

BESSARABIA WITHIN GREATER ROMANIA: A STUDY OF INTERDEPENDENCY BETWEEN THE INTERNATIONAL ASPECT AND THE INTERNAL EVOLUTION

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Beyond the brotherhood and ethnic community feelings the words „Basarabia” and „basarabeni” wake in the Romanians’ hearts a note of regret and consternation. The regret that even after more than a decade of free option we find two distinct Romanian countries and their relationships excepting few fields or opportunity moments don’t certify „an unique breath” between them. The consternation is not only because of the genuine communist campaign of Chisinau against Bucharest but also because of the absence of a clear national identity expressed by the population of the Republic of Moldova. Moreover the real possibility of personal contacts between the two sister countries attested the great linguistical and mentality differences between the Romanians from both sides of the Prut river. Soon after the „flowers bridges” among Bessarabians appeared a kind of inferiority complex towards their Romanian brothers which will pass later into an open hostility. The great dispute concerning the „Romanian” or „Moldavian” character of Moldavian society represents not only a political one but also one which divided the entire society in the Republic of Moldova.

It would be a proof of superficiality to consider this tendency as only nostalgia for the „good old days” of the Soviet period or as a reminiscence of Soviet mentality. This hostility appeared also as a result of the „collective memory” preserved at least by a generation of Bessarabians who lived in the interwar period within Greater Romania.

From this point of view the first idea to be stressed here is that as part of Greater Romania Bessarabia didn’t have an easy situation. Further I will bring arguments in favour of this affirmation. Many times in the interwar period Bessarabians saw as discriminating the Romanian political, economic and administrative actions in the province. After the Second World War when Bessarabia was annexed by the Soviet Union the Soviet ideology insisted on speculating on the critical interwar situation of Bessarabia. As part of a greater anti-Romanian propaganda this action had to led to the Bessarabians’ conviction that the interwar period was a „black” one in the history of Bessarabia, Bessarabians were then treated as „second hand” beings and Romania was going to transform Bessarabia into a „colony”. Ironically these arguments reappeared both in political speeches and usual discussions soon after the independency of the Republic of Moldova was proclaimed.

Having set up the framework of this situation we will have to identify the sources of this hostility and misunderstanding. And this leads us to the necessity of explaining Bessarabia's interwar situation within Greater Romania.

It's necessary to clarify the focus of our intention. It does not attempt either a complete analysis of the economic, political, social or cultural evolution of Bessarabia or a discussion about the Soviet–Romanian relationships concerning this issue. The article mainly focuses on the study of the interdependency between the international aspects of the Bessarabian problem and the inner evolution of Bessarabia as part of Greater Romania. This interference caused the critical situation of Bessarabia in the interwar period and created the premises for the long time reticence of Bessarabians towards Romanians.

The preliminary aspects of the Bessarabia issue

During the interwar period the Bessarabia issue was a more complex subject than a Soviet–Romanian diplomatic dispute. As its international implications, the Bessarabian problem was one of the „hot” problems of post-war Europe taking into consideration the Soviet Union's passion and interest to get back this territory.

Both Romanian and Soviet historiography had as priority the analysis of the Soviet–Romanian bilateral negotiations and conferences concerning the definition of the status of the territory between the Prut and the Dniestr rivers. Given the political interests and the ideological implications of diplomatic „clashes” between Romania and the Soviet Union over this territory's ownership such priority could be logical. Nevertheless besides the international difficulties the absence of the Soviet Union's official recognition of Bessarabia as Romanian territory created a critical situation to this province as part of interwar Romania. It is worth to underline that the historiography concerning the Bessarabia issue in the interwar period has hesitated, still in our days, to establish a linkage between the international aspects of this question and its consequences over Bessarabia's integration in the Romanian interwar structures. The undermining of the Romanian authority in Bessarabia achieved by the Soviet sedition action has been a widespread subject of Romanian historians. It's not the aim of this paper to insist on this point. My purpose is to identify the way in which these actions led to the deformation of the normal integration of Bessarabia within Greater Romania after the First World War. Besides the international tensions the Soviet Union's refusal to admit Bessarabia's Union with Romania generated a serious economic and social crisis which often affected the good intentions of the Romanian administration in Bessarabia.

The neighbourhood of the Soviet Union and the real peril of communism spread not only in Bessarabia but also in Romania imposed the radical solutions

from Bucharest. As a result, the „hard hand’s policy“ followed by the Romanian authorities in Bessarabia generated the latent discontents here whose consequences were the dislike of the Romanian regime, the dislike speculated by the Soviet ideology to inoculate among Bessarabians a strong anti-Romanian feeling. The analysis of Bessarabia’s interwar evolution will confirm the validity of these assertions.

The first years after the Union

From the beginning of Greater Romania’s existence as well as for the other countries of Eastern Europe appeared the issue of the joined territories. As part of the Austrian, Hungarian or Russian administrations the Romanians from Transylvania, Bessarabia, Bucovina and Banat had known the distinct rules which determined the peculiar evolution of these territories. This assertion is especially available in Bessarabia’s case whose inhabitants had specific features because of the Russian influence and comparatively low cultural level of its population.

The unity of these territories was therefore a necessity. The great problem was its form. Should it be a centralized state created around old Romania or should this unity have an autonomous or federal form? The opposition between these tendencies was consequence of the different old regimes established long before the First World War. Or the Romanian provinces, inclusively Bessarabia, had had a relative autonomy until 1918¹.

The Union decision from March 27, 1918 determined Bessarabia’s situation in the first years of the interwar period. It ensured to Bessarabia a large political and administrative autonomy within the Romanian state. Two conditions were the most important. The first was ensuring Bessarabia’s right to realize her own agrarian reform. The second maintained a large political autonomy for Bessarabia. „Sfatul Țării” which voted the Union remained the main political institution and its decision should have been recognized by Romanian government². The whole legislation and the local government system were kept and they might be changed by the Romanian Parliament with the participation of Bessarabians deputies only³.

Thus until November 27, 1918 when the unconditional Union of Bessarabia with Romania was decided, not only the administrative but also the political autonomy of Bessarabia had a very pronounced character.

The first conflict between the central government and the province appeared as a result of the agrarian reform. Bessarabia’s right to realize her own agrarian

¹ A. Tibal, *Problemes politiques contemporains de l’Europe Orientale*, Paris, 1930, p. 30.

² I. Agrigoroaiei, Gh. Palade, *Basarabia în cadrul României întregite, 1918–1940*, Chișinău, 1992, p. 71.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 71.

reform was one of the Union conditions and it was required by the specific evolution of this territory. The landowners system which existed in Bessarabia before 1918 had generated many violence and discontents among Bessarabian peasants. That situation was speculated by Bolsheviks who found the peasant masses prepared to follow their populist propaganda. That's why the peasants participated in the violent actions of Russian Bolshevik soldiers whose consequences were the expropriation of all landowners by Bessarabian peasants⁴. There was the explanation of the Bessarabian political groups' decision to realize their own agrarian reform which would have excluded foreign involvement.

As a result, the Bessarabian agrarian reform had a different character from those implemented in other Romanian provinces. While in old Romania, Transylvania or Bucovina the lands were distributed to peasants in Bessarabia the lands were taken over from peasants who assumed them illegally as result of the confused war situation in 1917–1918⁵.

From the very beginning the pronounced agrarian character of Bessarabia and her specifically overpopulation showed the impossibility to satisfy the whole land requirement⁶. The discontents followed among Bessarabians and A. Cardaș, the director of „Casa Noastră”, the institution which had implemented the agrarian reform in Bessarabia, admitted later that the reform had been realized using the armed forces⁷. Even though the discontents weren't political, given Bessarabia's special status it would be preferably to avoid them. The Soviet propaganda used the situation caused by the agrarian reform so as to compromise and discredit the Romanian administration. The pauper peasants disfavoured by the agrarian reform were the targets looking for the Soviet Union's propaganda. That was the main social element used by communist ideology against Romanian authorities. All parts involved in this issue understood that the Bessarabian question was more than a strictly Romanian problem. Thus a peculiarity of Romanian political life was turned by the Soviet Union into political speculation and presented as a discriminatory policy of Bucharest towards the Bessarabian population.

The second conflict speculated by the Soviet communist propaganda appeared as consequence of Bessarabia's administration. I have earlier stressed that in the aftermath of the Union Bessarabia kept its autonomy. Besides „Sfatul Țării” there was the Directors' Council, an autonomous institution which was solving

⁴ A. Babel, *La Bessarabie. Etude historique, ethnographique et économique*, Paris, 1926, p. 268-269.

⁵ I. Ionescu-Sisești, *Reforma agrară în România*, București, 1921, p. 33; I. Scurtu, D. Almaș, *Istoria Basarabiei. De la începuturi până în 1994*, București, 1994, p. 193.

⁶ A. Cardaș, *Aspecte din reforma agrară basarabeană*, Chișinău, 1924, p. 74.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 77.

independently the main questions of administration in Bessarabia⁸. After November 27, 1918 the Bessarabian autonomy tendencies were gradually mitigated. On January 1, 1919 the General Department created by „Sfatul Țării” was abolished and replaced by the Bessarabian Ministry led by D. Ciugureanu⁹. Soon after November 27, 1918 the Directors’ Council was also abolished¹⁰. It was therefore attested a slowly and natural transfer of the provincial administration to the central authorities.

The Averescu’s government established in March 1921 suddenly changed this process and the administrative principles from old Romania were introduced in Bessarabia. By a decree were abolished the last institutions of the Bessarabian autonomy and for the administrative unification was named an administrative inspector, general Schina, whose prerogatives weren’t clearly definite¹¹.

The effects of these administrative changes had a serious impact on the local population. Unfortunately because of many reasons in the question of Bessarabia’s administration the historical significance of the Union itself was missed. The government from Bucharest named in Bessarabia an administration which didn’t understand that unique moment and many times the national ideal and interest were compromised by some statesmen’s greed and moral corruption. As a result of that situation after two years of Romanian administration nostalgia for Russian tsarist regime had appeared among Bessarabians¹².

The Bessarabian statesmen had often warned the central government that the involvement of Bessarabia in the Romanian political intrigues might have unexpected consequences for Bessarabia’s future. Bessarabia has always been a hard ruled province and the first post-war decade didn’t bring any real political and economic success to Romanian administration. It’s true the Romanian administration had found a propitious situation here as the Tsarist Russian policy and anti-Semitism had estranged Bessarabians and a part of the minorities from Russian culture as well as from civil and administrative life. Moreover, the new Romanian administration was coming into a medium which understood her and which was as well understood by her¹³. So there was a great chance for the success of its intentions. Yet there were other nuances to take into consideration. Deserted after 1812 by their elites, as both the boyars and the priests were oriented towards Petersburg and Moscow, the Bessarabians were limited for more than one century

⁸ I. Agrigoroaiei, Gh. Palade, *op. cit.*, p. 71-72.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 72.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 72-73.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 73.

¹² „Adevărul”, October 24, 1920.

¹³ P. Cazacu, *Moldova dintre Prut și Nistru (1812–1918)*, Iași, 1924, p. 329.

to themselves, to an over-simplified tradition. Because of this imposed isolation from the rest of the Romanian people, they have had a distinct evolution from the other Romanians and they didn't feel themselves as part of this people in the last decades before the Union¹⁴. Even if the Bessarabian population kept the language and the traditions it didn't attribute itself the same Romanian character as Romanians from Transylvania did. Many statesmen and intellectuals who after the Union visited Bessarabia ascertained the existence of this Moldavian specificity, a different mentality and even some linguistical differences¹⁵. This specific mentality explains the inefficiency of the Tsarist regime measures as well as those of the Romanian government after 1918. Being neither Romanians nor Russians the population of this territory was considering itself before 1918 as Bessarabians or Moldavians.

Both the local statesmen, who were the elites created in the Russian Empire and those from Bucharest many times didn't understand that specific situation and that was the great error of the post Union policy. Politically the Bessarabian population was backward; a question once again demonstrated by the agrarian reform, and the communist influence was a permanent danger for Bessarabia. Because of the Romanian authorities' incapacity to attract the large masses of Bessarabians on its side, the Soviet Union found, especially among the pauper classes, the supporters for the idea of Bessarabia's joining the Soviet Union¹⁶.

Besides, the Romanian authorities met a new and a great issue created after 1918 by the presence of an important number of national minorities especially Russians, Ukrainians, and Jews. By the policy followed in 1918–1940 the Romanian administration hadn't succeeded in convincing the national minorities of the historical truth about Bessarabia, a deficiency speculated by Moscow as well¹⁷. For this reason the minorities were the Achilles' heel of Romanian administration in Bessarabia. From the very beginning of that period the Soviet Union used the national minorities for the organization of destructive activities against Romanian authorities. The Tighina, Hotin and Tatarbunar uprisings were the most eloquent examples of these anti-Romanian actions.

On this background the political conflict between the Bessarabian statesmen and the central authorities began. The Bessarabian political elites accused the Romanian of being excluded from the province's government and replaced Romanian staff, especially during the Liberal government (1922–1926)¹⁸.

¹⁴ O. Ghibu, *De la Basarabia rusească la Basarabia românească*, Cluj, 1926, p. 186.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 187.

¹⁶ M. Bruhis, *Rusia, România și Basarabia (1812, 1918, 1924, 1940)*, Chișinău, 1992, p. 107.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ A. Tibal, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

The discontents of the local population towards some authorities' abuses generated many interventions of the Bessarabian deputies in the Romanian Parliament and determined in August 1920 the Bessarabian minister D. Ciugureanu to request an audience with Romania's King Ferdinand I for exposing the critical situation of Bessarabia¹⁹.

Meanwhile the Romanian deputy V. Stroescu visited Bessarabia in 1920 and confirmed in Romanian Parliament the veracity of the Bessarabian deputies' and D. Ciugureanu's accusations. He confirmed also the abuses of the Romanian authorities in Bessarabia protesting as well against the trials staged under the pretext of annihilating the communism²⁰. Given that in that period the Bessarabia issue was negotiated at the Paris Peace Conference, the size of the conflicting situation was mitigated, but a Parliamentary Inquiry was created to estimate the situation in Bessarabia. The Inquiry's results attested that under the necessity or the pretext of fighting communism the Romanian Sigurantză punished many innocent people²¹. For the same reason the Sigurantză often interfered in Bessarabia for intimidating the political opponents of the government party²². As D. Haneş, the Head of Parliamentary Inquiry, pointed, the Romanian authorities were badly accepted in Bessarabia and even the teachers from Old Romania were often rejected by the Bessarabian population²³. The Inquiry ascertained that the given situation was coming from the weak and inconsistent policy of Romanian government in Bessarabia²⁴. As suggested the Bessarabian interwar press the administration of Bessarabia ought to have been changed by replacing the Romanian elements by the local political elite²⁵.

The Romanian government answered to these accusations by the reasons which reflected an indisputable reality. A territory which had long time known the foreign dominion and where the Romanian population was consciously maintained on the lowest social and intellectual level, didn't have among Bessarabian Romanians a political elite able to ensure the complete administration. The old Russian administration was made up by ethnic minorities whose loyalty to the new Romanian administration was questionable. Thus for the new state's consolidation a rush of Romanian elements from Old Romania was a necessity for Bessarabia²⁶.

¹⁹ „Sfatul Ţării”, August 23, 1920.

²⁰ „Adevărul”, February 12, 1920.

²¹ Ibidem, October 17, 1920.

²² A. Tibal, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

²³ „Adevărul”, October 22, 1920.

²⁴ Ibidem.

²⁵ „Sfatul Ţării”, August 28, 1920.

²⁶ N. Giurgea, *Din trecutul și prezentul Basarabiei*, Chişinău, 1928, p. 101.

Yet the „hard hand’s policy“ followed by the Romanian governments in Bessarabia was also justified by the security and military necessities. That situation was linked with the special status created for Bessarabia within Greater Romania by the Soviet Union’s permanent claims. On the one hand the real possibility of war for Bessarabia on the other hand the Soviet permanent propaganda in the province imposed to the Romanian governments the necessity of a military situation in Bessarabia²⁷. Nevertheless the exceptional military situation was the way of state’s ruling during the critical moments of its existence only. Having the priority of quick actions the military ruling had as well great drawbacks. Having perturbed the society’s normal evolution the military ruling created the psychology of discretion and abuse for the authorities and the lack of respect for the law for the population, the sensation that the power was the only ruling’s attribute. As consequence of these circumstances the Bessarabians contested both the existence of the legal security and the massive military presence in Bessarabia²⁸. Dramatically but the local population who hadn’t the competence of appreciation and was judging the consequences of reality, blamed the Romanian authorities for the existent critical situation. In fact the post war stabilization known in Europe as well as in Romania was perturbed in Bessarabia by the uncertainty of its international and political situation. In other words the critical situation of Bessarabia as part of Greater Romania was the reflection of its international unsolved situation.

This was the main reason why during the interwar period Romania wished the Soviet Union’s recognition of Bessarabia as Romanian territory. Besides the great international importance the settling of Bessarabia issue would have offered to the Romanian governments the chance of peaceful governance in Bessarabia. The veracity of the assertions above was also confirmed by the interwar economic development of Bessarabia.

The consequences of the economic crisis

The First World War strongly struck both the Romanian and Bessarabian economy. The pre-war economic orientation and the strong agrarian character of the Bessarabian economy considerably influenced Bessarabia’s post-war economic recovery. The breaking of the economic, commercial and transport relations with the former Imperial territories, the hard access both to the Romanian and European markets as well as the narrow, unilateral character of the Bessarabian economy have had a decisive impact on Bessarabia’s economic unfavourable evolution during the interwar period. Before 1918, the Bessarabian economy was entirely

²⁷ Al. Boldur, *Bessarabskii vopros*, Chișinău, 1930, p. 18.

²⁸ A. Tibal, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

turned towards the Russian Empire's markets and Bessarabia was one of the most important agrarian producers of the Tsarist Empire (the pre-war Bessarabian export overwhelming its import with 100 mln. golden-roubles)²⁹.

The industry of Bessarabia also knew a colonial way of working. Many Bessarabian factories were the annexes of the Russian great enterprises only³⁰.

The breaking of the Soviet Romanian diplomatic relations and the continuity of that situation until 1934 had as consequences the closing of the Dniestr boundary and the absence of economic relations between the two neighbour countries. The given situation affected first of all the Bessarabian economy which was entirely oriented towards the East and created a permanent economic crisis in Bessarabia. It wasn't only Bessarabia's but also the Baltic States' hard situation after the loss of the former economic relations³¹.

The Bessarabian agriculture was the most affected by the loss of the Russian traditional markets. The Romanian market was very limited as well as the access to the European markets. From this point of view the advantages were on the side of the producers from Old Romania who were favoured by the government's protection on the loans, the tariffs and the means of transport. As the Bessarabian review „Basarabia economică“ stressed: “Even though the other conditions would be equal these differences will always put the Bessarabian economy into the inferiority situation”³².

As has been pointed earlier, the Bessarabian industry also suffered because of the closing of Romania's eastern boundary and the abnormality of the Soviet-Romanian relationship. But the given situation was worsened by the Romanian governments' attitude as well. It was stressed that Bessarabia will remain an agrarian province as the lack of the raw materials there couldn't have maintained the working of the local industry³³. Reflecting on that situation the Romanian economist N. Arcadian ascertained in 1936 that „[...] looking on the Bessarabian industry globally and comparing it with the other provinces' and the 1919's situation we find that while old Romania, Transylvania and Bucovina had known industrial growth, Bessarabia had a pronounced agrarian character as consequence of the diminution of industrial development”³⁴.

Nevertheless it has to be admitted, as the Bessarabian historian Stefan Ciobanu has rightly done, that it was irrational to create an industry on a territory

²⁹ I. Kaba, *Etude politique et économique sur la Bessarabie*, Paris, 1919, p. 39.

³⁰ Șt. Ciobanu, *Basarabia Оши́бка! Закладка не определена*, Chișinău, 1993, p. 394.

³¹ R.J. Crampton, *Europa Răsăriteană în secolul XX... și după*, București, 2002, p. 125.

³² „Basarabia economică”, 1939, no 3, p. 8.

³³ I. Agrigoroaiei, Gh. Palade, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

³⁴ N. Arcadian, *Industrializarea României*, București, 1936, p. 236.

deprived of the raw materials and the labour force only for the sake of having a proper and varied industry there³⁵.

In fact that peculiar evolution of Bessarabian economy within Greater Romania had a more profound explanation. As the English historian Norman J. Pounds pointed, the hard economic situation of Bessarabia was caused by the Soviet Union's permanent claims towards this territory. The fear of losing Bessarabia stopped Romania from developing the province³⁶. Thus besides the diplomatic and political difficulties the Soviet Union's unwillingness to admit Bessarabia's union with Romania caused an uncertainty about this territory's future which would hinder the Romanian governments to develop Bessarabia during the interwar period³⁷.

As a result, during twenty two years of Bucharest rule the Bessarabian economy had known few investments of capital. From 1919 to 1926 the investments in the Bessarabian industry diminished eight times and in 1936 they were representing only 0,1% from all investments of Greater Romania. Following august 1939 the investments in Bessarabian economy were officially ceased³⁸.

After 1918 the French, English, Belgian financial groups were interested in some branches of the Bessarabian economy but the international status of this territory, especially the uncertainty of Romania's position there stopped any attempts of foreign investments. As declared the Bessarabian statesman P. Halippa at the meeting of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry from Chisinau: „The foreign capital is afraid of investing in Bessarabia as Bessarabia is so far disputed territory”³⁹. The Romanian governments didn't deny that the establishment of diplomatic and economic relations with the Soviet Union would have hindered the decline of the Bessarabian economy⁴⁰. The situation above affected not only the inner evolution of Bessarabia but the international position of Romania also. In the world especially in the United States had long time persisted the idea that the Soviet Union's attitude towards the Bessarabia issue was gravely affecting the stability of Romania⁴¹. A country confronted with the eventuality of the war for a territory disputed by a great power couldn't be a safe place for the foreign investments.

³⁵ Șt. Ciobanu, *op. cit.*, p. 403.

³⁶ Norman I. Pounds, *Eastern Europe*, London, 1969, p. 869.

³⁷ Al. Boldur, *Bessarabskii vopros*, p. 17.

³⁸ A.M. Lazarev, *Moldavskaia sovetskaja gosudarstvenosti i bessarabskii vopros*, Chișinău, 1974, p. 121.

³⁹ P. Cazacu, *Zece ani de la Unire. Moldova între Prut și Nistru (1918–1928)*, București, 1929, p. 103.

⁴⁰ V.V. Tilea, *Acțiunea diplomatică a României (nov. 1919 – martie 1920)*, Sibiu, 1925, p. 119.

⁴¹ F.C. Nanu, *Politica externă a României (1918–1933)*, Iași, 1993, p. 121.

The economic difficulties of Bessarabia generated an anachronism of its social life and that was dangerous because of the Soviet Union's policy towards Bessarabia. As a consequence, the Bessarabian population accused the governments from Bucharest for the economic problems and alleged that Romania transformed Bessarabia into a colony⁴². That is why the Romanian authorities had ascertained in Bessarabia a hostile attitude towards Romanian administration, an anarchic, a quasi revolutionary situation among Bessarabians⁴³. As the Romanian newspaper „Adevărul“ pointed, there was a latent state of discontents in Bessarabia linked with great economic sufferings. „Nevertheless the process hasn't here the noisy form of discontents from Transylvania but we have to overlook neither Bessarabia's geographical position, nor its situation from an international prospect. From the both points of view Bessarabia's situation is exceptional. It's an imperious duty to keep so Bessarabia contented” stressed the daily from Bucharest⁴⁴.

There is no doubt that the Soviet communist propaganda in the Bessarabia issue was indirectly favoured by the hard Romanian administration and by the critical economic situation of Bessarabia in the interwar period. Nevertheless we have to admit that the extreme measures of Romanian administration were determined by the desire to ban the widespread of communism ideology both in Bessarabia and Romania. The re-establishment of the Soviet-Romanian diplomatic relations in 1934 appeased for a while that anomalous situation. As the Bessarabian statesman I. Inculeț reflected: „The re-establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union will have an enormous importance from a political, economic as well as psychological point of view. It will implant in the Bessarabians' hearts the peace and the safety of tomorrow”⁴⁵. The hopes of this redress fell once Bessarabia was annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940.

Conclusion

The elucidation of Bessarabia's history in the interwar period imposes some eloquent conclusions about this territory's integration within Romanian structures. Given the unusual and novel character of that experience the appearance of a conflicting situation between the centre and the province was normal as the national territories which had existed under varied regimes and Empires were welded together. It was also well-known that the existence of these territories (of Bessarabia as well) within different Empires caused them some essential

⁴² A.Tibal, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁴³ ANIC, Fond Casa Regală, file 16/1932, p. 4.

⁴⁴ „Adevărul”, January 6, 1932.

⁴⁵ „Universul”, June 12, 1934.

modifications, some specific features which generated this conflict. But that was a constructive conflict, one which was looking for the best way of the Greater Romania building. First of all that was an issue of Romanian internal evolution. In Bessarabia's case that process took a different aspect linked with the Soviet Union's policy followed in the province.

That power's geopolitical interests in the region as well as its revolutionary character turned the Bessarabia issue from a Romanian one into an international problem. As a consequence the Soviet foreign policy and the diplomatic game followed by Moscow towards that peculiar question and the involvement of the Soviet communist actions in the Romanian internal affairs seriously affected the normal integration of these territories within Greater Romania. The ruling of Bessarabia has never been an easy one for Romanian governments and this paper has stressed the presence of different animosities. But the same animosities existed in the other joined territories of Greater Romania as well as in the other new formed states of Eastern Europe. In Bessarabia the remedy of those conflicts was perturbed by the special status of the province as consequence of the Bessarabian issue's international unsolved situation.

From this point of view this paper has tried to offer a complex and an adequate explanation of Bessarabia's difficult situation during the interwar period. Besides the inherent academic message it would be a moral obligation towards the generation of Bessarabians who lived for 22 years within Greater Romania. Definitely there was also an attempt to avoid the wall of political interests and ideological substratum which still contains the right writing of Bessarabia's history.