

## OIL AND WAR IN ROMANIAN HISTORY DURING THE XX<sup>th</sup> CENTURY (I)

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**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 céda à Washington,*

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*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 ...»<sup>1</sup>*

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.”<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup>Aymeric 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.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. 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”.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup>Francis Dealisi, *Le pétrole*, Paris, Payot, 1921, p. 35.

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

<sup>3</sup>See 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.<sup>1</sup>

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”.<sup>2</sup> In the opinion of Cesare Alimentini, petroleum represents today the “keystone” of industry and transportation and the first condition for the national defence of the states.<sup>3</sup> 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 cannot be conceived, without it life cannot exist”.<sup>4</sup> 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.”<sup>5</sup> 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”.<sup>6</sup> 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*<sup>7</sup> 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,

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

<sup>2</sup>Anton Zischka, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>Cesare Alimentini, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

<sup>4</sup>G. H. Damaschin, *Problema combustibilului și politica de Stat*, București, Tip “Cartea Medicală”, 1924, p.1.

<sup>5</sup>Edward Ward, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>6</sup>Jean-Jacques Berreby, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup>Edgar 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”.<sup>1</sup> 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!”<sup>2</sup>

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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 lubrication of cart axels, the lighting of boyar courts or the treatment of certain

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<sup>1</sup>Jean-Jacques Berreby, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

<sup>2</sup>Pierre l’Espagnol de la Tramerye, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

diseases in people or animals – dates from very old times.<sup>1</sup> 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."<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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").<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

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. Research<sup>6</sup> 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 present. It is very probable that, before the Romans, the Dacians knew black oil and used it..."

<sup>1</sup>See 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.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *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.

<sup>3</sup>Valerian 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.

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

<sup>5</sup>Cf. 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.

<sup>6</sup>Constantin 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.

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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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 derivative 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.<sup>4</sup> 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,<sup>5</sup> and in 1858 it became the property of his brother, Marin Mehedințeanu.<sup>6</sup> 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 oil.<sup>7</sup> In April 1858, oil lamps began to be used for the public lighting of the

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

<sup>2</sup>Armand Rabischon, *op. cit.*, I, p. 1811.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Valerian Popovici, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

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

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

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

<sup>7</sup>Constantin Alimănișteanu, *Patruzeci de ani în industria petrolului din România. 1866-1906*, in *Convorbiri Literare*, no. 3-5/1906, p. 442.

Moldavian capital, Iași,<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>2</sup> 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,<sup>3</sup> 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”.<sup>4</sup> 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,<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup>

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 seven years, to secure his monopoly over the U.S. oil pipe-lines, which enabled

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<sup>1</sup>Valerian Popovici, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. 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 (Suppliment).

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Daniel Durand, *La politique pétrolière internationale*, Paris, P.U.F., 1962, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup>Jean-Jacques Berreby, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

<sup>5</sup>Cesare Alimenti, *op. cit.*, p. 77; Karl Hoffmann, *Oelpolitik und angelsächsischer Imperialismus*, Berlin, Ring-Verlag, 1927, pp. 24-26.

<sup>6</sup>Henry Peyret, *La bataille des trusts*, Paris, P.U.F., 1954, pp. 21-22.



him to subordinate most of the isolated internal producers.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> Concurrently, the Company oriented toward winning foreign markets as well, so that around 1919 it dominated the commerce with kerosene in Europe and China.<sup>3</sup>

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*.<sup>4</sup> Under the leadership of Henry Deterding, nicknamed “Napoleon of petroleum”,<sup>5</sup> 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.).<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup>

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.<sup>8</sup> In 1914, through the intervention of Lord Fisher and of Winston Churchill, the British government acquired an important stock (representing 56%

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

<sup>2</sup>Pierre l’Espagnol de la Tramerye, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibidem.*

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

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

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

<sup>7</sup>G. Damougeot-Perron, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

<sup>8</sup>See 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.

of the trust's capital) which was going to secure its actual control over *Anglo Persian Oil Co. Ltd.*<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup> 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.*<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> In Europe, *Deutsche Bank* was the one that most closely served the plans of the

<sup>1</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>2</sup>Pierre l'Espagnol de la Tramerye, *op. cit.*, pp. 90.

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

<sup>4</sup>Cf. 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.

<sup>5</sup>Frederik Wirth, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

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

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.*<sup>1</sup> 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.*<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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,<sup>4</sup> Russia or Galitiya. In 1912-1914, the German groups carried on 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 the respective vilayets from the sultan’s government. For the exploitation of this concession, the three groups formed *Turkish Petroleum Co.*<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>A.A. Fursenko, *op. cit.*, pp. 214, 414-415.

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

<sup>3</sup>A. A. Fursenko, *op. cit.*, p. 427.

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

<sup>5</sup>Cf. G. Damougeot-Perron, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-189.

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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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,<sup>3</sup> 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, which offered “inestimable” advantages for the navy<sup>4</sup> regarding: speed, range of action, storage, etc. Churchill developed the program of his predecessors, which

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. V. Iscu, *Răsboale 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.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Pierre l’Espagnol de la Tramerye, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

<sup>3</sup>Lord 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).

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Winston S. Churchill, *La crise mondiale*, I Paris, Payot, 1925, pp. 121-129.

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,<sup>1</sup> 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".<sup>2</sup> This way, Great Britain was the first state<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

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 *Sherman Act*, which later was the basis of the entire U.S. antitrust legislation.<sup>6</sup> Article 1 of the above mentioned law declared "illegal" any contract or economic-

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<sup>1</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup>Alexandru Topliceanu, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Dr. Paul Horia Suciuc, *op. cit.*, I, p. 130.

<sup>4</sup>Winston S. Churchill, *op. cit.*, I, p. 130.

<sup>5</sup>Vintilă I. C. Brătianu, *Petrolul și politica de stat*, București, Imprimeriile Independența, 1919, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup>Simon 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.

financial combination that would have restricted “the freedom of business and trade”.<sup>1</sup> 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.*<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

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 “object of dispute” between the powerful rivals *Royal Dutch Shell* and *Standard Oil Co.*<sup>6</sup> With the help of their governments, the two oil trusts provoked civil wars

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<sup>1</sup>Simon N. Whitney, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>G. Damougeot-Perron, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 71.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 80-81; John Ise, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

<sup>5</sup>See Anton Zischka, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>6</sup>Alexandru Topliceanu, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

wars and revolutions, frequent coups d'état, etc. in Mexico,<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

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"<sup>5</sup> 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 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.

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<sup>1</sup>See 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.

<sup>2</sup>Alexandru Topliceanu, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>3</sup>Cesare Alimenti, *op. cit.*, *passim*; Charles Pomaret, *La politique française des combustibles liquides*, Paris, Éditions de la Vie Universitaire, 1923, *passim*.

<sup>4</sup>A. A. Fursenko, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

<sup>5</sup>M. Baumont, R. Isay et H. Germain-Martin, *L'Europe de 1900 à 1914*, Paris, Éditions Sirey, 1966, pp. 354-355.

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,<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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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.<sup>3</sup> A French publicist was of the opinion that, if in 1914-

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

<sup>2</sup>Jean-Jacques Berreby, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-172.

<sup>3</sup>See, 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 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; idem, *Știința distruge monopolurile*, second edition, București, Editura Gorjan, 1942. From this last work we quote: “petroleum has become the blood of the war



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,”<sup>1</sup> imposing itself as “master of peace and war.”<sup>2</sup> René Sédillot noticed remarked that, **“apparently, petroleum has greater responsibilities in unleashing the second conflict of the century than the first one.”**<sup>3</sup> 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.**<sup>4</sup> 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,**<sup>5</sup> 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 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**

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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).

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

<sup>2</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 116-119.

<sup>3</sup>René Sédillot, *Istoria petrolului*, p. 228.

<sup>4</sup>See *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.

<sup>5</sup>*Introduction ...*, p. 85.

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 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.”<sup>1</sup> 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.”<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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).”<sup>4</sup>

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 1939 of the role of petroleum as “war weapon”,<sup>5</sup> and he was not alone.<sup>6</sup> In Bucharest, *Monitorul Petrolului Român*, noticing that exactly 25 years

<sup>1</sup>René Sédillot, *Istoria petrolului*, p. 228.

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

<sup>3</sup>Cf. 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.

<sup>4</sup>*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.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Cesare Alimenti, *Il petrolio nell'economia mondiale*, quoted edition, p. 62.

<sup>6</sup>See 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

later the war cataclysm war 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.”**<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup> 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, 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

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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).

<sup>1</sup>“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.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Joachim von Ribbentrop, *De Londres à Moscou*. București, Editura Cartea Românească, 1939, p. 3.

and military-strategic plans in accordance with **the petroleum factor as well**.<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>2</sup> oriented towards Romania<sup>3</sup> 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”**,<sup>4</sup> and later, the operational plans of the Wehrmacht<sup>5</sup> in the crucial year 1942 depended categorically on the intention of Hitler and the German High Command (*O.K.W.*) to capture the Caucasus.<sup>6</sup> The basic principles of the economic policy of the Reich in the war years<sup>7</sup> or the plans regarding the area of the Near East and the Middle East were also inspired by the petroleum factor.<sup>8</sup> Today it seems totally strange

<sup>1</sup>Cf. 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).

<sup>2</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 77-80.

<sup>3</sup>In the years 1940-1944, Romania represented **“the main source for supply with oil products”** for the Nazi Reich (cf. S. M. Lisičikin, *Neftianaia promišlennost 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).

<sup>4</sup>See 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...”**).

<sup>5</sup>For 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).

<sup>6</sup>Cf. 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).

<sup>7</sup>See Dietrich Eichholtz, *Geschichte der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft 1939-1945*, I, 1939-1941, Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1971, p. 168 and the following.

<sup>8</sup>See 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*.

that, in 1940-1943, acting in the North-African space, the German and Italian troops suffered from the lack of liquid fuel,<sup>1</sup> although a few decades later... a “sea of oil” was discovered in the area (Libya).<sup>2</sup> The petroleum problem was no less stressful for Japan than it was for Germany or Italy.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, for Great Britain and France the petroleum question assumed different coordinates. Their possibility to “block” Germany in the winter of 1930-1940<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> and Romania.<sup>6</sup> 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,<sup>7</sup> which was dealt with and solved in connection with the **economic blockade**<sup>8</sup> 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” to ensuring the provisioning with steel from Sweden and oil from the U.S.S.R., Poland, and Romania.<sup>9</sup> It was to be expected that, planning the total blockade of the Reich already in the first days of the conflagration,<sup>10</sup> the London officials would investigate the sources of liquid fuel available to Hitler, among which were the

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Goralski, Russell W. Freeburg, *Oil and War*, p. 124 and the following (chapter 8 – “Mideast Oil and the Mediterranean”).

<sup>2</sup>*Ibidem*.

<sup>3</sup>“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”).

<sup>4</sup>Robert 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).

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Henri Michel, *La drôle de guerre*, p. 240-249.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 244-245; Sir Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, I, London, HMSO, 1970, *passim*.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Gh. Buzatu, *Din istoria secretă a celui de-al doilea război mondial*, I, pp. 200-201.

<sup>8</sup>See 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.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. J. R. M. Butler, *Bolșaia strateghiia*, I, *Sentiabr 1939-iun 1941*, Moskva, 1959, p. 86.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 85.

Romanian ones.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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."<sup>3</sup> 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."<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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).<sup>6</sup> The seriousness of the situation and the importance of the matter determined the *War Cabinet* to create a **special committee** presided by Lord M. Hankey,<sup>7</sup> Minister without portfolio.<sup>1</sup> Great

<sup>1</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup>Gh. Buzatu, *Din istoria secretă a celui de-al doilea război mondial*, I, p. 209.

<sup>3</sup>Great 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).

<sup>4</sup>Great Britain, PRO 766, War Cabinet 65/1, War Cabinet 13 (39), September 12, 1939.

<sup>5</sup>Great Britain, PRO, War Cabinet 15 (39), September 14, 1939.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibidem*.

<sup>7</sup>See 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).

Britain intervened through certain private companies – *Royal Dutch-Shell*, *Steaua-British*, and *Phoenix Oil Co.*<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> At the meeting from October 18, 1939, the issue of Romanian petroleum was again called forth,<sup>4</sup> at a moment when the British "economic offensive" in Romania had registered successes against the Reich,<sup>5</sup> the effects being considered "catastrophic" for Berlin (the level of the prices and the decrease of the exports to Germany).<sup>6</sup> The issue of the Romanian oil derivatives continued to come to the attention of the *War Cabinet* a few more times: on November 3, 1939<sup>7</sup> or on November 16, 1939,<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup> 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 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

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<sup>1</sup>Great Britain, PRO, War Cabinet 15 (39), September 14, 1939; Philippe Marguerat, *Le III-e Reich et le pétrole roumain*, pp. 168-169.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 169.

<sup>3</sup>Idem, War Cabinet 15 (39), September 14, 1939; Philippe Marguerat, *Le III-e Reich et le pétrole roumain*, pp. 168-169.

<sup>4</sup>Idem, War Cabinet 50 (39), October 18, 1939.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Phillippe Marguerat, *Le III-e Reich et le pétrole roumain*, pp. 168-169.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 170-172.

<sup>7</sup>Great Britain, PRO 766, War Cabinet 65/2, War Cabinet 69 (39), November 3, 1939.

<sup>8</sup>Idem, War Cabinet 85 (39), November 16, 1939.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibidem*.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibidem*.

Germans for the transport of oil derivatives on the Danube.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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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<sup>3</sup> Premier Armand Călinescu met with the official representatives of Great Britain and France, Sir Reginald Hoare and, respectively, A. Thierry.<sup>4</sup> On September 18, 1939, Călinescu received W. Fabricius, the German Minister in Bucharest.<sup>5</sup> 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."<sup>6</sup> 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?!]."<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, Berlin often intervened in Bucharest, soliciting the assurance of the oil deliveries to the Reich according to the war necessities,<sup>8</sup> which remained a topical issue in the winter 1939-1940, to which others were constantly added, especially the prevention of the sabotage of the petroliferous region by the Anglo-French.<sup>9</sup> In London, in August-October 1939, the Romanian Minister V.V. Tilea had intense negotiations with the leader of the

<sup>1</sup>Idem, War Cabinet 93 (39), November 24, 1939.

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

<sup>3</sup>See Viorica Moisuc, *Diplomația României*, p. 269.

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

<sup>5</sup>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).

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

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

<sup>8</sup>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 (telegram no. 549/Bucharest, September 15, 1939, Fabricius to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

<sup>9</sup>Arh. 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).



Foreign Office, Lord Halifax,<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> In December 1939, Tilea and Lord Halifax discussed the issue of a conjugated Germany-U.S.S.R. aggression against Romania,<sup>3</sup> Bucharest's delegate inquiring about the validity of the guarantees from August 1939, but receiving a totally disappointing answer.<sup>4</sup> The end of the year 1939 marked important successes for Germany as far as ensuring, through agreements,<sup>5</sup> important oil imports from Romania, concretized in the economic agreement from September 29<sup>6</sup> or those from December 21, 1939,<sup>7</sup> interpreted by Berlin as “a new development” of the understanding from March 23, 1939.<sup>8</sup> For several months there took place a constant **British and French counteroffensive**,<sup>9</sup> with manifest tendencies to limit

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<sup>1</sup>Great Britain PRO, London-Kew, FO – 23 852, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup>*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).

<sup>3</sup>*Ibidem*, f. 338 and the following (minute of the discussion from December 4, 1939).

<sup>4</sup>Cf. 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.

<sup>5</sup>On 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 datorii și pasiune. Însemnări zilnice*, I, p. 431).

<sup>6</sup>See 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.

<sup>7</sup>*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).

<sup>8</sup>Viorica Moisuc, *Diplomația României*, p. 250.

<sup>9</sup>Philippe 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, Țentralnîi Gosudarstvennîi 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

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.<sup>1</sup> Carried on especially at a commercial level, the Allied offensive had positive results,<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> The decrease of the oil exports to the Reich,<sup>4</sup> 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,<sup>5</sup> 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,"<sup>6</sup> but the causes had to do mostly with transportation.

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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**<sup>7</sup> or **the occupation of Romania**.<sup>8</sup> Under completely different circumstances, the same scenario was being repeated that had been applied in World War I,<sup>9</sup> 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,<sup>10</sup> 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

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(*ibidem*). Under those circumstances, the Allied response was expected (cf. **Note sur la politique alliée roumain**, My 1, 1940, *ibidem*, ff. 159-162) (see also Gh. Buzatu, *România în arhivele Kremlinului*, quoted edition, pp. 200-201).

<sup>1</sup>Philippe Marguerat, *Le III-e Reich et le pétrole roumain*, p. 169, 173, 175.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 174.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 177.

<sup>4</sup>According to the German statistics: from 70 000 tons in October 1939 to 60 000 tons in November 1939.

<sup>5</sup>ADAP, vol. VIII, p. 367 (telegram no. 835/ Berlin, November 30, 1939, Wiehl to Clodius).

<sup>6</sup>Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, Regele Carol și Mareșalul Antonescu*, p. 119.

<sup>7</sup>ȚGASA, Moskva, fund 198, opis 2, files 395-396, *passim*.

<sup>8</sup>See 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).

<sup>9</sup>See Gh. Buzatu, *România și trusturile petroliere internaționale până la 1939*, quoted edition, p. 31, 39.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. Marion C. Siney, *The Allied Blockade of Germany 1914-1916*, p. 192.

Romanian government for the losses that will result from this measure.”<sup>1</sup> 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).”<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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,<sup>5</sup> after the end of the world war in 1918, there began the great spectacle of establishing **committees**,<sup>6</sup> of **evaluating the damages**,<sup>7</sup> and establishing the **method of payment** (compensations for/against the Romanian debts).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Apud “Istoricul chestiunii distrugerilor din 1916 (Actele și documentele oficiale)”, in *M.P.R.*, no. 24/1925, p. 1983-1988.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 1983-1984.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 1984-1985.

<sup>4</sup>See *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.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibidem*.

<sup>6</sup>The first committee met on February 9, 1922, including L. Mrazec, I. Tănăsescu, and L. Wenger.

<sup>7</sup>In 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 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).

<sup>8</sup>See 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 (1916-1927), *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.

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.<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>2</sup> established with the Germans effective measures to prevent the possible sabotages.<sup>3</sup> In Bucharest it was often considered in the period 1939-1940 defending the neutrality of the country<sup>4</sup> implied measures for saving petroleum

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Gregoire Gafenco, *Préliminaires de la Guerre à l'Est...*, p. 327 and the following (chapter XIII – *L'agonie de la neutralité roumaine*).

<sup>2</sup>They 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).

<sup>3</sup>See, 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 *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).

<sup>4</sup>Soon 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).

from destruction by the Anglo-French.<sup>1</sup> 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 war<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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, 1939<sup>4</sup> was recommended to the

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<sup>1</sup>See the opinion expressed in the daily paper *Timpul* from July 28, 1940 (apud *Acestea erau garanțiile anglo-franceze. Planurile de distrugeri ale Alianților în regiunea petroliferă și pe Dunăre*, București, Institutul Grafic "Arta" [1940], p. 13).

<sup>2</sup>*Acestea erau garanțiile anglo-franceze. Planurile de distrugeri ale Alianților 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*.

<sup>3</sup>See Gh. Buzatu, *România 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*).

<sup>4</sup>ȚGASA, Moskva, fund 198, opis 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 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

government in Paris by General Maurice Gamelin, the French Chief of Staff.<sup>1</sup> **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.<sup>2</sup> In order to attain their objectives, the French and British governments maintained close diplomatic contacts,<sup>3</sup> and the secret services in London and Paris, as we have found, took action,<sup>3</sup> as did, on the other hand, Admiral Canaris's *Abwehr*, to counteract the Western plans.<sup>4</sup> Under this last aspect, the documents published under the care of Cristian Troncotă<sup>5</sup> 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**,<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> In 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.<sup>8</sup> It was established that the connections, without having an official character,<sup>9</sup> should be maintained directly between the two intelligence services,<sup>10</sup> and the *Abwehr* should delegate with this purpose Major Dr. Hans Wagner to Bucharest.<sup>11</sup> On November 8, 1939, Wagner

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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).

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

<sup>2</sup>Paul 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).

<sup>3</sup>*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.

<sup>4</sup>See Horia Brestoiu, *Acțiuni secrete...*, *passim*.

<sup>5</sup>See 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.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 300 (doc. no. 47).

<sup>7</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 302-303.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 310 (Report of C. Gh. Ionescu-Micandru, doc. no. 48).

<sup>9</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 313.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibidem*.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 314.

arrived in Bucharest for a short visit,<sup>1</sup> 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."<sup>2</sup> 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*,<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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 Germany the necessary security and reassurance in this matter** (author's bold)."<sup>7</sup> On May 28-30, 1940, Admiral Canaris returned to Bucharest,<sup>8</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 320-324 (Report of Ionescu-Micandru on the visit, doc. no. 49).

<sup>2</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 323.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 336 (Report from December 4, 1939, doc. no. 55).

<sup>4</sup>*Ibidem*.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 336-344.

<sup>6</sup>We extract from the **note** written by Moruzov himself (*ibidem*, p. 351, Note of Moruzov from December 11, 1939, doc. no. 58).

<sup>7</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 352 (doc. no. 59).

<sup>8</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 445-450 (Note of M. Moruzov, doc. no. 106).

Adolph Hitler and “the entire Germany.”<sup>1</sup> Also, M. Moruzov travelled to Berlin,<sup>2</sup> as well as to Paris and London.<sup>3</sup> 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 collaboration<sup>4</sup> and who, precisely because of that, committed themselves to guarantee the “territorial integrity of Romania”<sup>5</sup> in the face of all the dangers, including the Soviet one.<sup>6</sup> 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).”<sup>7</sup> The assistance of the **R.S.S.** proved substantial in discovering and preventing the sabotage acts on the Danube<sup>8</sup> or ignored the German illegal weapon transports destined for the guarding of the refineries,<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup> 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 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*.<sup>11</sup> From **that**

<sup>1</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 447.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 419-421 (Report, doc. no. 92).

<sup>3</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 389-397 (doc. no. 77), 407-415 (doc. no. 90), 416-419 (doc. no. 91), 421-425 (doc. no. 92).

<sup>4</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 368 (doc. no. 62).

<sup>5</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 369 (doc. no. 63).

<sup>6</sup>*Ibidem*.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 391 (doc. no. 77).

<sup>8</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 425-430 (doc. no. 93).

<sup>9</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 440-441 (doc. no. 103).

<sup>10</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 437-438, 438-439 (doc. nos. 100-101, from May 16, 1940).

<sup>11</sup>See 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 Troncotă, *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).



**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,<sup>1</sup> but for the head of the R.S.S. it was, however, too late.<sup>2</sup>

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,<sup>3</sup> 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 destruction of the area.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> The fall of France, the efficiency of the German countermeasures,

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<sup>1</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 481-482 (doc. no. 126).

<sup>2</sup>In 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).

<sup>3</sup>In 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).

<sup>4</sup>See 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, p. 97.

<sup>5</sup>ȚGASA, Moskva, fund 198, opis 2, file 395, ff. 75-77.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 78.

and Romania's fears regarding the immediate prospects of the war determined the quashing of the Wenger file.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime, in Bucharest and Paris, in Berlin, Moscow, and London, in Rome and Washington, sensation was created<sup>2</sup> 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,<sup>3</sup> primarily the area of the Iron Gates.<sup>4</sup> The discovery made at Giurgiu did not allow for any doubts that the purpose of the planned operation was "the blocking of the Romanian oil from being transported to Germany."<sup>5</sup> Consequently, strict measures were imposed for

<sup>1</sup>Among 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).

<sup>2</sup>See Horia Brestoiu, *Acțiuni secrete...*, p. 167 and the following.

<sup>3</sup>About 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).

<sup>4</sup>On April 10, 1940, the U.S. Minister to Bucharest, F. M. Gunter, 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, 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).

<sup>5</sup>*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).

the supervision of the Danube traffic, both by Romania as well as by Yugoslavia.<sup>1</sup> At one point, it was said that Germany asked Hungary for the right to patrol on the Danube,<sup>2</sup> but later on the rumour was denied by Berlin,<sup>3</sup> which declared itself satisfied with the prompt intervention of the Gh. Tătărescu government.<sup>4</sup> 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**),<sup>5</sup> finally realized on May 27, 1940,<sup>6</sup> discussed with King Carol II,<sup>7</sup> with the Romanian Premier,<sup>8</sup> and with the Minister of Foreign Affairs<sup>9</sup> 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 took place in the period February-March 1940, with certain periods of crisis.<sup>10</sup> Some of the agreements signed in the meantime were temporary (March 1939).<sup>11</sup> At one point, Berlin's delegates left Bucharest, and on May 27, 1940 the famous **Petroleum Pact**, also known as the **Armament-Petroleum Pact**,<sup>12</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup>National Archives, Washington, Record Group 59, Box No. 2 113 (telegram no. 122/Bucharest, April 12, Gunther to Hull).

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

<sup>3</sup>*Ibidem* (telegram no. 940/Berlin, April 12, 1940, Kirk to Hull).

<sup>4</sup>*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).

<sup>5</sup>See *ADAP*, Series D, vol. IX, p. 35 (telegram no. 400/Bucharest, March 29, 1940, Fabricius and Neubacher to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

<sup>6</sup>*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.

<sup>7</sup>*ADAP*, vol. IX, p. 285 (telegram no. 712/Bucharest, May 16, 1940, Fabricius to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

<sup>8</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 39-42 (the mentioned report of Clodius and Fabricius from March 30, 1940).

<sup>9</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 354-356 (telegram no. 790/Bucharest, May 25, 1940, Fabricius to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

<sup>10</sup>Cf. Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, Regele Carol și Mareșalul Antonescu*, pp. 119-120.

<sup>11</sup>Viorica Moisuc, *Diplomația României*, p. 278; Philippe Marguerat, *Le III-e Reich et le pétrole roumain*, pp. 189-191.

<sup>12</sup>Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, Regele Carol și Mareșalul Antonescu*, p. 120.

did not make payments in cash,<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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,<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> Under these circumstances, on June 21, 1940, therefore on the eve 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".<sup>5</sup> A "rapid organization" of this collaboration was intended, both at a political as well as an economic level.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> This **did not save** Greater Romania from the border disaster, just as it did not save King Carol II's regime.

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<sup>1</sup>*Ibidem.*

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

<sup>3</sup>See *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).

<sup>4</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 383-384.

<sup>5</sup>See *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).

<sup>6</sup>*Ibidem.*

<sup>7</sup>Gregoire Gafenco, *Préliminaires de la Guerre à 'Est...*, pp. 343-344.