

## **Bessarabia from Russian Empire to Greater Romania: a Study of Interdependency between the Process of Integration and the Soviet Interference**

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**Abstract.** *The fall of the Soviet Union opened a flourishing debate among scholars over the complex legacy of different empires, especially into broad comparative analysis. The present paper subscribes to this tendency but in a slightly different way. The works on the character and legacy of the Russian Empire exceeded hundreds, but the seizure of power in Russia by Bolsheviks and the tremendous changes imposed by the Soviet experience of former left a narrow space in analyzing the complexity of this legacy. In the rush of dismantling any connection with the Imperial Russia, the Soviet Union had successfully succeeded in making its inheritance both destroyed and forgotten. Indeed the transition from the Russian Empire to the Soviet one was perhaps the only case of a radical perpetuation of an Empire, which tried and mostly succeeded in annihilating the legacy of the previous.*

**Keywords:** *Russian Empire, Soviet experience, legacy*

### **Introduction**

The fall of the Soviet Union opened a flourishing debate among scholars over the complex legacy of different Empires, especially into broad comparative analysis<sup>1</sup>. The present paper subscribes to this tendency but in a slightly different way. The works on the character and legacy of the Russian Empire exceeded hundreds, but the seizure of power in Russia by Bolsheviks and the tremendous changes imposed by the Soviet experience of former left a narrow space in analyzing the complexity this legacy. In the rush of dismantling any connection with the Imperial Russia, the Soviet Union had successfully succeeded in making its inheritance both destroyed and forgot. Indeed the transition from the Russian Empire to the Soviet was perhaps the only case of a radical perpetuation of an Empire, which tried and mostly succeeded in annihilating the legacy of the previous.

There were however parts of the Russian Empire which confronted its complex legacy outside the Soviet Union after the First World War. Finland, Baltic States, Poland, the Western part of Ukraine and Belorussia as well as Bessarabia as result of war, revolution and national awaking fall apart from the Soviet state and experienced during the interwar period various form of independence or existence within national or foreign states.

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<sup>1</sup> See for instance K. Barkey and M. von Hagen (eds), *After Empire: The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1997; K. Dawisha and B. Parrott, *The End of Empire? The transformation of the USSR in Comparative Perspective*, M.E. Sharpe, New York, 1997; but also Ronald G. Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1993; Alexander J. Motyl (ed.) *The Post-Soviet Nations: Perspectives on the Demise of the USSR*, Colombia University Press, New York, 1992; Alexander J. Motyl (ed.), *The Post-Soviet Nations*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1992.

By the decision of the Sfatul Tarii (the Parliament of Bessarabia at that moment) from March 27, 1918, Bessarabia was the first Romanian territory which opted to join motherland after one century of Russian annexation. The union of Bessarabia generated a complicated international problem in the interwar period since the Soviet Union never accepted the fact. But in the same time the returning within Romania attested the existence of many differences between the Bessarabians and the rest of Romanians who lived under states and empires different as political and socio/economic structures. The interference of these two aspects caused a complicated evolution of Bessarabia within the interwar Romania.

It's necessary to clarify the focus of our intention. It does not attempt a complete analysis of economic, political, social or cultural consequences of the Russian imperial legacy over the process of integration with interwar Romania. The article mainly focuses on the study of interdependency between the international aspects of the Bessarabian problem and the inner evolution of Bessarabia as part of Greater Romania.

### **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<sup>2</sup>.

Both Romanian and Soviet historiography had as priority analyse of the Soviet-Romanian bilateral negotiations and conferences concerning the definition of the status of the territory between the Prut and the Nistru 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 our days, to establish a linkage between the international aspects of this question and its consequences over the Bessarabia integration in the Romanian state. The undermining of the Romanian authority in Bessarabia achieved by the Soviet sedition action has been a widespread subject of Romanian historians. It is not the aim of this paper to insist on this point. Our purpose is to identify the way in which these actions led to the deformation of normal integration of Bessarabia within Greater Romania after the First World War. Besides the international tensions the Soviet Union's refusal to admit the 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 result the "hard hand's policy" (politica mâinii tari) followed by the Romanian authorities in Bessarabia generated the latent discontents here which

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<sup>2</sup> For details on the Soviet-Romanian dispute over Bessarabia see O. Țicu, *Problema Basarabiei și relațiile sovieto-române în perioada interbelică (1919-1939)*, Editura Prut International, Chisinau, , 2004

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 the Bessarabia's interwar evolution will confirm the validity of these assertions.

### **Aftermath of 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 authorities which determined the peculiar evolution of these territories. This assertion is especially available in the Bessarabia case which inhabitants had the specific features because of the Russian influence and comparatively low education and 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 this unity should have the autonomy or federal form? The opposition between these tendencies was consequence of the different old regimes established long before First World War. Or the Romanian provinces, inclusively Bessarabia, had had a relatively autonomy until 1918<sup>3</sup>.

The union decision from March 27, 1918, determined the Bessarabia's situation in the first years of interwar period. It ensured to Bessarabia a large political and administrative autonomy within Romanian state. Two conditions were the most important. The first was ensuring the Bessarabia's right to realize the own agrarian reform. The second maintained a large political autonomy for Bessarabia. "Sfatul Tarii", which voted the union, remained the main political institution and its decision should have been recognized by Romanian government<sup>4</sup>. The local legislation and government system were kept and they might be changed by the Romanian Parliament with the participation of Bessarabians deputies only<sup>5</sup>. Thus until November 27, 1918, when was decided the unconditional union of Bessarabia with Romania, not only administrative but also political autonomy of Bessarabia has had a very pronounced character.

The first conflict between the central government and the province appeared as result of the agrarian reform. The Bessarabia's right to realize the own agrarian 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. The peasants participated in the violence actions of Russian Bolshevik soldiers, which consequences were the expropriation of all landowners by Bessarabians peasants<sup>6</sup>. All these circumstances determined the Bessarabian

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<sup>3</sup> A. Tibal, *Problèmes politiques contemporains de l'Europe Orientale*, Paris, 1930, p.30.

<sup>4</sup> I. Agrigoroaiei, Gh. Palade, *Basarabia în cadrul României întregite*, 1918 - 1940, Chişinău, 1992, p.71.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p.71.

<sup>6</sup> A. Babel, *La Bessarabie, Étude Historique, ethnographique et économiques*, Paris, 1926, p. 268-269.

government to realize its own agrarian reform which would have excluded the foreign involvement.

As result the Bessarabian agrarian reform has had different character from those implemented in other Romanian provinces. While in Old Romania, Transylvania or Bucovina the landowners were distributed to peasants in Bessarabia the landowners were taken over from peasant who assumed them illegally as result of confused war and revolutionary situation in 1917-1918<sup>7</sup>.

From the very beginning the pronounced agrarian character of Bessarabia and her specifically overpopulation showed the impossibility to satisfy the whole land require<sup>8</sup>. The discontents followed among Bessarabians and A. Cardaş, the Director of "Casa Noastră", the institution which had implemented the agrarian reform in Bessarabia, admitted later that the reform has been realized using the force and violence<sup>9</sup>. Even though the discontents were not political ones, it would be preferably to avoid them taking in consideration the Bessarabia international status. The Soviet propaganda used the complicated situation caused by the agrarian reform to compromise and discredit the Romanian administration. The pauper peasants disadvantaged by the agrarian reform were the main social classes used by the Soviet communist ideology against Romanian authorities. Thus a peculiarity of Romanian political life was turned by the Soviet Union into political speculation and presented as discriminatory policy of Bucharest towards the Bessarabian population.

The second conflict, actively speculated by the Soviet propaganda, appeared as consequence of the Bessarabia administration. I have earlier stressed that in the aftermath of the Union Bessarabia kept its large autonomy. Beside "Sfatul Tarii", there was the Directors' Council, an autonomy institution established from Bucharest to deal with the administration in Bessarabia<sup>10</sup>. After November 27, 1918, the Bessarabian autonomy was gradually mitigated. On January 1, 1919, the General Department created by "Sfatul Tarii" was abolished and replaced by the Bessarabian Ministry led by D. Ciugureanu<sup>11</sup>. Soon after November 27, 1918, the Directors' Council was also abolished<sup>12</sup>. It was therefore attested a slowly and a 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 were not clearly definite<sup>13</sup>.

The effects of these administrative changes have had a serious impact on the local population. Unfortunately because of many reason in the question of Bessarabia administration has been misunderstood the historical significance of the union itself. The government from Bucharest named in Bessarabia an administration which did not realize the complexity of situation and many times the national ideal and interest were

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<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> A. Cardaş, *Aspecte din reforma agrară basarabească*, Chișinău, 1924, p.74.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p.77.

<sup>10</sup> I. Agrigoroaiei, Gh. Palade, pp.71-72.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p.72.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p.p. 72-73.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p.73.

compromised by some statesmen's greed and morality corruption. As result of that situation after two years of Romanian administration nostalgia for Russian tsarist regime had appeared among Bessarabians<sup>14</sup>.

The Bessarabian statesmen had often warned the central government that the involvement of Bessarabia in the Romanian political intrigues might have unexpected consequences for the Bessarabia's future. Bessarabia has always been a hard ruled province and the first post war decade did not bring any real political and economic success to Romanian administration. It is true that Romanian administration had found a propitious situation here as the Tsarist Russian policies had estranged most of Bessarabians and a part of minorities from Russian culture as well as from civil and administrative life. Moreover, the new Romanian administration was coming into territory which was sharing the similar historical, cultural and traditional values<sup>15</sup>. There were thus great chances for successful policies within Bessarabia.

Some nuances of the Russian imperial legacies should have been taken into consideration however. Leaved after 1812 by its elites as both the boyars and the priests were oriented towards Petersburg and Moscow, Bessarabians were limited for more than one century to themselves, to an over-simplified tradition. Because of this imposed isolation from the rest of Romanian people, they have had a distinct evolution from the other Romanians and they did not perceived themselves as an organic part of the Romanian people in the last decades before the union<sup>16</sup>. Even if the Bessarabians maintained the archaic Romanian tongue and the traditions as such the sense of Romanian identity was not as strong as for instance in the case of the Romanians from Transylvania. Many statesmen and intellectuals who after the union visited Bessarabia ascertained the existence of this Moldavian specificity, a different mentality and even some linguistically differences<sup>17</sup>. The Romanian government after 1918 confronted a very complicated legacy of the Russian empire in Bessarabia: with the Romanians securing the majority and representing the most rural and least educated nationality; with the presence of the wide variety of ethnic groups; with the Russian and Russian-speaking population dominating urban life and elites; and the native population preferring to identify themselves as "Moldovans" rather than "Romanians".

The political elites, both the local statesmen (mostly the elites created in the Russian Empire) and those from Bucharest (insensible for the peculiarity of Bessarabia development under Russia Empire), many times acted in Bessarabia denying that profound transformation. Politically the Bessarabian population was backward (a fact demonstrated by the implementation agrarian reform, but not only) 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 the Bessarabia's return to the Soviet Union<sup>18</sup>.

Besides, the Romanian authorities meet a new and a great issue created after 1918 by the presence of important number of national minorities especially Russians, Ukrainians, and Jews. By the policy followed in 1918-1940 the Romanian

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<sup>14</sup> *Adevărul*, October 24, 1920.

<sup>15</sup> P. Cazacu, *Moldova dintre Prut și Nistru(1812-1918)*, Iași, 1924, p.329.

<sup>16</sup> O. Ghibu, *De la Basarabia rusească la Basarabia românească*, Cluj, 1926, p.186.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p.187.

<sup>18</sup> M. Bruhis, *Rusia, România și Basarabia (1812,1918,1924,1940)*, Chișinău, 1992, p.107.

administration had not adequately succeeded in convincing the national minorities in the historical truth about Bessarabia, a deficiency speculated by Moscow as well<sup>19</sup>. The minorities were the Achilles' heel of Romanian administration in Bessarabia and 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 Tatarbuniar uprisings were the most eloquent examples these anti-Romanian actions.

On this background the political conflict between the Bessarabian statesmen and the central authorities started. The Bessarabian political elites accused the Romanian for being excluded from the government of province and for their abusive replacing by the *Răgăţeni* (Romanians from Old Romania), especially during the Liberal government (1922-1926)<sup>20</sup>.

The discontents of local population towards some authorities' abuses generated many interventions of the Bessarabians deputies in Romanian Parliament and determined in August 1920 the Bessarabian minister D. Ciugureanu for asking an audience to Romanian King Ferdinand I to expose the critical situation of Bessarabia<sup>21</sup>.

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. The abuses of the Romanian authorities in Bessarabia were attested as well as many trials against political opponents and innocent people staged under the pretext of annihilating the communism<sup>22</sup>.

Since the Bessarabia issue was negotiated at Paris Peace Conference, the size of conflicting situation has been 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 Siguranta punished many innocent people<sup>23</sup>. For the same reason the Siguranta often interfered in Bessarabia for intimidating the political opponents of the government party<sup>24</sup>. As pointed D. Haneş, the Head of Parliamentary Inquiry, the Romanian authorities were hardly criticized in Bessarabia and even the teachers from Old Romania were often rejected by the Bessarabian population<sup>25</sup>. According to the Inquiry statement that situation was the result of the inefficient and inconsistent policy of Romanian government in Bessarabia<sup>26</sup>. As suggested the Bessarabian interwar press the administration of Bessarabia ought to be changed by replacing the Romanian elements with the local political elite<sup>27</sup>.

The Romanian government reply to these accusations was partly right: 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, was not able to provide political elite for a complete administration of Bessarabia. The Old Russian administration was made up by ethnic minorities whose loyalty to the new

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 107.

<sup>20</sup> A. Tibal, p.21.

<sup>21</sup> *Sfatul Ţării*, August 23, 1920.

<sup>22</sup> *Adevărul*, February 12, 1920.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, October 17, 1920.

<sup>24</sup> A. Tibal, p.21.

<sup>25</sup> *Adevărul*, October 22, 1920.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>27</sup> *Sfatul Ţării*, August 28, 1920.

Romanian administration was questionable. Thus for the new state's consolidation a rush of Romanians elements from Old Romania was unavoidable and necessary for Bessarabia<sup>28</sup>.

The "hard hand's policy" followed by the Romanian governments in Bessarabia was also justified by the security and military necessities. It was determined by the special status created to 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 military situation in Bessarabia<sup>29</sup>. The exceptional military situation is the way of state's ruling used during the critical moments of its existence only. Having the priority of the quick actions in the critical circumstances, the military ruling has the great deficiencies as well. Its persistence perturbs the society's normal evolution and could generate the psychology of discretion and abuses for the authorities and the lack of law's respect for 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 Bessarabia<sup>30</sup>. Dramatically but the local population who had not 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 and during the interwar period Romania wished the Soviet Union's recognition of Bessarabia as Romanian territory in order to have this situation clarified. Besides the international connotation, 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 difficulties**

The First World War strongly struck both the Romanian and Bessarabian economy. The pre-war economic orientation and the strong agrarian character of Bessarabian economy considerably influenced the 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 the Bessarabia's economic unfavourable evolution during the interwar period. Before 1918 the Bessarabian economy was entirely 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)<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> N. Giurgea, *Din trecutul și prezentul Basarabiei*, Chișinău, 1928, p.101.

<sup>29</sup> Al. Boldur, *Bessarabskii vopros*, Chișinău, 1930, p.18.

<sup>30</sup> A. Tibal, p.21.

<sup>31</sup> I. Kaba, *Étude politique et économique sur la Bessarabie*, Paris, 1919, p.39.

The industry of Bessarabia also knew a colonial way of working. Many Bessarabians factories were the annexes of the Russian great enterprises and oriented towards imperial necessities<sup>32</sup>.

The breaking of the Soviet Romanian diplomatic relations and the continuity of that situation until 1934 have had as consequences the closing of the Nistru boundary and the absence of economic relations between two neighbour countries. The situation affected first of all the Bessarabian economy which was entirely oriented to the East and created a permanent economic crisis in Bessarabia. It was not only the Bessarabia's, but also the Baltic States' hard situation after the losing of the former economic relations<sup>33</sup>.

The Bessarabian agriculture has been 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 stressed the Bessarabian review "Basarabia economică" "Even though the other conditions would be equal these differences will always put the Bessarabian economy into the situation of inferiority"<sup>34</sup>.

As was pointed out above the Bessarabian industry suffered as well from the closing of the Romanian's eastern boundary and the abnormality of the Soviet Romanian relationship. But the critical situation in economy was worsened by the Romanian governments' attitude as well. It was frequently stressed during the interwar period that Bessarabia was an agrarian province because the lack of the raw materials there could not entertain the working of the own industry<sup>35</sup>. Reflecting on that situation, the Romanian economist N. Arcadian ascertained in 1936 that "... looking on the Bessarabian industry globally and comparing it with the others provinces' and the 1919's situation we find that while Old Romania, Transylvania and Bucovina had known industrial growth, Bessarabia had got a pronounced agrarian character as consequence of the diminution of industrial development"<sup>36</sup>. The Bessarabian historian Ștefan Ciobanu considered however that it was irrational to create an industry into the territory deprived of the raw materials and the labour force only for the idea to have a proper and varied industry there<sup>37</sup>.

In fact that peculiar evolution of Bessarabian economy within Greater Romania has had a more profound explanation. As pointed the English historian Norman. J. Pounds the economic difficulties in Bessarabia were caused by the Soviet Union's permanent claims towards this territory and the perspective to lose Bessarabia stopped Romania to develop the province<sup>38</sup>. Therefore besides the diplomatic and political difficulties, the Soviet Union's contest of the union between Bessarabia and Romania caused an uncertainty about this territory's future which impeded the Romanian governments to develop Bessarabia during the interwar period<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> Șt. Ciobanu, *Basarabia Eroare! Marcaj în document nedefinit.*, Chișinău, 1993, p.394.

<sup>33</sup> R.J. Crampton, *Europa Răsăriteană în secolul XX...și după*, București, 2002, p. 125.

<sup>34</sup> *Basarabia economică*, Nr. 3, Chișinău, 1939, p.8.

<sup>35</sup> I. Agrigoroaiei, Gh. Palade, p.86.

<sup>36</sup> N. Arcadian, *Industrializarea României*, București, 1936, p.236.

<sup>37</sup> Șt. Ciobanu, p.403.

<sup>38</sup> Norman I. Pounds, *Eastern Europe*, Londra, 1969, p.869.

<sup>39</sup> Al. Boldur, *Bessarabskii vopros*, p.17.



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 ceased<sup>40</sup>.

After 1918 the French, English, Belgian financial groups were interested in some branches of Bessarabian economy but the international status of this territory, especially 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 a disputed territory"<sup>41</sup>. The Romanian governments did not deny that the establishment of the diplomatic and economic relations with the Soviet Union would have hindered the decline of Bessarabian economy<sup>42</sup>. 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 Romania<sup>43</sup>. A country confronted with the eventuality of the war for a disputed by a great power territory could not be a safe place for the foreign investments.

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 consequence the Bessarabian population accused the governments from Bucharest for the economic problems and alleged that Romania transformed Bessarabia into colony<sup>44</sup>. The Romanian authorities had ascertained in Bessarabia an hostile attitude towards Romanian administration, an anarchic, a quasi revolutionary situation among Bessarabians mainly because of this propaganda<sup>45</sup>. As pointed Romanian newspaper "Adevarul" there was a latent state of discontents in Bessarabia linked with great economic sufferings. "Nevertheless the process has not here the noisy form of discontents from Transylvania but we have to overlook neither the Bessarabia's geographical position nor its situation from international prospect. From the both point of view the Bessarabia's situation is exceptional. It is an imperious duty to keep so Bessarabia contented" stressed the daily from Bucharest<sup>46</sup>.

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 the communist 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 reflected the Bessarabian statesman I. Inculet: "The

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<sup>40</sup> A.M. Lazarev, *Moldavskaja sovetskaja gosudarstvenosti i bessarabskii vopros*, Chişinău, 1974, p.121.

<sup>41</sup> P. Cazacu, *Zece ani de la Unire. Moldova între Prut şi Nistru (1918 – 1928)*, Bucureşti, 1929, p.103.

<sup>42</sup> V.V. Tilea, *Acţiunea diplomatică a României (nov. 1919-martie 1920)*, Sibiu, 1925, p.119.

<sup>43</sup> F.C. Nanu, *Politica externă a României (1918-1933)*, Iaşi, 1993, p.121.

<sup>44</sup> A.Tibal, p.21.

<sup>45</sup> Arhiva Statului Bucureşti, fond *Casa Regală*, dosar 16/1932, f.4.

<sup>46</sup> *Adevărul*, January 6, 1932.

re-establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union will have an enormous importance from political, economic as well as psychological point of view. It will implant in the Bessarabians' hearts the peace and the safety of tomorrow day"<sup>47</sup>. The hopes of this redress fell once Bessarabia was annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940.

### **Conclusion**

The elucidation of the 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 conflicting situation between the centre and the province was normality as have been welded together the national territories which existed under varied regimes and Empires. It was also well-known that these territories existence (of Bessarabia as well) within different Empires caused them some essential modifications, some specific features which generated this conflict. But that was a constructive conflict, one which was looking for the best way to build the fundamentals of a new state. In other words it was a issue of Romanian internal evolution. In the case of Bessarabia's integration the situation was complicated by the Soviet Union policy followed in the province.

The geopolitical interests followed by the Soviet state in the region as well as its revolutionary character turned the Bessarabia issue from a Romanian one into an international problem. As a consequence of 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 integration of Bessarabia within Greater Romania. The ruling of Bessarabia has never been an easy task for Romanian governments and this paper has stressed the existence of different animosities. But the same difficulties persisted 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 has been perturbed by the special status of the province as consequence of the Bessarabia international uncertain situation.

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<sup>47</sup> *Universul*, June 12, 1934.