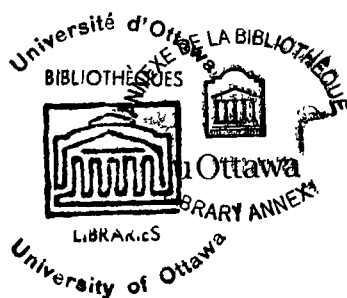


THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ROMANIAN INDEPENDENCE:
THE STRUGGLE, THE VICTORY, THE AFTERMATH

by

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Preface

The idea of a national unity into a sovereign State had always been present to a variable degree in the history of the Romanian people, yet it was not fulfilled until the late 19th century.

It is the aim of this thesis to trace the development of this idea and to analyze as close as possible the political character of those who sustained it, and the difficulties they encountered in their endeavour to bring it to its fulfillment.

It is also intended to point out the prevalent circumstances of the period - major internal conditions and international developments - the degree of influence they exercised on the Romanian Government and nation, and the manner in which that government and nation reacted to those circumstances, seeking to turn them to their advantage.

The topic is complex and some repetition is unavoidable, despite the best of intentions to avoid it. In certain cases, however, repetition occurs for the sake of emphasis - to drive home some points disputed in the past due to lack of evidence.

Some of the conclusions, which differ somehow from those drawn by past historians, are based on the new evidence made available by the Romanian Government after the second world war.

The research is based mainly on the available primary sources, both old and new, Romanian and foreign. Many secondary sources also have been consulted and found invaluable in their presentation and interpretation of character and events.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of a national unity into a sovereign State seems to have formed the nucleus of the entire historical evolution of the Romanian people. The main aspect of their history appears as a struggle for the attainment of these objectives. The creation of the Principalities of Walachia (Muntenia and Oltenia) and Moldavia in the middle ages had been a first victory in this direction. The union of these Principalities with Transylvania (an area populated by Romanians but under Hungarian rule) at the very end of the 16th century, under Michael the Brave,¹ a Walachian Prince, though for a very short duration, was a further indication of the existence of a consciousness for national unity and sovereignty, though Michael's personal ambition, no doubt, played the greater role.² The development of a Romanian culture in the first half of the 19th century, based on the idea of Romanian Latinity, further enhanced the aspiration for unification—the unification of all Romanians into one single, sovereign nation. In his pamphlet, Dorintele partidei nationale in Moldova, published in 1848, M. Kogalniceanu³ demanded the "unification of the two Principalities into one single State."⁴ The provisional government in Walachia, in 1848, declared itself for the unification of the Romanian people. "All lands inhabited by Romanians should be called Romania and form one state...the Romanian nation demands that it be one and indivisible."⁵

1. Michael the Brave ruled from 1593 to 1601.
2. D. Mitrany, "Romania: Her History and Politics", The Balkans: A History of Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, Romania, and Turkey, by N. Forbes, A. Toynbee, D. Mitrany, and D. Hogarth, Oxford University Press, London, 1915, pp. 250-262. Hereafter referred to as Mitrany, The Balkans.
3. Romanian patriot and statesman. 4. V. Maciu, Condițiile interne ale proclamării independenței României, Bucharest, 1955, p. 13.
5. L. S. Stavrianos, The Balkans Since 1453, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York, 1958, p. 348.

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The Crimean War brought changes of great significance in the history of modern Romania. Russia was defeated by France and Britain, and all her claims of "protection" over the Principalities were curtailed. The Treaty of Paris (1856) placed the Principalities under the joint guarantee of the Powers and restored their national autonomy; Bessarabia, acquired by Russia in 1812, was restored to Moldavia. Moreover the Powers agreed that a special commission be formed to study the future status of the Principalities.¹

Still under the suzerainty of the Sultan, the Romanians embraced Napoleon III and, by acquainting him with their aspirations, won him to their cause, which harmonized with his tendency to secure the self-determination of peoples. His influence contributed substantially to the attainment of unification of the Principalities.

In 1857 the Powers held elections in the Principalities, which registered great majorities for the union. A year later the Powers agreed that the Principalities may unite, if they so desired, but each was to have her own prince and assembly, with a central commission and a superior court of justice.

In the early spring of 1859, while the Powers were distracted by the crisis which was to lead to the Franco-Austrian War over Italy, the Romanians took a bold step. The National Assemblies of both Moldavia and Walachia elected unanimously as their prince one and the same man - Alexandru Ioan Cuza. This contravened the stipulations of the Treaty of Paris and the Powers protested, but Napoleon urged Cuza's recognition as Prince of the United Principalities. The Powers reluctantly gave in and on December 23 1861 the union of the Principalities was formally proclaimed. The new auto-

1. The text of the Treaty of Paris is given in British and Foreign State Papers, volume 46, London, 1865, pp.107-111.

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nomous State was named Romania, and Bucharest was selected as its capital. This event marked an objective and necessary step in the laying of the foundations of the modern Romanian national State.

Alexander Cuza was a man of enlightened views and took a genuine interest in his people, striving to improve their social and economic conditions. His reign was marked by far-sighted efforts to solve some of Romania's most difficult problems. His first step was towards the secularization of monastic properties. By a law of 1863 he dissolved a large majority of the monasteries in Romania, expelled the abbots and monks, and confiscated their property for national interests. As the monastic lands had accumulated over the years to constitute about one fourth of the total arable surface, this act brought rich revenues under State control. His next step was to effect the emancipation of the peasants. By the Agrarian Law of 1864, the peasants were allotted small land holdings, according to the number of cattle they possessed, and all feudal dues in labour and kind were abolished. State bonds compensated the boyars, landed aristocrats, and the peasants had to make annual payments for fifteen years. The result was similar to the one brought about in Russia by the Emancipation Law of 1861. A peasant's holding was usually too small to enable him to live decently, and the payments were more than he could afford. The boyars continued to possess the best of the arable land and much of the forest and pasture land, while the peasants were given the poorest sections of the land with no pasture for their animals.¹

1. J. A. R. Mariott, The Eastern Question, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940, pp. 300-3. Stavrianos, op.cit., pp. 351-55. W. M. Gewehr, The Rise of Nationalism in the Balkans, H. Holt & Co., New York, 1931, pp. 61-4. F. Damé, Histoire de la Roumanie Contemporaine, Paris: Felix Alcan, 1900, pp. 133-40.

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In order to overcome all opposition to his reforms,¹ Cuza felt compelled to assume dictatorial powers through a coup d'état in May 1864. This act together with his reforms, among others, alienated the clergy, the boyars, and the constitutionalists. The peasants remained on his side, but they were ill-organized and inarticulate. A conspiracy was soon formed, consisting of members of the upper and middle class military men, and in February 1866 Cuza was forced to abdicate and quit the country. A provisional government, Lieutenantance Princièrè, was set up in his place to rule the country until a foreign prince could be found.

After some difficulty in finding for the Romanian throne a candidate who would not meet with too strong an opposition from the neighbouring Empires (Russia, Austria, Turkey), the Romanian leaders offered the crown to Prince Carol,² the second son of Prince Karl-Anton of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, the elder and Catholic branch of the Prussian royal family.³ Knowing well that Romania's neighbouring Powers would object strongly to the accession of a German Prince to the Romanian throne, Carol hesitated to accept the offer before seeking advice. The King of Prussia, William I, as head of the whole family, counselled caution. But Bismarck, the President of the Prussian Council of Ministers, who perceived the advantage of enthroning a Hohenzollern in a country which occu-

1. There were many other reforms introduced by Cuza. A decree on public instruction provided for free and obligatory education. New primary and secondary schools were established as well as the Universities of Iassy and Bucharest. It was during his reign, too, that the Romanian government adopted the Napoleonic Code, improved the judicial system, introduced trial by jury, and improved the tax-collecting system. Dame', op.cit., pp. 133-40. 2. Prince Carol, born in 1839, was then a lieutenant in the 23rd regiment of the Prussian Dragoons. Dame', op.cit., p. 161.

3. Prince Karl-Anton had given up voluntarily in 1849 his principality to Frederick William IV of Prussia. He had been President of the Prussian Council of Ministers from 1858 to 1862; thereafter being appointed military governor of the Prussian Rhenishlands and Westphalia. Ibid.

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pied a strategic position in Eastern Europe,¹ urged the Prince to accept the offer. "You have been unanimously elected by a nation to rule over them", he told Carol in a private interview, "obey the summons." He admitted that the Powers "most interested" would protest vigorously against the candidature, but he felt sure that once Carol reached Romania the protest would remain "only on paper, and the fact cannot be undone!" Moreover, Austria was not likely to give too much trouble for he (Bismarck) proposed "to give her occupation for some time to come!"²

Carol was not an exceptionally brilliant man. His conservative mind lacked social perceptiveness and ingenuity. But he possessed other qualities, such as patience, perseverance, and a strong sense of duty, which compensated for his lack of brilliance.³

Upon his arrival in Romania, Carol took the oath as constitutional ruler and received the resignation of the members of the Lieutenant Prince. Once formally established, he sought out Conservatives of moderate views and formed his first government, under the premiership of Lascar Catargiu, boyar and statesman.⁴ His next step was to summon a constituent assembly. This body drafted a constitution on the Belgian model, which was unanimously approved and adopted in July 1866. This document⁵ gave Romania a truly parliamentary gov-

1. Politicus (pseudonym), "Romania and the Eastern Question", Fortnightly Review, October, 1916, C, 549 - 562

2. S. Whitman, Reminiscences of the King of Romania, Harper & Brothers, London, 1899, pp. 18-20. 3. Stavrianos, op.cit., p. 357.

4. This government comprised also two Radicals, one of whom was Ion C. Bratianu, future prime minister. Dame, op.cit., pp. 164-66

5. Text of Romanian Constitution given in Dame, op.cit., pp. 424 - 446.

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ernment with ministers responsible to the legislature. The latter was bi-cameral in form, a Chamber of Deputies and a Senate, both elective. Nominally universal manhood suffrage existed but, by means of a system of electoral colleges, similar to that of Prussia, the upper class controlled parliament.¹

Another important step that Carol had to take as soon as possible was to secure the Sultan's recognition. Negotiations between the Romanian Government and the Porte began at once, but they were progressing very slowly. By October (1866), however, an agreement was reached and Carol went to Constantinople to meet his suzerain in person.² The Sultan agreed to a hereditary dynasty in Romania and a Romanian army of no more than 30,000 men, but was unwilling to recognize Romania's right to strike her own coinage and medals. Treaties conducted between the Porte and foreign Powers were to be binding on Romania only if they did not interfere with her established rights and privileges. The Romanian Government could not conclude treaties or conventions with foreign Powers without first obtaining the approval of the Porte.³ These were the main restrictions which constituted Romania's dependence on the Porte. It is in order to remove these restrictions, and other grievances, that in the next decade the Romanian Government began a relentless diplomatic struggle which culminated in the War for Independence.

The early years of Carol's reign were by no means easy

1. Gewehr, *op.cit.*, p.357. 2. By September, 1866, the British Government decided to urge the Sultan to accept Carol as Prince of Romania for the sake of Balkan tranquillity. Lord Newton, *Lord Lyons*, a record of British diplomacy, volume 1, E. Arnold, London, 1913, p.156.
3. A.C.A. Sturdza, *La Terre et la Race Roumaines*, Librairie J. Rothschild, Paris, 1904, pp.529-30. Dame, *op.cit.*, pp.170-72.

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to cope with. The administration of the country was weak; most politicians, especially the Radicals, were educated in the spirit of 1848, and party spirit was high and undisciplined. The army was small and ill-equipped; there were no railways, and only a few good roads. But perhaps the worst of all was the financial condition of the country. "We have not a penny", Carol wrote to his father in July 1866, "and the Ministry, in order to restore the equilibrium of the Budget, has to adopt measures which will scarcely gain friends for us".¹

Under the circumstances he had to struggle hard to gain the confidence and co-operation of all political factions in order to obtain good government and maintain unity of direction in both internal and external affairs.²

Carol was very much concerned with the orientation of Romania's foreign policy. His sympathies being, naturally, with Prussia, he strove from the very beginning to steer Romania into the orbit of the former. "Prussia", he wrote to Bismarck in January 1868, "will always have in me a zealous representative of her interests in the Orient".³ His sympathies, however, were not shared by his subjects.

The difference between Carol's sympathies and those of his subjects was bitterly revealed by the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1). Public sentiment in Romania was overwhelmingly pro-French. Thus while Carol, in a letter to William I, expressed his disappointment at not being able⁴ to "follow his beloved Sovereign on the field of battle", the Romanians

1. Whitman, op.cit., p.129. 2. Dame, op.cit., p.167

3. Letter of Carol to Bismarck, January 27, 1868. The Correspondence of William I and Bismarck, with other letters from and to Prince Bismarck, translated by J.A.Ford, volume 2, F.A.Stokes Co., New York, 1903, No.131, p.142.

4. Mariott, op.cit., p.307.

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were clamouring that "wherever the banner of France waves, there are our sympathies and interests"¹. Feeling ran so high that there sprang out spontaneous anti-German riots in several places, and a serious revolt broke out in the town of Ploesti. The army remained loyal and the uprisings were easily suppressed; but the Jury's acquittal of the insurgents indicated the nature of the public opinion. Carol's position became so difficult that he summoned the Lieutenant Prince to relinquish his powers to them, and changed his mind only after the Conservatives solemnly promised him full support in the future.²

Prussia's overwhelming victory over France, which Carol predicted, had a sobering effect on the Romanian nation. The Conservatives kept their promise and rallied to the support of the Prince. Lascar Catargiu gathered a group of influential politicians and formed a new ministry (1871). This government held office until the spring of 1876, when the Balkan caldron began again to boil in a new attempt to solve the so-called Eastern Question.³

1. Whitman, op.cit., p.99. 2. Dame, op.cit., pp.210-25.
Gewehr, op.cit., pp.65-66. A.C.A.Sturdza, op.cit., pp547-52. Whitman, op.cit., pp.104-106.
3. Ibid.

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Part B

The Powers, the Balkans, and Romania, 1875-1878.

The Western Powers regarded Romania as a ready market for their manufactured goods, as a reliable supplier of agricultural products and raw materials and as a place to invest their surplus capital. However, during the Balkan Crisis of 1875-1878, this Balkan country took on an added significance for them. This was due to Russia's attempt to apply her traditional policy towards the Balkans. For the Russian Government Romania possessed much greater strategical value than economic. Romania could advance Russian imperialistic schemes in the Balkan peninsula by serving as a link between the Balkan Slavic nations and the Russian Empire.

Since 1871, when she repudiated the Black Sea restrictions imposed on her by the Peace of Paris in 1856, Russia resumed her traditional anti-Turkish policy towards the Balkans. Her ultimate objective there was the domination of the Straits - the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. Through them passed a high percentage of her overseas commerce, without which she felt that she would no longer be a great Power. The Straits had to be dominated by her, and if Turkey could not be controlled directly, due to the international guarantee which the Ottoman Empire received by the Treaty of Paris, the establishment of a chain of satellite Slavic nation States could be the key to her objective. This was Russia's main reason for her active intervention in Balkan affairs and the principal factor which motivated her to declare war on Turkey in 1877.

Since among the Balkan Slavic nations Bulgaria was geographically most favourably located for that purpose, Russia aimed at the creation

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of a protectorate in that region. Bulgaria was then to be linked up to the Russian Empire by the annexation of Dobrudja and Bessarabia, and enlarged through union with Eastern Rumelia. Consequently, by the Treaty of San Stefano (1878) Russia created a large Bulgarian State, demanded Romanian Bessarabia, and later was reluctant to hand over Dobrudja to Romania.

In the process of unfolding her plans Russia antagonized Britain and Austria, who had interests of their own in the Balkans and were determined to diminish Russian influence there. Britain's traditional policy in the Near East was based on the necessity of protecting the route to India by maintaining a Turkish State sufficiently strong and extensive to withstand Russian political and military pressure. To this now was added the desire to protect her newly-acquired control over the Suez area. Thus she could not tolerate Russia's schemes in the Balkans, which could give the Government in St. Petersburg control over Constantinople and a ready access to the Mediterranean.

Austria, who had in the past ten years lost her supremacy in Italy and in Germany, considered her position in Eastern Europe as very important; now it was her only path of expansion. From the Austrian point of view Balkan nationalism had to be resisted, as her own Slavic peoples could possibly break away. Her eastern boundaries would then disintegrate, her own expansion would be blocked, and the important trade route through the Danube endangered. Thus she could not tolerate a large Bulgarian State on her eastern borders, especially since it was to be linked with the Russian Empire. Consequently she was determined to prevent the Russians from attaining their Balkan objectives.

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This clash between the Austrian and Russian interests in the Balkans forced Germany to become more actively involved in the dispute. Bismarck declared that Germany had no interests in the Balkans, desiring only to keep Russia and Austria in friendly terms.

As a result of the Franco-Prussian War (1871), Bismarck feared a war of revenge from France. To discourage her from taking such a step the main aim of his foreign policy was to keep France isolated. To achieve this end he devised a system of alliances which committed Russia and Austria to friendly relations with Germany. This system of alliances, which was later extended to include Italy and Romania, and indirectly Britain, gave Germany the security she was seeking. This security was now threatened by the Austro-Russian rivalry over supremacy in the Balkans. Bismarck's position in the dispute was therefore a difficult one. He would have liked to have seen Austria acquire a preponderant influence in the peninsula, but, at the same time, desired to keep Russia content. The estrangement of Russia could force her to look for an ally, and France would be the logical choice. An alliance between France and Russia could encourage the former to seek her revenge, with the result that Germany might be forced to fight a war on two fronts simultaneously. To prevent such a disaster, Bismarck had to make sure that Russia remained within the network of his alliances. Thus when the Russians demanded Bessarabia, he was only too eager to comply with the request, and attempted to convince the Austrians to do the same. The latter however, had her reservations.

Romania's refusal to cede Bessarabia of her own accord, and the delicate and dangerous state of international developments of the period

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convinced the Russians that they would more easily gain the desired link between themselves and Bulgaria if Romania could be drawn into their sphere of influence. Their eagerness to achieve this end worried Austria and Britain, who wanted to maintain Romania as a neutral element between the Balkan Slavs and Russia and thus prevent a common border between them. Consequently the Austrian Government adopted a very active foreign policy towards Romania, while the British promised their full support.

Not being able to convince the Romanians to relinquish Bessarabia of their own accord, nor to draw Romania into their sphere of influence, Russia announced to the Powers her intention of acquiring Bessarabia at all costs. This obviously implied the use of force, but in reality it was no more than a clever way of testing the attitude of the Powers. Had any of the Powers really objected to Russia's acquisition of Bessarabia, she might have had second thoughts. As it happened, no Power really objected. Some of them decided to see to it that Russia got only Bessarabia, and not her desired link with Bulgaria. Subsequently, when Germany supported Russia's demand on Bessarabia, Austria insisted that, in turn, Romania must be compensated territorially on her south-eastern borders. The Austrians wanted Romania to obtain the Ottoman province of Dobrudja, which could have served as a link between Bessarabia and Bulgaria. The Russians agreed, but offered Romania a narrow Dobrudja, which in time could have shrunk to non-existence under Russian pressure. At this point France intervened, insisting that a larger Dobrudja should be offered. The Russians objected strongly but had to yield, as the French proposal was supported by Austria, Britain and Italy.

France had no major interests in the Balkans and her policy there

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was quite passive. In fact, since 1871 all French foreign policy was kept on low key, for fear of antagonizing Bismarck, who suspected, as we have seen, that France was seeking alliances for a war of revenge. Yet, the French did intervene in Romania's favour in regard to Dobrudja. This appears to have been motivated by their intentions to acquire colonies in North Africa. Hence the French, too, had no desire to see the Russians in control of the Straits, with a free access to the Mediterranean. Moreover, by opposing Russia they hoped to convince Bismarck that they were not interested in a Russian alliance. In such a way, they hoped to obtain his support in their quest for colonies in North Africa.

Italy's support of Romania was motivated by economic considerations and by innate feelings of affinity which developed between the two nations by the middle of the 19th century. In the first instance, it was obvious that Romania could offer better terms in commercial conventions as a free and independent country than she could as part of the Russian or Ottoman Empires. In the second instance, the development of a Romanian culture in the first half of the 19th century, based on Romanian Latinity, drew the two nations together. This was enhanced by the fact that both nations strove for unification and achieved it about the same time.

These were then the main factors which compelled the Powers to act towards Romania the way they did in the late 1870's. It is well to keep in mind here that the economic considerations diminished in importance only in a time of crisis, when the political considerations ruled supreme, but they were always present, and when the crises subsided they resumed their prominence. Perhaps the best example of this, as we shall see later on, is when Bismarck refused to recognize Romania's independence

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until all German investments in Romanian railways received the securities demanded of the Romanian Government by the shareholders or the investors themselves.

Social and Economic Conditions

The social and economic aspects of this important period in Romania's history have been seriously neglected in the past; most historians being primarily concerned with its political aspect. It is only recently that these aspects began to receive considerations more equitable with their importance.

The social and economic factors had a significant influence on the political events of the period. They had a bearing even on the nation's attitude towards independence. For, as we shall see, while everybody desired it, independence meant different things to different social classes, each expecting certain benefits from it.

At the time of the declaration of independence there were three social classes in Romania: the wealthy landowners or boyars, a small but active middle class, and the peasantry to which belonged the greatest majority of the nation. According to their social and political outlook the boyars could be divided in two groups: the hard-line conservatives, who were against any change in the social and economic structure of the nation; and the liberally-minded boyars¹, who were willing to bring about changes, as long as they were not deprived of the basic rights and privileges belonging to their class.²

The middle class, a fairly new addition to the structure of Romanian society, was also divided in two groups: the small landholders, who resided on the countryside and claimed the leadership of the peasantry; and the urban professionals and

1 The distinction between these groupings was rather vague since it was based on their attitude rather than their position on the social ladder.

2 J.S.Roucek, "The Political Evolution of Romania", The Slavonic Review, April, 1932, X, 602-615.

and merchants¹, some of whom had small sums invested in the young Romanian industry and commercial enterprises, who resided in the urban areas and claimed the leadership of the urban masses, including those labourers who did not own anything and whose livelihood depended on their daily wages - the proletarians.²

The last class, numerically the largest and economically and politically the most destitute, consisted of all the peasants, some of whom owned some land, while others possessed only movable property or nothing besides their recently acquired (1864) legal, but not economic, freedom to move as they pleased.

The agrarian reform of 1864 failed to reach its objective, which in M.Kogalniceanu's words was "to level up society, to lower the highly placed and raise the humble"³. Some of the factors contributing to this failure were inherent in the reform itself, but most of them were to be found in the boyars' hostile attitude towards reform. The reformers, it seems, were concerned mainly with the legal aspect of the emancipation of the peasant, neglecting its economic aspect. Consequently, the Emancipation Act of 1864 made the peasant a free man but only in the legal sense, while economically he remained bound to the boyar's land. It set him up as a full owner of a plot of land, but that plot was not large enough, or fertile enough, to sustain his livelihood. As a result he ended up working for the boyar on worse terms than before. The wheels of the administration, which was supposed to carry the reform into effect, were controlled by the boyars, who had all the reasons to see to it that the reform failed miserably. Thus when the abolition of feudal dues could no longer be avoided, the boyars made sure that the peasant were

¹ Here again the distinction between these groupings is quite loose. Many a middle class urban dweller had property in the country and exercised influence among the peasants.

² Roucek, loc.cit. ³ D.Mitrany, *The Land and The Peasant in Romania*, H.Milford, London: Oxford University Press, 1930, p.55.

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endowed with as little and as poor land as possible. Moreover, since the Agrarian Law of 1864 did not provide for future generations, the peasants invariably divided their plots equally among their sons. This process of progressive fragmentation, over the years, brought the poor peasant to the point where it all began - to work the boyar's land on the boyar's own terms. The boyar's terms invariably contained compulsory labour. Hence "labour dues, abolished as a legal system, continued as an economic practice"¹. To the peasant's labour obligation were now added the financial obligations, for he now had to pay his annuities to the State for the land he received plus the land tax. Deprived of any income, the peasant was forced to borrow money from his landlord at exorbitant interest rates. This practice brought the peasants to a state of chronic indebtedness to their landlords, who often translated the financial debt into labour obligations, forcing the peasants to sign labour contracts for years into the future. "Men have died without being able to pay off their debt", wrote Ion Ionescu de la Brad, a Romanian Deputy of that period, "but their widows and children are forced to labour and to pay, even though they may have inherited nothing"².

The plight of peasantry was further worsened by a law on agricultural contracts began in 1866 and completed in 1872. This law entitled the landlords and their tenants to ask local authorities for military assistance to enforce labour contracts. Many a landlord abused this law to threaten the poor peasants into total submission to his whims.

It is worth noticing here that all this new legislation, so drastic for the peasants, contained no sanction for the landlords in case they failed to keep their part of the bargain. Legally and economically, it seems, the peasants were hopelessly abandoned to the pleasure of the landlords, who, replete with wealth and privileges, had no interest or desire to alleviate the suffering of those beneath them on the social

¹ Mitran, op.cit., p.56.

² Ibid., p.61.

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scale. "One Class", wrote Dobrogeanu-Gherea, a Socialist of the time, "had achieved for itself 'roses without thorns, while the thorns - and the thorns alone - were left for the peasants'."1

The peasants did not remain passive to their condition. They began making official complaints to both the Department of the Interior and to that of Justice, but their complaints remained unheeded. There was no peasants' organization to defend their interests, but many members of the middle class championed their cause. On June 16, 1875, for example, Deputy D.G. Vernescu, member of the official opposition, voiced in the Chamber his regret at not finding in the speech from the throne any reference concerning the improvement of peasants' condition which was deplorable.² Many highly placed officials in different districts of Romania informed the central government in Bucharest that quite often local authorities in certain districts exceeded their powers when handling the peasants. On August 14, for example, Senator Racota informed the Ministry of the Interior about the inhuman treatment the peasants received at the hand of the authorities in the district of Teleorman.³ In the spring of 1876 an article appeared in Economia Rurala, a paper concerned with the development of the rural districts. It discussed the high rate of mortality among the rural population, attributing it to poor living conditions.⁴ All this, however, made but faint impressions on the Conservative Government whose main concern was the

1 Mitran, op.cit., p.80. 2 Documente Privind Istoria Romaniei: Razboiul Pentru Independenta, volume 1, M. Roller, editor-in-chief, Bucharest, 1952, No.46. Henceforth referred to as Romanian Documents, or in the abbreviated form, Rom. Doc.

3 Romanian Documents, volume 1, No.67. 4 Economia Rurala, April 25, 1876. Article printed in Romanian Documents, Volume 1, No.136.

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protection of Boyars' interests.

Seeing that the Conservative Government remained indifferent to their official complaints, the peasants resorted to active resistance. They refused to further co-operate with the local authorities, which were strongly demanding that they (the peasants) fulfill their labour obligations to their respective landlords. Many peasants claimed that their labour contracts were actually terminated but that the landlords refused to acknowledge it. When the local authorities attempted to apply brute force, the peasants in many districts rebelled. Throughout 1876 there sprang out isolated uprisings in several parts of Romania.¹

Since the boyars were not willing to transfer any part of the good lands to the peasants, nor to relinquish any degree of their control over the peasants' labour, many progressive intellectuals of the time began searching for some other means to improve the lot of the peasantry. One of these ways was conceived and advocated by Ion Ionescu dela Brad. He arrived at the conclusion that the lot of the peasant could be greatly improved if he could be emancipated from the tyranny of interest dues on loans, which often exceeded the initial amount of the loan. In the autumn of 1876 he introduced this idea in the Chamber, proposing that the government should establish a Peasants' Bank for the rural areas, offering the peasants the badly needed capital for the improvement of their small properties at low interest rates.²

In the meantime the Conservatives were turned out and a

¹ Reports coming from different Prefects, informing the central government about civil disturbances in their districts. Ibid., Nos. 121, 122, 149, 153, 155, 206, 459. The office of Prefect in Romania was similar in nature with the office held in France by the Préfet. Romania was divided administratively in departments, called judete, each having a Prefect at its head.

² Maciu, op.cit., pp. 32-33.

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new government, consisting of liberally-minded boyars and members of the middle class, took office. The new prime minister, Ion C. Brătianu, recognized the bad deal the peasants received at the hands of the previous government and proposed the formation of a special commission to deal fairly with the distribution of land to the peasants. He sent out a Circular to all Prefects, instructing them to apply fairly the law of 1864 and give land to those who were entitled to it. "There are twelve years", said the Circular, "since the peasants are waiting for the fulfillment of a right granted them by the law".¹

The fulfillment of these good intentions had to be temporarily postponed due to the imminency of a war between Russia and Turkey, in which Romania was sure to be drawn due to her geographical position. But an initiative in favour of the peasants was taken. The fact that the project of a Peasants' Bank was introduced and debated upon in the Chamber, together with a solemn promise for a new land distribution,² not only gave the peasants fresh hopes for a better life after the war, but created in them a strong interest for the achievement of independence. Among them began developing the conviction that independence was a condition for their liberation from the evils imposed on them by the remnant feudal usages, financial exploitation, and boyar calousness.³ Thus for these and other reasons, of national and religious order, all not quite clear in their minds yet strong enough to act upon, independence to the peasants appeared as an imperative for a better life in a sovereign State.

Romania's economy was essentially an agrarian one and

¹ Circular Note, October 27, 1876. Romanian Documents, Volume 1, No. 204. ² Mitrany suggests that the promise of land made by the government in the spring of 1877 was meant as an incentive for the peasants, to cause them to support vigorously the war effort. Mitrany, op.cit., p. 66.

³ Maciu, op.cit., p. 33.

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the wealthy landowners had all the interests to keep it that way. The corn trade was bringing in handsome profits, and the land value was keeping pace with them. The three economic factors of vital importance to the boyars, if they were to maintain their privileged position, were the extension of cultivation to all available land surface, cheap peasant labour, and a policy of free trade, which would bring them even higher profits from the export of grain. The first two of these factors, obviously, affected directly the interests of the peasants, but the third one affected greatly the fortunes and interests of the middle class, who were interested in developing a home industry and a home market for locally produced industrial goods.

The infant Romanian industry could not compete on the home market with the older and more advanced industries of the West. A wall of protection was thus necessary for the home industry, if it was to develop successfully. Yet protectionist measures could not be introduced without first removing the Turkish suzerainty; because the Porte was not willing to allow any protectionary measures in favour of Romanian industry. The attitude of the Porte was dictated by the interests of the Western Powers, who were using the Ottoman Empire as a market for their manufactured goods and as a place where to invest their surplus capital. This situation contributed substantially to the determination of the industrially oriented Romanian middle class to obtain full independence for their country. But, at the same time, these same considerations contributed to the unwillingness of the Powers to see Romania established as an independent State.¹

It was this situation, too, that brought the middle class at loggerheads with the boyars. It constituted a strong conflict, not only of interests, but also of ideals, for independence held a different meaning for each of the two groups. The wealthy boyars, who possessed all privileges and

¹ Maciu, op.cit., pp.19-21

power, having but little to gain and much to lose, looked upon freedom merely as the ending of Turkish exactions by the intercession of the Powers. But the younger generation of the middle class were inflamed by the spark of nationalism. Influenced by the rediscovery of their Latin origin, they went to receive their education in France, especially Paris, where they were imbued with liberal ideas and lofty ideals. Freedom to them meant the end of all alien interference in the affairs of their country.¹

The difference in attitude and economic interests between the two social classes, eventually, translated itself into a political struggle which went on between the two political parties - the Conservatives, representing the landed interests, and the Liberals, representing mainly the interests of the middle class - with brief interruptions, for more than a decade.

The middle class wanted badly a protected home market, and they were determined to achieve this end with or without Ottoman approval. This, of course, implied a vigorous struggle for independence. Similar interests were felt and expressed in Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece. Many enlightened minds within these countries began to look at the so-called Eastern Question as at a Balkan problem which could be effectively solved only by the Balkan States themselves. An effective alliance between the aforementioned States could overthrow the Turkish yoke and restore complete independence to all belligerent States. To achieve this end, they felt, there was no need for assistance from the Powers, which always complicated things due to their conflicting interests. Informal talks between delegates representing these groups in these states went on at different times and places, but nothing substantial was achieved due to strong interference

¹ Mitrany, op.cit., pp.42-43.

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from the interested Powers. An understanding was reached between the Bulgarians and Romanians in the spring of 1866, and an alliance was concluded between Romania and Serbia in January 1868, but none of these countries made use of their agreements with each other.¹

While the aims of the middle class could have been thus achieved without any support from the Powers, the objectives of the boyars depended almost entirely on that support. They needed the co-operation of the Powers to whom they were selling their agricultural products and from whom they were importing tools and machinery. The boyars were concerned with the home market only in as much as it offered them cheap labour, which, they believed, could no longer be obtained if the country were to recover its independence through a revolutionary struggle in which the peasantry would be called upon to play a major role. For the time being the interior autonomy guaranteed by the Treaty of Paris seemed sufficient for them. This does not mean to say that the boyars did not want independence for their country. It only means that they were seeking to obtain it in a way and at a time compatible with the interests of the Powers. They were willing to wait until the consent of the Powers was obtained in return for economic concessions. This was the main reason for the conclusion of a commercial convention with Austria-Hungary in the summer of 1875.²

As it was to be expected, Romania's young industry suffered terribly on account of that commercial convention with Austria, which allowed most Austrian manufactured goods to enter Romania's market free of customs duty; but it appears that the over all economy of Romania did not suffer by it.

1 L.S.Stavrianos, Balkan Federation, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1958, pp.85-90. L.S.Stavrianos, "The First Balkan Alliance System", Journal of Central European Affairs, October, 1942, II, 267-290. E.Engelhardt, "La Confederation Balkanique", Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique, October, 1891, VI, 29-55.
2 Maciu, op.cit., pp.22-4, 26-7.

Government statistics for the years 1875 and 1876 show a balance of payment in Romania's favour. If the figures for the years 1874 and 1875 (before and after the conclusion of the convention with Austria) are compared, we see that in 1875 the exports went up while the imports went down¹. Obviously this was sound economic policy. But if one takes into consideration the fact that Romania's chief item of export was grain, one cannot help concluding that the profit accrued to the class which needed it least - the wealthy boyars on whose lands the exported grain was grown.

Due to the weak industrial progress the industrial proletariat was very small and unorganized. An attempt was made in 1872 to form an organization to be comprised of all urban workers, but it was suppressed a year later by the government. Not being able to form an organization of their own, both urban and rural workers accepted the leadership of the more radical members of the middle class, such as I.C. Bratianu and C.A. Rosetti. Suffering greatly from the effects of the commercial convention with Austria, the workers joined the middle class in their struggle against the economic policies conducted by the Conservative government. They thus became a useful weapon in the hands of the middle class radicals, who could bring about a civil disturbance at will.²

The revolutionary movements which plagued Russia at the time did not remain unfelt in Romania. Many active revolutionaries fled Russia to escape police persecution and took voluntary residence in Romania, where they continued their propaganda and agitation. Their main aim was to preach social revolution; and since they were of the Narodnik type of

1 Total export in 1875 is valued at 144,962,079 and total import for the same year is valued at 100,834,169. For the year 1876 total export is shown at 235,256,286 and total import at 165,933,503. This compares favourably with the figures for the year 1874, when total export reached to only 134,713,818 and the total import reach the sum of 122,794,114. Rom.Doc., volume 1, Nos. 209-214.

2 Maciu, op.cit., p. 34.

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revolutionaries (Narodnya Volya), the peasantry was their main target.¹ But in the rural areas, as in the urban, their work was rendered difficult by their inability to move freely among the masses. This was due to lack of communication and police surveillance. Very few of the Russian Revolutionaries spoke Romanian and even fewer Romanians spoke Russian. The revolutionaries therefore always needed local assistance to gather the peasants and interpret to them the new ideas. This need for organization and interpretation forced them to travel in groups. These groups were attracting the attention of the authorities, which suspected them and kept them under close surveillance.² To overcome these difficulties, some revolutionaries decided to establish themselves permanently in Romania, to learn the language and apply for citizenship. Others, perplexed and disappointed by the indifference with which the Romanians greeted Socialism, wished^{ed} to return to Russia, where the masses embraced more eagerly the tenets of their doctrine.³

There are over 400 letters printed in Romanian Documents, attesting to the vigorous activity of these revolutionaries in Romania. Their activity, however, was more detrimental to Russia than to Romania, for they were the "middle men", the connecting link, so to speak, between the Russian revolutionaries at home and those abroad. Letters, money and parcels went through Romania going to and from the revolutionaries exiled in the West. There is even a letter coming from the

1 Romanian Documents, volume 1, No. 514.

2 Ibid., No. 511.

3 Ibid., Nos. 555, 658, 677.

well known revolutionary leader exiled in Switzerland - Plekhanov.¹

This vigorous activity among the Russian revolutionaries in Romania created some sympathetic reactions within the Romanian society, where a modest socialist movement began to take shape.² This movement, contrary to all expectations, did not begin among the rural masses, nor among the urban workers. It began in the capital city of Bucharest within a small but active circle of young intellectuals, led by N.Z. Codreanu, a medical student at the University of Bucharest. They formed the "Society of Culture and Solidarity Among Students" and drew up a programme of activity which strengthened the cause for independence. Though the members of this organization belonged to the lower section of the upper class and the whole range of the middle class, they sympathized with the peasants. Their socialism was quite different from the socialism of the 20th century. They were Utopians, concerned with the betterment of society as a whole. And the betterment of Romanian society, in their opinion, had to start with Romania's emancipation from the Ottoman yoke (suzerainty). Toward this end they began an active campaign which went on relentlessly throughout 1876 and the spring of 1877 among the urban and rural population. They were strongly demanding of the government to shake loose the yoke of slavery and declare Romania an independent and sovereign State.³ These small but active groups of well-to-do intellectuals became a useful weapon in the hands of the Liberal Radicals, under Bratianu, who had the same aim in view.

1 Romanian Documents, Vol.1, No.679. 2 From the many letters going through Romania between the Russian revolutionaries at home and abroad, it can be unmistakably established that all lines of communications centered on the town of Ploesti. One wonders if it was just a coincidence that Carol in his Memoirs referred more than once to Ploesti as the "hot-bed of sedition". Cf. Whitman, op.cit., pp.99,101,102. 3 Maciu, op.cit., pp.34-35. After several meetings a motion was put forward, approved by over 500 students, asking the government to sanction the formation of a battalion of volunteer students in case of war against the Porte. Ibid.

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Political Conditions and Foreign Relations to 1876

At the time of the declaration of independence, there were two main political parties in Romania. The Conservative party, consisting mainly of wealthy boyars, and the Liberal party, made up of members belonging to different sections of the social structure: liberal boyars and members of the middle class from both urban and rural areas.

The Conservatives usually identified the interests of their own class with the interests of the nation. Consequently, as long as they held political power, Romania's both home and foreign policies were conducted with one end in view - to serve those interests. Since they possessed wealth and privileges their main concern was to maintain the status quo. Any suggestion of change was stubbornly opposed.

The Liberal party, unlike the Conservative, consisted of several political factions, each with its own leaders and its own political platform. In this respect the Liberal party was the weaker of the two, for it only attained complete unity of purpose in time of crisis, while the Conservatives were united most of the time. The strongest of these factions within the Liberal party was the Radical group. The Radicals were not numerically numerous, but they were vigorous politicians, enthusiastically dedicated to whatever cause they happened to embrace, even though the causes they embraced were not always clearly defined. Their leader and inspiration was Ion C. Bratianu, who as a young man had enthusiastically participated in the French Revolution of 1848. Bratianu's close collaborator and ardent supporter was C.A. Rosetti, a man of great intellectual capacity. Both men were burning with that sacred fire of nationalism. Their group consisted mainly of young, ardent men educated abroad and trained in the tradition of French liberalism and Jacobinism. True to their temperament and training, they never shrank from using

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revolutionary tactics in order to reach their aims.¹

As it was to be expected, the Radicals advocated reforms at home and a vigorous policy abroad. For this reason, if no other, they obtained the sympathy and support first of the urban masses and later on of the rural masses, too. Some of the reforms they advocated were highly idealistic and hence impractical, but they caught the imagination of the masses. It was in attempting to stem the flood of ideal liberal measures, among other things, that the Conservatives incurred the resentment of the masses, which held them in contempt.

When Prince Carol arrived in Romania in 1866, ambitious to leave a stamp on her history, he, too, wanted things done and associated himself with the Radicals. But in a relatively short period he found out that the Radicals were too much for him. He thus changed sides, as we have seen, in 1871, embracing the cause of the Conservatives, who held political supremacy until 1876.

It was during this period of Conservative ascendancy that the Romanian army became established as a loyal element to the government of the country.² It received a thorough overhaul in organization and equipment, rendering it an efficient weapon in the hands of those who held the reins of power.³

The Conservatives conducted a very cautious foreign policy, taking into consideration not only the interests of the Powers but also their susceptibilities, seeking to avoid offending any of them. To achieve this, they steered the ship of state through an unblemished but painfully tortuous

1 Damé, op.cit., pp.176-180. Mitran, The Balkans, pp.285-6, 289. Roucek, loc.cit. 2 The junta that overthrew A.I.Cuza was composed mainly of superior officers of the army.

3 We have seen that military units had been employed not only to quell peasant uprisings, but also to enforce labour contracts.

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course which, if it pleased the Powers, gave cause for great anxiety among the Liberals at home. Undoubtedly the Conservatives also wanted independence for their country but they sought it through slow diplomatic drudgery. They were willing to wait until independence could be obtained as a consequence of international diplomacy. In their foreign relations, the Conservatives appeared to have followed closely Bismarck's advice. "Romania", said the Iron Chancellor in 1868, "ought to cultivate cordial relations, as far as possible, with all her neighbours and await with patience until the ripe fruits of the European tree drop of themselves on the table. She is forbidden to gather these fruits herself, especially while they are unripe".¹

The one Power with whom they found it most difficult to maintain good relations was Turkey. Technically speaking the Porte was still Romania's suzerain Power, but her suzerainty was more nominal than real - no one took it seriously, except the Turks. Instead of voluntarily giving up these "trivial rights", as the British Ambassador to St. Petersburg called them,² which could no longer be exercised, and gain the friendship of Romania, the Turks clung stubbornly to them, creating an atmosphere in which the Romanian Government found it difficult to maintain good relations with the Porte. The Ottoman Government, for example, treated the Romanian Diplomatic Agent at Constantinople as an Ottoman functionary, while the Romanian Government insisted that he was a member of the diplomatic corps. "Our relations with the Turks are strained", Carol wrote in 1875, "they will not grant us even the smallest concession; they actually refuse to concede us the name of Romania".³

1 E.J.Dillon, "The New Situation", Fortnightly Review, October, 1916, C, 531-548.

2 Lord Augustus Loftus, Diplomatic Reminiscences, vol. 2, Cassell & Co. Ltd., London, 1894, p. 118.

3 Letter from Prince Carol to his father, November 27, 1875. Whitman, op. cit., p. 225. All these complaints were later set in a long Memorandum of June 15, 1876, addressed to the Porte.

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Turkish unwillingness to show any considerations to Romanian aspirations, forced the Conservative Government into taking a bold diplomatic step. They decided to force the Powers to declare their attitude in the matter by claiming Romania's rights to conclude international agreements without reference to the suzerain Power. That Turkey would reject this claim they had no doubt, but if any of the other Powers should be willing to accept this interpretation, Ottoman objection could remain a dead letter.

To the great satisfaction of the Romanian Government there was such a Power willing to accept that claim - Austria-Hungary. The Vienna Government quite willingly began negotiations with Romania in the winter of 1874 for a commercial convention which was concluded in the summer of 1875. For Austria it was a purely economic arrangement in which she aimed at re-establishing the preponderance lost through the opening of the Danube to western trade. For Romania this convention had primarily a political significance and she therefore submitted, as we have seen, to heavy economic sacrifices.

The conclusion of this treaty widened the gap between the Conservative boyars and the middle class Liberals. The latter argued that the political advantages gained by it were too small for the economic sacrifices incurred. The Conservatives, on the other hand, contended that the political advantages gained by it were too significant to be subordinated to economic considerations. Indeed, "this international act" for them contained the very germ "of Romanian independence"¹. But the Liberals were no longer to be moved by the Conservative arguments concerning priorities. They decided to put an end to what they considered Conservative misrule, which was driving the masses to open rebellion. Thus middle class political factions, together with small groups of liberal boyars,

¹ Whitman, op.cit., p.140.

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formed a strong coalition¹ in the summer of 1875 in order to create a strong opposition to the policy conducted by the Catargiu Government. This so-called Mazar Pasha Coalition² acted so efficiently that within less than a year the Conservatives were out of office.³

Abroad, too, the Austrian-Romanian treaty created quite a stir. Turkey, as it turned out, was not the only Power to object to its conclusion; there were also France and England. For France, apparently, it provided an opportunity to vent her hatred for Germany. By opposing the Austrian-Romanian treaty, she was indirectly opposing the German tendency of establishing a hegemony in Eastern Europe.⁴ The British Government objected to it in principle. There were several debates in both Houses of Parliament concerning this treaty, which they considered to be "an infringement of the Treaty of Paris". The British press, too, shared the opinion of the government and supported the Ottoman objections. "Turkey's demand to have her suzerainty recognized is only fair and reasonable", wrote the Daily Telegraph on July 26, 1875. "If Romania makes commercial treaties she will make others.....", wrote the Daily News in the same day, concluding with the words "and so will the other vassal states" to make it clear where Romania stood in their opinion.⁵

While the Austrian-Romanian commercial convention was thus assailed both at home and abroad, the Bosnian insurrection erupted, bringing again the Balkan caldron to the boiling point. The Bosnians were joined almost at once by the Herzegovinians, hence bringing the revolt closer to the Austrian

1 Prominent in this coalition were Ion Ghica, M. Kogalniceanu, and Manolache Costache Iepureanu. 2 So called because it was formed in the house of M. Lakeman, an Englishman established in Romania. He was nicknamed Mazar Pasha because at one time he was employed by the Porte. 3 Dame, op.cit., pp. 254-261. 4 Dame, op.cit., p. 257. 5 C.G. Thompson, Public Opinion and Lord Beaconsfield, vol. 1, Macmillan, London, 1886, p. 215.

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border. This revolt was secretly supported by Serbia and Montenegro. Even the faraway Russia showed strong sympathies for the rebels.

In Romania, too, this revolt of Christian people against Ottoman Moslem oppression struck a sympathetic note. The first to openly show their sympathy with the insurgents were the Radicals. Several issues of their paper, Românul, carried articles which exposed the cause of the rebels and demanded that justice be done to them.¹ As the Conservative press, and the government, began to admit that their sympathy was also with the Christians from across the Danube, the Porte began to fret, adopting an attitude of suspicion which created quite a tension in their relation with Romania. It was to ease this tension that V. Boerescu, foreign minister, found it necessary to reassure the Porte of Romania's intentions. The Romanians, wrote the minister, will not take active part in the rebellion. "We are but passive spectators.... This does not mean that we do not sympathize with the insurgents, on the contrary... But our national interests demand that we follow a separate and independent line of foreign policy from that of our neighbours on the right bank of the Danube".²

As time progressed, however, Romania's neutrality seemed to become increasingly more difficult to maintain. This was due mainly to the attitude of Russia, who was becoming progressively more eager to solve the Balkan problem by direct intervention. Late in November the Russian Consul in Bucharest, Zinoviev,³ asked the Romanian Government what their attitude would be in the event of a Balkan crisis. The Romanians declared themselves in favour of neutrality, not because they decided to remain neutral, but because they could not reach a decision of action. "In many Cabinet meet-

¹ Rom. Doc., vol. 1, Nos. 41, 44. ² V. Boerescu to the Romanian Diplomatic Agent in Constantinople, August 21, 1875. Ibid., No. 17. ³ I. A. Zinoviev was Russian Consul in Bucharest until 1876.

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ings during the last weeks of 1875", wrote Titu Maiorescu, minister of the Catargiu Government, "we have discussed this grave question...(but) inaction was always the result. The idea of neutrality prevailed".¹

This inability on the part of the Romanian Government to reach an agreement and shape and maintain a definite and firm policy, encouraged the Russian Government to consider viable an occupation of Romania "as a guarantee" against an Ottoman occupation of Serbia and Montenegro, which were known to the Porte as active supporters of rebellious Bosnia-Herzegovina.²

Russia's eagerness to draw Romania into her sphere of influence worried Austria, who had plans of her own for that country. The Austrian Government wanted to maintain Romania as a neutral element between the Balkan Slavs and Russia so that the last two could never obtain a common border between them. To achieve this aim Austria adopted a very active foreign policy in relation to Romania. This diplomatic race between Austria and Russia for Romania's favour created an atmosphere of tension in Bucharest. In February, 1876, Carol described the situation as intolerable. "The Austrian representative", wrote Carol to his father, "inquires what we shall do in the event of Russian troops occupying the country; the Russian sounds us to find out whether we repose any confidence

1 Maciu, op.cit., p.38. "One could hardly imagine", comments Maciu, "that the Conservative boyars could have taken any other attitude outside that of neutrality. To participate in a war against the Turks would have meant to mobilize the army, consisting almost entirely of peasants. This worried the landowners, who knew only too well how much the peasants hated them". Ibid. Lascar Catargiu, then prime minister, recorded similar indecisions of the Cabinet during the month of December, 1875. D.A. Sturdza, Charles Ier, Roi de Roumanie: chronique, actes, documents, volume 2, Bucharest, 1904, p.IX. ² Conversation between General N. Ignatiev, Russian Ambassador in Constantinople, and General I. Ghica, the Romanian Diplomatic Agent there, December 19, 1875. Ibid., p.VI.

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in Austria-Hungary:but both adjure us not to act hastily... So much is certain, that Russia is concentrating troops on the Moldavian frontiers..."¹

As foreign developments were thus becoming increasingly more difficult to cope with, the Conservative Government was being paralyzed into inaction by internal dissensions. They were no longer in the position to adopt and maintain a strong foreign policy, for they were fast losing all support at home. Besides Radicals and moderate Liberals there were now added to the opposition small groups of boyars, who previously supported the government.

The development of a capitalist economy affected greatly the land-owning class, dividing them into factions of conflicting interests. The conservative-boyars faction, led by D. Ghica and V.Boerscu, which became interested in the establishment of a number of financial institutions, withdrew their support formerly given to the Catargiu Administration, seeking a closer co-operation with the liberal-boyars, led by I.Ghica and D.Sturdza.² The pressure they applied through the Rural Land Bank (Credit Foncier Rural), which they controlled, on the land-owning Senators with mortgaged properties, forcing them to vote against their own party (i.e., against the government), contributed substantially to the change in government which brought Ion Strat as the new minister of finance on February 8, 1876.³ Three days later the new finance minister reported in the Chamber the startling news of a deficit of several million lei contracted by the previous government.⁴ This started a wave of hostile demonstrations throughout the country. The demonstrators were loudly demanding the resignation of the Conservative Government. These demonstrations

¹ Letter from Prince Carol to his Father, February 8, 1876. Whitman, *op.cit.*, p.228. ² Maciu, *op.cit.*, p.38. ³ Damé, *op.cit.*, p.267. Sturdza, *op.cit.*, p.5. ⁴ Report of the Minister of Finance to the Chamber of Deputies, February 11, 1876. *Rom.Doc.*, volume 1, No.224.

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were, of course, adequately fed by the Radical press, especially Romanul, controlled by Rosetti, which trumpeted the government's inefficiency and dishonesty.¹

The prime minister, Catargiu, reluctant to relinquish the reins of power, and unable to work any longer with a hostile Senate, asked Carol for a dissolution. The latter concurred and the Senate was dissolved on March 15, 1876. This step, however, failed to diminish Catargiu's difficulties, for the new elections returned a majority loyal to the Ghica-Sturdza faction on whose support the government could no longer rely. Moreover, hostile demonstrations continued unabated in most of the urban areas. No longer able to brave the winds of opposition, Catargiu resigned early in April.²

The new government, presided by General I.E. Florescu, found it very difficult to work with a hostile Senate which opposed all their measures. The new prime minister asked Carol for a dissolution but the latter refused to concur, asking Manolache Costache Iepureanu to form a new government, May 9. At long last the Radicals saw their ambition for power satisfied when Iepureanu included in his Cabinet all the leaders of those political factions which a year earlier formed the great Mazar Pasha Coalition. Most prominent among them were M. Kogalniceanu, at the Foreign Office, I.C. Bratianu, Finance, and G. Vernescu, who received the portfolio of the Interior. The department of war, eagerly sought by the Radicals, went to Colonel Slaniceanu, in whom Carol had great confidence.³

While the Radical party was grasping political power in Romania, the revolt from Bosnia-Herzegovina spread to the Bulgarian lands, complicating further the so-called Eastern Question, which began to seriously worry the cabinets of the

1 Sturdza, op.cit., pp. 8-9. Damé, op.cit., p. 268.

2 Maciu, op.cit., p. 39. Sturdza, op.cit., pp. 10-11, 13, 17. 3 Damé, Op.cit., p. 269. Sturdza, op.cit., pp. 25-6. Maciu, op.cit., p. 39.

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Powers. One of the cardinal factors in this Balkan trouble concerned Romania's attitude. What was Romania going to do? She could either join the rebels and face the consequences or remain neutral and presumably enjoy the goodwill of the Porte, and of the Powers. Since the first step involved a great deal of risk, and little promise of reward, the Romanians adopted the second (alternative).¹

Aware of the activities carried on the Romanian soil by certain Bulgarian revolutionary groups, the Romanian Government adopted vigorous measures to prevent any volunteers, guns and ammunitions, from crossing the Danube into Ottoman territory, for this would have compromised the state of Romania's declared neutrality.² At the same time Kogalniceanu assured the Porte that the new government (Radical) possessed the strongest desire to maintain peaceful relations with the Ottoman Empire.³

Hardly was the Bulgarian revolt crushed when more threatening clouds began rising over Turkey. Serbia and Montenegro were openly preparing for war against their suzerain Power. Prince Milan of Serbia was rather anxious to know the attitude Romania would adopt in the event of a war between his country and Turkey.⁴ Notwithstanding the strong temptation to join the Serbians and satisfy their ambition for independence, the Romanians decided to maintain their neutrality. On June 26 Kogalniceanu informed the Serbian Government that despite strong sympathy with the Serbian cause, Romania will maintain

¹ Iepureanu defined Romania's neutrality in the Chamber on May 10, 1876, adding that his government was willing to defend that neutrality by force of arms if necessary. Rom. Doc., volume 1b, No. 115.

² In the April-June period there were several dispatches going from the central government in Bucharest to local authorities at different points along the Romanian-Ottoman frontier, instructing them to prevent any illegal crossing. Ibid., Nos. 107-109.

³ Kogalniceanu to General Ghica, May 11, 1876. Sturdza, op.cit., pp. 29-30.

⁴ Whitman, op.cit., pp. 230, 235.

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her adopted neutrality. To prove Romania's friendly attitude Kogalniceanu admitted confidentially that the Romanian Government had knowledge of anti-Ottoman activities carried on by Serbian and Bulgarian groups on Romanian soil but had taken no measure to stop them.¹

The Ottoman ship of State was, indeed, sailing in narrow and dangerous straits and the Romanians, by remaining neutral, diverted the strongest of winds which could have wrecked it. Now that a new storm was brewing in Serbia, Kogalniceanu began wondering whether the Turks should not be ever more grateful for Romania's attitude. If they were, was it not the time to show that gratitude by making some concessions to the Romanians? This seemed to have been the mood in which Kogalniceanu found himself on June 28. On that day he sent to the Romanian Diplomatic Agents accredited to the Powers a Circular Note, together with an explanatory Memorandum, dated June 15, in which the Ottoman Government was asked to recognize Romania's individuality as a State; to recognize the Romanian Agent as a member of the Diplomatic Corps in Constantinople; to regularize the position of Romanians in Turkey and to recognize Romanian Consular jurisdiction over them; to recognize the inviolability of Romanian territory; to recognize the right to conclude extradition, commercial, and postal conventions between Turkey and Romania; recognition of Romanian passports; and the definition of Turko-Romanian border at the mouths of the Danube, taking as a basis the navigable channel (Thalweg) of the main arm of the delta.² The Circular was concluded with the somewhat

1 Kogalniceanu to the Romanian Agent in Belgrade, June 26, 1876. Rom.Doc., volume 1b, No. 195. N. Iorga, Correspondance diplomatique roumaine sous le roi Charles Ier (1866-80), Paris, 1923, No. 281. A declaration of neutrality was also contained in Carol's speech from the throne, July 2, 1876. British and Foreign State Papers, volume LXVII, 1875-6, W. Ridgway, London, 1883, pp. 1294-5.

2 The Danube empties into the Black Sea through three channels (mouths), only one of which is navigable.

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threatening words that should the Porte refuse to grant these requests, the Romanian Government would be forced to adopt a course far different from the one hitherto observed, "for it (the new course) would perhaps afford us the advantages our sincere behaviour failed to secure...(for us)".¹ The agents were instructed to acquaint the governments to which they were accredited with these requests and to insist that the Powers make a strong representation at the Porte in Romania's favour.

Kogalniceanu's Memorandum was in effect a request for the recognition of Romania's independence. He seems to have believed that at that particular juncture the Porte and the Powers were ready to settle this account in Romania's favour in order to avoid any further complications in the Balkan problem. But the foreign reaction was not too encouraging. The Austrian Government was disposed to support point seven, referring to territorial changes, but before this could be brought to the attention of the Porte the consent of most Powers had to be secured.² The German Government approved the requests in the Memorandum, which Italy considered "as just as moderate",³ providing Romania maintained her state of neutrality unaltered.⁴ The French Foreign Minister, Duke Decazes, found the requests not only "irritating" but also "dangerous".⁵

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- 1 Kogalniceanu's Circular Note to all agents, June 28, 1876. Rom.Doc., volume 1b, No. 209. 2 Costaforu to Kogalniceanu, July 6, 1876. Iorga, op.cit., No. 312. 3 Ibid., No. 293.
 4 T. Maiorescu to Kogalniceanu, July 11, 16, 1876. Ibid., Nos. 301, 309. Rom.Doc., volume 1b, No. 248. 5 Kogalniceanu received the French reaction via the French Ambassador in Constantinople. Iorga, op.cit., No. 342. In a dispatch to Callimachi, Romanian Agent in Paris, Kogalniceanu expressed his disappointment at the lack of French support, which "by tradition should be given to Romania". Ibid., No. 320. Rom.Doc., vol. 1b, No. 360.

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The Russian Foreign Office found the Memorandum improperly timed, "too late or too early". N.K.Giers, A. Gorchakov's deputy, conceded that most points therein contained were just and could receive sanction later on, but "the last one will be more difficult to attain".¹ The Romanian Agent in St. Petersburg expressed his indignation at the general European reaction in a long dispatch to Kogalniceanu. "Too many of them", wrote E.Ghica, "seems to seriously believe that we have decided to get the best of the turmoil in which everyone is involved". Russian "society" was very much against Romania's attitude. The official Journal de St.Petersbourg carried an article which stated that Romania should not expect any favourable intervention from the Powers towards her new requests at the Porte. E.Ghica could not understand why Russia, who herself took advantage of the Franco-Prussian War in order to repudiate the restrictive Black Sea clauses imposed on her by the Treaty of Paris (1856), would not now stand by Romania, who sought to rid herself of the restrictions imposed on her by the suzerain Power.²

The reply to his Memorandum for which Kogalniceanu was waiting most anxiously was the one from Constantinople, for the Porte alone could, if she so desired, without reference to the rest of the Powers, recognize Romania's independence.

After several days of silence, Savfet Pasha, Ottoman Foreign Minister, told the Romanian Agent, General Ghica, that the Memorandum was badly timed. The latter retorted that that was not so, for it was presented at a time when the Porte was engaged in the reorganization of its empire, introducing new reforms.³ The Turks, however, remained uncon-

1 Emil Ghica to Kogalniceanu, July 18, 1876. Ibid., No. 319.
General Ghica to Kogalniceanu, July 30, 1876. Iorga, op.cit., No. 337.
2 Ghica to Kogalniceanu, July 20, 1876.
Rom. Doc., vol., 1b, No. 329. Iorga, op.cit., No. 317.

3 General Ghica alluded here to the promise the Sultan made to Europe in response to the Andrassy Note (January, 1876) and the Berlin Memorandum (May, 1876). The Sultan promised to introduce major reforms in his European Dominions.

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vinced by General Ghica's arguments. In the meantime Serbia and Montenegro declared war on the Porte. Several days later Savfet Pasha told General Ghica that the Porte decided not to give any consideration to the Romanian Memorandum until after the end of the war. The Ottoman attitude was correctly appraised by the Romanian Agent in a dispatch to Kogalniceanu. "The Imperial Government", wrote General Ghica, "avoids the answer in order to gain time and then, once the crisis is over, it will make some small concessions...refusing the rest categorically".¹

Disappointed with the Ottoman reply, Kogalniceanu decided to by-pass the Porte and appeal to the rest of the Powers, whose diplomatic support could have compelled the Ottoman Government to comply with the Romanian requests. On August 6 he sent a Circular Note to the Romanian Agents accredited to the governments of the Powers, instructing them to insist that the Powers support the Romanian demands as otherwise the Romanian Government might have to "depart from the line of conduct which it has marked out for itself and which it has religiously followed up to now".² These were strong words, indeed, but the intractable Kogalniceanu still hoped that the Porte could be forced into recognizing Romania's independence by diplomatic means; and since he felt that the time was ripe for it, he sought to make use of all diplomatic tactics that he could muster. His hopes were soon to be shattered. The Powers remained, as before, indifferent to Romania's aspirations, while at home both parliament and government were becoming increasingly suspicious of Kogalniceanu's tactics and their consequences.

¹ General Ghica to Kogalniceanu, July 24, 1876. Rom. Doc., vol 1b, No. 335. Iorga, op. cit., No. 346. ² Maciu, op. cit., pp. 42-43. Sturdza, op. cit., p. 146. Iorga, op. cit., pp. XXVIII-XXIX. R.V. Burks, "Romania and the Balkan Crisis of 1875-78", Journal of Central European Affairs, July, 1942, II, 119-134.

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While Kogalniceanu was thus closely watching the political developments abroad, seeking to derive from them some advantages for his country, there were important political developments occurring at home. The elections to the Chamber, held in early June, had given an overwhelming majority to the Radical Liberals, led by I.C.Bratianu and C.A.Rosetti. On July 9 the latter was elected president of the Chamber, a fact which incurred the displeasure of Germany,¹ and three days later a parliamentary commission was projected to conduct official inquiries in all ministerial departments to find out all the abuses and illegalities committed by the Catargiu administration.²

On July 22 many Romanians interested in the destiny of Their country gathered in Bucharest to attend the opening of Parliament. It was the hour of the Radicals. In the address in the Chamber in reply to the speech from the throne, Rosetti gave vent to all dissatisfactions felt by the rural and urban masses alike, emphasizing the injustice they suffered at the hand of the Conservative Government, and the bitterness they felt at being betrayed by those whom they had elected, they thought, to serve their interests.³

On August 3 a motion was made in the Chamber asking for the appointment of a parliamentary commission of seven members to conduct preliminary hearings leading to the conviction of the Catargiu Cabinet. Carol opposed this idea vigorously, but the Chamber adopted the motion. Moreover, Rosetti announced,

1 T.Maiorescu, Romanian Agent in Berlin, reported that Radowitz, German Deputy Foreign Minister, complained about Rosetti's appointment as leader of the Chamber. "The names of Rosetti and Bratianu", said Radowitz, "are of the nature of forfeiting the sympathies of the Powers... They do not inspire any confidence". Iorga, *op.cit.*, No.319, July 20, 1876.

2 Sturdza, *op.cit.*, p.126. Dame, *op.cit.*, p.271

3 Address in the Chamber of Deputies in reply to the speech from the throne, July 22, 1876. Sturdza, *op.cit.*, pp.137-141.

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amidst the enthusiastic ovations of the Chamber, that the act of accusation will be made public by posting it in every district in the country. This prompted Iepureanu to resign the next day, for he, too, had been a minister in the Catargiu administration; and with him fell the whole cabinet on August 4.¹ The next day Carol called on I.C. Bratianu to form a new ministry, with the tacit understanding that the prosecution of the Catargiu Cabinet was to be dropped. Bratianu's new Cabinet was a combination of moderate and radical Liberals with N. Ionescu at the foreign office.

Once the wealthy boyars lost their grip on power, the peasants sought to wreak revenge on them. The Conservative daily, Timpul, carried an article on September 30 which described the disorders on the countryside. It said that the peasants refused to pay to the landlords their debts incurred during the period of drought, and that fire was being set to the properties of the richest, especially to the properties of former mayors.²

The project for the prosecution of the Catargiu Ministry was soon dropped but the fact that the ex-ministers were officially accused, together with the promise of land made by the Bratianu administration,³ contributed greatly to the moral satisfaction and sense of justice of the peasants, causing them to gain relative confidence in the new Liberal Administration. It is quite safe to say that Bratianu's administration enjoyed the combined confidence of the liberal boyars, the middle class, and the peasantry. The confidence of the peasants was a favourable factor in an eventual Romanian active participation in a struggle against the Turks, which seemed more and more imminent.

The fall of the Iepureanu Government was due, as we have seen, to internal circumstances, but it could have been brought about just as well by the utter failure of Kogalniceanu's

¹ Sturdza, op. cit., p. 146. Damé, op. cit., pp. 271-2
² Maciu, op. cit., p. 31 ³ See p. 6.

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attempt to obtain the recognition of Romania's independence by applying diplomatic pressure at the Porte, against whom Romania was not supported by any of the Powers and whose military superiority was proven by her victories against the Serbians. Kogalniceanu's spirited foreign policy, while failing to secure the support of the Powers, succeeded in offending the Turks, who considered it "provocative and insulting".¹ Consequently, he (Kogalniceanu) was gradually losing support among his colleagues and in Parliament.² Moreover, by the second half of July (1876) conditions in the Balkans changed considerably; a new pattern was developing, which demanded drastic adjustments in Romania's foreign policy.

The outcome of the war which started at the beginning of July between Serbia and Turkey was already decided by the end of the same month. In fact the very first encounters between the belligerents showed that the Serbs had both overestimated their own military spirit and material resources for war and underestimated those of their opponents.³ Russia's eagerness to intervene directly in Balkan affairs was becoming increasingly more evident. Her intervention was demanded by tradition, economic motives and power politics, all neatly

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- 1 Iorga, op.cit., p. XXVIII. 2 On July 16 Kogalniceanu was interpellated in the Senate about his line of conduct in foreign affairs. He declared that he was willing and ready to submit all diplomatic documents before a commission of inquiry. Sturdza, op.cit., p. 135.
- 3 Romanian Agent in Belgrade to Kogalniceanu, July 18, 1876. Iorga, op.cit., No. 314. S. Whitman, op.cit., pp. 236-7. Rom. Doc., volume 1b, No. 219.

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bound by the expansionist tendency known as Pan-Slavism.¹

A Russian direct intervention, of necessity, implied the passage of Russian troops across Romanian territory. This could have brought disastrous consequences for Romania. According to the Treaty of Paris, Romania was technically part of the Ottoman Empire and the entrance of Russian troops on Romanian soil entitled the Turks, as suzerain, to cross the Danube and resist the invasion. This would have meant that the two Powers would have settled their differences on Romanian territory. Such an event could have imperiled Romania's very existence as a separate state. This was all the more possible since the Treaty of Paris contained no provisions for Romania's safety in an eventual war between the Powers - in this case between Russia and Turkey. It was for this reason that the Romanian Government saw the necessity of adopting a new foreign policy. But a new policy demanded

¹ Ever since 1871, when she repudiated the Black Sea restrictions, Russia resumed her traditional policy towards the Balkans. Her ultimate objective was the domination of the Straits - Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. Through them passed a high percentage of her overseas commerce, and without it she felt that she would no longer be a great Power. The Straits had thus to be dominated by her, and if Turkey could not be controlled directly, due to the international guarantee which the Ottoman Empire received by the Treaty of Paris (1856), the creation of a chain of satellite Slav nation States could be the key to her objective. What she awaited was an opportunity to intervene without arousing the suspicion or, worse, the enmity of the Powers, and the Serbo-Turkey War appeared to offer her that long sought opportunity. Similarity of race and religion with the belligerent Serbs afforded her some justification for intervention on moral grounds. A Turkish victory, which seemed imminent, would entitle her to champion the cause of the Slav and Orthodox Christians, thus solving the Eastern Question, the Russians thought, once and for all in their favour. German Diplomatic Documents, volume 1, ed. E.T.S. Dugdale, Methuen and Co. Ltd., London, 1928, Nos. 147, 155. A. Onou, "The Memoirs of Count N. Ignatiev", Slavonic Review, December, 1931, X, 386-407. B.H. Sumner, "Ignatiev at Constantinople", Slavonic Review, January, 1933, XI, 341-353.

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a change in personnel. Hence M.Kogalniceanu was dropped and N.Ionescu was brought forth. The former, according to F. Damé, sought an early understanding with Russia, which implied co-operation with her, while the latter believed that whatever the circumstances a policy of complete neutrality would best serve Romania's interests.¹

Ionescu's first step as foreign minister was to recall Kogalniceanu's dispatch of August 5 which hinted at the possibility of Romania's departure from neutrality, telling the agents accredited to the Powers to await new instructions.² Before sending new instructions to its agents abroad, the Romanian Government had to take into account important developments occurring not only in the Balkans but also in the West. While the Serbs were being soundly beaten by the Turks, the Russian Tsar, Alexandre II, and his Chancellor, Gorchakov, were meeting with the Austrian Emperor, Francis Joseph, and his Chancellor, Andrassy, at Reichstadt in Bohemia in order to reach some agreement concerning intervention in the Balkans. The result of this meeting was not known to the Romanians, but there were credible rumours that an agreement had been reached between the two Empires. Worse still, the rumours had it that Russia was bent on recovering Bessarabia from Romania and that Austria had agreed to it in principle, providing certain conditions were met. The Romanian Government, naturally, became very anxious to find out more about the Reichstadt agreement.

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- 1 Damé, op.cit., pp.273-4. Damé does not name any specific evidence in support of his conclusions. The development of later events, however, bear him out. 2 N.Ionescu's Circular Note, August 7, 1876. Sturdza, op.cit., p.147.
- 3 As we now know, those rumours were authentic, though, as we shall see later on, no final and definite agreement concerning the retrocession of Bessarabia to Russia had been reached until the spring of 1877, by the Budapest Conventions.

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Taking advantage of a visit Francis-Joseph made in Transylvania at the end of August, 1876, the Romanian Government sent a delegation to Sibiu, headed by Bratianu, ostensibly to bring greetings to the Emperor from Prince Carol. The members were well received and were given the opportunity to tell Francis-Joseph how much Romania valued Austrian friendship, but they could not learn much about the Reichstadt agreement. Nevertheless, the Emperor's benevolent disposition towards Russia's Balkan policy caused Bratianu to change his political view and to concede the necessity of an understanding between Romania and Russia.¹

¹ Maciu, op.cit., p.46. Sturdza, op.cit., p.163.

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The Thorny Question of Bessarabia

An understanding between Romania and Russia could have been easily achieved had it not been for the Bessarabian question.¹ Once the Romanian Government got wind of Russia's machinations for the recovery of Bessarabia,² it adopted a stiff attitude towards St. Petersburg. Thus when on September 30 the Russian Cabinet attempted to find out what position Romania would take in the event of a Russo-Turkish war, the latter was very evasive in her reply. Ionescu instructed Emil Ghica, the Romanian Agent in St. Petersburg, to tell Giers, that Romania hoped for peace. The Romanian Government, ran the dispatch, is grateful for the assurances received from the Imperial Government but at present could not declare its intentions or position. The Russians got the message and

- 1 Bessarabia was a Romanian province. It was an integral part of the principality of Moldavia since the middle ages. Russia obtained this province from the Turks, by the Treaty of Bucharest, concluded between Moscow and the Porte in 1812, just before Napoleon's invasion of Russia. By the Treaty of Paris (1856), which concluded the Crimean War, the victors returned the southern half of Bessarabia to Moldavia, later part of Romania, in order to secure the freedom of navigation on the Danube. It was the loss of that territory that the Romanians feared, for the Russians were always throwing about strong, but unofficial, hints that they were determined to recover it.
- 2 According to Karatheodory Pasha's account, Kogalniceanu had seen the manuscripts of the Reichstadt agreement and was thus certain of Russia's intentions. B. Bareilles, Le Raport Secret Sur le Congres de Berlin Adresse a la Sublime Porte par Karatheodory Pasha, Edition Bossard, Paris, 1919, p. 130. However there is no other evidence of this, neither Romanian nor foreign; though G. Hanotaux quoted this passage as evidence in his, Histoire de la France Contemporaine, volume 4, La Republique Parlementaire, Paris, Ancienne Librairie Furne, 1908, p. 364.

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were annoyed at the thought that Romania was bent in causing them embarrassment.¹

Despite this tacit and reciprocal resentment, it was becoming increasingly more evident to both Russia and Romania that an understanding between them would sooner or later have to be reached due to the course of events which were fast developing toward that end. But, if Russia, due to her more privileged position, could afford to wait a little longer, Romania was very anxious to learn the terms of such an understanding. It was with this purpose in mind that a Romanian delegation, headed by Bratianu, arrived at Livadia, in the Crimea, on October 12, 1876.² The time was opportune, for their visit coincided with the meeting of the Imperial Council,³ called together by Alexander II to decide Russia's policy towards the Balkans. They were well received and obtained brief interviews with both the Tsar and his ministers, but no definite agreements were reached between them. The Romanians therefore failed to reach the main object of their mission, but during their brief encounters with the Russians many things became clearer to both sides. The Tsar was cautious, avoiding a direct discussion of the burning question which Bratianu had in mind, but Gorchakov was more straightforward in this matter. He told Bratianu in no uncertain terms that in the event of war with Turkey the Russian troops must cross Romanian territory, and that for that reason a military convention, devoid of any political implications, must be concluded between Romania and Russia at a time

1 Sturdza, op.cit., p.186. Rom.Doc., vol.1b, No.469.

2 Sturdza, op.cit., p.194.

³ The Council consisted of Prince Alexander Gorchakov, D.A.Miliutin, Minister of War, Count Nicholas Ignatiev, and the Tsarevitch, the future Alexander III. Ibid., p.187.

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chosen by the latter. From the words "devoid of any political implications" it was clear that Gorchakov was not going to commit his government on the question of Bessarabia. All Bratianu could do now was to invoke the intercession of the Powers. Thus he replied that an understanding with Romania would present no difficulty if the Russian Government acted in concert with all the Powers. This reply infuriated Gorchakov and caused him to drop the diplomatic niceties.¹ Bluntly he demanded Romania's unconditional consent, threatening that otherwise the Russian Government would consider Romania as an integral part of the Ottoman Empire and occupy her territory by force. Bratianu, by no means intimidated, coolly remarked that it would be very odd indeed if Russia started a war for the liberation of Orthodox Christians from the Moslem yoke by an act of hostility against an Orthodox-Christian nation. He further added, for what it was worth, that the Romanian armed forces would block any attempt of an invading army to cross the Pruth.²

As the Romanian deputation was preparing to depart for home, Gorchakov came up to Bratianu, attempting to smooth down his earlier roughness, with the remark: "We shall soon come to terms if a war ensues; and Romania can only gain by it"! Sensing the subtlety, Bratianu replied that in such a case an understanding would serve the interests of "both States", adding that he would be prepared to enter negotiations to this effect.³

1 In his interview with Ignatiev, Bratianu complained about Gorchakov's behaviour. To this the latter replied "qu'il ne fallait pas prendre au tragique les paroles du chance-
 lier". Sturdza, op.cit., p.197. 2 Ibid., pp.196-7.
 E.M.Almedingen, The Emperor Alexander II, the Bodly Head,
 London, 1962, pp.282-3. Whitman, op.cit., p.239. Dame, op.cit.,
 pp.274-5. Hanotaux, op.cit., p.305. The river Pruth was then,
 as it is today, the border between Russia and Romania.
 3 Whitman, op.cit., p.239. Sturdza, op.cit., p.197. Dame, op.cit.,
 p.275.

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On October 16 Bratianu and his colleagues returned to Bucharest without any tangible results. From the two trips abroad they brought home little positive knowledge about the Reichstadt agreement, yet it was enough to give the government cause for great anxiety. Unmistakably Russia was going to hurl her forces against the Turks across Romanian territory with the tacit consent of Austria and Germany.¹ What was Romania to do? To oppose the Russians without outside help would have meant suicide. On the other hand, Russia's known desire for Bessarabia made the Romanian Government reluctant to conclude a bargain with her.² Moreover, to join the Russians against Turkey meant to violate the Treaty of Paris. This would have incurred the displeasure of the Powers; and Romania could not afford to lose the good offices of the Powers, with whose help she hoped to keep Russia out of Bessarabia. To remain loyal to the suzerain Power, as the Treaty of Paris stipulated, was the worst of alternatives. For in case of a Russian victory Romania could have been deprived of a large portion of her territory as war indemnity or, worse, an outright occupation which could have ended her existence as a separate State. A Turkish victory would have dealt a decisive blow to Romania's desire and plans for the attainment of independence.

The only way out of this impasse seemed to lay in asking the Powers to grant and guarantee Romania a state of neutrality similar to that of Belgium. This step was especially desirable since it involved no risk on Romania's part; she

1 E.Ghica to N.Ionescu, October 11, 1876. Rom.Doc., vol.1b, No. 485.

2 Though there is no evidence for it, Sumner suspects strongly that, while at Livadia, Bratianu must have been acquainted directly with Russia's determination to recover Bessarabia. Sumner, Russia and the Balkans, 1870-1880, Oxford University Press, London, 1937, p.295.

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stood only to gain by it. If the Powers agreed, Romania would not only be safe against Russian invasion but would also automatically obtain her much desired independence, for apparently it was the current opinion within the diplomatic circles that a State could be neutralized only if it possessed full sovereignty.¹ If the Powers refused, Romania would then feel free to pursue the policy which best served her interests; perhaps even coming to some formal understanding with Russia, if the latter were to offer reasonable terms. Were any of the Powers to protest against it, Romania could argue that since the Powers refused to help her to carry out her obligations, which alone she was unable to fulfill, she was forced by political necessity to adopt that step.²

The international situation appeared favourable to this new line of policy. Serbia's resistance came to an end during September and Prince Milan appealed to the Powers for mediation with the Porte for an armistice. Rumours were in the air that the Powers were contemplating a conference to settle the Balkan dispute. This could present Romania with the opportunity of taking her request for neutrality on the Belgian model before the plenipotentiaries of the Powers assembled in conference.

Anxious to take advantage of the international developments, the Romanian Government began unfolding the new adopted plan. On October 19 Prince Ion Ghica was sent to London as an extraordinary envoy to find out Britain's attitude towards an eventual neutralization of Romania. Two weeks later the speech from the throne set the tone of the new

1 Balaceanu to Ionescu, November 18, 1876. Rom.Doc., vol 1b, No. 555. Even Andressy held that opinion. Ibid., No. 678.

2 Dame, op.cit., p. 273.

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policy. It began with a light note, saying that Romania's relations with the foreign States were among the best and that all Powers advised her to maintain her neutrality. But ended with the significant remark that should Romania be threatened by forces beyond her ability to resist "guarantor Europe will not fail us in the defence of our territorial integrity and our national rights"¹. Once a beginning was made, it remained for the foreign office to follow this up through formal diplomatic channels. The next day Ionescu sent out the new instructions promised to the agents more than a month earlier.² In a Circular Note he outlined the new policy for the benefit of the agents and instructed them to find out whether the government of the Powers to which they were accredited would be willing to guarantee Romania's neutrality in the event of war "between Turkey and one of the Powers".³ Ionescu's move proved to be well timed, for the following day the British Government sent out a Circular Note to the governments of all the Powers, proposing a conference at Constantinople to settle the Balkan disputes.⁴ The Romanian Government now had to wait anxiously the results of their moves.

On his way to London Ion Ghica stopped briefly in Vienna and Paris to sound the opinions of those governments. His mission was delicate as it was difficult. In a way it was closely connected with the policy of neutralization adopted by his government but it had a specific feature. He was to find out whether Austria and Britain would be willing to support Romania in resisting an eventual Russian demand for Bessarabia. If they were willing to do so, then, Ion Ghica was to formulate, together with them, some definite

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- 1 Speech from the throne, November 2, 1876. Rom.Doc., vol. 1b, No. 512. 2 See p. 31. 3 Romanian Circular Note, November 3, 1876. Rom.Doc., vol. 1b, No. 513.
 4 British Circular Note, November 4, 1876. German Diplomatic Documents, volume 1, p. 38.

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plans for co-operation to come into effect when needed. He went first to Vienna, where Andrassy, who apparently got wind of his mission, excused himself for not being able to receive him. Thus he was received instead by Baron Orczy, Andrassy's deputy, to whom Ghica detailed the aim of his mission. He wanted to know whether in the opinion of the Austrian Government the Treaty of Paris was still in force and whether a violation of the neutrality of Romania would be permitted. Romania, he added, would not hesitate to make use of her military resources if she could secure support from Austria and perhaps some other Power. But if left unaided she "would be obliged by a friendly attitude to Russia to diminish so far as possible the evils of a Russian occupation of Romanian territory". Orczy was evasive in his reply, for he knew that the Austrian Government had in fact long ago agreed to the cession of Bessarabia to Russia (by the Reichstadt Agreement). This was the reason why Andrassy avoided a confrontation with the Romanian Envoy.¹

From Vienna Ghica drove on to Paris, where he was received by Duke Louis Decazes, French Foreign Minister, whose attitude was hardly less evasive than that of the Austrian minister. When Ghica broached the subject of neutralization, Decazes commented that Romania had become a necessity in the equilibrium of power and that Europe must thus maintain her existence. This reply was, of course, far less than Ghica had expected, for a guaranty of Romania's existence did not imply a guarantee against the loss of Bessarabia; he drove on to London, where he hoped for better news.²

In London Ghica was received by the Marquis of Salisbury, who had just been appointed British Plenipotentiary to the conference which was to take place shortly in Con-

1 G.H.Rupp, A Wavering Friendship: Russia and Austria, 1876-1878, London: Oxford University Press, 1941, pp. 242-4.

2 Ion Ghica to N. Ionescu, October 7, 1876. Rom. Doc., vol. 1b, No. 520.

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stantinople. To him he had handed a long Memorandum in the name of the Romanian Government. It traced the progress Romania had made since her unification, under the collective guarantee of the Powers. It emphasized Romania's strategic position, her good behaviour, and the advantages Europe derived from this. The European guarantee to Romania, the Memorandum concluded, such as it then existed, was no longer sufficient and it was therefore in the interests of Europe to render it more effective.¹ Salisbury's reaction to the Memorandum was quite favourable. He received Ghica twice, on November 14 and 15, and, in Ghica's opinion, both times he showed "the greatest interest for the tranquility and prosperity of Romania". In between these visits, Ghica was also received by Lord Derby, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who promised that at the coming conference in Constantinople his government will attempt to remove all difficulties existent in Romania's relations with the Porte. He further expressed satisfaction with Romania's foreign policy. But the best news was yet to come from Salisbury himself, who declared that "England shall not allow an invasion of Romania. Such an act", he concluded, "would constitute a casus-belli".²

Though Salisbury's declaration implied a unilateral guarantee, it was not the type of guarantee Ghica was seeking for his country. He was seeking a unilateral guarantee for Romania alone as a State in its own right, apart from the Ottoman Empire. A collective European guarantee of Romania as part of the Ottoman Empire existed since 1856, and all Salisbury had now done, as it later turned out,³ was to affirm that Britain considered that guarantee as binding on

1 Romanian Memorandum November 14, 1876. Sturdza, *op. cit.*, pp. 246-9.

2 Ion Ghica sent home three reports from England at this time. The first and the third described his interviews with Salisbury; in the second he reported his interview with Derby. *Rom. Doc.*, vol. 1b, Nos. 536, 539, 542.

3 See Page 48, also p. 64.

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her part, regardless of how the other Powers felt about it. Despite this ambiguity in Salisbury's declaration, Ghica did not feel that his mission was a total failure.¹ In fact his mission appeared so successful in the diplomatic circles that rumours reached Gorchakov subsequently via Berlin that England had proposed a grant of four million pounds and war material, if Romania would oppose the entry of Russian troops on her territory.²

If Ion Ghica's reports brought some ray of hope to the Romanian Government, the other reports coming from the regular diplomatic agents were discouraging to say the least. The Powers made no haste to reply to the Circular Note of November 15, and two days later Ionescu sent out another one. This time it was more elaborate and more precise in language. Romania, the Circular ran, had been able so far to maintain a strict neutrality due to the solemn guarantee she received from the Powers. Should war break out between the Powers themselves, what would then become of Romania's neutrality? To avoid receiving evasive replies, Ionescu instructed the agents to "obtain a positive answer".³

Within twenty-four hours the replies started to come in, but they all indicated that the foreign reaction was quite unfavourable to the content of the Circular. From Paris S. Sendrea, the Romanian Agent, reported an interview with the French President, to whom he explained Romania's reasons for requesting the guarantee of neutrality. The latter admitted that due to her geographical position Romania was in great danger of a Russian invasion but he hoped that the Constant-

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- 1 Ion Ghica to N. Ionescu, December 2, 1876. Rom. Doc., vol. 1b, No. 593. 2 Gorchakov to Shuvalov, Russian Ambassador in London, December 2, 1876. R. W. Seton-Watson, "Russo-British Relations During the Eastern Crisis", Slavonic and East European Review, 1925-1926, IV, 433-62, No. 104.
- 3 Romanian Circular Note, November 17, 1876. Rom. Doc., vol. 1b, No. 546. Sturdza, op. cit., p. 251.

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inople Conference would bring peace.¹ From Berlin A. Degre, the Romanian Agent, reported on November 21 that from the attitude of the foreign office officials he gained the impression that Germany was going to stand by Russia. Thus Austria alone would have a difficult task to stop Russia from crossing Romanian territory should the latter (Russia) decide to take such a step. "From this follows", Degre continued, "that our policy in the East, as dictated by necessity, should be directed against Turkey". The next day he continued to report in the same line of thought. "In case of war", Degre wrote, "England would intervene in Turkey's behalf...In such a situation...we must get close as early as possible either to England or to Russia and Germany". Finally on November 27 he managed to see Bernhard-Ernst von Bulow, German Foreign Minister. This interview only confirmed his suspicions. "Should a war start", said the German Minister, "every country must preserve herself according to the best of her knowledge and ability".² From Constantinople came more encouraging news. General Ghica, the Romanian Agent there, was able to report that in three separate occasions Savfet Pasha, Ottoman Foreign Minister, declared that should the Russians invade Romania the Turks were not likely to cross the Danube to confront them on Romanian territory. Better still, the Ottoman minister declared himself in favour of a guarantee of Romanian neutrality. "To have a neutral zone between Russia and Turkey is what the Porte always

1 S. Sendrea to N. Ionescu, November 18, 1876. Rom. Doc., vol. 1b, No. 554. Subsequent reports from Paris indicated that the French Government had decided not to do anything about Romania's request and let circumstances take their own course. Same to same, December 22, 24, 25, 1876. Ibid., Nos. 574, 582, 652.
 2 A. Degre, to N. Ionescu, November 21, 22, 27, 1876. Ibid., Nos. 570, 573, 584. Germany's position in the Eastern Question was made officially known to the world by Bismarck in a speech in the Reichstag on December 13, 1876. Dame, op. cit., p. 276.

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wanted....", but he doubted whether the other Powers would ever agree to it.¹ The Austrian Government agreed in principle with the Romanian request but thought that it was impossible to bring it about at that time due to the course of international events and the political status of Romania (a vassal State).² Russia's reply was almost irrelevant to the Romanian request; she considered it as a temporary expedient. Romania, the reply stated, had nothing to fear from Russia. Should a war become unavoidable in the Balkans, Russia would seek to come to an understanding with Romania.³

Only from Italy came a truly favourable reply. Count Melegari, Italian Foreign Minister, declared that his government was in favour of granting Romania a state of neutrality similar to that of Belgium. Moreover, he decidedly stated that the Italian Plenipotentiary at Constantinople "shall be instructed to support Romania's request at the Conference".⁴ Italy's goodwill was much appreciated by the Romanians, but it did not help them much since Italy at that time carried very little weight on the international scene.

1 General Ghica to N.Ionescu, November 18, 19 and December 25, 1876. Rom.Doc., volume 1b, Nos. 557, 560, 653.

2 Balaceanu to Ionescu, November 18, 1876. Ibid., No. 555.

3 Emil Ghica to N.Ionescu, November 15, 19, 1876. Ibid., Nos. 541, 556.

4 Romanian Agent in Rome, Gheorghian, to Ionescu, November 24, 25, 1876. Rom.Doc., vol. 1b, Nos. 581, 583.

The Russo-Romanian Convention

Failing to obtain an European promise for a guarantee of neutrality, the Romanian Government decided to take matters in their own hands, seeking desperately to prevent Romania from being caught alone and unprepared in the middle of the Russo-Turkish struggle, which by now appeared imminent and inevitable to all. The Tsar had long ago consented to a partial mobilization.¹ By the middle of November, six Russian Army Corps were placed under the command of Grand Duke Nicholas, brother of the Tsar, as the Army of the South. There was no secret about this. Gorchakov even sent out a Circular Note informing the governments of the Powers about this partial mobilization and the reason for it.²

The thought that their country could become the battleground in the ensuing Russo-Turkish struggle caused great anxiety among the Romanians. This anxiety was especially felt by the politicians at the top level, who fully realized the grave consequences of such an event, yet they could not agree on the means to be adopted in order to prevent such a disaster. Sturdza and Ionescu thought that Romania should continue to maintain that state of neutrality which she observed in the past. Since the Western Powers were continually counselling Romania to remain neutral, Ionescu still hoped for that European guarantee he sought since he took office, especially as the conference at Constantinople was about to begin.³ Bratianu, on the other hand, gave up that hope and

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- 1 During the month of October. A. Onou, "The Memoirs of Count N. Ignatiev", Slavonic and East European Review, December, 1931, X, 386-407. 2 Russian Circular Note, November 1, 1876. Rom. Doc., vol. 1b, No. 511. Whitman, op. cit., pp. 241-2. Sturdza, op. cit., p. 241.
3 N. Ionescu's declaration in the Chamber, December 7, 1876. Rom. Doc., volume 1b, No. 603.

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thought that an understanding with Russia would best serve Romania's interests, especially if he could secure a Russian promise not to ask for Bessarabia.¹ Bratianu's attitude was strengthened by an international development which apparently he alone recognized and was willing to manipulate. In the European conflict of interests over the so-called Eastern Question, Romania was becoming less and less a pawn on the board and more and more a factor which the Powers directly concerned had to take into account.² This was mainly due to Romania's internal preparations. The permanent army and its reserves were mobilized for the autumn manoeuvres on October 6(1876).³ When the length of time provided by the law expired, the Deputies authorized the government to keep the reserves under arms for an unspecified length of time. On December 18 eight more regiments were added to the territorial army;⁴ and the Chamber voted new credits necessary for the equipment of all units with modern material.⁵ The army was strategically deployed and public opinion was being prepared for war. These preparations generated waves of diverse reaction throughout Europe. Thus while the Western Powers expressed anxiety at Romania's military preparations and admonished her to maintain the state of her neutrality unchanged or unaltered, both Russia and Turkey seemed eager to gain her co-operation for their benefit.⁶ To increase the odds in Romania's favour, Bratianu put all his irons into the fire. He encouraged Ionescu to continue his pursuit for an European guaranty of

1 Sturdza, *op.cit.*, p.198.2 R.W.Seton-Watson, *A History of the Romanians*, Archon Books, U.S.A., 1963, p.334.3 *Rom.Doc.*, vol.1b, No.475.4 *Ibid.*, No.606.5 *Ibid.*, No.591. Dame, *op.cit.*, p.276.6 Balaceanu to Ionescu, October 10, 1876, *Rom.Doc.*, vol.1b, No.477. Ion Ghica to N.Ionescu, November 6, 1876. *Ibid.*, No.520. Emil Ghica to N.Ionescu, November 18, 1876. *Ibid.*, No.556. Derby to Mansfield, English Agent in Bucharest, October-November, Sturdza, *op.cit.*, pp.199, 204, 249.

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neutrality, while he kept himself ready to enter secret negotiations with both Turkey and Russia. Though he had his heart set on an understanding with the latter, he could not very well totally ignore the former. An ill-timed refusal to co-operate with the Porte could have brought on Romania the fanatical reprisals of the Bashi-Bazouks (Turkish irregulars) before Russia had the time to come to her assistance.

Towards the end of November negotiations had been opened between Russia and Romania on the initiative of the former. Gorchakov, who did not attach much value to Romania's assistance, thought an agreement with her could be reached at any time convenient to Russia; and, in his opinion, it was to the latter's advantage to delay it until hostilities were about to begin, for then Romania, due to her geographical position and national interests, would be faced with the necessity of siding with Russia on the latter's terms. General Ignatiev and Grand Duke Nicholas, on the other hand, regarded Romania's assistance as an important factor in the overall Russian war strategy. They were thus resolved to force Gorchakov's hand and to reach an agreement with the Romanians before the Constantinople Conference met. It appears that Ignatiev feared that at that Conference Romania **could** obtain that European guaranty of neutrality she was **still** seeking. This would have deprived Russia of the convenient and much desired passage southward across Romanian territory. Consequently, with the approval of his government, he sent his counsellor of the embassy, A. Nelidov, to negotiate and sign a military convention with the Romanian Government.¹

Nelidov arrived in Bucharest on November 28 with a letter of introduction from Ignatiev to Bratianu and with in-

1 Sumner, op.cit., pp. 296-297. In the autumn of 1876 Nelidov was appointed director of the diplomatic chancery with the Staff of Grand Duke Nicholas.

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structions from St. Petersburg not to enter upon any political conversations but to limit his mission to the conclusion of a military convention. He negotiated directly with the prime minister in the strictest secrecy. Only Prince Carol was informed about the progress of the proceedings.¹

The most difficult aspect of these negotiations concerned the fate of Bessarabia. Bratianu was determined to secure from the Russian a formal guarantee that the St. Petersburg Cabinet would at no time in the future seek to annex Romanian Bessarabia. Nelidov protested that his instructions forbade him to enter upon any political conversations, but Bratianu insisted that if a formal agreement were to be reached between Russia and Romania it had to take the form of a treaty and be considered as a political contract. After a week of hard negotiations a formula seemingly agreeable to both parties was reached and the preliminary draft of a treaty was drawn up. Bratianu's anxieties concerning the fate of Bessarabia were eased off by the inclusion of a clause by which the Russian Government engaged to guaranty the security and individuality of the Romanian State in its present limits.²

The Russians were apparently satisfied with the document³ and insisted on having it signed as soon as possible;⁴ but Bratianu was still hesitating to take the final step

1 Whitman, *op.cit.*, p.242. Sturdza, *op.cit.*, p.265.

2 A. Nelidov, "Souvenirs d'avant et d'après la Guerre de 1877-78", *Revue des Deux Mondes*, July, 1915, XXVIII, 241-77.

Sturdza, *op.cit.*, pp.265, 267.

3 Gorchakov informed Ignatiev that Emperor Alexander was very satisfied with Nelidov's success in his negotiations with the Romanians. Gorchakov to Ignatiev, December 11, 1876. Seton-Watson, "Russo-British Relations During the Eastern Crisis", *Slavonic Review*, 1925, 1926, IV, 433-62, No. 143.

4 On December 30 Grand Duke Nicholas sent an officer of his Staff, Colonel Bobrikov, to discuss the details of a Russian passage with Carol. The latter refused to discuss it until the results of the Constantinople Conference were known. Sturdza, *op.cit.*, p.403.

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which would commit his country to the Russian camp. Romania's financial situation was very critical and the expense of a war could have brought about dire consequences. Moreover there was an anti-Russian feeling in the country and a strong anti-Russian party in parliament and in government. Thus each time Baron D. Stuart, Russian Consul in Bucharest, pressed the Romanian Cabinet for the signature of the document, the latter replied that they must await the results of the Constantinople Conference.¹ In fact Bratianu worried so much about this convention with Russia that he asked Carol to seek Bismarck's advice. The latter consented and charged Count Alvensleben, German Consul in Bucharest, with this mission. Bismarck's reply somehow reassured Bratianu. It said that the passage of Russian troops in virtue of a treaty was preferable to an outright invasion, but that there was no advantage in rushing things, i.e., to hurry to ^{the} conclusion of a treaty with Russia.²

At the very time Nelidov was in Bucharest, negotiations had also been opened with the Turks. Informal and secret conversations were being carried on for quite sometime between Bucharest and Constantinople through the intermediacy of Sir Henry Lakeman,³ but neither of the two governments appears to have taken them seriously. Towards the end of November, however, suspecting that Russia was seeking to come to some formal understanding with Romania, the Porte had officially sent Ali Bey, the President of the Danube Commission, to Bucharest to propose a plan of co-operation against Russia. Since Bratianu's efforts were directed mainly toward

1 Sturdza, *op.cit.*, p.395.

2 *Ibid.*, p.400.

3 This is the same Lakeman mentioned on page 17 (Mazar Pasha). He did not carry much weight in Romanian political circles, but he claimed some influence through his wife, who was related to Colonel Slaniceanu, minister of war.

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an understanding with Russia, the Turk received little encouragement and in a few days he left Bucharest to seek new instructions in Constantinople.¹

Soon after Ali Bey's departure from Bucharest the Constantinople Conference held its first session. To this Conference Romania sent D.Bratianu, brother of the prime minister, with the special mission of pursuing the sessions and presenting to the plenipotentiaries Romania's claims to a guarantee of neutrality and territorial integrity. The plenipotentiaries refused to discuss Romania's claims at the preliminary meetings under the pretext that they had received no instructions from their respective governments to that effect.² Even more disappointing to the Romanian Government was the change in Britain's attitude. Salisbury, who earlier appeared inclined to grant Romania some form of a guarantee against foreign invasion, now came to the conclusion that, due to her geographical position, Romania could not be saved from invasion by any form or degree of guarantee if one of the neighbouring Powers chose to take that step. He further felt that Romania's claims for a guarantee of neutrality must not be brought before the Conference, for it would inevitably break it up, bringing about a train of ugly consequences for all concerned.⁴

Despite this unfavourable attitude on the part of the Powers, D.Bratianu presented each of the plenipotentiaries with a Memorandum in which he exposed Romania's position, emphasizing the danger awaiting her in the event of a war between the Powers.⁵ The plenipotentiaries politely accepted

1 Sumner, op.cit., pp.295-296. 2 N.Ionescu to D.Bratianu, December 8, 1876. Rom.Doc., vol.1b, No.609.

3 Sturdza, op.cit., p.303. 4 General Ghica to N. Ionescu, December 18, 1876. Rom.Doc., vol.1b, No.637. Sturdza, op.cit., pp.303-5. On January 21, 1877, Lord Derby told Sendrea, Romanian Agent, that England could not grant neutrality to Romania, for Russia would never accept it. Sendrea to Ionescu, January 21, 1877. Rom.Doc., vol.2, No.34.

5 D.Bratianu to N.Ionescu, December 29, 1876. Rom.Doc., vol.1b, No.663.

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the Memorandum, feigning agreement with its content, but no one was willing to bring Romania's request before the Conference since they were, they claimed, without instructions to that effect.¹

Events in Constantinople threw the Romanian Government into confusion, splitting it into two factions. One faction, sensing the practical reality of the situation, favoured an entente with Russia; while the other, led by Sturdza and Ionescu, still favoured neutrality almost at all costs.² The latter tilted the balance in favour of neutrality and Ionescu instructed the agents to plead once more with the governments of the Powers to which they were accredited for a guarantee of neutrality.³ This time Romania obtained secret support from a most unexpected source - the Porte. Realizing the inevitability of war with Russia, the Ottoman Government was seriously considering the idea of improving their relations with Romania by supporting some of her claims. Odian Effendi, Ottoman special envoy, was sent to London at the beginning of 1877 in order to help Musurus, the Ottoman Ambassador there, in his attempt to convince the British Government of the usefulness of a neutralized Romania.⁴ Romania's special envoy at Constantinople, Bratianu, was assured by Savfet Pasha that the Porte will support the Romanian claim for neutrality.⁵ The Ottoman Ambassador at Vienna approached the Romanian agent there, C. Balaceanu, and twice assured him that the Ottoman Government "is seriously con-

1 D. Bratianu to N. Ionescu, January 1, 1877, Rom. Doc., vol. 1b, No. 674. Sturdza, op. cit., pp. 399, 403. ² Ibid., p. 303.

³ Ibid., p. 404.

⁴ Ignatiev to Shuvalov, January 7, 1877. Seton-Watson, "Russo-British Relations During the Eastern Crisis", Slavonic Review, 1925-1926, IV, 433-62, no. 152 (p. 456).

⁵ D. Bratianu to N. Ionescu, January 8, 1877. Sturdza, op. cit., pp. 450-1.

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considering the possibility of recognizing the independence and neutrality of Romania"¹. Turkey's attempt to support Romania's claims, however, was too late and hence useless. Salisbury informed D.Brătianu that Romania's claims could not be considered by the Conference. The content of Brătianu's Memorandum, Salisbury said, was not comprised in the basis of the Conference and did not enter within the competence of the plenipotentiaries.²

Any chance there may have been for a Turkish-Romanian rapprochement was ruined by the proclamation of the new Turkish Constitution, which the Porte adopted as a means of forestalling Europe's demand for reform. Article one of that Constitution stated that the Ottoman Empire was indivisible and it consisted of all the actual regions and possessions and of the privileged provinces. Article seven listed the prerogatives inherent in the sovereignty of the Sultan and emphasized that the latter gave the investiture to the heads of the privileged provinces in the manner determined by the privileges granted to them (dans les formes déterminées par les privilèges qui leur ont été concédés).³ When General Ghica asked Savfet Pasha what was meant by the privileged provinces and their heads, the latter replied that it meant Romania, Serbia, and Egypt and their respective rulers.⁴

The content of articles one and seven of the new Ottoman Constitution raised a storm of indignation in Bucharest and led to bitter exchanges with Constantinople. In a secret session the Chamber adopted a motion authorizing the govern-

1 C.Balaceanu to N.Ionescu, January 10, 1877. Rom.Doc., vol. 1b, No. 703. Sturdza, op.cit., p. 452.

2 Salisbury to D.Brătianu, January 16, 1877. Ibid., p. 458. Rom.Doc., vol. 2, No. 17.

3 Proclamation of the Constitution of the Ottoman Empire. Sturdza, op.cit., p. 312.

4 General Ghica to N.Ionescu, December 24, 1876, and January 1, 1877. Rom.Doc., vol. 1b, Nos. 650, 671.

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ment to protest against the aforementioned articles, which infringed upon Romania's ancient rights.¹ In a number of telegrams and dispatches, Ionescu formally protested at the Porte and informed the Powers that Romania was a separate country and did not belong to the Ottoman Empire, that the provisions of the Ottoman Constitution in no way concerned Romania, whose relations with the Porte were established by ancient capitulations between Romanian Princes and Ottoman Sultans, which did not affect the sovereignty of either State and which were consecrated by recent European treaties.²

Annoyed by Turkey's attitude towards the resolution of the Conference, which broke up on January 20, the Powers appeared inclined to approve Romania's point of view.³ With the exception of Sir H. Elliot, British Ambassador, their representatives in Constantinople found the Romanian protest legal and reasonable.⁴ The Porte's reaction to Romania's protest was ambiguous, to say the least. Savfet Pasha made a faint attempt to soothe Romania's pain by stating that the content of articles one and seven in the new Constitution had been misinterpreted by the Romanians, that Romania's status was in no way changed by the new Constitution.⁵

1 Minutes of the Chamber of Deputies' session held on January 3, 1877. Ibid., No. 700.

2 General Ghica to N. Ionescu, January 3, 6, 1877. Ibid., Nos. 676, 680. N. Ionescu to General Ghica, January 6, 1877. Ibid., No. 690. Sturdza, op.cit., pp. 407, 410, 411.

3 Romanian Agent in Berlin, A. Degre, to N. Ionescu, January 5, 6, 1877. Rom. Doc., vol. 1b, Nos. 685, 689. Balaceanu to Ionescu, January 5, 7, 11. Ibid., Nos. 684, 692, 708. Sendrea to N. Ionescu, January 11. Ibid., No. 711. Romanian Agent in Rome, Gheorghian, to Ionescu, January 12, 1877. Ibid., No. 714.

4 General Ghica to N. Ionescu, January 6. Ibid., No. 691. Sturdza, op.cit., p. 443.

5 General Ghica to N. Ionescu, January 7, 1877. Ibid., pp. 443-444. Rom. Doc., volume 1b, No. 693.

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The new Ottoman policy enraged all social classes in Romania, causing the ministerial party which advocated neutrality to lose much support in the country, thereby easing the path of those for an understanding with Russia.¹ The neutralists, led by Sturdza and Ionescu, still insisted that Romania must continue to maintain the neutral policy she had hitherto followed. They were eagerly seeking to follow the path outlined by Count Andrassy, who advised that in case of a Russo-Turkish war the Romanian Government and army be withdrawn into the province of Oltenia on the Austro-Hungarian border and adopt an attitude of defiant expectation in concert with Austria. If Romania followed this course, Andrassy assured Balaceanu, the Austrian Government would not allow any violation of her political or territorial interests.²

Such a policy, however worthy of consideration it might have been at some point in the development of Balkan events, was no longer acceptable to a great majority in the Chamber and, above all, to the prime minister, Bratianu, and Prince Carol, who made it known to Andrassy.³ No longer in agreement on foreign policy with his Cabinet colleagues, Sturdza resigned his office as minister of public works, January 6, 1877, and began organizing an active resistance against military preparations and co-operation with Russia in the Senate, where he had a strong following of liberal boyars.⁴ On January 31 he delivered a lengthy speech in the

- 1 V. Maciu, op.cit., p. 51. 2 Balaceanu to Ionescu, December 17, 1876. Rom. Doc., vol. 1b, No. 632. Damé, op.cit., p. 277. Sumner, op.cit., p. 299. Whitman, op.cit., pp. 243-4. Burks, "Romania and the Balkan Crisis of 1875-78", Journal of Central European Affairs, July, 1942, 11, 119-134.
- 3 Whitman, op.cit., pp. 243-4. Sumner, op.cit., p. 299.
- 4 Maciu, op.cit., pp. 51, 52. Sturdza, op.cit., p. 443.

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Senate in which he exposed the weak financial condition of the State, advocating a cut in the military budget of fifty percent. The financial crisis described by him was real since public expenditure rose annually while the productive forces lagged behind, thus causing an economic stagnation which reduced public income. But the financial problem could not be effectively solved by reducing the military budget, as he proposed, but rather by increasing the public income through a more equitable taxation, i.e., raising the land-tax of the boyars, proportionately, to the level of that imposed on the peasant; also by enforcing the reality of tax collection from the great land-owners, who did their best to avoid the payment of direct taxation.¹

On the very day when Sturdza directed his attack in the Senate against the military and foreign policy of the government, two of his colleagues and friends, G. Vernescu, minister of interior, and N. Ionescu, minister of external affairs, handed in their resignations in support of his stand. Ionescu, however, remained at his post as interim minister for two more months.

In order to avoid the fall of the government through a vote of non-confidence in the Senate, where the prime minister had very little support, Bratianu asked Sturdza to accept the portfolio of finance. The latter, thinking that by being in the Cabinet he could better prevent Romania's collaboration with Russia, accepted the offer and re-entered the Cabinet on February 8. Aware of Sturdza's intentions and seeking to cut off his support, the prime minister asked Carol for the dissolution of the Senate, where most governmental measures were being blocked or rejected. His demand was rejected by Carol, who kept this measure as an object of barter

¹ Maciu, op.cit., pp. 52-3.

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in exchange for an amnesty to be accorded to the previous Conservative ministry, whose legal prosecution Bratianu was still pursuing¹.

Soon after he assumed his new position, Sturdza began unfolding his plan for neutrality. On February 23 he announced a deficit of 40,000,000 lei and demanded severe reductions in public expenditures, affecting all governmental departments, until the budget for 1877 could be evenly balanced. This step was obviously directed mainly at the war department, but Colonel Slaniceanu refused to accept the reductions of expenditures imposed on his department. His refusal was vigorously supported by the prime minister and by the Prince. This caused Sturdza to hand in his resignation for the second time on March 5².

Losing their grip on the government, the neutralist party sought to gain public support through publications. The Conservative daily, Timpul, began publishing articles meant to create fear of Russia in the Romanian nation. Ion Ghica, leader of liberal boyars, published a pamphlet, O Cugetare Politica, in March 1877, in which he attacked the policy of the government which aimed at obtaining independence through war - hence by collaboration with Russia. He urged the Romanians to trust England and France, for these Powers would and could secure independence for all Balkan States. Sturdza, too, published a pamphlet in which he was demanding the abolition of the permanent army, for financial reasons and its replacement by a territorial militia. Even Ionescu published a pamphlet (anonymous), entitled L'état roumain et la paix d'Orient, in which he expressed a desire for independence, but insisted that it be obtained without

1 Maciu, op.cit., pp. 54, 68. Sturdza, op.cit., pp. 487, 492, 493-4.

2 Ibid., pp. 497-99. Maciu, op.cit., pp. 54, 68.

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aid from Russia, who was hostile to Romanian interests.¹

This campaign against war and against collaboration with Russia failed to exert any substantial influence on public opinion, which was becoming increasingly more anti-Turkish, demanding a complete separation from the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of Romania as an independent State. The influence of the neutralist party was strongly undermined by the development of events abroad. Following the failure of the Constantinople Conference, the representatives of the Powers met in London toward the end of March, where they issued a Protocol in which certain reforms were demanded of the Porte. The Turks showed their displeasure with this Protocol which they considered an interference in their internal affairs, but promised to study it and to give the Powers a reply within a few days. The Ottoman attitude made it obvious to all that the Eastern Question could no longer be settled by peaceful means. This situation strengthened the hand of the Romanian war party. In spite of the financial difficulties experienced by the government, a decree was issued calling for the formation of two more artillery regiments. When the Chamber attempted to reduce the military budget by two million lei Slaniceanu opposed the measure and the Deputies contented themselves with half that amount. At the end of March the prime minister assured Baron Stuart that in the event of war the Romanian Government would be willing and ready to sign a convention with Russia, based on the preliminary draft of November of the previous year. To prepare the ground for the acceptance of a convention with Russia by the Legislative Assembly, the prime minister again asked

1 Maciu, op.cit., pp. 55-6. Maciu thinks that the purpose of Sturdza's pamphlet was to disorganize the permanent army, thus preventing Romania from entering the war. Ibid.

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Carol for the dissolution of the Senate, which was against any understanding with Russia. The latter consented this time and the Senate was dissolved on April 4 and new elections were called for the end of the month. Two days later, realizing that the gates of war were now open, the neutralist Ionescu left the foreign office. His place was taken temporarily by Ion Campineanu, Minister of Justice.¹

The position of the war party in Romania was also strengthened by certain developments within the Russian political hierarchy. A preliminary draft of a Russo-Romanian Convention had been worked out, as we have seen, in November-December, 1876, but the lack of further development filled Grand Duke Nicholas with anxiety. In a long report, sent in January 1877 from Kishinau, Headquarters of Russian Army of the South, the Grand Duke exposed to the Tsar his view on the Romanian situation. He stressed in no uncertain terms the necessity of obtaining Romania's commitment to friendly co-operation as early as possible.² His efforts met with some degree of success, for during the month of February there took place several meetings between Russian and Romanian Staff Officers, who discussed military problems of common interest.³ But a formal agreement between the two governments was rendered unattainable at this time by the same old ghost - the Bessarabian problem. The Russians were pressing as before for a purely military convention, while the Romanians insisted on a treaty of political nature.⁴

Since it was obvious that the Russians were still trying to avoid a formal commitment on Bessarabia, the Romanian Government became more anxious than ever, and decided to inquire

1 Sturdza, *op.cit.*, pp. 502, 506, 511, 516-17. Dame, *op.cit.* p. 279.

2 G. Duke Nicholas to Tsar Alexander. *Rom. Doc.*, vol. 1b, No. 694.

3 Sturdza, *op.cit.*, p. 483.

4 G. Duke Nicholas to Prince Carol, January 24, 1877. *Ibid.*, pp. 467-9. Prince Carol to G. Duke Nicholas, February 2, 1877. *Ibid.*, pp. 490-1.

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at Berlin and Vienna about the true intentions of Russia.¹

As we now know, the Austrian Government had already agreed to the retrocession of Bessarabia to Russia in return for a free hand in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Germany knew about it.² Yet the reply came favourably. The Romanian Government was assured that Russia made no demand on Bessarabia and that she expressed no such intentions for the future. Moreover, the Romanians were reminded of the Austrian promise that Russia could not be allowed to annex any part of Romania.³ This reassurance seemed satisfactory to the Romanians, especially since the Russians suddenly adopted a more lenient attitude in their dealings with Romania. The Russians were now willing to grant Romania some guarantee of territorial integrity in return for a free passage to Russian armies across Romanian territory.⁴ This new Russian attitude encouraged Bratianu to take another bold step. When Baron Stuart insisted that a Russo-Romanian convention be signed at once,

1 N. Ionescu to A. Degre, March 6, 1877. Iorga, op. cit. No. 426. Ionescu to Balaceanu, February 27, 1877. Rom. Doc., vol. 2, No. 98.

2 Article 3 of the "Additional Convention", annexed to the Treaty of Budapest, 1877, provides for the retrocession of Bessarabia to Russia. A. F. Pribram, The Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary, vol. 2, English edition by A. C. Coolidge, H. Fertig, New York, 1967, pp. 199-203. Société de l'Histoire de la Guerre, La Politique Extérieure de l'Allemagne, vol. 2, A. Costes, Editeur, Paris, 1927, Nos. 256, 257. Henceforth referred to as La Politique Ext. In fact, the retrocession of Bessarabia to Russia had been suggested by Bismarck to Andrassy at their meeting in Berlin in May 1876. Rupp, op. cit., p. 99. Andrassy, in his turn, suggested it to Gorchakov during their meeting at Reichenstadt in the summer of 1876. Sumner, op. cit., p. 173. This event had been foreseen by Bulow, German Foreign Minister, as early as January 1876. Bulow to Munster, German Ambassador in London, January 4, 1876. German Diplomatic Documents, vol. 1, No. 29, pp. 20-2.

3 Balaceanu to Ionescu, March 24, 28, 1877. Iorga, op. cit., Nos. 431, 433. Debain, French Consul in Romania, to Decazes, March 28. Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1er Série, vol. 2, No. 150.

4 The Russians feared that the Romanians might be stubborn enough to refuse to sign the convention of passage. This would have forced them to occupy Romania. Such an event could have incurred the hostility of Europe, for disregarding the rights of a

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the Romanian prime minister replied that this could be achieved only on the condition that the Russians agreed to pay for their passage across Romanian territory in gold and not in the depreciated ruble. The Russians hesitated at first but agreed to it in the end.¹

One of the main factors which compelled Romania to come to a formal understanding with Russia was her morbid fear of a Turkish invasion. On April 11 the Turks informed the Powers that the terms of the London Protocol were unacceptable.² War was now a certainty. The following day the Turks concentrated a force of 35,000 men at Vidin on the southern bank of the Danube directly across from the Romanian town of Calafat. Fearing an Ottoman occupation of Calafat, the Romanian Cabinet agreed on a general mobilization.³ On April 13 Ion Cămpineanu, foreign minister, instructed Balaceanu to inform Andrassy that since the war was both inevitable and imminent, Romania sought to define the conditions of a Russian passage in order to reduce the danger which would result from total neutrality. In all other respects, the dispatch continued, Romania wished to remain neutral as before. This line of conduct, however, could not be maintained if Turkey sought to transfer the theatre of war on Romanian soil. Since fear of a Turkish invasion created great agitation in the country, Balaceanu was to entreat Andrassy to make strong representations at the Porte in order to prevent this danger and its consequences.⁴ The following day Cămpineanu instructed the Romanian Agent in Constantinople to obtain from the Porte assurances that Romanian soil would not be invaded by Ottoman forces.⁵

1 Sturdza, op.cit., p.535.
1877. Rom.Doc., vol.2, No.160.
Damé, op.cit., p.280.

2 Ottoman Circular, April 11,
3 Sturdza, op.cit., p.536.

4 Cămpineanu to Balaceanu, April 13, 1877. Rom.Doc., Vol.2,
No.165. Iorga, op.cit., No.441. Sturdza, op.cit., pp.545-6.

5 I. Cămpineanu to General Ghica, April 14, 1877. Rom.Doc., vol.2,
No.172.

The reply from Vienna was favourable. Andrassy promised to obtain from the Porte assurances that the Turks would not cross the Danube. But the reply from Constantinople was ominous. Savfet Pasha asked the Romanian Agent if the Romanian Government was as determined to defend the frontiers on the Pruth as those on the Danube. To the Ottoman Ambassador in London, Musurus, Savfet Pasha wrote that should the Russians cross the Pruth the Turks had no choice but to cross the Danube to stop the invader. This, of course, meant that Romania was to be transformed into a bloody field of battle.

Fear of invasion created waves of agitation across the country. Military units began to move towards the Danube, to reinforce those already existent there, while groups of civilians were running away from it. Uncertainty, anxiety, and patriotism formed the dominant feeling of the nation. Wild rumours of imminent invasion were abundant and panic spread throughout the southern section of the country all the way to Bucharest.²

Events at home coupled with events abroad convinced Bratianu that the time had come to face the political necessity of signing a convention with Russia. But even at this stage, the eleventh hour, he was still hesitating to assume all responsibility for an act which could backfire in the near future. He thus decided to seek the support of all political factions in the country. To achieve this aim, he asked Carol to call in crown council not only the ministers of the present Cabinet but also the ex-prime ministers and the majority leaders in the Chambers.

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- 1 Balaceanu to Campineanu April 11, 14, 15. *Ibid.*, Nos. 140, 171, 187. General Ghica to Campineanu, April 15, 1877. *Ibid.*, No. 177. Savfet Pasha to Musurus, April 16, 1877. Sturdza, *op.cit.*, p. 599.
 - 2 *Ibid.*, pp. 549, 558-9. Whitman, *op.cit.*, pp. 248-9. *Rom. Doc.*, vol. 2, Nos. 201, 267.

The Council was held on April 13 and the proceedings were recorded by Campineanu in a Minute entitled: "Conseil tenu sous la presidence du Prince, le 1/13 avril 1877, au sujet de la ligne de conduite a suivre par le pays dans le cas de la declaration de guerre entre les Russes et les Turks". According to this Minute the opinion of the Council was divided in three. One group, led by Iepureanu and I.Ghica, advocated a strict neutrality for Romania; and if that was not possible, then, both the Russians and the Turks should be allowed to enter Romania and, if necessary, to occupy some strategic points in the country. Another group, led by D.Ghica and A.Golescu, advised the government to ask Austria to occupy Romania in the name of Europe during the length of the Russo-Turkish war, thus preventing both belligerents from entering Romanian territory. Within the third group, led by Rosetti, Campineanu, and Kogalniceanu, there was a divergence of opinion. They all expressed the desire for the achievement of independence for Romania as soon as possible, but could not agree on the course to be adopted. Thus while all of them opposed co-operation with the Porte, some advocated co-operation with Russia and others sought to invoke the assistance of the Western Powers.

The prime minister explained to the Council that resistance to Russia was impossible and that a convention with her was a necessity which could not do any harm to Romania, for in no circumstance would Europe tolerate the substitution of Russian for Turkish suzerainty. He therefore asked the Council to consider seriously a formal understanding with Russia, declaring that, on the other hand, any violation of

1 The Conservative ex-prime ministers L.Catargiu and I.E. Florescu who were defeated in April, 1876, and since then prosecuted by the Radicals, were either not invited or failed to appear. Sturdza, *op.cit.*, p.536. Damé, *op.cit.*, p.280. Seton-Watson, *A History of the Romanians*, p.335.

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Romanian territory by Ottoman forces must be met with force. Kogalniceanu, who at this point was ignorant of the preliminary draft of a convention with Russia, agreed with the prime minister, but argued that a Russian victory would surely entail the loss of Bessarabia.¹ Kogalniceanu's deduction was shared by the prime minister, who still feared the loss of Bessarabia despite Austrian assurances to the contrary, but there was no way out of this impasse.

The truth of the matter was clear to anyone who had any political insight. The Russians had to cross Romanian territory in order to reach the Balkans, and unless a formal agreement was reached with them which would bring them as friends, they would come as enemies. Thus irrespective of the final outcome of the war, and hence the ultimate fate of Bessarabia, a formal agreement had to be reached with the Russians if they were to respect Romanian rights while in transit through Romanian territory. It was the understanding of this truth that compelled Kogalniceanu to back up the prime minister and to accept the portfolio of foreign affairs.

The concrete results of the Crown Council was a victory for the Radical faction. The minister of war, Colonel Slaniceanu, who showed insufficient energy in the preparation of the army for war, was replaced with General A.Cernat, a friend and partisan of I.C.Bratianu and C.A.Rosetti. The energetic Kogalniceanu, who was won over to Bratianu's point of view, became once more foreign minister, ready to lead the country on the path of independence.²

On April 16, 1877, Kogalniceanu met Baron Stuart and a revised draft of the Russo-Romanian Convention of November

1 Sturdza, op.cit., pp. 536-45. Maciu, op.cit., pp. 57-63. Iorga, op.cit., No. 443. Rom.Doc., vol. 2, No. 169. Damé, op.cit., pp. 280-1.

2 Maciu, op.cit., pp. 63-4. Rom.Doc., vol. 2, Nos. 182, 190. Damé, op.cit., pp. 280-1.

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1876, was finally signed. This Convention consisted of four articles. Articles one and three stipulated the conditions in which the Russians were to cross Romanian territory. Article four stipulated that the terms of the Convention were to take effect immediately following their ratification by the contracting governments. For the Romanians, however, the most important provision of the Convention was contained in the second article. In it the Tsar and his government pledged to maintain and protect the actual integrity and political rights of Romania.¹ For a clearer promise than this the Romanians could not ask. In fact it appeared to them too good to be true, yet there it was duly signed.² With the Russian promise and the Austrian reassurance, the Romanians rested seemingly content for the time being.

In the internal politics, the conclusion of the Russo-Romanian Convention meant one more Radical victory over the Conservative and Liberal boyar factions, who advocated a policy of total neutrality for Romania and subservience to the West. For better or for worse, Romania threw in her lot with

1 "Afin qu'aucun inconvenient ou danger ne résulte pour la Roumanie du fait du passage des troupes russes sur son territoire, le gouvernement de Sa Majesté l'Empereur de toutes les Russies s'engage à maintenir et à faire respecter les droits politiques de l'Etat Roumain, tels qu'ils résultent des lois intérieures et traites existants, ainsi qu'à maintenir et à défendre l'intégrité actuelle de la Roumanie". Article 2 of Russo-Romanian Convention, April 16, 1877. Sturdza, op.cit., p.551. Rom.Doc., vol. 2, No.191. Damé, op.cit., p.281.

2 Why the Russians compromised themselves in this fashion is not clear. As later events were to prove, they had no intention of keeping this promise. The Romanians suspected that their promise was worthless. Burks, op.cit., p.127. This Russian undertaking, according to H.Seton-Watson, was in flagrant contradiction with their intention to annex Southern Bessarabia, which had been clearly stated in their agreement with Austria. H.Seton-Watson, The Russian Empire 1801-1917, Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1967, p.452.

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the Northern Empire. On April 18 a decree was issued calling for general mobilization;¹ and military units, equipped for battle, were stationed at strategic points along the Danube. This placed Romania in a position of undeclared rebellion against the suzerain Power. The tortuous road to independence was now open.

1 The minister of war compiled a report on the military conditions. In reply to this report, Carol decreed the mobilization of the army, April 18, 1877. Rom.Doc., vol.2, Nos. 204, 205.

The Declaration of Independence

The conclusion of the Russo-Romanian Convention automatically placed Romania in the Russian camp and made her vulnerable to Ottoman invasion. It was to prevent such a catastrophe that the day after the Convention was signed Kogalniceanu sent out a Circular Note appealing to the Powers to intercede with the Porte in Romania's favour. "The Russian army", ran the Circular, "pass over our territory only with the tacit consent of the Powers. We cannot do what Europe does not want to do. If we are not able to resist the passage of the Russian army, Turkey is not in this way justified to transform Romania into a battle ground". He instructed the agents to ask the government to which they were accredited to force Turkey to respect Romania's territorial integrity.¹

The foreign reaction to this appeal varied widely. The German Foreign Minister declared unequivocally that his government could no longer intervene at the Porte in Romania's favour. In Vienna, Andrassy, as well as the British Ambassador, promised to support Romania's cause; but they could not guarantee any success since the Treaty of Paris could no longer be invoked from the moment they allow Turkey to be attacked without coming to her aid. The French Government was willing to help. The French Ambassadors in Vienna and London were instructed to ask those governments if they were willing to join France in sending a joint diplomatic note at the Porte. From Italy the reply was most favourable. The Italian Foreign Minister made a solemn promise that his government would do everything in its power to

1 Rom.Doc., vol.2, No.192. Romanian Circular, April 17, 1877.

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prevent an Ottoman invasion of Romanian territory.¹

As the war was getting closer with every day that passed, the Romanians began to lose all hope for an European guarantee. They began to realize that whatever the future held in store for them, they would have to rely more on their own resources and less on the promises of others. It was due to this realization that they acquired the determination to be militarily prepared to meet any circumstances which would seriously threaten their future development as a free nation.

Mobilization in Romania began, as we may recall, as early as October, 1876, with the autumn manoeuvres. During the winter of 1876-1877 the equipment of the permanent army was modernized and completed, and its tactical capacities were developed by exercises. The royal decree for mobilization issued on April 18, 1878, was, more or less, a formality which entitled the government to ask for appropriations. The following day the Assembly was convoked for this purpose and a money bill, representing a special military budget, was introduced and passed unanimously.² It was about this time, too, that defensive measures were taken against any possible attack from across the Danube - important positions were fortified and military units were strategically deployed.

The permanent army consisted of four divisions.³ The

1 Degre to Kogalniceanu, April 18, 1877. Rom. Doc., Vol. 2, No. 211. Balaceanu to Kogalniceanu, April 19. Ibid., 213. Callimachi to Kogalniceanu, same date. Ibid., Nos. 215, 217. The Romanian Agent from Rome, E. Obedenaru to Kogalniceanu, same date. Ibid., No. 212.

2 The Legislative Assembly met in an extraordinary session on April 19, 1877. The following day an appropriation bill was passed to cover the expense of mobilization. Ibid., Nos. 236, 244.

3 The total effective mobilized consisted of over 100,000 men, of which the operative forces amounted to 58,700 men, 12,300 horses, and 190 guns. R. Rosetti, "Romania's Share in the War of 1877", Slavonic Review, March, 1930, VIII, 548-570.

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first two of these divisions were concentrated on Calafat and its surroundings; the remaining two being placed on Bucharest and on the portion of the Danube facing it. The purpose of the first measure was to prevent the Ottoman forces concentrated on Vidin from entering Calafat, which could have served as a bridge-head for an invasion of Oltenia. The purpose of the second was to stall an eventual Ottoman attack on Bucharest, before the Russian troops had reached the Danube. Once the Russians took their position along the Danube, the two Romanian divisions around Bucharest were to withdraw westward and join the other two in southern Oltenia. The four divisions, consisting of about 35,000 men, could then act as the right wing of the Russian forces.¹

While the Romanians were thus preparing to deal with an eventual invasion, a message came from the Porte. In it the Grand Visir pointed out the danger facing Romania from the North. The Russians, the message said, were about to cross the Pruth; therefore the Romanian Government should immediately get together with the Ottoman Government to find a way for common action in order to avoid this danger. The Romanian Government, who had no intention to co-operate with the Turks, replied evasively that such a step was too important to be taken on their own authority, neither the government nor the Prince was willing to assume such a responsibility. Carol therefore promised to summon the National Assembly to meet in three days to decide on the matter and to communicate its decision to the Porte at once.²

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- 1 R. Rosetti, "Romania's Share in the War of 1877", Slavonic Review, March, 1930, VIII, pp. 552-55. Maciu, op. cit., p. 66.
 - 2 Grand Visir to Carol, April 22, 1877. Rom. Doc., vol. 2, No. 297. Carol to the Grand Visir, April 23, 1877. Ibid., No. 317.

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Hardly had the Romanians time to recover from the shock produced by the message from the South when ominous news came from the North. On the evening of April 23 they were informed that the Russians crossed the Pruth and were fast advancing towards Barbosi, a strategic point on the Danube. Since this step violated the terms of the Russo-Romanian Convention, and was taken without previous consultation, the Romanian Government did not know what to make of it.¹ The Cabinet hurriedly got together to discuss the new situation. Since the Legislative Assembly was not to meet until April 26, they decided to act in accordance with the resolutions passed by the Chamber in its last session, i.e., to maintain Romania's rights and her neutrality. Consequently, the Romanian troops were ordered to withdraw to the interior in order to avoid any conflict which could bring the war on Romanian territory. The Prefects of the invaded districts were ordered not to act as agents of the central government but to content themselves with secondary roles, seeking to prevent possible conflicts between the invader and the people, letting the municipal authorities to represent their communities before the commanders of the foreign troops.² These decisions were at once dispatched to all concerned and were published in the official organ of the government - Monitorul Oficial. To make sure that Europe knows about this, Kogalniceanu promptly sent a Circular to all agents, informing them

1 The terms of the Convention were to come into effect only after their ratification by the Romanian Parliament, which was to meet on April 26. Hence the Russians were not expected before then - April 28 at the earliest.

2 Proclamation of the Romanian Government On the Entrance of the Russian Army Into Romania, April 24, 1877. British and Foreign State Papers, volume 68, 1876-1877. W. Ridgway, London, 1884, pp. 850-51. Henceforth referred to as BFSP. Sturdza, op.cit., pp. 584-85.

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about the Russian move and the decisions taken by the Cabinet.¹ The next day, April 25, most English papers carried the news that the Russian troops crossed the Romanian border and the Romanian Government, yielding to force, directed the Romanian troops to fall back in order to avoid a conflict.²

Russia's decision to cross the Romanian frontier before the Convention was ratified was caused by her desire to forestall Turkey's appeal for mediation of the guaranteeing Powers. It was also caused by strategic considerations, for, as they explained later, once the war had been declared, the Turks could have invaded Romania and occupy railway centres and strategic points.³

Justifiable as their act might have been, the Russians could not advance any adequate reason for not consulting the Romanians before the crossing of the border was effected. The same high-handed disregard of what the Romanian Government considered its rights was demonstrated by Grand Duke Nicholas, who issued a proclamation directly to the Romanian people.⁴ The Romanian authorities had the samples of the proclamation collected and asked the Russians for an explication. The latter immediately forwarded an official explanation for the early crossing of the border, assuring the Romanian Government, at the same time, that the terms of the Convention

1 Romanian Circular, April 24, 1877. Rom.Doc., vol. 2, No. 348.

2 Thompson, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 182.

3 Romanian Agent in St. Petersburg, Emil Ghica, to Kogalniceanu, April 24, 1877. Rom.Doc., vol. 2, No. 344. Romanian Special Envoy to St. Petersburg General Ghica, to Kogalniceanu, same date. Ibid., No. 345. Same to same, April 25. Ibid., No. 383. Sent on April 16 to effect ratification of Russo-Romanian Convention, General Ghica was appointed Romanian representative in St. Petersburg and then at the Grand Duke's and the Imperial Headquarters. He was detained in Kishinau, seeing the Grand Duke and the Tsar, and did not reach St. Petersburg until May 6, 1877.

4 Proclamation of the Grand Duke Nicholas to the inhabitants of Romania, April 24, 1877. Rom.Doc., vol. 2, No. 342. Sturdza, op.cit., p. 587.

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would be closely observed. The proclamation of the Grand Duke was excused on the ground that as the terms of the Convention were not generally known, it was necessary to inform the Romanian population that the Russians were coming in as friends.¹ When the Romanians showed dissatisfaction with these explanations, Grand Duke Nicholas took the pain of justifying his actions in a personal letter to Prince Carol.² A few days later the Tsar himself wrote to Carol, explaining the reasons for the early crossing of the Pruth.³

In the midst of this confusion and war fever elections for the Senate were held between April 21 and 25. The returns gave the government a solid majority in the upper Chamber - a healthy sign in troubled times. Everyone was now anxiously waiting for the opening of Parliament to find out whether the Convention with Russia would be ratified.

On April 26 Carol opened the Legislature with a speech in which he recalled the unfavourable attitude of the Powers towards Romania. Since none of the Powers represented at the Constantinople Conference were willing to accept her request for an European guarantee of neutrality, Romania could now only depend on herself to prevent hostilities from being transferred to her territory.⁴ With the opening speech over, the Assembly passed on to the business of the day. The first and the most important item in the agenda was the Convention

1 General Ghica to Kogalniceanu, April 24, 1877. Rom. Doc., vol. 2, No. 346. Sturdza, op.cit., p. 600.

2 Grand Duke Nicholas to Prince Carol, April 26, 1877. Ibid., pp. 616-617. Romanian Documents, vol. 2, No. 404.

3 Alexander's letter to Carol was delivered by Prince Dolgoruki on April 28, 1877. Ibid., No. 546. Sturdza, op.cit., p. 616.

4 Speech from the throne, April 26, 1877. Sturdza, op.cit., pp. 604-6.

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with Russia. The sessions proved to be longer and stormier than anticipated, for the government found itself faced with an opposition which, though small, was determined to prove the Convention worthless and fraught with dangers.

In the Chamber of Deputies the Convention was opposed by three members, one of whom was N. Ionescu, the ex-foreign minister. To their attacks the government reply that Romania had done everything possible to maintain a policy of strict neutrality, but the Powers refused to offer any assistance towards that end. Kogalniceanu pointed out that the European Powers had tacitly abandoned their obligation contracted by the Treaty of Paris to protect the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. When Russia declared war on Turkey, argued Kogalniceanu, she placed herself outside the Treaty of Paris, which guaranteed Romania's political status. Since the Western Powers rejected Romania's appeal for a guarantee of neutrality, it was the duty of the Romanian Government to obtain from Russia a promise to respect the rights Romania had acquired by the Treaty of Paris. This was the purpose of the Convention.¹ The government won their point and the Convention was ratified with 69 votes against 25.

In the Senate the opposition was stronger and better organized than in the Chamber. It consisted of several well known political figures including Sturdza and Iepureanu, the ex-prime minister. They proved that the Convention was a violation of the Treaty of Paris, and argued that article 2 which guaranteed Romania's territorial integrity was insufficient protection against Russian later claims, i.e., against Russian ulterior demands. Iepureanu and Boerescu recalled that they had warned the Crown against the government's adventurous policy and asked the Senate not to let

1 Debates of the Legislature on the Convention with Russia, Sturdza, op.cit. pp. 623, 627, 661.

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itself be led onto a path fatal to the country.¹

Despite these well presented arguments, the government stood their ground firmly. In long and fiery speeches both Kogalniceanu and Bratianu drew the attention of the Senate to the advantages Romania obtained from the Convention with Russia. Bratianu concluded his speech with the significant remark that the sympathies of the Romanian people had to go where there existed some support for the interests of their country.² At the end of the debates the Senate adopted the motion for the ratification of the Convention with 41 votes against 10.

The ratification of the Convention with Russia created an unfavourable reaction abroad. The Western press accused Romania of misconduct in her relations with the Porte. It maintained that the Romanians should have conformed with the existing treaties and made common cause with the suzerain Power. The Hungarian press, above all, was the noisiest. It expressed strong sympathies for the Turks and hatred for the Russians. It went so far as to accuse Romania of treachery and deceit. The French and German Governments made known their displeasure by refusing to comment on the matter. From Vienna Balaceanu reported that Romania's Convention with Russia produced a bad impression all around. In fact he felt that most foreign governments suspected that there is more going on between Russia and Romania behind that Convention. Most diplomats seemed to be expecting a new move on Romania's part, such as a declaration of war on Turkey or an open co-operation with Russia.³

Stung by this interpretation of events, Kogalniceanu at once set out to put an end to those speculations abroad. In

1 Damé, op.cit., p.283.

2 Sturdza, op.cit., p.670.

3 Ibid., pp.690,735. Balaceanu to Kogalniceanu, May 2, 1877. Rom.Doc., volume 2, No.615.

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a long Circular he denied all charges brought against his country. It was only after the Powers had abandoned Romania, said the Circular, leaving her helpless between two hostile and superior armies, that she sought to secure for herself her frontiers and her rights and interests. The Romanian army had no intention of joining the Russian army. It had been mobilized only to defend Romania's borders against invasion by the Turkish irregulars. He concluded by asking the agents to give strong assurances to the governments to which they were accredited that Romania did not deceive and had no intention of deceiving anybody. If Europe had a more energetic attitude, Romania would have been more firm in her politics. But since Europe consulted only her own interests, Romania had to submit to the force of circumstances and make the best of the terrible situation in which she was plunged against her will.¹

Romania's attempt to convince the Powers that her agreement with Russia was a justifiable necessity was rendered ineffective by the activity of the Turks, who endeavoured to make Europe believe that the Convention with Russia was neither justifiable nor necessary. On April 25 the Grand Visir telegraphed Carol that Russia had declared war on Turkey and that the Porte now expected Romania to remain loyal to her ties with the Ottoman Empire.² Since this telegram remained unanswered, the Porte issued a Circular in which Romania was accused of bad faith. The Treaty of Paris, said the Circular, provided Romania with ample means for the defence of her territory; hence her alleged impotence was inadmissible. Romania was in the power of the enemy and the Ottoman Government

1 Romanian Circular, May 3, 1877. Rom.Doc., vol. 2, No. 651. Sturdza, op.cit., pp. 690-91.

2 Edhem Pasha to Carol, April 25, 1877. Ibid., pp. 601-2. Rom.Doc., vol. 2, No. 381.

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could not recognize as legal any of her declarations meant to change her political status.¹

Realizing that despite all diplomatic measures Romania was gradually detaching herself from the Ottoman Empire, the Porte attempted to reaffirm her suzerainty by more direct means. On May 5 the Ottoman Foreign Minister announced that the Romanian Agency in Constantinople was suspended. When the Romanian Agent protested that such an action was legally impossible, he was imprisoned and his correspondence confiscated.² It took the intercession of the Powers to have him released and allowed to depart for home.³

The next day Ottoman batteries began to shell several Romanian towns along the Danube. Neutral shipping was confiscated in Romanian ports, and the ferocious Bashi-bazouks began raiding the left bank of the Danube.⁴ The port of Braila was bombarded while Grand Duke Nicholas was reviewing the Russian troops stationed there.⁵ Calafat, and three adjoining towns, became the prime target of Turkish artillery (on May 8).

Indignant at this unprovoked aggression, Kogalniceanu informed the Powers that the Turks were creating a situation in which Romania found it very difficult to maintain her neutrality.⁶ At Vienna the Turkish representative was asked

1 Ottoman Circular, May 2, 1877. Sturdza, *op.cit.*, pp. 685-87.

2 Savfet Pasha to G. Ghica, May 3, 1877. *Ibid.*, pp. 691-2. Ghica to Savfet Pasha, May 4. *Ibid.*, p. 696. *Rom.Doc.*, vol. 2, No. 686. Savfet Pasha, to Musurus Pasha, May 3. *BFSP*, vol. 68, pp. 865-66.

3 Kogalniceanu to Degre, May 5. Sturdza, *op.cit.*, p. 701. Kogalniceanu to Callimachi, Balaceanu and Obedenaru, same date. *Ibid.*, p. 701.

4 Romanian Circulars, May 4 and 10. *Ibid.*, pp. 696, 731-2. Rosetti, *loc.cit.*, p. 554.

5 The Prefect of Baila to the Minister of the Interior, May 6, 1877. *Rom.Doc.*, vol. 2, No. 752.

6 Romanian Circular, May 8, 1877. *Ibid.*, No. 842. Sturdza, *op.cit.*, pp. 726-7.

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to explain the contradiction between the Porte's promises made to the Austrian Government and the bombardment along the Danube. The Ottoman Ambassador replied that, since the conclusion of the Convention with Russia, Turkey considered herself at war with Romania.¹ This prompted the Romanians to retaliate in kind by opening fire on Vidin. By May 9 Romania was, in all but name, at war with the suzerain Power.²

In reply to the unprovoked aggressive acts committed by Turkey on the left bank of the Danube, the Radicals in Bucharest began to agitate the populace of the city in favour of a declaration of independence. Rosetti's paper, Românul, enumerated all the sins Turkey committed against Romania and exhorted the Romanians to put aside their political differences and unite "under the flag of the fatherland in order to emerge from this struggle as brothers...in a free Romania".³

In a report to Andrassy about the "plans and tendencies" apparent in different political parties in Romania, the Austrian Consul in Bucharest signalled a growing agitation among the "representatives of the people, who tend towards a declaration of independence and war against the Porte". At two private meetings the report said, there were fiery speeches in which it was emphasized that the Romanians should not let the present favourable circumstances pass without plucking the ripe fruit of independence and, at the same time, defend themselves against the insolence of the Turks. The initiative had to be taken by the nation's representatives. The Prince, too, was forced to adopt this cause since his dignity was no longer compatible with inaction in view of the Ottoman attacks. News of this agitation quickly penetrated public

1 Balaceanu to Kogalniceanu, May 9. Ibid., pp. 727-8. Rom. Doc., vol. 2, No. 876.

2 Romanian Circular, May 9. Ibid., No. 940. Sturdza, op. cit., p. 777.

3 Excerpt from Românul, May 6, 1877. Ibid., p. 725.

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opinion and a declaration of independence was talked of as a probable eventuality.¹

Rosetti's eagerness to have Romania proclaimed independent at once was strenuously resisted by Kogalniceanu, who considered such a step dangerous at that time since the Powers did not seem willing to tolerate it. Thus when on May 10 a motion was introduced in the Chamber towards that end, Kogalniceanu opposed it emphatically, fearing that it could bring injurious consequences. Carol, too, was against a proclamation of independence at that time, but for reasons different from those of his foreign minister. He wished to see this important event in Romania's history taking place on the day of anniversary of his accession to the Romanian throne (1866). This would serve to strengthen the dynastic sentiments in the country.² The motion was thus defeated, but Rosetti and his followers remained in the same frame of mind. They were biding their time waiting for the next opportunity around to re-introduce that motion.

The next day a new motion was introduced in the Chamber by a group of deputies loyal to Bratianu and Kogalniceanu. It simply demanded that a state of war be recognized between Romania and Turkey, and advised the government to see to it that at the conclusion of peace Romania would emerge with a "well defined political position".³ During the debates on this motion some deputies accused the government of being intimidated by Turkey's aggression. Kogalniceanu denied the accusations. Other deputies feared that Turkey, supported by England, could win the war. In such an event, they wanted to know, who would guarantee Romania against Ottoman reprisals.

1 Zweideneck to Andrassy, May 6, 1877. Sturdza, op.cit., pp. 732-33. Rom.Doc., vol. 2, No. 886.

2 Maciu, op.cit., pp. 72-73.

3 Sturdza, op.cit., p. 734.

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To these Bratianu replied that "...this guarantee we must first seek among ourselves...", a formula used for a long time thereafter by the Liberal party.¹ With the debates closed the Chamber voted on the resolution which stated that through acts of aggression against Romania, Turkey had broken the ancient bonds which united the two States bringing a state of war between them. It is therefore recommended that the government should make "every effort and to take every measure to defend and assure the existence of the Romanian State".² The following day the Senate adopted a similar resolution, and Kogalniceanu promptly conveyed to the Powers the parliament's decisions.³

The new developments in Bucharest, needless to say, met with a cold reception abroad.⁴ The Powers believed that the Romanians were going too fast toward independence, and Kogalniceanu set out once again to justify the actions of his government.⁵ But at home, where it was believed that the government was going too slow, the declaration of independence was the topic of the day. The hesitant attitude of the government and of some deputies and senators created waves of agitation among the urban masses; and the Radical press fed this agitation adequately in order to force the government to clarify its position.

On May 21 Rosetti's followers decided to stage a show-down in the Chamber during the interpellation period. Learning beforehand what the subject of interpellation was going to be, a large number of people gathered in the assembly hall and out in the street waiting to hear what the govern-

1 Maciu, op.cit., pp.74-75.

2 Resolution of the Chamber of Deputies, May 11, 1877. Sturdza, op.cit., p.734.

3 Romanian Circular, May 13. Rom.Doc., volume 2, No.1034.

4 Austrian Circular, May 13. Sturdza, op.cit., p.736.

5 Romanian Circular, May 14. Iorga, op.cit., No.458.

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ment had to say. The interpellation was made by deputy N. Fleva, who accused the government of a timorous attitude, inactivity, and ambiguous decisions, and challenged them to justify their actions.¹ The spokesman for the government was Kogalniceanu, who delivered a long speech. In it he admitted some of the accusations brought against the government, denied others, and justified some of the measures taken by the Cabinet, ending with the moving words that he did not have "the slightest doubt or fear" to declare before the national assembly that "Romania was a nation free and independent". Following this speech the assembly introduced a motion which expressed satisfaction with the government's explanations and position and acknowledged that the state of war with Turkey and Romania's absolute independence have received official sanction (consecration). The motion was adopted by 79 votes, with two abstentions. The Senate adopted a similar motion.² Romania was now independent.

The news of the official proclamation of independence spread like wild fire and the spontaneous enthusiasm of the nation was immeasurable. Young men flocked to the banners, committees of women were organized for medical assistance (Red Cross ambulances), and money, articles of clothing and even food were generously being offered to the young army, which was burning with patriotic zeal and impatience to be called upon to assure the independence of the country.³

Romania's self-proclaimed independence had to be recognized by all the Powers, including Turkey, if it was to be effective. But the reports coming from abroad showed that

1 Maciu, op.cit., p.76.

2 Resolutions of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies, May 21, 1877. Rom.Doc., volume 2, Nos. 1343, 1344. Sturdza, op.cit., pp. 748-49.

3 Dame, op.cit., p.285. Maciu, op.cit., pp.70,77. Rom.Doc., volume 2, Nos. 231, 415, 453, 921. Ibid., volume 3, Nos. 333, 335, 765.

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Europe was not prepared to recognize such a step at that time. In fact, with the exception of Italy, all Powers appeared to be greatly annoyed by the recent developments in Bucharest.

The Porte, as it was to be expected, declared Romania in a state of rebellion and announced their intention of re-establishing Ottoman suzerainty over the Principalities by any means at their disposal required by the nature of the situation.¹ The French and British Governments showed their displeasure by restricting their comments to a minimum. The French Foreign Minister, Duke Decazes, declared that by her recent actions, Romania had placed herself outside the guarantee Europe had granted her by the Treaty of Paris. Since this released the Powers from their obligations towards her, the French Government felt free to withhold its decision on the matter.² The Austrian Government declared that while Romania had legitimate reasons for declaring war on the Turks, her declaration of independence was premature. Andrassy therefore was not prepared to express an official opinion on this matter until the end of the war - at the peace conference. He even sent out a Circular recommending that all other Powers take a similar attitude.³ The German Government declared that its attitude towards Romania's claim to independence would depend on the way the interests of German citizens (financial investors in Romanian railways) in Romania would be satisfied.⁴ The Italian Government greatly sympath-

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- 1 Savfet Pasha to Musurus Pasha, June 5, 1877. BFSP, volume 68, pp. 875-877. 2 Callimachi to Kogalniceanu, May 25-June 19, 1877. Rom.Doc., volume 3, Nos. 158, 270, 385, 1101. Decazes to Debain, French Agent in Bucharest, May 23, 1877. Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1st series, volume 2, No. 175. Henceforth referred to as DDF.
- 3 Balaceanu to Kogalniceanu, May 25-June 12, 1877. Rom.Doc., volume 3, Nos. 154, 207, 337, 354, 672, 800. Iorga, op.cit., Nos. 478, 489. Austrian Circular, May 13, 1877. Sturdza, op.cit. p. 736. 4 Degre to Kogalniceanu, May 27-June 13. Rom.Doc., volume 3, Nos. 245, 332, 763, 870. Iorga, op.cit., Nos. 471, 474, 480.

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ised with Romania and declared itself willing to do everything in its power to advance her interests; but, due to the international situation, it had to postpone its decision on Romania's independence until the end of the war.¹

The Russian reply indicated that the St. Petersburg Cabinet, too, was very much displeased with the latest developments in Romanian politics. No mention was made of the declaration of war, but they were highly critical of the declaration of independence. They felt that Romania should have left the solution to her independence to the peace conference and confided herself to the goodwill of Russia.²

Legitimate as this complaint might have been, to the Romanians it only served to confirm their suspicion of Russian intentions. They suspected for quite some time that at the end of the war Russia intended to obtain Bessarabia and compensate Romania for it with a grant of independence.³ This suspicion constituted the main factor which compelled Romania to proclaim her independence at such an early stage of the war, without consulting the opinion of Russia, or any other Power.⁴ Then, of course, there was also the factor of national prestige. The Romanians wanted their independence to result from an act of national will rather than from a benevolent act of the Powers.⁵

The struggle to preserve Bessarabia became so interwoven with the struggle for the attainment of independence that the Romanian Government began to consider them as to aspects of one and the same goal - a sovereign Romania within her then existent boundaries. To be sure Romania's

1 Obedenaru to Kogalniceanu, May 24-June 12, 1877. Rom. Doc., volume 3, Nos. 106, 244, 341, 795, 801. Iorga, op. cit., Nos. 470, 477.

2 Burks, loc. cit. 3 From Count Ignatiev's Memoirs one draws the conclusion that this idea was prevalent in Russian diplomatic circles. A. Onou, "The Memoirs of Count N. Ignatiev", Slavonic Review, December, 1931, X, 386-407.

4 Seton-Watson, A History of the Romanians, p. 337.

5 Sturdza, op. cit., pp. 809-810.

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independence appeared somehow assured. Russia would in all probability win the war and it was to her interests to recognize Romania's independence in order to weaken Turkey. It was even reasonable to expect that the other Powers, too, sooner or later would recognize Romania's independence if a victorious Russia were willing to recognize her that status. But, by the same token, who would be willing to prevent Romania's loss of Bessarabia if a victorious Russia were to ask for it? To this question there was no positive answer, for it would have been unreasonable to expect that any of the Powers would be willing to wage war on a victorious Russia for the sake of Romania's Bessarabia. In such an event then Romania would be left to her own resources and had she dared to resist the Russians, they could have dismembered her in retribution.¹

A way out of this difficulty, the Romanians thought, might be attainable if Russia could be made to accept a moral commitment towards Romania before the eyes of Europe. Indeed Russia had already assumed such a commitment when she concluded the Convention with Romania on April 16, 1877, in which she undertook to preserve and defend the existent territorial integrity of the latter.² But, as the Russian troops

1 The Romanian Government had no knowledge at the time of Austria's determination to preserve Romania's political existence. In the course of the secret negotiations which went on at the time between Austria and Britain, Andrassy admitted that a war between Austria and Russia could result only in the collapse or destruction of one of the belligerents. Nevertheless there were certain eventualities which would lead to such a struggle and among them was "The incorporation of Romania with Russia, or the dependence of that Principality on the Russian Empire". Andrassy to Beust, Austrian Ambassador in London, May 29, 1877. D.E. Lee, "The Anglo-Austrian Understanding of 1877", Slavonic Review, June, 1931, X, 189-200, No. 3. Same to same, June 22. Ibid., December, 1931, X, 449-465, No. 12.

2 The Russo-Romanian Convention was published in English newspapers towards the end of May, 1877. W.G. Wirthwein, Britain and the Balkan Crisis 1875-1878, Columbia University Press, 1935, p. 215, footnote 120.

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were pouring into the country on their way towards the Danube, the Romanians feared that it no longer constituted a sufficient guarantee against the loss of Bessarabia, which, for all practical purposes, was already under Russian military occupation. Thus Russia had to be led into undertaking a stronger, and hence more binding, moral commitment towards Romania. This could only be achieved by an active participation of Romania in the Russo-Turkish war. In this way the Romanian army could render the Russians valuable services before the eyes of foreign observers, (it might even give them decisive aid). In such a case the Russians would find it difficult to demand a territory belonging to their ally in arms. However, should they find it necessary to insist on the retrocession of Bessarabia, the Romanian Government would have a powerful moral weapon against their claim. The Russians could then be made to appear before the European public opinion as ungrateful and unscrupulous, taking advantage of a small but valiant ally who had helped them to defeat their common enemy - the Turks. Such an argument, it was believed in Bucharest, could influence European public opinion enough to render the governments of the Powers reluctant to acquiesce in the retrocession of Bessarabia, and consequently to discourage Russia's pursuit of aggrandizement at Romania's expense.

Romania and the Russo-Turkish War

The idea for an active participation of Romania in the Russo-Turkish war was conceived in Bucharest in the autumn of 1876 when the Romanian delegation at Livadia met with a stubborn Russian refusal to undertake any commitment concerning the integrity of Romania's territory.¹ By the spring of

1 Rosetti, loc.cit.

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1877 it became a primary objective of Romanian politics,¹ but the task of its implementation was rendered difficult by the attitude of the Russian Cabinet, who apparently saw through Romania's plan and, of course, were most anxious to avoid affording her the means to thwart a territorial ambition for which, in part at least, Russia was waging war on Turkey.²

The policy of the Russian Chancellery was somehow thwarted by the attitude of the Russian military commanders, who were most anxious to obtain Romanian assistance, providing the Romanian army was incorporated into the Russian army. The attitude of the Russian general staff was induced mainly by the unfriendly attitude of the Austrian Empire. Despite their agreements with Russia, the Austrians were hostile to the war and part of their army had been mobilized and concentrated on the Galician border, menacing Russia's line of supply. To prevent any unpleasant surprise, the Russian general staff had to detach a large section of their Southern Army and deploy it along the Galician border. This move diminished considerably the Russian striking force across the Danube, where the Turks were massing their forces in ever increasing numbers. At the same time information reached the Russian Headquarters that the Turks, with English financial backing, had steadily modernized their equipment and strengthened their defences since January 1877.³ Under these circumstances the Russian military could not disregard the substantial advantages they could derive from Romania's co-operation. They knew that the Romanian army would prove a valuable asset to their war effort if it were to perform all the auxiliary services, for this would render all Russian units avail-

1 Sturdza, op.cit., p.689.

2 S.Goriainov, Le Bosphore et les Dardanelles, Paris:Librarie Plon, 1910.p.376.

3 Burks, loc.cit. Rosetti, loc.cit.

able for combat.¹

The incorporation of the Romanian army into the Russian army, however, was not the kind of active participation the Romanian Government sought. They wished for independent action: to have the Romanian army fight on a separate sector, under the supreme command of its own sovereign. As the Russians were not willing to grant them this wish, the Romanians decided to bide their time, waiting for new developments. The financial difficulties which they experienced at the time afforded them the opportunity of postponing any definite military commitment. In April Kogalniceanu instructed General Ghica to inform the Russian Government that the Cabinet at Bucharest was paralyzed by a financial crisis and could make no move without a loan of five million francs.² The Russians, themselves faced with financial difficulties, could not give this matter their immediate attention, though Grand Duke Nicholas was eager to see the Romanian army ready for action as soon as possible. It took them about a month to decide the value of the loan that could be made to Romania. One million had already been advanced through Baron Stuart as partial indemnification for the confiscated Romanian monastic properties in Russian occupied Bessarabia,³ and General Ghica could not obtain more than a loan of three millions in gold.⁴

1 M.D.Stojanovic, The Great Powers and the Balkans 1875-78, Cambridge: University Press, U.K., 1968, p.152.

2 Kogalniceanu to General Ghica, April 21, 1877. Rom.Doc., volume 2, No.256.

3 Baron Stuart to Bratianu, April 19. Sturdza, op.cit., p.563. Report of Romanian Minister of Finance in the Chamber of Deputies, April 26, Rom.Doc., volume 2, No.414.

4 A.Plagino, Romanian representative at the Russian Headquarters, informs the Romanian Government that the loan is approved and ready to be received, May 20. Ibid., No.1342.

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In the meantime the Romanians continued to negotiate with the Russian general staff. In the period between May 14 and May 18 Carol met three times with Grand Duke Nicholas, who moved his Headquarters to Ploesti, not far from Bucharest. During these conversations the Grand Duke pressed for the active co-operation of the Romanian army. The least he expected was that the Romanians would hold the left bank of the Danube until the Russians had finished their strategic deployment. Prince Carol agreed to secure the Russian right flank and indicated his willingness to treat on conditions of further co-operation, but made it clear that he intended to keep his army under his direct command.¹

The agreements reached between Carol and the Grand Duke were rendered temporarily ineffective by the attitude of the Russian Cabinet. Prince Gorchakov was most unwilling to consent to Romanian armed support; ostensibly because this could compromise Russia vis-a-vis the Powers and give rise to international complications. He told General Ghica that the Tsar did not desire the co-operation of Romania. If Romania wanted to take part in the war she must do so uninvited, at her own risk and expense.² A few days later this was expanded in an official note which A. Nelidov, director of the diplomatic chancery with the staff of the Grand Duke, was compelled to address to the Romanian Government. The note was strong and the message clear. Russia had no need of the support of the Romanian Army; her own military forces were more than enough to attain her aims. If for reasons of her own Romania felt compelled to take the field against Turkey, her plans of campaign must be carefully drawn so as not to hinder the Russian's operations; she must therefore either

1 Whitman, op.cit., p.267. Sturdza, op.cit., pp.736-738.

2 General Ghica to Kogalniceanu, May 22, 1877. Rom.Doc., volume 3, No.64.

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make no move, or consent to the incorporation of her army into the Russian army.¹

If the Russians chose to keep Romania in suspense about the fate of Bessarabia, their intentions towards that province, already communicated to Austria and Germany, as earlier stated, were revealed anew in the course of the secret negotiations carried on during the month of May with the British Government. The aim of these negotiations was the termination of the war by means of delimiting mutual interests. In a Memorandum, dated May 30, Gorchakov defined the general terms on which the Tsar would conclude peace, provided the Porte would agree to them before the Russians forces crossed the Balkans. One of these terms was the retrocession of Romanian Bessarabia to Russia; Romania was to be compensated either by the recognition of her independence or by a part of the Dobrudja.²

In the first week of June the Tsar, accompanied by Gorchakov and Ignatiev, among others, arrived at Ploesti, now Imperial Headquarters. During the second week of June, Carol and members of his government met several times with the Tsar and members of his government and discussed problems of common interest, but the main question at issue, Bessarabia, was not squarely faced. The Russians persistently refused to enter any conversations on this subject, while the Romanians either did not dare or were unwilling to find out exactly what was intended. The Tsar merely expressed his

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- 1 Russian Note addressed to the Romanian Government, May 29, 1877. Sturdza, op.cit., pp.787-89. Whitman, op.cit., p.269.
 - 2 Gorchakov to Shuvalov, May 30, 1877. Seton-Watson, "Russo-British Relations During the Eastern Crisis", Slavonic Review, June, 1926, V, 413-434, No.228. Seton-Watson, Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question, Frank Cass and Co.Ltd. London, 1962, p.195. Stojanovic, op.cit., pp.159-60. Sumner, op.cit., pp.312-313.

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good intentions towards Romania in very vague terms, avoiding any specific comments on the latter's participation in the war. Ignatiev strove to point out the great advantages Romania could obtain from the war if she would only trust Russia and follow her bidding. Gorchakov alone was willing to raise a bit the veil of secrecy which surrounded Russia's intentions on Bessarabia, allowing the Romanians a glimpse at what was in store for them. He informed Carol, during a private conversation, that although the mouth of the Danube was essential to the development of Romania, Russia wanted its northern arm, the Kilia, which the Treaty of Paris had ceded to the Principalities. This was a strong hint that Russia intended to demand Bessarabia. Carol replied that the time had not yet come for the discussion of such important issues which Europe alone could settle; and that until then he intended to preserve the territorial integrity of his country. As for Romania's participation in the war, Gorchakov reiterated his earlier position: that Russia was adequately prepared to win the war and attain her objectives and therefore there was no need for Romanian military assistance.¹

The knowledge intimated by Gorchakov enhanced Romania's determination for an independent action. Military preparations were intensified and plans were made for an independent campaign in Bulgaria, many miles away from the Russian zone of operations. The opportunity to justify this policy to Europe, ironically enough, was provided by the Turks, who increased the number of their incursions on Romanian territory. Kogalniceanu sent out a circular informing the Powers that bands of Turkish irregulars in ever increasing number were crossing the Danube at night and devoted themselves to

¹ Sturdza, op.cit., pp.812,826,823. Whitman, op.cit., p.270. Sumner, op.cit., p.325. Hanotaux, op.cit., p.322.

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brigandage and murder causing great loss of life and property in the Romanian villages along the left bank of the Danube. The circular was accompanied by an annex which listed in detail all the atrocities committed by the Turks on Romanian territory. Entitled as she was to retaliation in kind, the circular concluded, Romania chose instead to appeal to the Powers to force the Turks to conform to the laws of war defined and acknowledged by all civilized nations of Europe. Should this fail, Romania then would probably be forced to cross the Danube and put an end to those incursions.¹

Hardly had the Powers time to vent their displeasure at Romania's announced intention to cross the Danube when the latter was preparing to do just that. On June 26, 1877, the Russians began to cross the Danube between Zimnicea and Sistov and the Romanians considered this an opportunity for themselves to cross that river above Vidin. Their intention however, was formally vetoed by Russia, who declared that she would consider it as an act of hostility toward herself.²

Disconcerted by the Russian attitude, the Romanians were now at a loss as to what their next move should be. Unwilling to submit to incorporation and forbidden to take an independent action, they decided to await new developments which might provide them with the opportunity of taking the field in their own, as an independent unit. Meanwhile the Grand Duke sought to take advantage of their temporary confusion and have them entangled in the Russian lines of operation. Since the Russians were about to attack Nicopolis, he asked Carol to concentrate the Romanian forces on Turnu Magurele, a town on the left bank of the Danube directly across from Nicopolis, and support the Russian crossing. He

1 Romanian Circular, June 11, 1877. Rom.Doc., volume 3, No. 762. Sturdza, op.cit., pp. 820-822.

2 Ibid., p. 835. Rosetti, loc.cit. Rom.Doc., volume 4, No. 30.

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even suggested that the Romanians establish their bridge-head near that town for an eventual crossing of their own. Sensing the implication, Carol replied that the Romanian army would concentrate on Turnu Magurele and support the Russian assault on Nicopolis but that he considered this to be only a temporary measure dictated by the necessity of the moment.¹ Nicopolis was attacked in full strength and fell to the Russians on July 16. The Romanians provided firm support to the Russian operations, but refused to cross the Danube.² Angered by this refusal, the Grand Duke ordered General Manu, commander of Romanian forces at Turnu Magurele, to cross the Danube at once and garrison Nicopolis, and to take charge of the prisoners captured at Nicopolis, escorting them to the Russian border. Indignant at such high-handed measures, the Romanians resolved not to accept the order. They promptly informed the Russians that despite the assistance rendered them, the Romanian army would not occupy Nicopolis. Moreover, since according to previous agreements the Romanian division, under General Manu, was to be stationed only temporarily at Turnu Magurele, they were considering its withdrawal from that quarter. As for the escorting of prisoners, the Grand Duke was politely informed that it was beneath the dignity of the Romanian army to perform auxiliary services, such as escorting prisoners which she herself did not take.³

As long as they won victory after victory, the Russians tended to override or ignore Romanian susceptibilities, but soon they were to become aware of the painful truth that Ro-

1 Nicholas to Carol, July 2, 1877. Sturdza, op.cit., p.850. Carol to Nicholas, same date. Ibid., pp.851-3.

2 Romanian Documents, volume 4, Nos. 697, 735, 779, 878.

3 General J. Krudener, commander of Nicopolis to General Manu, July 18, 1877. Iorga, op.cit., No.499. Carol to Kogalniceanu, July 19. Ibid., No.508. Rom.Doc., volume 4, No.785. Kogalniceanu to General Manu, same date. Ibid., No.786. Sturdza, op.cit., pp.865-867.

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mania was the only country willing and capable to help them effectively in case of need and hence she must not be alienated, at least not for the duration of the war.

As soon as the Russians crossed the Danube, they sent a powerful vanguard under General Iosif V. Gurko to seize the passes of the Balkans. The flanks of this line of advance were to be protected on the left by the eastern army, under Grand Duke Alexander, Heir Apparent, and on the right by the ninth army, under General J. Krudener. For the first two weeks in July the plans of their operations had been carried out successfully, after that they met with a series of defeats which brought them near disaster. Gurko seized the Balkan passes, but was forced by Suleiman Pasha to remain on the defensive in the Shipka pass. The Heir Apparent was repulsed by the Turks on the Lom. General Krudener had taken Nicopolis, as earlier stated, and advanced towards Plevna, a fortified town a few miles south of Nicopolis, but there he suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Osman Pasha. The whole Russian front was now seriously threatened. Should Osman Pasha advance on Nicopolis and take it, the Russian armies would be cut off from their base of supplies. Plevna thus became the immediate objective of the war.¹

These reverses convinced the Russians that their forces in the Balkans were insufficient, not only for the offensive but even to maintain their acquired positions in Bulgaria. An order for the mobilization of new forces was sent to St. Petersburg,² but it would be weeks before the new forces could be employed. To avoid an imminent defeat, the Russians had to swallow their pride and ask the Romanians to come to their aid by occupying Nicopolis; thus releasing the Russian

1 Rosetti, op.cit., pp. 555-556.

2 General Ghica to Carol, July 21, 1877. Sturdza, op.cit., p. 868.

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garrison for action before Plevna. This appeal for help was made repeatedly, not only by the Russian high command, but also by the Russian Chancellery¹

After communicating to the Russians the specific conditions on which the Romanians were willing to co-operate, Carol ordered General Manu to advance on Nicopolis. On July 28, a Romanian detachment crossed the Danube and occupied Nicopolis the following day.² As soon as the Romanians were in possession of the town, the Russians hurried to the front line and on July 30 launched a new attack on Plevna. The result was disastrous. For the second time the Russians suffered a severe defeat, and were retiring in disorder on Sistov. The next day Grand Duke Nicholas telegraphed Carol a frantic appeal for help: "The Turks...are crushing us. Beg you to...cross the Danube, as you wish..."³

The Russian defeats before Plevna placed the Romanians in a dilemma. This unfortunate development was no longer a matter of concern for the Russians only. It concerned the Romanians, too, for a Russian defeat could greatly affect their fortunes. If they denied the Russians the aid they

- 1 Sturdza, op.cit., p.870. On July 25 General Ghica came to the Romanian Headquarters with a message from the Tsar. In it the latter was asking the Romanians to occupy Nicopolis. Ibid., p.868-9. Two days later a similar appeal came from Nicholas. Ibid., p.871.
- 2 Ibid., pp.874-5. Rom.Doc., volume 5, No.29. How the Russian Chancellery viewed Romanian help could be seen from the comment made by A.G.Jomini, senior counsellor in the Russian Foreign Ministry, then in Bucharest with Gorchakov, in a letter to N.K.Giers, assistant Foreign Minister, then in St.Petersburg. "Nous avons eu un grave échec à Plevna! On envoie en hâte le corps de Nicopolis. Il est remplacé par les Roumains qui se croient nos sauveurs et veulent se faire payer"! Charles and Barbara Jelavich, Russia In The East 1876-1880. E.J.Brill, Leiden, 1959, p.51.
- 3 Nicholas to Carol, July 31. Whitman, op.cit., p.275. Sturdza, op.cit., p.880.

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were seeking, the Turks might seize Nicopolis and transfer the war to Romanian soil. On the other hand, to assist the Russians meant to submit to their conditions, i.e. the incorporation of Romanian troops into Russian units; and such a step was viewed with apprehension in Bucharest, considering Russia's intentions regarding Bessarabia. Yet to help the Russians out of their predicament, the Romanians thought, would obligate the St. Petersburg Government respecting the Bessarabian question in a way which no written agreement could do.¹ For these reasons the Romanian Government came to the conclusion that the Russians had to be helped, but not before extracting from them a promise to respect certain conditions which would help maintain the separate individuality of the Romanian troops, and perhaps a separate base of operations.

Another factor which contributed to Romania's reluctance to send adequate aid to the Russians was the attitude of Austria. Balaceanu's frequent reports from Vienna indicated that the Austrian Government was opposed to a Romanian crossing of the Danube.² It was not until the month of July that Balaceanu was able to report a significant change in Austria's attitude towards Romania. Andrassy, said Balaceanu, did not advise the Romanians to cross the Danube, but if they found it necessary to do so, he would not oppose the passage either directly or indirectly. Moreover, continued the report, both Andrassy and Francis-Joseph were disposed to support Romania at a future peace conference to obtain a part of the Dobrudja but reserved the right to safeguard the interests of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.³ This was en-

1 Sturdza, op.cit., pp. 880-1. Burks, op.cit., p. 132. Rosetti, op.cit., p. 556. Sumner, op.cit., p. 326.

2 Balaceanu to Kogalniceanu, June 23 and 25, 1877. Rom.Doc., volume 3, Nos. 1105, 1223.

3 Balaceanu to Kogalniceanu, July 3, 1877. Rom.Doc., volume 4, No. 277. Iorga, op.cit., Nos. 497, 506.

couraging news, indeed, but more was desired. Kogalniceanu wanted to obtain a definite promise from Austria, not only that she would not object to a Romanian crossing of the Danube, but that she would not oppose a Romanian occupation of some strategic points along the southern bank of that river, such as Vidin. To obtain this objective he decided to pay Andrassy a personal visit. On July 28 he sent out a Circular, informing the Powers that Romanian forces occupied Nicopolis, and shortly afterwards headed for Vienna. Following a two hours interview with Andrassy, Kogalniceanu was able to inform his government that there was no longer any real opposition in Vienna to the Romanian crossing and that Austria was willing to allow Romania to acquire as much territory in Dobrudja as she desired; but there was to be no Romanian conquest on the right bank of the Danube.² But this was not all he had learned in Vienna. During his stay there he was made unmistakably aware that Romania had been sacrificed at Reichstadt: that Russia would demand Bessarabia and that Austria would do nothing to prevent her from obtaining it.³

The removal of Austrian opposition to a Romanian crossing came none too early, for, as we have seen, the Russians were faced with grave difficulties before Plevna and were pressing hard for Romania's assistance. Carol was now able to inform the Russian Headquarters that 30,000 Romanian troops were ready to march on Plevna, providing they were to maintain their independence. The Russians still

1 Romanian Circular, July 28. Rom.Doc., volume 5, No.36.

2 Kogalniceanu to Romanian Foreign Ministry, August 13, 1877. Ibid., volume 5, No.473.

3 Sumner, op.cit., p.325.

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refused to agree to this condition, insisting that circumstances demanded a complete unification of command and operations; but the Romanians made it clear that unless their conditions were met no effective aid could be offered them.¹

Losing his patience with the Romanian delaying tactics, Grand Duke Nicholas sent a request, in the form of an order to Carol to send the Romanian third division to Nicopolis to join the fourth, which was already there. The latter refused to comply with this request.² This heightened considerably the tension between the two countries.

In a final attempt to ease this tension, Bratianu set out for the Russian Headquarters at the beginning of the third week in August. There he presented to the Grand Duke the conditions of Romania's co-operation with Russia. Forced by the gravity of the events on hand, the Grand Duke yielded and Bratianu returned home on August 21 with a letter for Carol. In it the Grand Duke confirmed his acceptance of the conditions presented to him by the Romanian prime minister, provided the Romanian army crossed the Danube at once.³ One week later Carol himself went to the Russian Headquarters, where he was courteously received by the Grand Duke and the Tsar. It was during this visit that the question of unity of command was at last resolved. The Russians gracefully offered him the command of the Russo-Romanian armies before Plevna on the condition that he should accept a Russian chief of staff. Aware of the inconveniences and dangers contained in this offer, Carol hesitated momentarily. He knew that this implied the incorporation which he had so consistently opposed, and that it would have thrown much of the discredit of an eventual defeat upon his army; but it would

1 Sturdza, op.cit., pp.881,884,890,893,894.

2 Whitman, op.cit., pp.276-77.

3 Sturdza, op.cit., pp.898-99.

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have been even more dangerous for him to refuse the imperial offer.¹ He thus accepted the command, and returned at once to the Romanian Headquarters from where he issued the order to his army to cross the Danube.²

If the morale of the troops crossing the Danube was high, the civilian population at home was depressed by apprehension and disappointment caused by the passage of the Russian army and the temporary military successes won by the Turks. The large foreign army sprawling through the country and high-handed Russian officers issuing orders and counter-orders created unending friction between themselves and local authorities.³ As the Russians appeared to be paying less and less attention to the stipulations of the April Convention, the Romanians began to view them with disfavour and the government in Bucharest had more than once to entreat local officials to co-operate with the Russian military authorities and to recall the latter to their treaty obligations.⁴ To this mood of annoyance and dissatisfaction was added the feeling of uncertainty and apprehension created by the existence of numerous Ottoman garrisons left intact behind the advancing Russians. By late July Russo-Romanian relations were so strained that even the Russian Chancellery began to worry about possible consequences. "Les rapports avec les Roumains s'aigrissent", wrote Gorchakov's private secretary in a letter to St. Petersburg. "On nous les aliène à plaisir sans réfléchir que nous sommes entre leurs mains et qu'en les tournant contre nous, nous nous mettons absolument à la discretion de l'Autriche". He

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- 1 Rom.Doc., volume 5, No. 935. Sturdza, op.cit., pp. 904-907. Dame, op.cit., p. 288. Seton-Watson, A History of the Romanians, p. 337. Whitman, op.cit., pp. 277-79.
 2 Sturdza, op.cit., pp. 911-12.
 3 Rom.Doc., volume 3, Nos. 374, 484, 553, 1146, 1161, 1290, 1318.
 4 Rom.Doc., volume 2, Nos. 420, 513, 533, 556, 956, 1056, 1132. Ibid., volume 4, No. 789.

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concluded the letter in a note of personal uncertainty and fear which throws some light upon the state of mind of the Russian diplomatic corps stationed in Bucharest. "Je souhaite de me tromper mais toute cette situation m'effraie au plus haut point".¹

Under the circumstances, the nomination of Prince Carol as commander of Russian troops could only add fuel to the fire. Many Romanians felt that their government was duped by the Russians, who aimed at gaining control over Romanian affairs. This feeling was particularly strong in Bucharest, where public opinion was growing alarmingly restless.² Attempting to remedy this situation, Carol issued an impressive proclamation to the nation. In it the Romanians were reminded that the hardships they were experiencing and the war confronting them were brought about by international developments, not by internal mis-government; that the destiny of their country rested in their own hands, and that the time had now come for them to prove to Europe that they were aware of their mission at the mouths of the Danube and had the vitality to fulfill it.³

By the beginning of September over 30,000 Romanian troops were across the Danube facing Plevna. The young Romanian army was an unknown factor on the European stage and its quality was being doubted by all, especially the Russians. On September 11, however, it went into action in the redoubts of Grivita, and by the time the battle of Plevna was over (December 10) its worth was established. The Ro-

1 Jomini to Giers, July 26, 1877. Jelavich, *op.cit.*, pp. 51-2.

2 Kogalniceanu to Bratianu, September 4. Iorga, *op.cit.*, No. 522.
Kogalniceanu to Carol, September 6. *Ibid.*, No. 523. Kogalniceanu to Balaceanu, same date. *Ibid.*, No. 524.

3 Carol's Proclamation to the Nation, September 8, 1877. *Rom.Doc.*, volume 5, No. 1257.

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manian army proved an invaluable reingorcement to the Russians, and foreing attaches and correspondents were unanimous in their praise of its impeccable gallantry and steadiness, which contributed substantially to the final outcome of the war.¹

Peace Negotiations

The surrender of Osman Pasha on December 9-10 meant the end of all serious Turkish resistance; hence a quicker conclusion to the conflict and the achievement of war objectives for the victors. Yet in the hour of victory the allies were at loggerheads, for their interests, never clearly defined, very definitely parted. To rid themselves of any obligations towards the Romanians, the Russians began to diminish the importance of the aid received. Thus while the Tsar and the Grand Duke officially gave credit to their ally, Russian officials privately belittled the importance of Romanian assistance. This naturally induced ill-feelings and gave cause to friction between the rank and file of the two armies.²

Despite this attitude towards their ally, the Russians desired to keep the Romanians in the war until Turkey had surrendered. But the Romanians felt that any further co-operation with Russia would be contrary to their interests. After the fall of Plevna therefore Carol resigned his command and refused categorically to allow his troops to take

1 Rosetti, op.cit., pp. 564, 568. Rosetti quotes several English newspapers, which were praising the fighting spirit of the Romanians. Romanian Documents, volume 6, Nos. 88, 1041.

2 Rom.Doc., volume 5, Nos. 1289, 1292. Whitman, op.cit., pp. 296-98. Rosetti, op.cit., p. 567. Jomini to Giers, Jelavich, op.cit., p. 58.

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part in the Russian march across the Balkans. Yet in order to have something in hand for future bargaining, a separate campaign along the southern bank of the Danube became once more desirable, and a Romanian division was sent to siege Vidin and some other less important fortresses.

Meanwhile the Russians were pressing on successfully across the Bulgarian plains. Early in January 1878, after Sofia had fallen, and a Russian vanguard, under General Mihail D. Skobelev, crossed the Shipka pass, the Turks announced their willingness to open armistice negotiations in Russian terms. The Romanian Government at once telegraphed the Grand Duke, then at Kazanlik, requesting admission to the peace talks with which the interests of their country were so closely connected. The latter replied politely that Romanian interests were not forgotten. Should an armistice be concluded, the message continued, the Romanians would be promptly informed about the clauses affecting them. Any further inquiries concerning conditions of peace and future negotiations should be addressed to St. Petersburg for the Grand Duke did not know them.¹

This was an ominous message, but before it reached Bucharest the Romanian Government ordered Colonel A. Arion to depart for Kazanlik, where negotiations were taking place. On behalf of his government, Arion was to ask for the recognition of independence, the razing of all Danubian fortresses, the retrocession to Romania of all the channels (mouths) of the Danube delta, and an indemnity of 100,000,000 lei. Romanian troops were to occupy Nicopolis, Rahova, Lom Palanka, and Vidin until indemnity was paid in full.² In case

1 Whitman, op.cit., p. 302. Nicholas to Carol, January 10, 1877. Rom.Doc., volume 8, No. 645.

2 All those towns, with the exception of Vidin, then being besieged, were already in Romanian hands. Rom.Doc., volume 7, Nos. 596, 866.

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he was refused admission to the negotiations table, Colonel Arion was to declare that all decisions concerning Romania would be considered null and void.¹

The Grand Duke's message revived the old fears among the Romanians. The old spectre of Bessarabian retrocession loomed once more over them. Could the Russians be so ungrateful after rendering them great service at a most critical moment? Besides, was the Tsar going to break his promise contained in the second article of the April Convention? The Romanians continued to hope, but with serious misgivings, that the Tsar would keep his word. "Though it cannot be believed that this formal engagement is to be violated", Carol wrote to the German Crown Prince in January, "still great anxiety prevails here, especially as the Russian Press constantly refers to this topic".²

What the Romanians did not know at the time was that Russia's plans for the retrocession of Bessarabia took their final form even before the fall of Plevna. At the end of November 1877 a conference was summoned at Poradim, the Tsar's Headquarters, to draw up the basis of peace. It was there that Russian objectives with respect to Romania were clearly defined. Romania's independence was to be recognized, but Russia reserved the right for herself to exchange Dobrudja and the Delta for Bessarabia. All points of general interest were to be settled in agreement with all other Powers, but the treaty of peace was to be concluded directly between Russia and Turkey (with the exclusion of Romania). Immediately after the fall of Plevna, the Tsar communicated

1 Minutes of Cabinet meeting and resolution, January 14, 1877. Rom.Doc., volume 8, No. 731. Kogalniceanu to Arion, same date. Ibid., No. 732. Iorga, op.cit., No. 542.

2 Prince Carol to Prince Friedrich Wilhelm, January 14, 1877. Whitman, op.cit., p. 303.

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these conditions to the Austrian Government. On January 26, 1878, the Austrian Emperor replied that he agreed with the proposed territorial exchange and shall do everything in his power "pour le rendre realisable".¹

If the Romanians had no formal knowledge of Russia's plans, they had good reason to suspect that something was afoot in the Russian diplomatic camp. Two days after Arion's departure for Kazanlik another message came from the Grand Duke in which he reiterated his previous statement that all Romanian inquiries concerning the armistice should be addressed to St.Petersburg. About a week after his departure, Colonel Arion reported that he was received with great courtesy by the Grand Duke, but was not admitted to the negotiations or allowed to discuss Romania's claims with him. In fact he was not even kept informed of the progress of the talks. All he could obtain from Nelidov was a reassurance that Romania's interests were in good hands. When Arion sought to obtain more specific information, he was told again that his government must address themselves to St. Petersburg.²

Failing to gain any ground at Kazanlik, the Romanian Government took the matter up with the Cabinet in St.Petersburg. General Ghica, who was sent to St.Petersburg on January 17 as Romania's special envoy, was kept fully informed of Arion's mission at Kazanlik, and was instructed to insist that the Russian Cabinet clarify Romania's position at the

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- 1 Stojanovic, op.cit., pp.201-2,206. Onou, loc.cit., p.632. Alexander II to Francis Joseph, December, 1877. Seton-Watson, "Russo-British Relations During the Eastern Crisis", Slavonic Review, November, 1946, XXV, 216-241, No.273. Francis Joseph to Alexander. Ibid., No.275.
 - 2 Nelidov to Bratianu, January 16, 1878. Rom.Doc., volume 8, No.779. Iorga, op.cit., No.550. Arion to Kogalniceanu, January 23. Rom.Doc., volume 8, No.918. Iorga, op.cit., No.546.

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peace talks.¹ At the same time Baron Stuart, Russian Consul in Bucharest, was presented with a note in which the Romanian Government affirmed their right to participate in peace negotiations. The Russian Consul was reminded that Romania had proclaimed her independence by declaring war on the Porte directly and against the advice of Russia. The Romanian army, then, continued the note, crossed the Danube at the invitation of both the Russian Government and Headquarters. The independent character which Romania assumed during the war therefore could not now be cast aside at the conclusion of hostilities. If it was her duty to share in the burden of fighting, it was also her duty and her right to take part in the peace negotiations.²

It was all in vain, the Russians remained unmoved by the Romanian arguments. The invariable answer came that Romania could not be a fully contracting party until her independence had been recognized by Europe. In the meantime Romanian interests were to be protected by Russia. The Tsar guaranteed Romania her independence and, in return for her sacrifices in the war, the acquisition of Dobrudja. Beyond that the Russians refused to make any comments.³

What lay behind this attitude was the determination of the Tsar to obtain Bessarabia at all costs. The silence regarding this matter, so well guarded by the Russian Government in the past, was at last broken shortly before the signature of the armistice on January 31, 1878. A telegram from General Ghica informed the Government in Bucharest that both the Tsar and Gorchakov had formally notified him that the

1 Kogalniceanu to Gorchakov, January 17, 1878. Rom.Doc., volume 8, No. 804. Kogalniceanu to General Ghica, January 21 and 23. Ibid., Nos. 890, 940.

2 This note was later sent to all agents as a Circular, January 23, 1878. Rom.Doc., volume 8, No. 941. Iorga, op.cit., No. 548.

3 General Ghica to Kogalniceanu, January 26, 1878. Rom.Doc., volume 8, No. 1057. Iorga, op.cit., No. 558.

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Russian Government intended to regain possession of Romanian Bessarabia. Romania was to be compensated with the Delta and the Dobrudja. The Tsar appears to have set his heart upon this and used many strange arguments to justify it. Bessarabia, one argument ran, had been ceded in 1856 to Moldavia, not to Romania (!), and had been separated from Russia by a treaty of which hardly a provision remained in force. Moreover, the national dignity and imperial honour demanded the re-acquisition of that province.¹ General Ghica protested vehemently against this decision, advancing many bona fide arguments, but Gorchakov made it clear to him that it was useless to argue. "Whatever arguments you may invoke", said the Chancellor, "you cannot modify our resolutions, for they are unchangeable. You are faced by a political necessity".²

The conflict with Romania over Bessarabia was temporarily overshadowed by other developments which demanded Russia's immediate attention, even though the Russians foresaw that under certain circumstances Romania's attitude could become of first rate importance. Britain's mood was becoming increasingly more belligerent toward Russia, and Austria

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- 1 General Ghica to Kogalniceanu, January 26(?). Iorga, op.cit., No.563. The following sources give the date of this telegram as January 29. A.C.A.Sturdza, La Terre et la Race Roumaines, p.567. Seton-Watson, A History of the Romanians p.339. Whitman, op.cit., p.304. The Russians used similar arguments at Vienna and Berlin, saying that they had guaranteed Romania's integrity only against Turkey(?). Seton-Watson, "Russo-British Relations..." Slavonic Review, XXV, 216-241, No.273. La Politique Ext., volume 2, No.321. Bulow's Memorandum, February 15, 1878 (Oubril to Bulow).
- 2 Whitman, op.cit., p.304. A.C.A.Sturdza, op.cit., p.567. The plea that Bessarabia had been for centuries an integral part of Moldavia and had fallen to Russia for the first time only forty-four years before the Treaty of Paris, seems to have made not the slightest impression upon either the Tsar or Chancellor. Seton-Watson, A History of the Romanians, p.339.

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gave Gorchakov note of her displeasure in a strong dispatch to Langenau, Austrian Ambassador to St. Petersburg. The Austrian note of protest reiterated Andrassy's earlier opinion that his government's assent to Russia's annexation of Bessarabia was now considered very difficult to envisage since the Romanians would not consent to its exchange for Dobrudja.¹ In fact Andrassy was now covertly encouraging the Romanians to resist Russian demands on Bessarabia and to make strong remonstrances to St. Petersburg.² Aware of the possible developments, the Russians set out to induce Romania to consent silently to the loss of Bessarabia, and, at the same time, to maintain her goodwill towards Russia. Should a war with the Powers become unavoidable, it would be dangerous to have an inimical Romanian army posted squarely on the Russian line of communications. But even if war were avoided, Russia's diplomatic position was too delicate to sustain the moral blows of her formal ally. It was to her advantage therefore to attempt to reach a friendly understanding with the Romanian Government.³

It was to reach this objective that Ignatiev, on his way to Adrianople, was instructed to visit Bucharest. He arrived in the Romanian capital at the end of January and remained there long enough to lay before the Romanian Government the views of the Imperial Cabinet. He produced a letter

1 Novikov, Russian Ambassador to Vienna, to Gorchakov, January 4, 1878. S. Goriainov, La Question d'Orient a la veille du Traite de Berlin, Institut d'Études Slaves, Paris, 1948, p. 232. Rupp, op. cit., p. 428. Andrassy to Langenau, January 28, 1878. Annexed to document No. 304, addressed to Karolyi, Austrian Ambassador to Berlin, same date. La Politique Ext., volume 2, pp. 143-45. Balaceanu to Kogalniceanu, January 27, 1878. Rom. Doc., volume 8, No. 1106.

2 Rupp, op. cit., p. 446.

3 Dame, op. cit., p. 300.

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from Gorchakov, which stated, among other things, that Russia wished to do for Romania everything possible in the field of diplomacy, but that there were "interests and rights" on which the Imperial Government could not compromise. "What we expect from the Romanian Government", the letter said, "is a just and rational appreciation of its situation and ours". The present moment, it continued, could be "decisive for the relations between our countries". If the Romanian Government would give in with good grace, Ignatiev explained, they could obtain a larger Dobrudja than previously promised and an indemnity of 100,000,000 lei. He even threw in a cautious hint that further compensation might be found in Carol's election to the future throne of Bulgaria.¹

Russia's demand of Bessarabia now at long last put forward, and Ignatiev's visit to Bucharest, produced a crisis in Romania, which strained the Russo-Romanian relations almost to the breaking point. Faced squarely with a situation which they strived since 1876 to avoid, the Romanian Government remained temporarily suspended in indecision. To resist Russian demands seemed utterly useless and even a dangerous procedure. Ignatiev's offers, on the other hand, appeared quite impressive. It meant continuance of friendly relations with Russia, a port on the Black Sea, and a handsome pecuniary indemnity. But internal conditions were distinctly unfavourable to any compromise. The news of the Russian demand leaked out and public opinion was outraged at such ingratitude. Feeling against Russian proposals ran so high that

1 Letter of Gorchakov to Kogalniceanu, January 23. Rom.Doc. volume 8, No.942. Seton-Watson, Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question, pp.265-66. Seton-Watson, A History of the Romanians, p.340. Whitman, op.cit., pp.305-06. Dame, op.cit., p.300.

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their acceptance could have brought about the fall of the government. Nevertheless, Kogalniceanu favoured acquiescence to Russian demands. Carol thought it more prudent to make a direct appeal to Grand Duke Nicholas and the Tsar himself in the hope of reconsideration, and, perhaps, to buy some time until the attitude of the Powers would be more clearly defined. Bratianu, on the other hand, who believed that internal conditions made it imperative for the government to reject Russian proposals, was determined to resist Russian encroachments to the bitter end. His opinion, as usual, prevailed and the government adopted his view as its policy.¹

On February 4 the Chamber of Deputies, and the Senate two days later, voted a resolution which incensed the Russians to the utmost. After invoking the April Convention by which Russia pledged to respect the territorial integrity of Romania, and after referring to the Tsar's sense of justice, as well as the sacrifices Romania made to preserve that integrity, the Legislative Assembly unanimously decided not to accept any change of frontiers. They declared that Romania would preserve the integrity of her territory to the last, with armed force if necessary. These decisions were, of course, communicated by Kogalniceanu to the European capitals as proof that the government acted in accordance with the will of the nation.²

This bold step taken by the Romanian Parliament created a favourable impression in Vienna, where Andrassy was vigorously striving to assemble the Powers in a congress to discuss the peace terms imposed by Russia on the Turks,³ and Kogalniceanu sought to take advantage of this development.

1 Sumner, *op.cit.*, pp. 464-5. Seton-Watson, *A History of the Romanians*, pp. 339-40. Dame, *op.cit.*, pp. 297-300. Burks, *loc.cit.*, pp. 310-320. 2 Whitman, *op.cit.*, pp. 306-7. Romanian Circulars. *Rom.Doc.*, volume 9, Nos. 708, 743. Burks, *op.cit.*, p. 312. 3 Andrassy to Langenau and Karolyi, January 28, 1878. *La Politique Ext.* No. 304, volume 2, pp. 143-5.

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He instructed Balaceanu to seek an interview with Andrassy and to insist before him that Romania be recognized an independent State and admitted at the approaching peace conference, where she might plead her case. Andrassy replied that the congress alone could pronounce on the admission of a country not signatory to the Treaty of Paris, but sought to encourage Romania's attitude by declaring that her demand was perfectly justified.¹ This opinion was also shared by the French, who thought that Romania must be represented at the future congress if the Greeks, whose claim was vigorously supported by Britain, were admitted. They even expressed the hope that perhaps Britain would support also the Romanian claim.²

Encouraged by these reports, Kogalniceanu prepared two significant notes: one was addressed to the Porte, the other to the Powers. The first expressed Romania's desire to resume friendly relations with the Ottoman Government, and referred briefly to the legitimate reasons which led Romania to take part in the war against Turkey. The Porte's voluntary recognition of Romania's accomplished independence would create for the future a firmer and more valuable bond of union between Turkey and Romania than that which now belonged to the past. The second note expressed the hope that the Powers would now consider Romania worthy of admission to the great European family of independent nations. It concluded with the suggestion that a Romanian delegation might attend the approaching congress. For good measure Kogalniceanu also sent a dispatch to General Ghica in St. Petersburg, instructing him to seek Russian support for Romania's admis-

1 Kogalniceanu to Balaceanu, February 5, 1878. Rom. Doc., volume 9, No. 249. Steriadi to Kogalniceanu, February 28. Ibid., No. 706.

2 Callimachi to Kogalniceanu, February 14, 1878. Ibid., No. 448.

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sion to the congress. It was rightful and legitimate for Romania, said the dispatch, to be represented in the future councils of Europe; and it was natural to expect that Russia would undertake the burden of facilitating Romania's admission to the future congress.¹

It is difficult to establish what Kogalniceanu hoped to achieve by appealing to St. Petersburg for assistance. One can hardly believe that he expected Russia to support a demand which could have turned the tides against her and in favour of Romania. The reply therefore could not have come as a surprise to him. The Russian Government merely returned a vague promise to support Romania's independence at the future conference. As for Romania's admission, they said that a delegation could be admitted to the congress but only for consultative purposes (not deliberative).²

If it is difficult to see Kogalniceanu's motives for appealing to St. Petersburg, his appeal to all other Powers is readily understandable. He hoped to attain the recognition of his country's independence before the congress met. This would have entitled Romania to be represented at the European conference, where her delegation could have effectively opposed the retrocession of Bessarabia to Russia. As long as Romania's independence remained unrecognized, Russia could by-pass the Romanian Government and obtain Bessarabia from Turkey as the suzerain Power.³ But the recognition of

1 Kogalniceanu to Ottoman Foreign Ministry, February 15, 1878. *Ibid.*, No. 470. Kogalniceanu to General Ghica, same date. *Ibid.*, No. 469. Romanian Note to the Powers, same date. Whitman, *op. cit.*, pp. 307-308. Debain to Waddington, same date. *DDF*, volume 2, No. 248.

2 General Ghica to Kogalniceanu, February 14, 1878. *Rom. Doc.* volume 9, Nos. 671, 687.

3 It is important to note here that it was Turkey who had given Bessarabia to Russia for the first time in 1812.

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independence would have forced Russia to deal directly with the Romanian Government. Kogalniceanu's plan was therefore sound, but it failed to materialize due to lack of European support.

The attitude of the Powers was one of complete cynicism. There is no evidence that Turkey ever replied to the Romanian note, while the other Powers hesitatingly returned a vague reply. Bismarck was too busy to receive the Romanian Agent and Balasiu was received instead by Bulow. The latter, too, feigned lack of time to study the Romanian note, and feared that the request for admission to the congress would meet with great obstacles. Waddington declared that Romania would receive her independence at the congress, but that there was little hope for her admission. Her admission at the congress, Waddington added, would require a general consensus and no Power appeared willing to take the initiative to obtain it. France could not help, for her role in the present crisis was a passive one. He referred the Romanian Agent, Callimachi, to London, where there was talk of war with Russia. The British Cabinet admitted that it was desirable to give Romania all possible support at the congress, but Disraeli doubted whether there was going to be one, due to the difficulties created by Russia. Italy was well disposed but powerless.¹

Lack of support abroad was ironically accompanied by strong opposition at home. The Conservatives were making every effort to discredit the policy of the government in the eyes of the nation. They were demanding that the Cabinet should resign and Carol abdicate rather than yield an inch

1 Callimachi to Kogalniceanu, February 24 and March 2, 1878. Rom.Doc., volume 9, Nos. 651, 742. Balasiu to Kogalniceanu, February 22. Ibid., No. 601. Ion Ghica, special envoy to London, to Kogalniceanu, February 27. Ibid., No. 689. Dame, op.cit., p. 313.

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of Romanian soil. If the government still claimed to serve the interests of the nation, it must loudly denounce any Russo-Turkish agreement which interfered with the internal affairs of Romania, and must withdraw all Romanian troops from Bulgaria.¹

The Treaty of San Stefano and its Consequences

Meanwhile Ignatiev at San Stefano was driving through the peace negotiations, which were concluded on March 3 and ratified by the contracting governments twenty days later. The news of the signature of this treaty caused a new outburst in Bucharest, which further deteriorated the Russo-Romanian relations. The fate of Bessarabia was sealed by article 19, which stipulated that Turkey was to cede Dobrudja and the Danube Delta to Russia, the latter reserving the right to hand them over to Romania in exchange for Bessarabia. Article 8 provided for the maintenance of Russian communications through Romanian territory with the army of occupation in Bulgaria for two years. The one small comfort Romania was to find in the treaty was contained in article 5. It stipulated that Turkey was to recognize the independence of Romania. The sum to be paid to Romania as war indemnity was to be settled by subsequent negotiations.²

These terms had been dictated by Russia over the head of the Romanian Government, who had been in no way consulted. As they became gradually known, Romanian feelings of consternation and bitter resentment increased. The country was in a turmoil and the government on the verge of collapse.

1 Burks, op.cit., p.312.

2 Text of Preliminary Treaty of Peace between Russia and Turkey. Signed at San Stefano on March 3, 1878. BFSP, volume 69, W.Ridgway, London, 1885, pp.732-744.

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Yet Bratianu still laboured under the illusion that Bessarabia could still be saved. He drew comfort from Austrian and British attitude towards the treaty of San Stefano. Austria was enraged by the creation of a large Slavic State on her southern borders. Britain demanded strongly that the whole treaty should be submitted to the Powers for revision.¹

The critical position in which the Romanian Government found itself at this time could be readily understood from the ambiguous attitude adopted towards Russia. The Romanians were now pursuing a double-headed policy of threat and conciliation. On the one hand General Ghica was instructed to appeal to Russia's sense of justice and gratitude. Was the Russian Government really going to despoil Romania of a territory so vital to her interests, despite the precious aid rendered them when most needed? If so by what means? By direct agreement with Romania, by an agreement reached at the congress, or simply by brute force? On the other hand, a strong note of protest was sent directly to St. Petersburg. Russia was accused of deliberately weakening the position of the Romanian Government by employing bull-doing tactics. The government had therefore decided, the note explained, to withdraw its troops from Bulgaria and confine its activities within the limits marked out by the April Convention. At the same time, for good measure, a memorandum was sent to the Powers informing them of Russian tactics and protesting against the prospective retrocession of Bessarabia.²

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- 1 Derby to Eliot, March 8, 13, 1878. Ibid., p. 798. Derby to Beust, March 9, 1878. Ibid., pp. 798-99. Derby to Shouvalov, March 16, 21. Ibid., pp. 802, 803, 805. Dame, op. cit., p. 308.
- 2 Kogalniceanu to General Ghica, March 8, 1878. Iorga, op. cit., No. 591. Kogalniceanu to Ignatiev, same date. Ibid., No. 592. Kogalniceanu to Ignatiev and Andrassy, same date. Ibid., No. 594. Kogalniceanu to the Porte. Rom. Doc., volume 9, No. 707. Iorga, op. cit., No. 597.

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This new drive against St. Petersburg failed to secure a support in the West. Both Austria and Britain, Russia's main foes, sought to encourage Romanian opposition to Russia's policy, but showed themselves unwilling to offer any assistance towards that end. The British Cabinet was concerned with obtaining the admission of Greece, not Romania, to the congress. Andrassy could promise only that if Russia would accept the admission of Greece, he would then demand that Romania, too, be admitted. But Russia refused to admit Greece precisely for this reason - for fear that Romania might have a valid argument for her own admission. The French Government showed itself sympathetic, but declared that it was not within the competence of its present policy to take any initiative in Romania's favour. From Berlin the word came that the German Government would not oppose Russia for Romania's sake.¹

If Romania's new move failed to secure support in the West, it succeeded in acquiring enmity in the East, for the Russians were now very indignant at their victim's anger. At a reception in St. Petersburg, the Tsar upbraided General Ghica before the whole diplomatic corps for the conduct of his government (March 10). Gorchakov, a few days later, went further than that. In a private interview he told General Ghica that in spite of all clamour in Romania and abroad "Russia's intentions will be carried out"; that he would not introduce the Bessarabian question at the congress be-

1 Derby to Loftus, British Ambassador to St. Petersburg, March 9, 1878. British and Foreign State Papers, volume 69, p. 799. Munster, German Ambassador in London, to Bulow, March 9. La Politique Ext., volume 2, No. 342. Bismarck's Memorandum, February 6. Ibid., No. 315. Stolberg to Bulow, March 12. Ibid., No. 348. Gorchakov to Shouvalov, March 6. Seton-Watson, "Russo-British Relations During the Eastern Crisis", Slavonic Review, April, 1948, XXVI, 543-562, No. 377. Le Flo, French Ambassador to St. Petersburg, March 6. DDF, series 1, volume 2, No. 261.

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cause it would be humiliating to the Tsar, that if another Power wished to do so he would oppose it; that he wished to treat with Romania alone, but that if she did not give way Bessarabia would be taken by force, and that if armed resistance were attempted it would be useless and dangerous for Romania.¹

This threat, ironically enough, provided the Romanian Government with an opportunity for effective retaliation. Since the retrocession of Bessarabia was provided by article 19 of the treaty of San Stefano, Gorchakov's declaration contradicted flatly Britain's determination to have the entire treaty submitted to the deliberation of the Powers assembled in congress. Grasping the significance of this fact Kogalniceanu at once flashed the news to all European capitals. Gorchakov heard of it on all sides, formally and informally, and attempted to escape from the awkward position in which he placed himself by denying having made such a declaration.²

Meantime the peace treaty was ratified by the two contracting governments, and its text was published in Journal de St. Petersburg. It was only then that the Romanians learned that it provided also for the Russian communications through their country for two years. This aggravated public indignation and influential political circles asked the government to denounce the treaty altogether. Forced by political

1 A. Dreux, Dernieres annees de l'ambassade en Allemagne de M. de Gontaut-Biron, Paris, Librairie Plon, 1907, p. 377. Loftus, Diplomatic Reminiscences, volume 2, p. 255. H. S. Edwards, Sir William White, London, 1902, p. 147. Sumner, op. cit., p. 467. Burks, op. cit., pp. 313-314.

2 Kogalniceanu to Balaceanu, March 16, 1878. British and Foreign State Papers, volume 69, p. 807. Eliot to Derby, March 23, Ibid., pp. 806-7. Shouvalov to Gorchakov, March 25. Seton-Watson, "Russo-British Relations During the Eastern Crisis", Slavonic Review, November, 1949, XXVIII, 218-228, No. 415. Gorchakov to Shouvalov March 26, 1878. Ibid., No. 417. Edwards, op. cit., pp. 151-2.

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pressure, the Cabinet announced in the Chamber that Romania could neither admit the passage of Russian troops during the occupation of Bulgaria, nor enter into any negotiations with regard to Bessarabia. This declaration was telegraphed abroad the following day, and Kogalniceanu informed the Powers that the treaty of San Stefano violated Romania's rights and could not therefore be considered binding on the Romanian Government. On the same day, on March 28, Bratianu left Bucharest on a special mission to Vienna and Berlin.¹

The new Romanian move brought immediate and drastic reaction from St. Petersburg. On April 1 Gorchakov sent for General Ghica and told him that if the Romanian Government protested against article eight of the treaty of San Stefano, the Tsar would have Romania occupied and the Romanian army disarmed. His threat was followed by a concentration of troops in different parts of Romania. The flimsiest pretexts were employed to increase the number of troops around Bucharest.²

This was Gorchakov's second blunder, for his declaration was out of step with the reality of the moment. The Romanians were aware that according to the new understanding reached about this time between Russia and Austria, the latter agreed to the former's occupation of Bulgaria (for six months instead of two years) providing that communications with the army of occupation were to be made by sea, "definitely not across Romania".³ In Britain, too, there were new developments which created an attitude more favourable to

1 Sumner, op.cit. p.467. Whitman, op.cit., pp.311-12. Burks, op.cit., p.314. Romanian Circular, April 5, 1878. Iorga, op.cit., No.614.

2 Whitman, op.cit., pp.312-13. Edwards, op.cit., p.149. Sumner, op.cit., p.468.

3 Stolberg, Austrian Ambassador to Berlin, to Bulow, April 1, 1878. La Politique Ext., volume 2, No.381.

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Romanian policy. Since early March, William Gladstone, British Liberal Leader, campaigned in favour of Romania, pointing out how greatly the Russian tactics had weakened the Tsar's moral position in the eyes of Europe. Now in April Lord Derby¹ was replaced by Robert, Marquis of Salisbury at the Foreign Office and England assumed a more bellicose attitude. The Romanian Agent in Vienna had been informed by Andrassy and Sir Henry Elliot, British Ambassador in Vienna, that neither Austria nor Britain would consent to Russian communications through Romania, and the Romanian Government promptly proceeded to take advantage of Gorchakov's new blunder. Carol immediately informed St. Petersburg that his army would only be disarmed after it had been defeated.² The Cabinet informed Baron Stuart that "Measures are being taken for rendering the menaced attack a costly one to its authors".³ At the same time Kogalniceanu publicized the Russian threat and dispatched to St. Petersburg a long and biting note denouncing the treaty of San Stefano and explaining the reasons for it. The Romanians, the note said, had entered loyally into alliance with Russia after she undertook the pledge to maintain and respect the national rights and the integrity of their territory. From the first they had played fully their part, yet in reward for their services and sacrifices, the Romanians met only with painful deceptions. Excluded from peace negotiations they could only hope that Russia, whose monarch constituted himself the legal and moral protector of their rights, would display a spirit of equity towards a weaker ally. Unfortunately their interests

1 Edward, Earl of Derby.

2 W.E. Gladstone, "The Paths of Honour and of Shame", Nineteen Century, March, 1877, III, 591-604. Sumner, op.cit., p.468. Whitman, op.cit., p.312. Edwards, op.cit., p.153. Seton-Watson, A History of the Romanians, pp.341-42. Rosetti, op.cit., p.569.

3 Edwards, op.cit., p.150.

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have been betrayed at San Stefano, where Russia was more eager to secure advantages for other Balkan States. The Russian Plenipotentiaries forgot the immense damages Romania suffered from the war. Her commerce had been brought to a halt, her once prosperous Danubian towns lay in ruins, her population infected with epidemics, her farm animals decimated, her roads wrecked, and her fields deserted. For all these sacrifices, to which must be added the blood her sons had shed on the battlefields of Bulgaria, what did Romania receive at San Stefano? The recognition of independence that the treaty had confirmed as a favour had already been won as a right. Russia knew this better than anyone else, for she confirmed that right when, a year earlier, she signed the April Convention with Romania. The indemnity it promised was but an illusion meant to deceive, the retrocession of the Danube Delta was an act of restoration long overdue, and the right of communications across Romanian territory was a derogation of Romanian sovereignty. The incongruity of this last stipulation was clear for all to see. In April 1877 when Turkey had nominal suzerainty over Romania, the Russian Government treated directly with the Romanian Government in order to obtain a free passage for the Russian army across Romanian territory, and now when Romania's independence was enforced upon Turkey as one of the conditions of peace, it was with the Porte that Russia negotiated in order to maintain her military communications across the territory of independent Romania. The cession of Bessarabia meant that Romania, not Turkey, was to pay for the costs of the war. For these reasons the Romanian Government must solemnly protest against the treaty of San Stefano, which was concluded without their participation, against their wish and to their detriment.¹

1 Kogalniceanu to General Ghica, April 5, 1878. A copy of this note was later sent to all agents. Iorga, op.cit., No. 614. BFSP, volume 69, pp. 824-829.

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In a matter of days the Russian threat to Romania had become known throughout Europe. It was the subject of discussion everywhere, even in the English Parliament, and the European press expressed sympathy for Romania.¹ Once more Gorchakov had to extricate himself from an awkward diplomatic position by declaring that he could not recall having made such threats. When General Ghica gave assurances to the contrary, Giers stepped in explaining that the Chancellor had no desire to deny Ghica's assertions but that "His Highness...may have used words which do not quite express his thoughts, or which are contrary to them".²

This was the beginning of a temporary thaw in the Russo-Romanian relations. On April 10 Giers proposed the opening of negotiations for a new military convention to regulate Russian communications during the occupation of Bulgaria. In a letter to Carol, Tsar Alexander II emphasized the same idea: "A friendly arrangement between our two Governments might easily regulate matters in view of the new situation. I am quite willing to lend myself to this measure...".³ At Bucharest Baron Stuart expressed a desire for the restoration of good Russo-Romanian relations and several Russian generals, who paid their respects to Prince Carol, explained away the movements of their troops.⁴

This was the situation when Bratianu returned from his mission abroad, on April 15, which on the whole had not been too successful. His arrival at Vienna coincided with that of Ignatiev, who was sent by his government to seek a new agreement with Austria. Bratianu's reception therefore was not too encouraging. As soon as he broached the Bessarabian

1 Whitman, op.cit., p.313.

2 "...des mots qui rendent mal ses pensees ou qui leur sont contraires...". Edwards, op.cit., p.152.

3 Alexander to Carol. Whitman, op.cit., p.315.

4 Ibid.

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question he was told that he must apply to Bismarck.¹ Consequently he left at once for Berlin, where he found Bismarck in a mood for talking rather than for listening. He urged Bratianu to reach an agreement with Russia before the Congress met. Bessarabia, he explained, was a sine quanon for Russia and the Powers had reached a mutual agreement to let her have that province. If Romania would come to an understanding with Russia, she might obtain from the latter a handsome sum and territory of great importance in the way of compensation. Bratianu thus returned home with nothing more than a bag full of assurances of friendship and goodwill from the Central Powers. The assurances given by the British Cabinet were slightly more substantial. Lord Salisbury told Callimachi that the Romanian Government could count on England's effectual support in peace and in war. But even this promise lost most of its value when Salisbury added that if England could reach an understanding with Russia, she would not wage war for the sake of Romania.² It was rather obvious that the Powers would do nothing for Romania, if they could settle their own differences with Russia. All that the Romanians could do now was to remain in the expectation that future developments would favour their cause.

Hardly was Bratianu home than the thaw in the Russo-Romanian relations came to an abrupt end. The reason for

1 Andrassy could no longer humour Bratianu on the Bessarabian question, for during his talks with Ignatiev he committed the Austrian Government to the retrocession of that province to Russia. Bulow reported to William I that in return for certain concessions, "the Vienna Cabinet recognizes Russia's right to retrieve that part of Bessarabia ceded in 1856, and declares itself ready to support this point of view in the diplomatic circles, so much vis-a-vis Romania as the Great Powers". Bulow to William I, April 15. La Politique Ext., volume 2, No. 398.

2 Whitman, op. cit., p. 316. Sumner, op. cit., p. 469. Seton-Watson, op. cit., p. 341. Vogue, French Ambassador to Vienna, to Waddington, April 13, 1878. DDF, series 1, volume 2, No. 288. Saint-Valliers, French Ambassador to Berlin, to Waddington, April 15, 1878. Ibid., No. 289.

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this was to be found in the struggle over article eight of the Treaty of San Stefano. Both Russia and Romania knew, as we have seen, that neither Britain nor Austria would consent to the continued use of Romanian territory for Russian military communications. The Russians were thus eager to conclude as soon as possible another military convention with Romania so that they could present the Congress with an accomplished fact which the latter would find it difficult to oppose. The Romanians, on the other hand, aware of Russia's intentions, rejected the proposal, precisely for that reason, on the grounds that a two years' occupation might easily become permanent.¹ This brought about an impending crisis in the Russo-Romanian relations. A complete rupture appeared imminent by the end of April.

Without further verbal ado the Russians began to increase the concentration of their troops in Romania and seemed about to carry out their threat of occupation. The anxious Romanians countered the Russian move by concentrating their forces in Oltenia, where they could be in direct contact with the Austro-Hungarians. Bucharest resembled a military camp and the Russians and Romanians were dangerously close to one another around the capital. The populace grew apprehensive and the Cabinet began to consider the possibility of transferring the seat of government to Craiova in Oltenia. At the height of the crisis Kogalniceanu sent an urgent message to the Powers acquainting them with conditions in Romania. He emphasized his government's determination not to yield to Russian pressure, and expressed the hope that Romania might be represented in the Congress in order to state her case.²

1 Edwards, *op.cit.*, pp.152-3. Vogué to Waddington, April 13, 1878. DDF, series 1, volume 2, No.288.

2 Whitman, *op.cit.*, pp.313,317. Rosetti, *op.cit.*, p.569. Salisbury to Colonel Mansfield, British Military Attaché in Bucharest, April 24, 1878. BFSP, volume 69, pp.829-30.

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Romania's attitude was in fact secretly encouraged by the British Government, who aimed at creating as many difficulties for Russia as possible in order to render her more amenable to their own demands. The Romanians were well aware of this and sought to turn the situation to their own advantage. By maintaining a stiff resistance somehow proportioned to Britain's bellicose attitude, they hoped to impress upon Russia the need of pacifying Romania through conciliation. Should the Russians prove unwilling to come to terms, Romania would then resist their demands to the bitter end. Consequently they continued the preparation for war. At home the Chamber voted increased supplies for war material on its own initiative.¹ Abroad the Romanian Agents declared that if Austria allied with England, Romania would join these two Powers in arms in the event of war with Russia.² In Bucharest the population assumed a bellicose mood. The whole country in fact seemed anxious to share in the defence of the national honour.³

The Russians retaliated by threatening to surround Bucharest with troops and began moving on Pitesti and Targoviste - points which were outside the communication zone allotted to them by the April Convention. Carol at once put the cavalry on the alert and warned the Russian commander to withdraw his troops if he wished to avoid a collision. Impressed by the Romanian determination to resist at all costs, the Russian commander marched his troops to a safe distance and promised to remain there. This removed the danger of an immediate armed clash, but feelings were still

1 Salisbury to White, British Agent in Bucharest, May 4, 1878. Edwards, op.cit., p.134. Whitman, op.cit., pp.317, 319-20.

2 Sir Henry Elliot to White, May 17. Edwards, op.cit., pp.135-36.

3 Whitman, op.cit., p.317.

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running high on both camps and mutual suspicions continued to prevail.¹ With the danger of an immediate armed clash removed, the Romanians turned their attention towards the events occurring at Berlin, where the European notables were about to assemble in congress to consider the terms of the treaty of San Stefano. It was there that a solution of a sort to the crisis was to be found.

The Congress of Berlin

Despite the knowledge that both Britain and Austria were attempting to settle their differences with Russia before the Congress met, and that such settlements would bring these two Powers in line with the Russian view on the Bessarabian issue, the Romanian Government still hoped that the conflict of interests between these Powers and Russia would be great enough not to allow a peaceful agreement to be reached. A war between these three giants, the Romanians thought, could yet save Bessarabia from the paw of the Russian bear. Nor were their hopes groundless, for throughout the early spring of 1878 there were talks, threats, and active preparations for war on all sides. By April war seemed imminent, and by early May the situation appeared so critical that the Romanian Government found it necessary, as earlier stated, to inform discreetly the governments of Britain and Austria that in the event of war between them and Russia, Romania would not hesitate to join them.²

1 Rosetti, op.cit., p.569. Sumner, op.cit., pp.468-69.

2 Gorchakov to Shouvalov, March 6 and 23, 1878. Seton-Watson, "Russo-British Relations During the Eastern Crisis", Slavonic Review, April, 1948, XXVI, 543-562, Nos.377,412. Schweinitz, German Ambassador to St.Petersburg, to Bulow, March 15. La Politique Ext., volume 2, No.352. Also documents Nos.322 (February 20) and 324 (February 21) talk about the imminency of war between Russia on the one hand and England and Austria on the other. Ibid. Elliot to White, May 17, 1878. Edwards, op.cit., pp.135-36. Sumner, op.cit., p.471.

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Soon, however, the Romanians were to be bitterly disappointed in their expectations. The Russian Government was able to strike new agreements with both Britain and Austria and the clouds of war began dissipating as fast as they gathered. By the beginning of June it was at last certain that the Congress would meet and that no Powers would take up the Romanian cause. Would Romania lose Bessarabia? On this question the opinion of the Romanian Government was still divided. Kogalniceanu, backed by Carol, believed that that was the case and that the wisest course would be to reach a direct understanding with the Russians before the Congress met. This, he thought, would secure Romania's admission to the conference and would increase her chances for maximum compensations. But Brătianu, backed by Rosetti, refused to admit that Bessarabia was lost and insisted that the matter must be brought before Europe. His stand was endorsed by the Radical party and a last minute Russian proposal for direct negotiations were refused.¹

Despite the divergence in their opinions, concerning Bessarabia, both Kogalniceanu and Brătianu were chosen by their government to head the Romanian delegation to Berlin. They arrived early in June in the German capital with the hope of obtaining admission to the Congress, where they could make a final attempt to save Bessarabia. To this end they had approached the plenipotentiaries of the Powers but the result was very discouraging. England and Austria, the two Powers who alone expressed some willingness to support Romania's cause, had in fact found in Bessarabia an invaluable object of barter. From the pages of the Globe the Romanians had learned about the Anglo-Russian Agreement reached at the end of May. Article two of this Agreement revealed the

1 Burks, op.cit., p.317. Sumner, op.cit., p.536. Seton-Watson, A History of the Romanians, p.342. Whitman, op.cit., p.318. A.C.A. Sturdza, La Terre et la Race Roumaines, p.568.

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fact that Bessarabia had already been sacrificed to Russia by her chief opponent. To be sure England did express her "profound regret" at Russia's claim of Bessarabia, but weakly added that as she found the other signatories of the Treaty of Paris not disposed to uphold the status stipulated in that treaty by force of arms, she herself was not "sufficiently interested in this question" as to dispute Russia's decision.¹ Austria, too, was in no position to encourage the Romanians on this issue, for, as we have noted, as early as April she confirmed her agreement to the Russian acquisition of Bessarabia.² Yet Andrassy liked to have the Romanians believe that he was their friend but that the Bessarabian issue was a matter for the Congress and hence out of his hands.³ No helping hand could be expected from France whose foreign minister declared several times in the past that in the Eastern Question his country played only a passive role. Italy was quite sympathetic toward the Romanian cause, but under the circumstances there was very little she could do to help. Germany could have helped effectively if she so wished, but Bismarck was primarily concerned with the preservation of the general peace, an end often easily gained by sacrificing the interests of minor States to those of the great. "Quelle que soit ma sympathie pour l'état de Roumanie, dont le Souverain appartient à la famille Imperiale d'Allemagne", he is supposed to have declared at the Congress, "Je ne dois m'ins-

1 A summary of the Anglo-Russian Agreement was published in the Globe on May 31, 1878, to the embarrassment of the two Powers concerned. Thompson, op.cit., volume 2, p. 458. At the next meeting of the House of Lords Salisbury was seriously questioned about this Agreement. "I referred especially", said Lord Grey, "to the statement that England deplored, but would not oppose, the retrocession of Bessarabia, which appeared to me so preposterous that I could not for a moment believe it". House of Lords debates, June 3, 1878. Ibid. p. 465.

2 Bulow to William I, April 15, 1878. La Politique Ext., volume 2, No. 398.

3 Rupp, op.cit., p. 488.

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pirer que de l'interet general qui conseille de donner une nouvelle garantie a la paix de l'Europe".¹

This was the situation when the Congress opened on June 13. From these circumstances the Romanian delegates could not fail to conclude that the die was cast against their country before the Congress met. Their already faint hope of being allowed to state their case before Europe now faded into thin air. But the Romanian cause was not totally lost, due to a turn of events which altered the situation in their favour. There is no evidence that the Romanians had any knowledge of it at the time, but in the private conversations which preceded and largely determined the course of each session of the Congress, the Austrian delegates found it expedient to oppose the retrocession of Bessarabia. Andrassy apparently was seeking to obtain higher returns for his government consent to Russian proposals.²

For about two weeks the Romanians were kept in a hopeless suspense. By June 28 the Congress was already on its eighth session and there was no indication that its members would change their minds about allowing the Romanian delegates to appear before them. Then, on June 29, it suddenly happened. On that day the Congress called upon the Greek delegates to appear before it. No sooner had the Greeks finished presenting their case and Lord Salisbury proposed that the Romanians should also be heard. "The Chancellor(Bismarck) was against that", wrote an eye-witness, "and tried to induce the Russian Chancellor to say no".³ But Salisbury remarked

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- 1 Prince von Bulow, Memoirs, Putnam, London, 1932, volume 4, pp. 448-9.
 2 A. Nelidov, "Souvenirs d'avant et d'après la Guerre de 1877-78", Revue de Deux Mondes, November 15, 1915, XXX, 241-270.
 3 The witness was Prince Hohenlohe, one of the acting secretaries of the Congress. Prince Chlodvig of Hohenlohe-Schillingsfuerst, Memoirs, English ed. G.W. Chrystal, Macmillan Company, New York, 1906, p. 225.

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ironically that "after listening to the delegates of Greece, who claimed foreign territory, it would be only fair to hear the delegates of a country which asks for territory which belongs to her"¹. The motion was carried and it was agreed that the Romanians should be heard on July 1.

Romania's admittance to the Congress was a mere formality, for her case had been decided without her, partly at the ninth session (June 29) and partly in the private conversations held between the ninth and the tenth session (July 1) by the plenipotentiaries of the Powers. The Russians had made it clear that they could not yield on the Bessarabian question, for it was a matter of honour with the Tsar. The other delegates, knowing well that Russia would have to give way on so many other points, thought it desirable to meet her wishes on this point. Thus when Bismarck proposed that the retrocession of Bessarabia be made one of the conditions for the recognition of Romania's independence there was hardly any protest raised against it. When the question of territorial compensation for Romania came next under consideration, the Russians contended that this was adequately provided for in the Treaty of San Stefano. The French delegation, however, motivated by a desire to separate Russia and Bulgaria as far as possible, advised the Russians to increase the territorial compensation provided by that treaty. The Russians were reluctant to heed the advice, but the French, supported by the Austrians and the English, secured their agreement of introducing this matter at the next session of the Congress.²

1 A.C.A. Sturdza, op. cit., p. 571. Seton-Watson, Disraeli, Bismarck and the Eastern Question, pp. 488-89.

2 Waddington to Dufaure, June 30, 1878. DDF, ser. 1, volume 2, No. 322. Charles de Mouy, "Souvenirs d'Un Diplomate. Recits et Portraits du Congres de Berlin", Revue de Deux Mondes, November 1, 1904, XXIV, 52-87. Salisbury to Russell, June 8. BFSP, volume 69, pp. 833-35. Cross to Salisbury, same date. Ibid., pp. 831-32.

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With the main points of the Romanian question settled, the Congress called upon the Romanian delegates to appear before it. On July 1 Kogalniceanu and Bratianu presented themselves before the assembly and read their memorandum, which to Hohenlohe appeared "on the whole tactful and moderate"¹. They asked that no territory should be detached from Romania, that the Russians should not evacuate their army of occupation in Bulgaria through Romanian territory, that they should recover the mouths of the Danube and receive an indemnity, and that Romania's independence should be recognized and her neutrality guaranteed.² In defence of Bessarabia they invoked the terms of the Treaty of Paris, the Romanian origin of the province, and the services they rendered Russia during the war with Turkey. It was all in vain. Gorchakov refused to allow any discussion on this issue. Moreover, the opinion of the delegates were already formed in favour of Russia. They had no direct interest in this issue and had no intention of offending Russia for the sake of Romania. Consequently, as soon as the Romanians left the room Bessarabia was given to Russia and Dobrudja to Romania. At this point Waddington intervened, proposing that the territory offered Romania as compensation should be extended further south as to include Mangalia on the shore of the Black Sea. The Russians objected, but the Congress endorsed Waddington's proposal; the exact boundaries were to be determined later by the European commission which was to delimit the boundaries of Bulgaria on the spot.³

1 Hohenlohe, op.cit., p.225.

2 Seton-Watson, A History of the Romanians, p.343.

3 Mouy, loc.cit. Waddington to Dufaure, July 1, 1878. DDF, series 1, volume 2, No.323. F.Waddington, "La France au Congrès de Berlin", Revue Politique et Parlementaire, September, 1933, No.466, pp.449-85. E.J.Pratt, "La Diplomatie française de 1875 à 1881", Revue Historique, 1932, CLXX, 447-470.

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It was unfortunate that Russia found it necessary to insist that the Romanians accept a condition which they had tried so desperately to avoid. The conduct of the Russian Government in this matter was most impolitic. It wounded the Romanians deeply and drove them into the open arms of the Central Powers.¹ Indeed there were few of those scrutinizing the events of the period who did not look upon the retrocession of Bessarabia as a blot.² Some even condemned their own government for not opposing Russia's unwarranted pretensions. Foremost among these was E.W.Gladstone, the English Liberal leader, who publicly accused the British Government of assisting Russia to despoil Romania of Bessarabia, "which for twenty years had enjoyed free and popular government", under Romanian rule, and now "has been replaced under despotic institutions". The Dobrudja, which Romania received as compensation, was in Gladstone's words, "a gift ungraciously given and reluctantly received".³ Bulow, son of German Foreign Minister, condemned Bismarck's attitude on similar grounds, and concluded that Romania was "left in the lurch by all Powers".⁴ Even among the Russians there was a growing feeling that the annexation of Bessarabia "did not conform to the dignity of a great Power".⁵ Yet the Tsar felt that justice had been done. He was sentimental about Bessarabia. He felt that it was his filial duty to erase the last blot of the Crimean War.⁶ "What seemed almost dishonour to

1 J.Holland Rose, The Development of the European Nations 1870-1900, Constable & Co.Ltd., London, 1914, p.240.

2 Thompson, op.cit., p.381.

3 Gladstone, "The Friends and Foes of Russia", Nineteen Century, January, 1879, V, 168-192. Gladstone, "England's Mission", Ibid., September, 1878, IV, 560-584.

4 Bulow, op.cit., p.448.

5 Goriainov, op.cit., p.376.

6 Loftus, op.cit., volume 2, p.255. Goriainov, op.cit., p.376.

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Mr. Gladstone", wrote one author, "was a point of honour with the Tsar"¹. Thus while the Russian Government felt that the acquisition of Bessarabia was a credit to their diplomacy at the Congress,² one British newspaper reported that Russia carried home little except "the stained and shameful spoil of Bessarabia".³

But the loss of Bessarabia was not the only painful blow Romania received at the hands of the Congress. In recognizing her independence, it further stipulated as a condition the removal of all restrictions upon the political and civil rights of all creeds imposed by the Romanian Constitution. This meant civil, political, and religious equality for all Jews in Romania, a requirement hotly contested by Romanian politicians of all shades.⁴

In all other matters reviewed by the Congress, the Romanians met with a more favourable decision. Russia's right of passage was rendered to one year, and most communications between the army of occupation in Bulgaria and its home base were to be made by sea.⁵ Romania obtained a seat in the international Danubian Commission, which, with revised powers, was to have its seat in the Romanian port town of Galati. All fortifications along the Danube were to be dismantled and war vessels excluded from its waters.⁶

These last decisions were indeed to the advantage of Romania, but they seemed very small consolations when compared with the two conditions upon which her independence depended. The news from Berlin filled the Romanians with

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- 1 Steven Graham, Tsar of Freedom: The Life and Reign of Alexander II, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935, p.265.
 - 2 Giers to Jomini, June 30, 1878. Jelavich, op.cit., p.147.
 - 3 The Daily Telegraph, July 15, 1878. Wirthwein, op.cit., p.404.
 - 4 Whitman, op.cit., p.318.
 - 5 Article XXII of the Treaty of Berlin. BFSP, volume 69, pp.757-58.
 - 6 Articles LII, LIII and LIV of the Treaty of Berlin. Ibid., p.765.

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dismay. The independence, which they thought to have honorably achieved on the field of battle, was now granted by the foreign Powers on terms which the Romanians regarded as humiliating. Their feelings against the Berlin decisions ran so high that the territorial compensation offered them was actually opposed by a large section of the nation.¹

¹ Whitman, op.cit., pp.318-319.

The Struggle For the Recognition of Independence

The resolutions of the Congress wounded the Romanians deeply. They found it extremely difficult to become reconciled to the decision reached at Berlin, making the recognition of their independence contingent upon the cession of Bessarabia to Russia, and upon a satisfactory (to the Powers) solution of the Jewish question, which they considered a purely internal problem. In the summer of 1878 they made a desperate attempt to convince the Powers to reconsider the Berlin decisions, but all their entreaties and representations were in vain. The Powers made it unmistakably clear that not one of them would recognize Romania's independence until formal submission had been made to the terms of the Treaty of Berlin.¹

Failing to convince the Powers to alter their decision and realizing that it was futile, and even dangerous, to resist the will of Europe, the Romanians began to seek practical ways to extricate themselves from the offending circumstances thrust upon them by articles 44 and 45 of the Berlin Treaty.

The second of these articles provided for the cession of Bessarabia to Russia and the acquisition of Dobrudja by Romania.² Its fulfillment was hotly contested by the nation, but the government realized that Romania would lose rather than gain by protesting against it.³ To prevent any outbreaks in the urban centres, especially in Bucharest, the government

1 Seton-Watson, A History of the Romanians, p.347.

2 Text of the Treaty of Berlin given in BFSP, volume 69, pp.749-767.

3 White to Russell, July 11, 1878. Edwards, op.cit., p.137. Russell to White, August 4, 1878. Ibid., pp.137-8.

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had purdently closed the Chambers on July 17, and did not have them re-opened until the end of September when the excitement had somehow subsided.¹ The Congress of Berlin, said the message from the throne which prorogued the Chambers, preoccupied with the general peace, subordinated the capital interests of the lesser States to the secondary interests of the Powers. "Romania, in particular, is called upon to make to the peace of the world the greatest and cruelest sacrifices".² On August 30 the government addressed to the Powers a Circular, promising to carry out loyally the provisions of the Berlin Treaty.³

The transfer of Bessarabia to Russia was allowed to occur almost unnoticed. Romanian authorities were quietly withdrawn from the province, and all written records were carefully avoided. Neither the goverment, nor the Chambers took any direct part in it. The entire affair was handled unceremoniously by minor officials of the local administration.⁴ When, at the end of September, the Chambers met to accept the Treaty of Berlin, the cession of Bessarabia was in reality accomplished. It remained for parliament now to add the official touches to it.⁵ Amid wild excitement and violent speeches a resolution was adopted on October 12, which authorized the government to surrender Bessarabia to Russia and to take possession of Dobrudja, promising, at the same time, to settle all the outstanding questions by consitutional methods. The very next day Russia took full possession of Bessarabia.⁶

1 Dame, op.cit., p.134.

2 Speech from the throne, July 17, 1878. BFSP, volume 69, pp.398-399.

3 Dame, op.cit., p.314.

4 Letter of Prince Carol to his father, August 4, 1878. Whitman, op.cit., pp.320-321.

5 Speech from the throne at the opening of the Chambers, September 27, 1878. BFSP, volume 69, pp.770-72.

6 Whitman, op.cit., p.323.

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On the strength of these resolutions adopted by parliament, the Romanian Government hoped to secure immediate recognition from the Powers. Towards this end the agents in Paris and Berlin were instructed to impress upon the governments to which they were accredited that Romania had almost fulfilled article 45 and that formal promises were made for the fulfillment of article 44 - the Jewish question. But the Powers showed no inclination to regard these steps as a satisfactory basis for immediate recognition. The German Government stated unequivocally that no recognition could be extended to Romania until all Treaty conditions were fulfilled. The French Government, similarly, declared that no further steps towards recognition could be taken until more progress had been made by Romania in the fulfillment of her obligations.¹

The British Government, like these two Powers, desired to see Romania fulfill her obligations incurred at Berlin, but, unlike them, it was prepared to grant her immediate recognition under certain circumstances. These circumstances had to do with Russia's intentions to postpone the evacuation of her armies and to make her withdrawal from the Dobrudja conditional upon free military passage over Romanian territory. Reports from Bucharest to this effect fitted in with reports coming from different quarters that Russia, disenchanted with the Berlin decisions, intended to throw aside the Treaty and to challenge the Powers.² The gravity of the situation compelled the British Government to subordinate all other Balkan problems to the task of getting the Russians out of the peninsula. On more than one occasion Salisbury explained to the governments of France and Germany

1 W.N. Medlicott, "The Recognition of Romanian Independence, 1878-1880", Slavonic Review, January, 1933, XXX, 354-372.

2 W.N. Medlicott, "Diplomatic Relations After the Congress of Berlin", Slavonic Review, June, 1929, VIII, 66-79.

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that should Balkan developments take a turn for the worse his government could be forced to identify their policy with that of Austria by granting immediate recognition to Romania.¹

The Russians, aware of Britain's intentions, were determined to obtain from the Romanian Government a formal promise regulating the passage of their armies through Dobrudja, before that province was handed over to Romania. They urged repeatedly upon the Romanians the conclusion of a new convention, but the latter declined to concur. At the beginning of November, 1878, they came up with a new proposal, suggesting that the terms of the April Convention be extended to the Dobrudja. The Romanian Government replied that they could not enter any agreements with regard to Dobrudja until that province had been occupied by Romanian troops. Stung by this reply, the Russians threatened that unless an agreement was reached with them, the Romanians would not be permitted to take possession of Dobrudja. Kogalniceanu now attempted to compromise by offering to allow them the right of passage through Dobrudja for the same period as was provided for it through Romania in the Treaty of Berlin, but the Russians rejected it as insufficient.²

Russia's refusal to compromise prompted Kogalniceanu to seek the advice of Austria and Britain, who alone among the Powers showed any real concern about the new Russian demands. He thus instructed Balaceanu, now ambassador to Vienna, to sound out Andrassy and Sir Henry Elliot, British Ambassador. Andrassy declared himself against any new convention between Russia and Romania, advising the latter to resist

1 Edwards, op.cit., p.195.

2 Medlicott, "The Recognition of Romanian Independence", op.cit., pp.364-65.

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any demands made by the former. Elliot, too, expressed opposition to Russian demands pointing out to Balaceanu that by allowing the Russians a passage through Dobrudja, the Romanian Government would be acting in a manner completely at variance with the intentions of the Powers. Such a step, added Elliot, would lead the British Government to consider Romania in the enemy camp in the event of an Anglo-Russian war over the Treaty.¹ These declarations did not constitute a formal guarantee of support, but they strengthened the moral position of the Romanian Government, enabling them to resist Russian pressure.

Sensing the winds from the West, the Russians changed their tactics and announced their intention of allowing the fulfillment of article 45 of the Berlin Treaty without further delay. Towards the end of November they instructed their ambassador in Bucharest to accept Kogalniceanu's offer, and to instruct the Russian commander to proceed with the handing over of the territory of Dobrudja to Romania. With the agreement reached, the Romanians proceeded at once with the occupation of the territory (November 26).²

By surrendering Bessarabia to Russia and taking possession of the Dobrudja, Romania had fulfilled one of the two conditions (article 45) upon which the recognition of her independence was based. This motivated her neighbouring Powers to accredit ministers to Bucharest.³ The first ambassador to Romania, Count Hoyos, was sent by Austria in the late autumn of 1878.⁴ Austria's example was soon followed by Turkey, and later by Russia. In return, the Romanian diplomatic agents in Vienna, Constantinople, and St. Petersburg were promoted to the rank of ambassadors.⁵

1 Elliot to White, November 3, 17, 1878. Edwards, *op.cit.*, pp. 163-164.

2 Medlicott, *op.cit.*, p. 372. Whitman, *op.cit.*, p. 321.

3 Speech from the throne, November 27, 1878. BFSP, volume 69, pp. 1127-30.

4 Elliot to White, August 22, 1878. Edwards, *op.cit.*, pp. 164-65.

5 Whitman, *op.cit.*, p. 323.

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The second condition upon which Romania's recognition was based was contained in article 44 of the Treaty of Berlin, which aimed directly at the removal of restrictions on the Jewish population in Romania.¹ The fulfillment of this condition was a task infinitely more difficult than it appeared to the foreign eye. According to article VII of the Romanian Constitution only foreigners of Christian confession could obtain naturalization.² Compliance therefore with article 44 of the Berlin Treaty meant that article VII of the constitution had to be amended. But the Romanians, already shocked by the loss of Bessarabia, were in no mood to make further concessions which would cut deep into the social structure of the country and dangerously dislocate its economic life.

Political and economic motives, perhaps religious as well,³ compelled a large majority of Jews from Russia and Russian Poland to seek better conditions of existence elsewhere. This, coupled with the trading and commercial opportunities created by the Treaty of Adrianople (1829), explains the rapid influx of Jewish immigrants into Moldavia in the thirties and forties. They came into the country as foreign

1 "In Romania the difference of religious creeds and confessions shall not be alleged against any person as a ground for exclusion or incapacity in matters relating to the enjoyment of civil and political rights...The freedom and outward exercise of all forms of worship will be assured to all persons belonging to the Romanian State, as well as to foreigners...The nationals of all the Powers.. shall be treated in Romania without distinction of creed, on a footing of perfect equality". Article 44 of the Treaty of Berlin. BFSP, volume 69, p.764.

2 "The character of Romanian is acquired, preserved, and lost conformably with the civil law. Foreigners of Christian denominations can alone obtain naturalization". Article VII of the Romanian Constitution. Text of constitution given in Dame, op.cit., pp.425-446.

3 On December 29, 1876, the Jewish World bitterly accused Russia of persecuting the Jews. Wirthwein, op.cit., p.166.

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subjects and claimed, and obtained, all the privileges and obligations due to the subjects of their countries of origin (i.e., to subjects of the governments which issued their passports). Within a generation they came to form an actual majority in certain urban areas of the country, but they still remained foreign subjects possessing no rights of citizenship. As their number continued to increase, restrictions were placed on their immigration but the authority of the government of the time was too weak to render them effective. By 1859 there were well over 100,000 Jews in Moldavia alone, where, within a decade, they had acquired an economic hegemony.¹

During the period of the fifties and the sixties the Romanian Government, fully occupied with important political developments at home and abroad, which brought about the unification of the Principalities and the advent of the Hohenzollern dynasty, relaxed their control on immigrants and failed to enact new legislation pertaining to foreign subjects. Taking advantage of this situation, and with the full support of the "Alliance Israélite", centered in Paris, the majority of Jews in Romania formed a strong political association for the advancement of their interests with agents in several countries. This caused them to remain foreigners in the midst of the Romanian nation, not only through their religion, but also through their language, customs, habits and aspirations.²

Through this association they communicated with powerful Jewish interests in the West, who in turn obliged the governments of the Powers to intervene with the Romanian

1 Seton-Watson, A History of the Romanians, pp.346-48.
Whitman, op.cit., pp.143-44. Romanian Circular, June 9, 1879. BFSP, volume 71, pp.1150-1156.

2 Whitman, op.cit., pp.144-45, 149-51.

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Government in their behalf.¹ Between 1866 and 1875 more than once these governments applied diplomatic pressure on the Bucharest Cabinet, requesting the removal of religious discrimination against the Jews. But this did not improve their status, for, as the Romanian Government repeatedly explained, the problem was not of a religious character, but of a social and economic nature.² Romania's explanations, however, made no apparent impression on the Powers except Russia,³ and to some extent Austria.⁴

By 1878 the Jewish question became very acute and there was no solution in sight. The Jews could no longer be expelled, for their countries of origin refused to accept them; their naturalization would have transformed the Moldavians into a minority in many urban centres in their own country, and thus would have removed all checks and balances on the economic exploitation of rural population. It was not for religious reason, then, that both government and nation were unwilling to comply fully with article 44 of the Berlin Treaty. Their unwillingness was motivated by economic, social, and even political considerations. The Jews sought their means of existence not in occupations which would develop the production and strengthen the economy of the country, but in trafficking and usuary which would weaken it. By these means they had acquired a substantial amount of the total capital of the country, placing it in mortgages on property.

1 The Anglo-Jewish Association drew up a memorial and presented it to the Congress of Berlin, calling for justice to the Jews in Romania. Wirthwein, op.cit., p.166. Whitman, op.cit., p.153.

2 Medlicott, op.cit., pp.365-66.

3 According to Lord Loftus, the Russian Government refused to participate in any official representation made to the Romanian Government by the Powers, concerning the treatment of the Jews. Loftus, op.cit., pp.19-23. Whitman, op.cit., pp.152,154.

4 Drawing from his own experience in Austria-Hungary, Andrassy thought that Romania was doing all that could be expected of her in solving the Jewish problem. Edwards, op.cit., p.167.

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They held thus mortgages on large tracts of rural property which legally they could not own. Now their naturalization would have removed this restriction and the whole rural region in Moldavia would have passed into their hands. This held political consequences in its train, as rural property played an important role in the political structure of the country, notably in the constitution of the electoral colleges which nominated the Senate. If the Jews, then, were to obtain political rights before they had been assimilated, because they received directives from outside the country, Romania could have been plagued by a dualism fatal to her national existence.¹

Despite these considerations the Romanians were made painfully aware of the fact that some steps had to be taken towards a satisfactory solution of the Jewish question. They had generally agreed that article VII of the constitution had to be modified, but there was an acute divergence of opinion as to what that modification should be, thus causing intense excitement in the Chambers and in the country at large. Consequently, by the end of 1878 no progress was made in this direction. Article 129 of the Constitution required the election ad hoc of a Constituent Assembly, which alone had the power to amend the Constitution of Romania. But the conditions necessary for this election remained under discussion in the Chambers throughout the winter of 1878-79. In December 1878 Bratianu reconstructed his Cabinet, including his recent critic and future successor, D.A. Sturdza, and on January 29 introduced a Bill in Parliament calling for the convocation of a Constituent Assembly. The Legislature supported the content of the Bill, but months elapsed before the three required readings took place in the Chamber. The third reading did not take place until April 5, 1879, after

1 Romanian Circular, June 9, 1879. BFSP, volume 71, pp. 1150-1156.

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Bismarck had in a somewhat threatening manner requested to be informed when the Jewish question was to be settled. The following day the Chambers approved in principle the modification of article VII and promptly voted for their own dissolution.¹

But even before this modest progress was made towards the fulfillment of the second condition imposed at Berlin, the Romanian Government attempted to persuade the Powers to be satisfied with the measures already taken. At the beginning of January 1879 they sent abroad two important statesmen to investigate this possibility. Rosetti, president of the Chamber of Deputies, was sent to Paris and Rome, and D.Bratianu, brother of the prime minister and minister Plenipotentiary at the Porte, to London. They were to give the necessary assurances to these governments of Romania's intentions to carry out the stipulations of article 44 of the Berlin Treaty, and to give the explanations on the manner in which it was proposed to deal with the Jewish question. They advanced political and historical reasons for the immediate recognition of Romania, emphasizing that by withholding it the Powers were in fact endangering, not promoting, the establishment of religious equality in Romania. All their labours, however, had been in vain, and in March they returned home empty-handed.²

Elections were held in the late spring and the new Chambers met early in June to fulfill the task before them. The opening of the Chambers was but a prelude to a summer

1 Dame, *op.cit.*, p.322. Whitman, *op.cit.*, p.329. White to Salisbury, January 17, 27, 29, 1879. *BFSP*, volume 71, pp.1140-1144. White to Salisbury, April 7. *Ibid.*, pp.1147-48. Speech from the throne at the closing of the Chambers, April 6. *Ibid.*, volume 70, pp.528-531.

2 Lord Lyons, British Ambassador in Paris, to Salisbury, January 4, 12, 1879. *Ibid.*, volume 71, pp.1136-38. White to Salisbury, January 3, 1879. *Ibid.*, pp.1138-39.

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of violent political struggles, which kept the national feelings on a high note of excitement. The government apparently was reluctant to lay definite proposals before parliament, thus allowing the nation to take the lead in this cardinal issue; a strong current of public opinion was opposed to the stipulations of article 44 of the Berlin Treaty.¹

At the beginning of July the Chambers appointed a special commission to study and report on the Jewish question, and to draft a bill of amendment based on their findings. On July 5 the parliamentary commission completed its report, which was introduced in the Chambers for deliberations. It stated that there were not, and never had been, any Romanian Jews, but only indigenous Jews, that is to say, Jews who had been born in Romania, but who had never been assimilated in language and customs, nor did they aspire to do so. It further said that all foreigners in Romania could secure naturalization, without distinction of creed, individually and by special law; the manner and form in which naturalization should take place would be inserted in article VII of the constitution; and the right to possess landed property should be regarded as a political and not as a civil right.²

This report and parliament's favourable attitude towards it strained Romania's relations with the West considerably. This was mainly due to the attitude of the German Government, who at the time held the centre stage of European politics. Bismarck insisted vehemently on Romania's full compliance with the terms of the Berlin Treaty, and his uncompromising attitude served to keep England and France in line with his wish on this issue. The governments of

1 Whitman, op.cit., pp.331-332.

2 Cumberbatch, British Charge in Berlin, to Salisbury, July 8, 1879. BFSP, volume 71, pp.1148-49. Campineanu, Romanian Foreign Minister, to Callimachi, July 9. Ibid., pp.1150-56. Edwards, op.cit., pp.166-67.

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these two Powers apparently needed Bismarck's support elsewhere and to obtain it, they were willing to support his attitude towards Romania.¹ Since the autumn of 1878 Bismarck became convinced that Romania was trying to evade her obligations incurred at Berlin; and he was determined to use all his influence to recall her to her duty to comply fully with the terms of article 44. To this end he appealed to all Western Powers to support his stand by not recognizing Romania until she had fulfilled her Treaty obligations. These Powers, with the exception of France, showed some uneasiness at Bismarck's passionate and apparently vindictive conduct, but found it expedient to go along with it. The Italian Government, especially, attempted to condemn Germany's unwillingness to recognize the difficulties facing the Romanian Government, and to urge Romania's recognition. Towards the achievement of this objective, they had instructed their ambassador in Berlin to read and leave a copy of a Note with the German Foreign Minister, but the latter refused to listen to its reading and to accept a copy of it.²

It soon became obvious that in insisting on a satisfactory solution to the Jewish question Bismarck was not acting for humanitarian motives, but for reasons strictly in accord with his conception of Realpolitik. Towards the middle of July 1879 the Romanian Government sent Sturdza, Minister of Finance, and a pro-German, to Berlin to lay the difficulties facing them before Bismarck. After several interviews with him, Sturdza discovered, what the Romanian Government suspected all along, that Bismarck was using the Jewish question

1 Saint-Vallier to Waddington, November 9, 1878. DDF, series 1, volume 2, No. 360. Salisbury to White, December 4, 1879. Edwards, op.cit., p. 169.

2 Saint-Vallier to Waddington, November 10, 1878. DDF, series 1, volume 2, No. 361. Same to same, April 4, 1879. Ibid., No. 403. Same to same, June 27, 1879. Ibid., No. 440. Elliot to White, August 22, 1878. Edwards, op.cit., pp. 164-65. Same to same, February 16, 1879. Ibid., p. 167. Salisbury to White, March 12, 1879. Ibid., p. 168.

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only as a means for securing a favourable settlement in the long-standing dispute over the railway question.¹

The decade of the sixties witnessed the introduction of an active program of railway building in Romania. The most important of several concessions to foreign companies was made to a Berlin firm directed by Strousberg, a German Jew, who in January 1871 announced his inability (and unwillingness) to carry out his obligations. As the January coupon remained unpaid, the Prussian Government demanded that the payment of interest to the shareholders should be made good by the Romanian Government, in accordance with its guarantee given in October 1868 when the concession was made. The Romanian Government declared itself unable to comply with the Prussian demand, due to financial difficulties, and the Chambers began a lively debate on the annulment of the concession. At this point two Jewish bankers, Hansemann and Bleichroder, announced their willingness to offer the necessary capital, and the shareholders formed a new company to take over the concession.²

Both the Conservative government before 1875 and the Liberal (Radical) government immediately afterwards attempted to free themselves from the financial entanglements with Germany by evolving a plan for the purchase of railways, but Bleichroder refused to accept the terms. The issue was temporarily overshadowed by the Russo-Turkish war, but regained prominence as soon as the war was over.³

Bleichroder sought to obtain from the Romanian Government not only a guarantee for the protection of his invested interests, but also a favourable settlement of the Jewish question. Towards this end he expected support from the German Chancellor, who since the early fifties displayed anxiety to make use of the financial power and influence of the

1 Whitman, op.cit., pp.341-42.

2 Ibid., pp.122-26, 130-35, 342-43.

3 Whitman, op.cit., pp.136, 139-40.

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Jewish magnates in his official program.¹ By the seventies Bleichroder was being increasingly regarded as the "Rothschild of Berlin" and his company was sought by "ministers, ambassadors, and all the diplomatic elite".² His personal and political ties with Bismarck were becoming so intimate that many began to suspect his hand in the German policy towards Romania. "I sat for an hour and a half with Bleichroder and listened to his talmudic wisdom", wrote Prince Hohenlohe in June 1878. "The Romanians cause him anxiety which I do not understand...The unpleasant part to me of the whole talk was that Bleichroder seemed to have influence with Bismarck in questions of commercial policy. He acted as if he shared in the Government, notwithstanding his assurances of humility".³ Those who had access to Bismarck's inner thoughts did not have the slightest doubt that Bleichroder's scheme in the Romanian affair had been advanced by German diplomacy.⁴

In the attainment of this objective the German Chancellor found a ready means of coercion in Romania's eagerness for independence. Thus while the Chambers were discussing the report on the Jewish question, compiled by the parliamentary commission, Bismarck informed the Romanian Government, via Vienna, that he lacked confidence in their good faith and that he would continue to consider Romania a dependent country until the Jewish question would be satisfactorily settled. He even went so far as to threaten to take up the matter with the suzerain Power at Constantinople.

1 Medlicott, op.cit., p.357.

2 Degre to Kogalniceanu, May 29, 1877. Iorga, op.cit., No.474. Disraeli to Lady Bradford, July 6, 1878. Marquis of Zetland, ed., The Letters of Disraeli to Lady Bradford and Lady Chesterfield, volume 2, 1876-1881, D.Appleton & Co., New York, 1929, p.232.

3 Hohenlohe, Memoirs, p.216.

4 Dr.Moritz Busch, Bismarck, Some Secret Pages of His History, volume 2, Macmillan Co., New York, 1898, p.342. There is evidence that Bismarck admitted it even to the Romanians. Whitman, op.cit., p.343.

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This move was indeed anachronistic, for Romania was a de facto independent State, but it was meant to frighten the Chambers into complying with his demands. Much as the Romanian Chambers would have liked to appease Bismarck on this point, they could not take any step contrary to the interests and quite out of harmony with the feelings of the nation. They therefore adopted the proposals contained in the report. Foreseeing the difficulties entailed by this step, the Cabinet resigned on July 23, 1879, and Bratianu only reluctantly agreed to reconstruct the government, with Kogalniceanu at the Interior and V. Boerescu at the Foreign Office. To allow the excitement in the country to subside, and to clear an effective path for diplomatic maneuvering, the new government prorogued the unmanageable Chambers for a month.¹

Meanwhile Sturdza in Berlin was endeavouring to accomplish his double-headed mission of explaining the difficulties his government faced with regard to the Jewish question, and bringing the railway negotiations to a successful conclusion. He made new proposals concerning the religious toleration in Romania which the German Government was prepared to accept. He presented a plan of emancipation according to certain categories,² and promised to impress upon his government the necessity of complying with article 44 of the Berlin Treaty. Before leaving Berlin on July 31, he signed a convention for the purchase of the railways, though no agreement was reached as to whether the direction of affairs was to remain in Berlin or transferred to Bucharest.³

1 Whitman, op.cit., p.133. Edwards, op.cit., p.162. Seton-Watson, A History of the Romanians, p.351. Waddington to Saint-Vallier, June 29, 1879. DDF, series 1, volume 2, No.442.

2 According to Sturdza's plan there were seven categories of Jews who could have been admitted to full citizenship in a specified length of time.

3 Whitman, op.cit., pp.341-42. Medlicott, op.cit., p.582. Lyons to Salisbury, July 23, 1879. BFSP, volume 71, p.1157.

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Sturdza's proposals in Berlin were quite inconsistent with events in Bucharest, where the Romanian Government was struggling with the Chambers to adopt a much milder set of proposals. On July 23 the newly reconstructed government introduced a program of emancipation of their own, which the Chambers only reluctantly adopted just before they were prorogued. The new program recognized the principle of naturalization of foreigners on individual basis, which excluded all categories, and emphasized special restrictions on the acquisition of rural property. Two days later Boerescu sent out a long Circular acquainting the Powers with the difficulties facing his government and the line of policy they proposed to pursue. The Romanian Government, the Circular said, was conscious of its obligations to comply with the Berlin stipulations, but the Powers must understand that a population of over 300,000 Jews, who were not Romanian citizens, could not be declared citizens in one day. Such a step would strike a disastrous blow at the economic interests of the country. The present government thus could not assume such a responsibility, nor could any other government.¹

Shortly after this Circular was sent out, Boerescu left Bucharest on a visit to the Western capitals. The chief object to his mission was to induce the Powers, especially Germany, not to insist on that part of Sturdza's project which provided for the removal of all restrictions on all persons comprised within the stated categories. To each of the Powers he reiterated the argument developed in his earlier Circular that the new principle of naturalization by nominal list of persons would grant the rights of citizenship to at least as many Jews as would have received it by

¹ Romanian Circular, July 25, 1879. BFSP, volume 71, pp. 1158-1162.

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the earlier principle of categories.¹

Boerescu's mission abroad was no more successful than that of his two predecessors - Rosetti and Bratianu. In all the European capitals that he visited he was told that Sturdza's project was preferable to the new scheme. In Paris he was told by Waddington that the new principle of nominal lists of persons was unacceptable, for it opened the door to corruption. In Berlin, too, the new project was regarded as unsatisfactory.² Even Austria was prepared to support the German point of view. From London Salisbury informed Sir William White, British Agent in Bucharest, that he understood the difficulties facing the Romanian Government, but that the new proposals presented no substantial acceptance of the principle laid down in the Berlin Treaty. What the British Government expected, he added, was not a sudden measure of extensive operation, but the acceptance of a principle which in time would acquire gradual effect in practice.³

The autumn of 1879 witnessed a substantial change in Bismarck's attitude towards Romania. The conclusion of the Dual Alliance between Germany and Austria in September of that year had no doubt much to do with this. Austria's anxiety for friendly relations with Romania could not very well be ignored by Bismarck. At the same time, the Austrian Government could hardly object to Bismarck's insistence on a satisfactory settlement of the railway question, the true cause of Bismarck's annoyance.⁴

1 Baron von den Brincken, German Charge in London, to Salisbury, August 11, 1879. Ibid., pp. 1162-63. Adams, British Charge in Paris, to Salisbury, August 23. Ibid., pp. 1163-64. Boerescu's Memorandum to Salisbury, August 27. Ibid., p. 1164. Elliot to White, August 11. Edwards, op.cit., p. 173.

2 Fourier de Bacourt, French Charge in Bucharest, to Waddington, August 11, 1879. DDF, series 1, volume 2, No. 453. Cf. footnotes 1 and 2, p. 539. Ibid.

3 Adams to Salisbury, August 23, 1879. BFSP, volume 71, pp. 1163-64. Salisbury to White, August 27. Ibid., pp. 1164-66. Edwards, op.cit., p. 173.

4 Medlicott, op.cit., pp. 584-85.

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The Romanian Government, too, was most anxious to iron out the difficulties existent between themselves and the German Government. It was for this purpose that Sturdza was sent again to Berlin on September 26, 1879. After a week of negotiations he reached a fresh agreement with Bleichroder and his associates. By it Romania undertook not to alienate for a certain period any railway lines and to give as additional security to the German company a mortgage on the revenues of the tobacco monopoly. With the deal concluded Sturdza returned home to introduce the newly concluded convention in the deliberations of the Chambers.¹

The Chambers re-assembled on September 2 but all important decisions were postponed until Boerescu's return from abroad - September 16. One more week of fruitless deliberations was to pass before the government felt ready to bring forward its own proposals. On September 24 a bill was introduced in the Chamber, containing the proposed amendment of article VII of the constitution, meant to remove all religious disabilities. The bill was accompanied by a nominal list including the names of about 1000 Jews who were to be admitted to citizenship and to full exercise of civil and political rights. The persons therein included were classified according to their qualifications under six categories. To have asked for more would have been impractical, for, as Sir William White explained to Salisbury, "any more extensive proposals would have been certain of rejection". In fact even these proposals proved to be more than the Chamber was prepared to accept. The bill was rejected in its original form and the government had to submit to its modification. The much disputed "categories" were no longer mentioned in the amended bill. Instead, it emphasized the principle that naturalization could only be granted by Law and on an individual basis, following a formal petition to parliament and

1 Ibid., p. 585. Seton-Watson, op.cit., p. 351.

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a period of ten years' residence in the country - save in some exceptional cases. The nominal list, however, remained, which gave the bill a resemblance to its original form. As Boerescu was to explain in his Circular of October 24: "La forme differe; le fond est identique". The amended bill was finally adopted with a large majority of votes by the Chamber of Deputies on October 18, and by the Senate five days later. Boerescu at once sent out a Circular informing the Powers about what he considered to be a great victory over the Opposition. Though amended, the Circular explained, the Bill contained the principle imposed by the Treaty of Berlin and was thus in harmony with the intentions of the Powers. The Romanian Government hoped, it added, that the Powers would find this step satisfactory enough to consider the Jewish question as settled.¹

Boerescu's circular was received abroad with mixed feelings, and met with very little criticism from the Powers. Perhaps this was an indication that the Powers felt that it was high time for Romania's recognition. Perhaps it meant that they were not prepared to recognize her independence until more was being done on the Jewish question. Whatever they thought and however they felt on this issue, the concrete result was that no immediate steps towards recognition were taken. The main reason for this was still to be found in the policy of the German Government. Bismarck continued to maintain his uncompromising attitude towards Romania.

1 White to Salisbury, September 25, 26, 1879. BFSP, volume 71, pp. 1166-67. White to Salisbury, October 18. Copy of amended bill included. Ibid., pp. 1169-70. Romanian Circular (Boerescu to Callimachi), October 24, 1879. Ibid., pp. 1171-75. It is interesting to note here that Boerescu's hope that the Powers would consider the passing of the Bill satisfactory coincides closely with White's suggestion to Salisbury: "It will be for the Powers to consider whether, according to their judgment, they can modify their relations to Romania on this Ministerial proposal becoming law". White to Salisbury, September 25. Ibid., pp. 1166-67.

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To be correct, he did admit to the French Ambassador that the time for Romania's recognition was approaching, but he insisted that a few weeks more of "strangulation" would do the Romanians good, before they were allowed to enjoy independence.¹ What all this meant was that he was still dissatisfied with Bucharest's handling of the railway affairs, and some time was yet needed to have the Romanians bow to his will. Indeed by the beginning of December there was no doubt left in anyone's mind that he was holding back the three Powers (England, France, Italy) until the railway deal with Romania was satisfactorily completed.² Elliot expressed a common view when he wrote White that he was much annoyed by the policy of making Romania's recognition dependent "upon the settlement of a question that is purely German, and has nothing earthly to do with the non-fulfillment of the religious-liberty clause of the Treaty, which has hitherto prevented it". Yet he hesitatingly admitted that the three Powers could not very well by-pass it since Bismarck made strong appeals to them "to hold together".³

Despite Bismarck's opinion to the contrary,⁴ the Romanian Government was quite anxious to satisfy the exigencies of the German Government.⁵ The railway bill was introduced in the Chambers in November, but it was accepted only in principle. The stumbling block was the transfer of the seat of administration from Berlin to Bucharest⁶ which could only be sanctioned at a general meeting of the shareholders. Since this meeting was not to take place until early 1880,

1 Saint-Vallier to Waddington, November 14, 1879. DDF, series 1, volume 2, No. 477.

2 Saint-Vallier to Waddington, December 10, 1879. Ibid., No. 483.

3 Elliot to White, December 16, 1879. Edwards, op. cit., pp. 173-74.

4 Saint-Vallier to Waddington, November 14, 1879. DDF, series 1, volume 2, No. 477.

5 White to Salisbury, November 24, 1879. BFSP, volume 71, p. 1179.

6 See page

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the Romanian Chambers were withholding their final decision till that time. This infuriated Bismarck, who accused the Romanians of "bad faith"; it also explains his determination to delay Romania's recognition.¹

The Romanians, on the other hand, felt that under the circumstances they had done all that could be expected of them, and hoped that the obstacle to recognition would be effectually and satisfactorily removed. This view was shared by the Austrian Government, who had in fact offered to use its good offices towards that end.² The Italians, too, considered the steps already taken by the Chambers as a sufficient guarantee for Romania's honest intention to comply with the stipulations of the Berlin Treaty. In fact they believed that Romania's recognition was long overdue and should not be delayed any longer.³ They thus decided to take the initiative in that direction. Early in December (1879) the Romanians were officially informed that the Italian Government was ready to recognize Romania's independence, and that Count Tornielli was on his way to Bucharest to present his credentials as ambassador.⁴

Italy's move apparently came as a surprise to Waddington, who could not understand her precipitate action. He had attempted to induce the Italians not to recognize Romania until the three Powers, too, were ready to take a similar step, but they politely declined the suggestion. To Salisbury, on the other hand, it was an indication that the time

1 Elliot to White, December 16, 1879. Edwards, *op.cit.*, pp. 173-74. 2 White to Salisbury, November 24, 1879.

See footnote 5 on previous page.

3 Italy proposed to the other Powers the recognition of Romania in the autumn of 1878 and in the spring of 1879. Cf., p.

4 Salisbury to Paget, British Ambassador in Rome, December 8, 1879. BFSP, volume 71, p. 1179. Salisbury to Lyons, December

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 1179-80. Salisbury to Paget, December 20.

Ibid., p. 1181.

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had come to put an end to the indeterminate relations existing between the Powers and Romania. He at once instructed the British Ambassadors in Paris and Berlin to impress upon the governments to which they were accredited the idea that Romania's recognition by the three Powers should be simultaneous, and that it was expedient not to delay it much longer. To this Waddington replied that he agreed with Salisbury's conclusions, and that he had made his view known to the German Government. From Berlin there was no immediate reply.¹

Obviously the German Government still abided by its earlier decision not to change its policy towards Romania until the railway deal was satisfactorily completed. Indeed Bismarck seemed determined to maintain this course even if the other two Powers were to separate from him and recognize Romania. By the end of December he was so upset over this issue that he forbade anyone to have it mentioned before him, until he had recovered from the bitterness he was suffering. This forced the Romanians to bow to the inevitable; the railway bill was again introduced in the Chambers, where it was finally adopted at the end of January, 1880.²

This step removed Germany's opposition and opened the door for diplomatic activity which was to bring the recognition of Romania's independence in less than a month. The initiative was taken by the Austrian Government, which sent an invitation to the three Powers to take the question of recognition into friendly consideration. The German Government replied that it was now willing to adhere to any agreement Britain and France would reach on this subject. Salisbury

1 Salisbury to Lyons, December 8, 1879. *Ibid.*, pp. 1179-80. Salisbury to Russel, British Ambassador in Berlin, December 8. *Ibid.*, p. 1180. Lyons to Salisbury, December 10, 1879. *Ibid.*, pp. 1180-1181.

2 Medlicott, *op.cit.*, pp. 587-589.

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bury immediately sounded Paris. The new French Foreign Minister, Charles Freycinet, replied with a proposal of his own. He prepared, and submitted for approval, the draft of a Note to be sent to the Representatives of France, Britain, and Germany in Bucharest, who were to deliver it simultaneously, on a date of common agreement, to the Romanian Government. It stated that the three Powers, satisfied with Romania's efforts to fulfill the conditions imposed by the Berlin Treaty, decided to recognize her as an independent State. The Note was approved in its entirety by the three governments and on February 20, 1880 the Representatives of these Powers delivered their identical Notes to Boerescu. The British Representative was ready on the same day, the other two shortly afterwards, to present his credentials to Carol and to open regular diplomatic relations between Britain and Romania.¹

This concluded a period of bitterness and dismay in the history of young Romania. A period in which the Romanians struggled unaided against the giants to obtain what they believed to be legitimately theirs.² It seemed ironic to Prince Carol that Germany, of all the Powers, found it necessary to oppose most violently the recognition of his adopted country, knowing well that this could have endangered his position.³ He expected more consideration from the German

1 Russell to Salisbury, February 5, 1880. BFSP, volume 71, p. 1182. Salisbury to Lyons, February 6. Ibid., p. 1181. Lyons to Salisbury, February 7. Ibid., pp. 1182-83. Salisbury to Russell, February 10. Ibid., p. 1184. Salisbury to Elliot, February 12. Ibid., p. 1185. Lyons to Salisbury, February 11. Ibid., pp. 1185-86. Salisbury to White, February 11. Ibid., p. 1186. White to Salisbury, February 20. Ibid., pp. 1186-87, 1188.

2 M. Olanesco, "La Roumanie depuis un demi-siècle", Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique, June, 1900, XIV, 337-351.

3 Letter from the German Crown Prince to Carol, October 19, 1878. Whitman, op.cit., pp. 324-25.

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reigning family, to which he distantly belonged. Yet all he received from them was verbal encouragements, unsupported by deeds. William I did nothing to reduce the difficulties of his "cousin", though he feigned agreement with the Romanian view of the Jewish question, and attempted to divert Carol's annoyance from Germany to Britain, who "sees a refined Rothschild in every Jew"¹. But once the difficulties were overcome and independence achieved, he lost no time in expressing his joy: "At last we have realized the wish we have so long cherished". He even thought it safe to reassure his "Dear Cousin" of his sympathies "both as a Hohenzollern and personally"².

To say that the achievement of independence was a total success for Romania would mean to overlook the price she had to pay, the deep scars which took more than three decades to heal. Early in this century a writer summed up the whole situation in the following words: "To avoid, then, all chance of being partitioned, and to enjoy the honour of no longer being considered a vassal state, which, as a matter of fact, she had ceased to be, Romania had to make concession to the Jews, to give up Romanian Bessarabia to the Russians... and to let the man of iron have his own iron way about the iron road"³.

1 Whitman, op.cit., p.341.

2 Letter from William I to Carol, March 5, 1880. P. Wiegler, William the First: His Life and Time, translated and edited by C. Vesey, G. Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1929, p.379.

3 Edwards, op.cit., p.161.

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The Aftermath. Romania Joins the Triple Alliance

If the achievement of independence was the most significant event that occurred in 1880, it was not the only one. On July 29 of that year the Dobrudja boundary commission completed its work and Romania's frontier in that region was definitely fixed and sanctioned by the Powers.¹ With this issue settled, Carol left Bucharest for a vacation abroad. During the early autumn of 1880 he paid a series of ceremonial visits to Vienna, Berlin, Dresden, and to his parents, after several years of separation. It was during this visit that the question of succession to the Romanian throne had been fully discussed, with the result that the constitutional right of succession of Carol's elder brother and his descendants was officially recognized by the House of Hohenzollern. This was accomplished by an exchange of letters, which were later introduced in the Chamber for deliberation and approval.²

The consolidation of the State was completed in March 1881, when parliament unanimously proclaimed Romania a kingdom. The time was ripe for such a measure, but the circumstances in which it was brought about revealed a lack of balance in Romanian politics. Incensed by the success and popularity of the government, the Conservatives began a campaign of agitation against the Liberals, charging them with republican tendencies and political instability. To refute these charges effectually, the Liberal Ministry pro-

1 The Romanians had an extremely difficult task in resisting Russia's tendency of extending the Bulgarian territory. They did not obtain all that they struggled for, but managed to retain the much disputed Arab-Tabia. Whitman, op.cit., p.349.

2 Ibid., pp.349-350.

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posed the elevation of Prince Carol to the rank of monarch. The government wished to delay this solemn act till the national festival day of May 22, but the ceremony was precipitated by an unforeseen event. On March 13 Tsar Alexander II fell victim to a Nihilist plot, and the possibility of revolution in Russia became a disturbing factor in Romania. To deprive the Opposition of the opportunity to capitalize on the excitement created by this event, the government proposed to the Chambers the immediate proclamation of the kingdom of Romania. The motion was unanimously carried by both Chambers on March 26. The coronation took place on May 22 at the Cathedral of Bucharest.¹

The new situation created by the achievement of her independence, and her new status, and the changes which were then taking place in the grouping of the European Powers, made it imperative for Romania to adopt a new political orientation which would enable her to secure the effective support of one of the Powers for a case of emergency. All political factions thus agreed that a new course in foreign policy must be followed, but there was great divergence of opinion as to what the new course should be. This was mainly due to the bitter dissensions occurring at the time within both political parties.

The home policy of the government alienated many valuable supporters, including the worthy Kogalniceanu, creating a split in the party. The dissenting Liberals, under the leadership of D. Bratianu, felt that their earlier liberal principles have been betrayed, and began an active campaign

1 Seton-Watson, *A History of the Romanians*, pp.353-54. Whitman, *op.cit.*, pp.351-54. *Romanian Law*, conferring the Royal Title on Prince Carol, March 26, 1881. BFSP, volume 72, pp.1102-1103.

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against their former leader - Ion Bratianu¹. The Conservatives, though L.Catargiu retained their nominal leadership, also fell into two groups - the "old" and the "new". The "old" group of unregenerate boyars continued to maintain their Russophil tendencies, not from any innate feelings of affinity, but for tactical and social reasons, which were quite outdated.² The "new" group of Conservatives, on the other hand, among whom the most eminent were Peter Carp and Titu Maiorescu, felt that in the new phase of existence in which Romania had now entered, a new orientation was imperative. Most of these people completed their higher education in Germany, rather than France, and looked towards that Empire, which at the time embodied the principle of political stability.³

Party dissensions generated a process of party disintegration, and political re-alignments, which threatened the existing political system with the creation of a third major party. This trend was discouraged by the attitude of the King, who did all in his power to encourage political evolution in the direction of a "two-party system". To this end he found a ready partner in Ion Bratianu, the prime minister, who possessed ample qualities for leadership and organization and an appetite for untrimmed power.⁴

Bratianu's partnership with Carol became especially close in the eighties, due to their complete agreement in the sphere of foreign policy. Both the prime minister and his king sought an anti-Russian orientation in foreign

1 Seton-Watson, op.cit., pp.355-56.

2 The strength of the anti-German party was due to tradition, to community of religion with Russia, and to the absence of any Russian merchants in Romania (and hence of irritating petty commercial quarrels). Most of its adherents were among boyars and peasants.

3 Seton-Watson, op.cit., pp.355-56.

4 Ibid., pp.357-58. Damé, op.cit., pp.367,399.

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affairs. They did so for different reasons, but the result was the same. Carol was and remained a Hohenzollern at heart. Despite Bismarck's brutal indifference to Romania's cause, the Romanian King maintained his veneration for the German Emperor, remained in intimate terms of friendship with the German Crown Prince, and desired to be closely connected with the German Empire.¹ He therefore did all he could to place Romania in the German orbit. Bratianu, on the other hand, possessed none of these innate feelings of sympathy with the Germans. He received his intellectual and political training in revolutionary Paris, and was therefore a total stranger to the German political and social conceptions. But his strong practical sense enabled him to modify his earlier revolutionary views and to adjust to the realities of Romanian political life. The bitter experience of 1878 alienated him from Russia and filled him with distrust and fear of further Pan-Slav aggression. His fears were shared by many of his associates, who felt with him that by waging war on the Turks, Russia's aim was not so much to free her co-religionists from the yoke of the infidel as to establish her dominations over the Southern Slavs. The Latin Romanians, though Orthodox, had been convenient tools for the realization of Pan-Slav aspirations, but once they had done their duty, they were no longer useful; hence their claims had

¹ In a letter to Bismarck, he wrote: "I believe that, as Prince of Romania, I have not disowned the qualities of a German Prince...The influence of Germany's power has...attained a periphery extending far beyond the Romanian frontiers, so that conditions existing in Romania cannot but be of special interest to your Excellency". Carol to Bismarck, July 26, 1873. The Correspondence of William I and Bismarck, p.154. A few years earlier he wrote: "Prussia...will always have in me a zealous representative of her interests in the Orient". Carol to Bismarck, January 27, 1868. Ibid., p.142.

been treated with scorn.¹

Romania's geographical position was such that she was constantly in danger of being crushed by the pressure of her two great neighbours, Russia and Austria. It was therefore impossible for her to exist in a state of isolation. She had to seek allies, either in the Russian or in the Austrian camp. Russia's unjust treatment and arrogant behaviour, however, excluded all possibility of a Romanian alliance with her.² Under the circumstances the Romanians turned their efforts for an alliance towards Austria.³ But the path to Vienna was not easily accessible. There were certain thorny problems which had to be solved before the two countries could get closer to each other. Perhaps the thorniest of them all was the double-headed question of the Danube and trade relations. Negotiations towards its solution went on between 1881 and 1883, and were concluded by the London Conference (1883) in which the Romanians were not allowed to participate.⁴ The dispositions of this con-

1 G.I. Bratianu, "Bismarck si (and) Ion C. Bratianu", Revista Istorică Română, 1935-36, V-VI, 86-103. For Russian contempt of Romanian claims confer Jomini's letter to Giers in: Jelavich, op.cit., p. 51.

2 An anonymous author suggested that this was Bismarck's intention. "Bismarck desired to chain Romania to Germany and Austria-Hungary by fear, and to set her against Russia by the sense of wrong unjustly suffered. He induced Russia to ill-treat Romania". Politicus, "Romania and the Eastern Question", Fortnightly Review, October 2, 1916, C, 549-562.

3 A. Smedovski, "La Roumanie et la Triple Alliance", Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique, 1937, LI, 39-56.

4 Kogalniceanu blamed the Romanian Government for the unfavourable position which Romania occupied in the Danube question. The Austrian Government, wrote Kogalniceanu, had displayed an unusual energy in order to win the foreign cabinets to their side; while the Romanians remained silent. Romanian representatives abroad received neither information, nor instructions from the Foreign Ministry in Bucharest concerning the Danubian problem. Kogalniceanu, then Counsellor of Legation in Paris, to G. Ventura, editor-in-chief of L'indépendance Roumaine, November 19, 1880. M. Kogalniceanu: Scrisori si Note de Calatorie, Z.N. Pop and D. Simonescu, editors, Studii si Documente, Editura Pentru Literatura, Bucharest, 1967, pp. 88-89.

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ference were totally unacceptable to the Romanians, who bitterly resented Austria's attempt to acquire a preponderant influence on the Lower Danube¹, which in their opinion would have amounted in fact to a protectorate over Romania.² The matter was brought to a crisis when the Romanian Government notified the Powers that it could not recognize the dispositions of a conference in which it had not been allowed to participate.³ The Austrian Government, who assumed the role of executor before the conference, had now to decide what measures to take, whether the dispositions of the London Conference were to be enforced. To avert the crisis and to reduce the tension between Bucharest and Vienna, Bratianu resorted to a most unusual step. He offered the position of minister to Vienna to Peter Carp, a Conservative and a pro-German. Carp accepted the offer on the condition that once the job was done, the prime minister should not expect support from him in matters of internal policy. Bratianu agreed and Carp departed for Vienna, where in a relatively short time he was able to remove most of the obstacles which blocked the way to a rapprochement between the two countries.⁴

Another difficulty which kept the two governments apart was created by the irredentist sentiment in Romania, which was much exploited by the anti-German party. The Romanians could not forget that the Dual Monarchy included a large fragment of their own kind in Transylvania. Magyar oppression

1 Speech from the throne, November 27, 1881. BFSP, volume 72, pp. 1122-28.

2 Over 50 per cent of Romania's imports came from Austria-Hungary, and only about 32 per cent of her exports went to that country. Naturally there was in Romania much concern over this economic subservience to a foreign Power. Stavrianos, op.cit., p. 485.

3 Speech from the throne, May 22, 1883. BFSP, volume 74, pp. 798-99.

4 Bratianu, loc.cit., p. 95.

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in Transylvania was to be sure no worse than Russian oppression in Bessarabia; but the Romanians in Bessarabia were only peasants, while those in Transylvania contained a solid and spirited middle class, whose protests kept pace with oppressive measures. To the already tense situation was added an awkward incident which served to fan the flames of discord between the two countries. In the summer of 1883 certain irredentist remarks were made by a Romanian member of Parliament at a banquet in Iassy following the unveiling of a statue of Stephen the Great. The incident was at once exploited; and undeserved proportions were given to it by the Austrian Government, who demanded official explanations.

In spite of all these difficulties which at the time appeared insurmountable, an alliance with Austria was concluded in the autumn of 1883. The key to the situation, as it turned out, was to be found not in Vienna, but in Berlin. As early as 1880 Bismarck began to feel that his recently concluded alliance with the Dual Monarchy would be greatly enhanced in value if Romania (and Serbia, too,) could be attracted into its orbit. He deemed it advisable then to take a step in this direction as early as possible, especially since Romania's newly acquired status forbade her to remain for long in isolation. Already in May, he wrote Carol a friendly letter in which he reviewed Romania's precarious position, located as she was between the two neighbouring empires, and pointed out to him what policy would best

1 Peter Gradisteanu spoke of the "two precious jewels" which had fallen from the crown of Stephen the Great. The Austrians identified the missing "jewels" with Bucovina and Transylvania - both under their control - while the Romanians maintained that it was meant Bucovina and Bessarabia. Bratianu, loc.cit., p.96. Cf., also La Politique Ext., volume 3, No.645.

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serve her interests. "To live in peace with these (Russia and Austria)", explained the letter, "is necessary for the consolidation of affairs, and to select at least one of them as a certain ally will always be the object of Romanian policy". He did not develop his thoughts to their inevitable conclusion, but the implication was clear.¹ Next he wrote to Vienna, urging Baron Haymerle to show more consideration for Romania; and then again to Bucharest promising Bratianu support in order to bring him closer to Austria.²

Meanwhile in Romania, too, isolated but powerful voices were ringing out in favour of an Austrian alliance. Most prominent among those who advocated such a course was Titu Maiorescu, the future prime minister. In January 1881 he published an article in the Deutsche Revue, in which he reviewed Romania's international position. His conclusions were unmistakably in favour of an Austrian alliance. He admitted that there were outstanding issues between the two countries, but they were not insurmountable. Even the question of the Romanians in Transylvania was not sufficient ground for estrangement between the two countries. He compared the conditions of Romanians in Transylvania with those of Romanians in Bessarabia, and concluded that the conditions under Russian rule were less favourable than those under Austrian rule. "The Russian Romanians are being annihilated, the Austrian Romanians are flourishing. Russia is a monarchy that devours nationalities, Austria is one that preserves them".³

Maiorescu's view was shared by many of the so-called new Conservatives, including Peter Carp, but two more years were to pass before they could gather enough strength to

1 Bismarck to Carol, May 20, 1880. Whitman, op.cit., p.348.

2 Seton-Watson, op.cit., p.360.

3 W.L.Langer, European Alliances and Alignments 1871-1890, second edition, Alfred A.Knopf, New York, 1966, pp.332-33.

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influence the official policy of the country. By that time, of course, due to prevailing circumstances, the government, too, began to feel the desirability, and indeed necessity, of an Austrian alliance: and sent Carp to Vienna, as earlier stated, to smooth the path in this direction. Shortly after his arrival in Vienna, Carp went to Friedrichruhe, where he was received by Bismarck. During their private conversation a program was established for better communications between the government in Bucharest and those in Berlin and Vienna. Carol was to be invited to Berlin, where he could discuss directly with the Emperor the prospect of an alliance between Romania and the Central Powers. On his way home he was to stop in Vienna for similar talks with Francis Joseph. Carol's visit was to be followed immediately by that of Bratianu.¹

In accordance with this plan, Carol left Bucharest early in August (1883) for the German capital, ostensibly to attend the baptism of Prince William's son. In Berlin he was entertained by the Imperial family, and had an interview with the Imperial Chancellor. He returned home towards the end of the month via Vienna. Disguised as Carol's visit was, it became subject to much speculation by the press. While he was still on German soil, the Neue Freie Presse carried an article commenting on the probability of an alliance between Romania and the Central Powers. "What today is merely assumed", concluded the article, "tomorrow could become a reality".²

1 Bratianu, loc.cit., p.96.

2 "On parle déjà de l'alliance de la Roumanie avec l'Allemagne et l'Autriche et les journaux commentent ce fait. Ce qui n'est aujourd'hui qu'une supposition, peut devenir demain une réalité". Smedovsski, loc.cit., pp.40-41. Bratianu, loc.cit., p.96.

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Carol's visit to Berlin was none too early. It coincided with a further deterioration of Balkan affairs. By the summer of 1883 the situation in Bulgaria had become critical and there seemed for a time to be real danger of a Russian military intervention.¹ At the same time, the Russians stepped up their efforts to foment internal strife in Romania. More money than ever before was being sent from St. Petersburg to the anti-German party and to the press. This worried not only the Romanians, who feared the possibility of becoming an enclave between Russia and her Bulgarian satellite, but also Bismarck, who feared that Russia might out-manoeuvre Austria in the Balkans, especially in Bucharest. It was due to these developments, then, that the Cabinets in Bucharest, Berlin, and Vienna felt the necessity of speeding up the negotiations for an alliance.²

In view of Carol's visit to Germany, Bismarck in correspondence with the German Ambassador at Vienna, Prince Henry Reuss, raised the question whether the League of Peace with Italy could be extended eastward to include Romania, and eventually Serbia and Turkey.³ G. Kalnoky, Austrian Foreign Minister, received the suggestion with enthusiasm. He readily admitted that this question had pre-occupied his mind for

1 Russia aimed at the creation of a protectorate in that region. Bulgaria was then to be linked up to the Russian Empire by the annexation of Dobrudja, and enlarged by union with Eastern Rumelia. The plan was to be put into effect after the fall of Prince Alexander of Battenberg. Meanwhile they interfered heavily in the internal affairs of the country, creating confusion and discontent meant to speed up the fall of the Prince.

2 Bratianu, loc.cit., p.95. La Politique Ext., volume 3, No.645.

3 Bismarck to Prince Henry VII de Reuss, August 19, 1883. La Politique Ext., volume 3, No.641.

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sometime, for he realized the usefulness of such a policy.. The addition of Romania "would fill a very noticeable gap", and the League of Peace would be considerably reinforced. The possibility of achieving this, however, seemed rather remote to him, since Romania had actually opposed Austria-Hungary in the Danubian question and showed no signs of conciliation. He was therefore willing to leave it to Bismarck to find a way by which Romania could be brought into the League. Carol's visit to Berlin and Vienna, he conceded, could provide the means to this end. On the other hand, the Romanian King might not be able to fulfill his promises, despite his honourable intentions, due to lack of support at home. Even the word of the Romanian Foreign Minister would be dubious, for he had no influence in the country; only Bratianu enjoyed real popularity and influence at home. "It is therefore this statesman", concluded Kalnoky, "that we would have to win to our cause, for he is perhaps the only one capable to provide security in view of the consolidation we seek in our relations."¹

Having secured the opinion of the Austrian Government, Bismarck felt ready to take up the matter with Bratianu, who early in September came to visit him at Gastein. There, in the peaceful surroundings of the well-known summer resort, the two statesmen discussed the situation in great detail and laid the foundations of a new Romanian policy. Haunted by the bitter experience of 1878, Bratianu apparently indulged in anti-Russian feelings which Bismarck, curiously

¹"C'est donc cet homme d'Etat qu'il faudrait gagner à notre cause, car c'est peut-être le seul qui soit capable de nous fournir une sécurité en vue de la consolidation que nous recherchons dans nos relations". Prince Henry VII de Reuss to Bismarck, August 21, 1883. Ibid., No. 642.

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enough, found them to be too strong for his taste. The German Chancellor gathered the impression that what Bratianu had in mind was not a simple defensive arrangement for the guarantee of peace, but rather an offensive and defensive alliance with some provisions for eventual territorial gain. He therefore found it necessary to warn the Romanian Premier that both Germany and Austria were anxious to avoid war with Russia. Indeed, added the Chancellor, though Austria could rely fully on German support, she still had the choice of preventing a rupture with Russia, either by an entente with her, or by the conclusion of a defensive alliance which would guarantee her against Russian aggression. This last remark immediately awoke in Bratianu the old fear of an understanding between the two neighbouring empires at the expense of Romania.¹ He told Bismarck that Romania could easily become a victim of such an arrangement. The latter sought to assuage his fears with the re-assurance that it was to the interest of Austria to preserve the existence of a non-Slav Romania. The reassured Bratianu, then, expressed his sentiments of loyalty to Germany, and the firm intention of his government to conclude an alliance with Austria. He recognized that Romania's real danger lay not in the numerically small Hungarian nation but in Pan-Slavism. He saw that Romania must lose her independence if Russia held the hegemony in the Balkans, if she obtained a permanent influence in Bulgaria, for then Romania would become the highway

1 Bratianu nourished this fear since the summer of 1876, when news leaked out about the Reichstadt Agreement. During negotiations for the Russo-Romanian Convention, Nelidov was made to give his word of honour that no such agreement was reached between the two empires, i.e., agreement for the partition of Romania (Bessarabia). Cf. A. Nelidov, "Souvenirs d'avant et d'après la Guerre de 1877-78", Revue de Deux Mondes, July 15, 1915, XXVII, 241-47.

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between St. Petersburg and Sofia, which the former would have at all costs to secure for itself. He concluded by stating his conviction that the support of Germany would be the only safeguard to Romania's independence. Germany could therefore rely on Romania's support in the event of Russian aggression. Bismarck professed satisfaction with Bratianu's expressed convictions, but in reality he was suspicious of his political convictions. He could not easily forget the revolutionary past of the Romanian Prime Minister. In a dispatch to Vienna, he expressed dissatisfaction with Bratianu's decision to have his son educated in Paris. He considered this as "characteristic", and wondered how far it was due to the influence of Rosetti, "whose intimacy with the Reddest parties in France is beyond doubt". His overall conclusion on the Romanian admission to the League was that the Central Powers should accept Romania as a partner in their alliance, but at the same time they should continue to negotiate with Russia.¹

Bismarck's eagerness to negotiate with Russia explains Bratianu's haste in his negotiations with the Austrians. On his way home from Berlin, he stopped in Vienna long enough to bring about an understanding with Kalnoky, who worked out the preliminary draft of a treaty to be negotiated. The two statesmen had several interviews and by the end of the month, they were able to iron out the differences which stood in the way to a rapprochement between their governments.²

Bratianu's haste did not prevent him from attempting to secure the things he considered desirable for his country. In Vienna, as at Gastein, he sought to obtain provisions for

1 Bismarck to Reuss, September 8, 1883. La Politique Ext., volume 3, No. 645.

2 Bratianu, loc.cit., p. 98.

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territorial gain as a consequence of an eventual war with Russia. He was thinking of the possession of the mouths of the Danube and the extension of Romania's frontiers in the east to the Dniester. Kalnoky, who was thoroughly acquainted with the course of the Gastein talks, declared himself unable to agree to any such provisions, insisting that the treaty must be of a defensive character - a League of Peace. Bratianu did not insist any further on this point, giving it to understand that he agreed with that interpretation.¹

The next disagreement in their negotiations came over a clause introduced by Kalnoky in the preliminary draft. It stated that Austria-Hungary and Romania engaged themselves reciprocally not to tolerate on their respective territory any movement directed against the State of the other. This obviously was a clever attempt to put an end to the national propaganda of the Romanians in Transylvania, and to their cultural and economic ties with Romania. Bratianu, who sensed the purpose of such a stipulation, opposed it vigorously. He argued that such a provision should be left out completely, for it implied lack of reciprocal trust. Kalnoky submitted to this interpretation and did not mention this point again.²

Then came the question of Germany's relation to the alliance. For the Romanian Government Germany's adhesion was essential; the treaty with Austria was not an end in itself, but only a means to an end. But the German Government was quite reluctant to take such a step. Bismarck took the attitude that there was no need for a formal adhesion of Germany to the Austro-Romanian treaty. Even without her signature, he argued, Germany would automatically assume

1 Reuss to Bismarck, September 26, 1883. La Politique Ext., volume 3, No. 652.

2 Ibid.

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obligations under the treaty in virtue of her alliance with Austria (i.e., the Dual Alliance of 1879). Hence any action taken by Austria to ward off an attack on Romania would obtain German support. His arguments failed to impress either Romania or Austria, but made them understand that, notwithstanding his personal predilections, Bismarck was pressured into adopting this attitude. Indeed he encountered a certain amount of difficulty with William I, whose Russophil feelings had always to be taken into consideration. The draft of the treaty contained two clauses which referred to the event of Romania or Austria being attacked "par la Russie", and this had to be changed to please the Emperor. This would not alter the essence of the treaty, but without it the Emperor would not give his consent. Moreover Bismarck himself was dissatisfied with the wording of the preamble which stated that the two governments concluded the treaty with the sole aim of forestalling the dangers which might menace "la sécurité et la paix de leurs Etats". He thought that the word "la sécurité" should be left out, for it might be interpreted as to justify an aggressive war. Remembering Bratianu's attempts to obtain provisions for territorial gain, the Chancellor was eager to avoid any phrase that might seem to encourage Romania to take advantage of her newly won position and commit almost two million German and Austrian soldiers to the cause of extending her frontiers in the east to the Dniester.¹

Germany's adhesion to this treaty was essential, not only for Romania, but also for Austria. Kalnoky was under no illusion regarding the feelings of the Romanians towards

¹ Bismarck to Reuss, September 28, 1883. La Politique Ext., volume 3, No. 653. Busch, German Deputy-Minister for Foreign Affairs, to Reuss, October 5, 7, 8, 1883. Ibid., Nos. 656, 657, 658.

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Austria-Hungary. Moreover, while it was almost a certainty that King Carol, as a Hohenzollern, would do all in his power to keep his word given to the German Emperor, no one could predict that he would be as eager to keep his promise to the Austrian Emperor. The Austrian Minister therefore agreed to the changes in the text of the treaty requested by Bismarck, promising at the same time to secure Romania's concurrence. The Romanian Government agreed to the changes on the condition that Germany would accede at once to the alliance. With these agreements reached, the objections of the German Emperor were removed and the treaty was signed on October 30, 1883. Germany acceded to it on the same day.¹

The first article of the treaty contained the promise that the two contracting parties would not enter into alliances or engagements directed against one another, and that they would follow a friendly policy and lend one another mutual support within the limits of their interests. Article two stipulated that in the event of an unprovoked attack upon Romania, Austria-Hungary was bound to bring timely help against the aggressor; and that Romania should come to the support of Austria-Hungary if, without provocation, the latter should be attacked in a portion of her states bordering on Romania. This in fact meant that while Austria-Hungary undertook to help Romania against aggression from any quarter, Romania was obligated to help Austria-Hungary only if attacked by Russia or Serbia. Article three provided for the military measures the two contracting parties would have to take if common action should become necessary. The fourth article laid the governments under pro-

1 Reuss to Bismarck, October 1, 1883. Ibid., no. 655. Reuss to Bulow, October 10. Ibid., No. 659. Busch to Bismarck, October 22. Ibid., No. 661. Same to same, October 25. Ibid., No. 662.

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mise, in the event of a common war, not negotiate or conclude a separate peace. Article five fixed the duration of the treaty to five years in the first instance, and to three more years afterwards if it was not denounced by either party one year before its expiration. The final article contained the mutual promise of the contracting parties to guard the secrecy of the treaty.¹

Romania's formal entrance into the camp of the Central Powers constituted a success for her diplomacy, determining the pattern of her policy for the next thirty years. She remained a silent partner in the Triple Alliance until 1914, when the advent of the First World War forced her to reverse her foreign policy. Though this alliance was meant to be no more than "an insurance company", and, "not a company for profit", as Prince von Bulow characterized it in 1902,² Romania derived certain substantial advantages from it. The adhesion of Germany gave the young State the guarantee of two Great Powers against aggression. This guarantee was further enhanced in May 1888 by Italy's entrance into the alliance; thus making Romania's position almost unassailable. This external security, so necessary for her internal development, afforded her the opportunity to adjust well to her newly won status and to consolidate her position in the Balkans, where she was soon to be regarded as a bastion for peace and stability.³

1 Text of treaty in A.F.Pribram, The Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary 1879-1914, volume 1, English edition by A.C.Coolidge, H.Fertig, New York, 1967, pp.78-87.

2 Pribram, op.cit., p.III (introduction).

3 Smedovsky, loc.cit.

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Conclusion

The idea of unification in a sovereign State had been an ever present factor in the common denominator which underlined the hopes and aspirations of the Romanian people, even though its realization seemed no more than a theoretical speculation. The development of a Romanian culture in the first half of the 19th century, based on the idea of Romanian Latinity, crystalized this idea and brought it into the realm of practical reality. Proud of their past and painfully aware of the present, the Romanian intellectuals began to prepare the masses for a brighter future compatible with their national heritage - the unification of all Romanians into one sovereign nation.

The true initiative for the attainment of this objective was taken by a small middle-class group of ardent nationalists, who had to struggle hard against powerful forces which intended to perpetuate the status quo in the political existence of the Romanian people. At home they had to contend with the sluggish Conservative forces which feared radical changes which would give expression to the national will, reducing the gap between the highly placed and the humble; abroad they had to struggle against the attitude of the Powers, whose economic interests and power politics demanded the preservation of the established relationship between themselves and the Romanians. Their task was difficult and the means to accomplish it were modest and sometime inefficient; but they had never lost sight of their aim, nor had they lost the hope of reaching it.

Following the unification of the Romanian Principalities and the abdication of Alexander Cuza, this group of Radical politicians, led by Brătianu, conceived the advantage of placing on the Romanian throne a foreign prince with enough family prestige to satisfy most social classes

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at home, and most governments abroad. It was for this reason that they offered the throne to Prince Carol of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen. They hoped that Carol would gain popularity both at home and abroad, and that with his help they could grasp political supremacy. Initially Carol went along with them, but when their tactical moves became too radical for his taste, he changed sides, embracing the Conservative cause. To counter the Conservative block the Radicals strove to gain the support of the middle-class and the peasants. When this proved insufficient, they attempted to divide the Conservatives themselves and gain to their side those liberally-minded boyars, whose economic interests were closer to those of the middle class rather than to those of the upper class. By the summer of 1875 the Radicals were able to form a powerful political coalition which succeeded to overthrow the Conservative Administration early in 1876.

No sooner had they gained political supremacy at home than they began to unfold their policy abroad for the attainment of Romania's independence. The tactics they employed were not fixed or rigid; they were flexible enough to adjust to internal conditions and international developments. If these two factors were incompatible, or contradictory, then, they would act according to the expediency of the moment, giving priority to the one that counted most at any given time.

The immediate results of their diplomacy were very unsatisfactory to say the least. This was due to a twist in international events which entangled them in the Russo-Turkish struggle. By late 1876 they failed to obtain independence from the Porte by diplomatic means, and there were credible rumours that Russia intended to ask for Romanian Bessarabia. At this point their immediate objective was to prevent the loss of Bessarabia. Towards this end they invoked the terms of the Paris Treaty, which guaranteed Romania's territorial integrity as part of the Ottoman Empire and asked Europe

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for a formal guarantee of neutrality. Failing to obtain a clarification on either of these points from a hesitant Europe, they had joined Russia in the war against the Turks in the hope of preventing the loss of Bessarabia and obtaining Europe's recognition of Romania.

This move of active involvement was no more successful than their diplomatic maneuvering. Romania's economy was heavily taxed by the exigency of the war, but all she obtained by the peace treaty of San Stefano was a promise for independence and for territorial compensation for the loss of Bessarabia. This failure lowered the prestige of the government in the eyes of the nation. To gain some of the lost confidence in the country, the Radical Government promised the nation that at the Congress of Berlin, they will attempt to reverse the decisions reached at San Stefano.

Towards the fulfillment of this promise, the Romanian Government struggled hard during the spring and summer of 1878, but they failed miserably. Europe decided that Bessarabia was to go to Russia. Worse yet, they even failed to obtain from the Powers the recognition of Romania's independence, declared by Parliament in May 1877.

The consequence of this failure could have been fatal to the political career of the Radicals, had it not been for the nature of the conditions upon which Romania's recognition was based. It was obvious to all that the loss of Bessarabia could no longer be prevented from the moment the Powers refused to support Romania against the might of Russia. Since the Congress made the recognition of Romania dependent on the solution of the Jewish question, the Radicals were able to point out to the nation the influence borne by the international Jewry. Bismarck's insistence on a satisfactory solution of the Railway question also helped the Radical cause, for they were able to indicate to the nation that their failure to obtain Romania's recognition was not due to a faulty policy of their own, but rather to German

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financial interests.

The task of complying with the terms of the Berlin Treaty proved very difficult. The Romanian Government was caught between two powerful forces, each pressing for a satisfactory solution of their interests. From abroad the governments of the Powers were pressing for the attainment of political and religious equality for the Jews in Romania, and Germany was pressing for a satisfactory solution of her financial interests in Romania. At home the forces of Opposition were pressing for the exclusion of the Jews from equal political rights, and for the elimination of German financial investments from Romania. It took the Radical Government almost two full years of relentless struggles to bring about a viable degree of compatibility between these opposing forces.

The attainment of Europe's recognition of Romania in the spring of 1880 gave a new lease to the political existence of the Radical party, but it did not put an end to their difficulties. Romania's newly acquired status created new problems which demanded an urgent solution, if she was to continue to exist and prosper as an independent State.

This newly won position coupled with the changes which were then taking place in the grouping of the European Powers required a new orientation in Romania's political outlook. Her geographical position was detrimental to her security. Placed as she was at the cross-roads of Russian and Austrian interests, she could not survive independently in a state of isolation. She had thus to seek and obtain a formal commitment of friendship and effective support in case of emergency from one of these Powers.

Russia's arrogant attitude made it impossible for the Romanians to get close to her. An Austrian alliance was therefore their only alternative; but the Austro-Romanian relations were strained by economic conflicts and irredentist sentiments. Austria's attempt to obtain a preponderent influence on the Lower Danube was resented by the Romanians

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and the Romanian irredentist sentiments were resented by the Austrians. Eager to reach an agreement with each other, but unable to solve the difficulties between them, both Austria and Romania appealed to Berlin for mediation. This move was welcomed by Bismarck who desired to prevent Romania from falling within the Russian sphere of influence and have her attached to the chariot of the Dual Alliance. Towards this end he undertook a vigorous diplomatic activity, attempting to convince both parties of the reciprocal benefits they would derive from a formal alliance with each other. The governments of Austria and Romania consented to his plan on the condition that Germany would become a third party to their alliance. On this point Bismarck hesitated temporarily but in the end promised to go along with it, providing the terms of the alliance were made compatible with his overall system of alliances he had in mind. The above two governments agreed to this and Romania became a silent partner in the Triple Alliance, where she remained until the advent of the first world war.

Despite the nerve wracking struggle and the loss of life and property during the war of 1877, the Romanians gained three important points during this troubled period in their history which helped them to raise the status of their country, and get it accepted into the European family of Sovereign States. The first of these was the achievement of independence which had an important effect on the state of mind of the nation. During the struggle for independence the two Romanian Principalities, just recently united, lost their individual identity and acquired a new one common to both of them - Romania. The exigency of the war of 1877 reduced considerably the gap between the different social classes and their respective political tendencies, welding them into one almost homogeneous mass - the Romanian nation. They were now free in a sovereign State and masters of their own destiny.

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The second point was Romania's elevation to the rank of Kingdom. This reduced the tendency of political opportunism by discouraging the formation of a plurality of major political parties, establishing firmly a two-party political system under a constitutional King. It also made Romania more acceptable to the neighbouring Powers, who regarded monarchy as the most stable political system.

The third point was made possible by the first two. With independence achieved and the monarchical principle adopted, Romania appeared as a desirable ally to the Central Powers, who were determined to reduce Russia's influence in the Balkans. By joining the Triple Alliance, Romania gained the much desired security against foreign aggression, which allowed the nation to concentrate on the consolidation of internal achievements.

It was due to these three points and their consequences that by the beginning of the 20th century Romania came to be regarded in the Balkans as a bastion of peace and security.

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