guns, telephonists and liaison officers.⁶

The day of December 6th, 1918 – the celebration of Saint Nicholas – represented an occasion to boost the morale of the Romanian troops, as well as of the population in the territory. In the barracks of Regiment 29 Infantry in Chernivtsi, a religious

¹ CSPMI-Pitești, RIJO 1, nr. 1815, Copie de pe Jurnalul de Operațiuni al Diviziei I Cavalerie, 2 august 1918-31 martie 1921, f. 137.

² *Ibidem*, f. 137/v.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ *Journal of Operations of Regiment 37 Infantry in the period 15.08.1916-31.03.1921*, in CSPMI-Pitești, RIJO 1, issue 3493, f. 151.

⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 151/v.

⁶ *Ibidem*, ff. 153-154.

service was organised, also attended by General Iacob Zadik, along with Iancu Flondor, as well as a representative of the English mission accompanied by the officers and the troop of the Regiment not on-call. Following the religious, General Iacob Zadik held a speech of encouragement and the troop enjoyed a festive meal.¹ During the winter holidays, the activities of the troops were generally suspended. Regiment 37 Infantry, for instance, also enjoyed the religious service; they were allowed to go to the cinema or to walk around town.²

Generally, things became quite calm; there were only short episodes of border attacks, such as on January 7th, 1919, when a Bolshevik troop crossed the Dniester at Mavslaveea and surrounded the village, disarming and capturing the post with the help of locals. The post was taken back and the Bolsheviks were banished two days later.³ However, from early 1919, the situation became ever more complicated, as the Bolshevik gangs created turmoil in Bessarabia. In a telegram of January 11th, to Corps 5 Army, the instructions were clear: “to repress the riots, proceed energetically and quickly. Show no mercy, tolerance or hesitation in such situation.”⁴ Among the persons who stood up during the confrontations with the Bolshevik troops, it is worth noting General Schina, who ran Division 1 Cavalry.⁵ According to his superiors, he led “the operations as effectively as possible, chasing back the Bolshevik troops over the Hotin and the Dniester”.⁶

Another important mission in maintaining security in the area was the involvement of the Army in creating a structure meant to ensure an efficient economy in the province. Hence, a central economic service was organised, comprising the chief usher of Division 8 Infantry and the state secretaries with the Department of Internal Affairs, of Industry, of Commerce, of Estates, of Agriculture and Diet; and a county economic service. This economic structure was dissolved on January 6th, 1919, thus withdrawing the activity of the military commanders in economic matters.⁷ The army also became involved in the organisation of the gendarmerie, to maintain rural and urban order. The process ended on May 1st, 1919 (the high decree 1.635/1919), by creating the Moldova Gendarmes Battalion, comprising 4 territorial companies; 1 warehouse company;

¹ *Regiment 29 Infantry. Copy of the Registry of the Journal of Operations. August 15th, 1916- April 10th, 1920*, in CSPMI-Pitești, RIJO 1, issue 3439, f. 43.

² *Journal of Operations of Regiment 37 Infantry in the period 15.08.1916-31.03.1921*, in CSPMI-Pitești, RIJO 1, issue 3493, f. 154/v.

³ CSPMI-Pitești, *Copy of the Journal of operations of Division I Cavalry, August 2nd, 1918-March 31st, 1921*, RIJO 1, issue 1815, f. 139.

⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 150.

⁵ The Division had received an order, as early as the beginning of November 1918, to go to Northern Bessarabia.

⁶ Valeriu Avram, Lucian Drăghici, Gabriel-George Pătrașcu, Ion Rîșnoveanu, *Războiul de întregire. Comandanți militari români (1916-1919)*, Editura Centrului Tehnic-Editorial al Armatei, București, 2016, p. 193.

⁷ Dumitru Seserman, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44.

25 sections and 206 gendarmes' posts, with a total number of 21 officers and 1,258 gendarmes.¹ In the month of March, few provoking attacks were registered at the borders, which the army stopped immediately. In general, the troops were in charge with the organisation, the individual instruction or defence tactics drills. On some days, morals lessons were taught to the soldiers, on topics such as "Bolshevism and its consequences; A soldier's dignity – a soldier's honour; The way they should treat the population".²

The day of April 9th, 1919 was another reason to celebrate for the troops of the Romanian army. Hence, the cathedral of Hotin hosted a *Te Deum*, attended by General Mihail Schina, commander of the Division I Cavalry, along with the civilian and military authorities. The troops present at the event were introduced; then, the troops and the students within the city of Hotin marched. On this occasion, General Mihail Schina held a "patriotic and inspiring speech, showcasing the importance of this day through the national gesture made by the Basarabeni brothers (a year before) of declaring united with Romania."³ At noon, an official meal was organised, attended by His Eminence Bishop Iurie, all the heads of corps within the Division, civilian authorities and personalities in Hotin (pertaining to various nationalities). After the meal, a student celebration took place, during which they sang the royal anthem and recited patriotic poems.⁴

In the month of April, temporary defence measures were taken, following the attack of the Hungarian troops in Transylvania. On May 1st, 1919, when the Romanian troops in Transylvania went on Tisa, Corps 4 Army was renamed *Petal General Group*. On the same day, it was announced that from April 28th, a new group of forces was settled in Bessarabia and Bukovina. Based on this order, a new action plan was developed.

In the period May 14th-17th, 1919, the sector of the Division was visited by General Grenly, the head of the British Military Mission, thus appeasing possible diplomatic conflicts – as it occurred at Hotin in January. On May 22nd, 1919, the Eighth Division received an order to act in Galicia, more precisely in Pokuttya, at the request of the Polish government, by starting another phase within the activity of this Division.⁵

As a conclusion

After the Union of 1918, attempts were made to keep in the collective memory the importance of the moment represented by the entry of the Romanian Army in Chernivtsi. Hence, on November 11th, 1919, the event was mentioned in

¹ *Ibidem*, p. 43.

² *Journal of Operations of Regiment 37 Infantry in the period 15.08.1916-31.03.1921*, in CSPMI-Pitești, RIJO 1, issue 3493, f. 163.

³ *Ibidem*, f. 165/v.

⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 165/v.

⁵ Dumitru Seserman, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

the pages of the newspaper *Glasul Bucovinei*. The piece focused on the legitimacy of the presence of the Romanian army – reminding the decisions of the Constituent Assembly –, on the historical and national rights. The piece stated that – to preserve these decisions and to draw everyone’s respect for them – “our work should be topped by our brave Army”.¹ They reminded, again, the danger of the “Bolshevik gangs”, which could have created problems had the Romanian Army not been present there. In terms of legitimating the presence of the Army, they also mention that it was called by “the population of the country, eager for peace and quiet”,² while General Zadik was seen as a messenger of King Ferdinand. The second image highlighted is the one of the festive moments welcoming the army in Chernivtsi, using terms with an emotional impact, such as “anthem” and “flag”: “Chernivtsi was clad in celebration attire. The Romanian flag flew high. Our national palace was adorned by the fir trees brought by our brave housemen living in the vicinity of the city. In the yard, ladies and children carrying flowers waited for three days straight the arrival of the first Romanian soldiers, always announced by a messenger eager to be the first announcing the salvation news. The notes of the national anthem rose from the young chests and flooded our ears with a charm the likes of which we had never heard. The day of November 11th perfected the victory of justice this autumn. Long live the Romanian soldier!”³

A year later, in 1920, the November 11th issue of the same newspaper was also anniversary, with articles dedicated to the Romanian army and to the union of Bukovina with Romania; such articles covered several pages. “November 11th will always be a day of great celebration for the Upper Moldavia of Stephen the Great; a day of recollection and spiritual elevation where the Romanian people in Bukovina is set to remember, year after year, the freedom granted by the Romanian army and by the merciful Romanian heart of His Majesty King Ferdinand I”,⁴ as mentioned in the first part of the article. It was a generous text, featuring details about the episode in question. It reminded the creation of the Constituent Assembly of Bukovina, which had the legitimacy of deciding how to bring peace in the territory, as well as the principles of self-determination supported by the USA. Whereas the people had decided – through the voice of the Constituent Assembly – the annexation of Bukovina to Romania, thus wishing to make this decision official, the troubles and uncertainty produced by the Bolshevik troops made the intervention of the Romanian army necessary.

¹ Procopovici, Alecu, *Zi de sărbătoare*, in “Glasul Bucovinei”, year II, November 11th, 1919, issue 285, p. 1.

² *Ibidem*.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ Vasile Grecu, *11 noiembrie 1918*, in “Glasul Bucovinei”, year III, November 11th, 1920, issue 560, p. 1.

celebrate the moment. However, there was a slight critical tone regarding some shortcomings after the union, determined the numerous changes of governments, which failed to make the economy more efficient, from their perspective. Nonetheless, people are advised to work for the good of the state and, implicitly, of any citizen individually: “whoever is a patriot without any ulterior motives and feels the troubled situation we are in has to put in all efforts for the service of the country, because the country does not deserve to be ruined by people who fail to understand the sublime of national altruism”.¹

In the issue of 1922, Vasile Grecu – the author of the piece dedicated to the remembrance of November 11th – started by mentioning that, whereas a decision had been taken for the acts of the union between the three provinces to be celebrated in one day, Bukovinians should not forget the day of November 11th, 1918. He mentions General Zadik, the order maintained by the Romanian army and the possibility that it created, for the Bukovinian Romanians to have political representation in Bucharest and to contribute concretely to problem solving. Just one article was also published on November 11th, 1923. The style is significantly more romanticised, similar to the first articles, of 1918-1919. They feature the name of General Zadik and the popular emulation in the Union Square. A year later, in 1924, there is no more mention of November 11th, 1918. All the aforementioned articles highlight a set of terms and phrases such as “our army”, “celebration”, “defence”, “peace”, “fate”, all meant to depict the royal troops present in Bukovina. The emulation and enthusiasm of the population, as well as efforts made by the Romanian troops to banish the Bolshevik gangs and to maintain the order in the territory are the episodes on which the articles focused. It may be concluded that this endeavour of the Romanian newspapers in Bukovina of developing a unitary historical narrative – which would dwell in the collective memory – is actually confirmed by the real actions carried out in the territory. The analysis hereof – comprising information collected from military archives – outlines a much clearer image of the actions conducted by the Romanian army in Bukovina, of the motivation and needs of the inhabitants. The last asked – more than a few times – the representatives of the Romanian army to ensure justice would be served in the context of certain disputes or community problems operated or stirred by the Bolshevik gangs (as it occurred with the cattle or grain robberies). Hence, besides stopping the direct attacks of the Bolshevik gangs on the civilian population and on the Romanian army, the latter was also interested in stopping local offences, such as those mentioned above; these actions were meant to restore peace and the natural course of the social and economic life in Bukovina. These multiple missions that the Romanian Army has accomplished in Bucovina contributed to the pacification of the province.

¹ *11 noiembrie. După 3 ani*, “Glasul Bucovinei”, year IV, November 11th, 1921, issue 844, p. 1.