

Intermediary research report

Project Code: PN-II-RU-TE-2012-3-0078

Project Title: **Visions and Perceptions of Romania in the Russian Imperial Discourse and Public Sphere in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century**

Project Director: Dr. Andrei Cușco

1st stage: May- December 2013

According to the general goals outlined for the project's first stage (May – December, 2013), the activities of the research team members focused on the analysis and systematization of the existing secondary literature and on the planning and organization of several research trips to Romanian and foreign libraries and archives (in the Russian Federation, the Republic of Moldova, Austria). An important totalizing activity within the first stage of the project was marked by the International Workshop *Diplomacy and Society in Eastern Europe: Directions, Sources, Research Methods*, organized on November 21-22, 2013, together with the research team involved in the project PN II-RU-TE-2012-3-0288 (*Foreign Diplomats in the Kingdom of Romania. Ways of Socialisation and Mundanity Experiences (1881-1914)*). In what follows, we will present a synthetic image of the project members' main activities and of the results achieved.

Research trip to St. Petersburg (Andrei Cușco). Between August 25 and September 27, 2013, the project director went for a research trip to St. Petersburg, where he worked in the collections of the Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA), as well as in the relevant manuscript and publication collections of the Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Russian National Library (RNB). The general aim of the research trip was to thoroughly investigate the archival and press materials concerning the Russian-Romanian relations and the Russian images and perceptions of the Romanian state during the period 1860-1916.

In this respect, the Russian State Historical Archive contains a rich documentary material related to various aspects of the Russian-Romanian diplomatic relations, but also specific funds concerning certain particular dimensions of the Russian and Romanian mutual images and perceptions (mostly on topics related to the religious sphere and the 'church question' in Romania). The project director had access to all the main archival holdings pertaining to Romania. Concretely, the archival collections consulted at the St. Petersburg archives fall into several main categories: 1) ceremonial and official collections of the Imperial Court which

reflect King Carol I's visit to Russia in 1898, the meeting between Carol I and Nicholas II at Constanta in June 1914, as well as the sporadic visits by other members of the Romanian Royal family to Russia in the early 20th century. Overall, these collections comprise around 30 archival funds; 2) archival collections regarding various aspects of the Russian-Romanian diplomatic relations in the late 19th and early 20th century. Although the majority of such materials are held at the Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire (AVPRI), in Moscow, which is currently inaccessible to researchers, A. Cușco identified approximately 15 *fondy*, linked to the appointment of Russian diplomatic representatives to Romania, but also featuring extensive reports of the Russian consuls and envoys to Romania, which frequently proved rather relevant for the project's topic; 3) around 15 *fondy* dedicated to various border issues and legal aspects; 4) around 10 *fondy* that were especially interesting to us, since they comprised certain materials related to (geo)political and national aspects, reflecting the increasing interest of the Russian Empire towards the Romanian nation-state in the early 20th century. The growing Russian preoccupation for Romania acquired a systematic character during World War I, when different Russian nationalist organizations, but also the Petrograd officials become aware of the relevance of the "Romanian question" in the context of the projects aiming at the geopolitical transformation of the East European space. A fascinating example in this sense is *fond* 1470, *opis* 1, *delo* 323-324, which holds over 1500 pages of translations from the Romanian press, from the 1914-1916 period, providing a detailed and comprehensive view of the central debates raging in Romania during the neutrality period; 5) Finally, one should emphasize the substantial information from the holdings of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church (especially *fondy* 796, 797 and 799), which cover the 'church question' in the United Principalities and the Romanian Kingdom starting from the reign of Al. I. Cuza and up to the first decade of the 20th century. Beyond these specific *fondy*, the following materials were especially relevant for the project's topic: *fond* 832, *opis*' 1, *delo* 108: „On the Situation of the Orthodox Church in the Danubian Principalities” (1860-1867), consisting of 38 documents (mostly diplomatic dispatches, but also letters of the Romanian church hierarchs addressed to their Russian counterparts). The project director consulted over 80 archival funds, which can serve as a good starting point for a synthetic approach towards the project's topic throughout the following years. These materials will also be included in a number of publications planned for the project's next stages.

The collections of the St. Petersburg libraries were relevant for the project's focus mostly due to the intensive research efforts devoted to the central and local press incorporating materials about

Romania. Besides central publications, such as *Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti* and *Novoe Vremia*, a number of Bessarabian Russian-language newspapers were under systematic scrutiny (especially *Bessarabskaia Zhizn'*, *Bessarabets* and *Drug*), which frequently allowed space for Romania-related subjects, reflecting various ideological positions. Dr. Cusco also looked at other regional newspapers published in Southern Russia (e.g., *Odesskii Listok*), that had been usually neglected by the historiography of the region due to their small impact in that period. Certain important moments in the discourse articulated by the Russian press vis-à-vis Romania were emphasized (e.g., the 1907 peasant uprising or the 1914-16 debates and foreign policy polemics). The complete collections of these newspapers can be found both at the Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences and at the Russian National Library. The project director also consulted over 50 printed volumes at the library of the Russian Academy of Sciences (travelogues, historical works, memoirs, political brochures, general publications, polemical writings from the period of the Great War) that offer a more complete understanding of the Russian visions and perceptions (either official or unofficial) towards Romania and its people. In the same context, Dr. Cusco also had access to around 30 similar publications stored in the funds of the Russian National Library. All these materials were either copied or digitalized, thus contributing to enriching the source base of our project.

Research activities: Flavius Solomon. During the project's first stage, dr. Flavius Solomon focused his research activities on two main aspects: 1) the articulation of the visions and perceptions of the Russian diplomacy regarding Romanian society during 1881-1914, as reflected in that period's diplomatic reports and dispatches; 2) the paradigmatic change in Russia's attitude towards Romania at the end of World War I. Both aspects have been approached through the collection and analysis of important documentary sources, identified during several research trips to the Romanian National Archives (Bucharest), the National Archive of the Republic of Moldova (Chişinău), the Russian National Library (Sankt Petersburg), the State Archive of the Russian Federation – GARF (Moscow), the State Archive of Social and Political History (the „Comintern Archive”) – RGASPI (Moscow), The State Archive (Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv) (Vienna), the Romanian State Archives in Iaşi.

Regarding the first cluster of problems, Dr Solomon came to the conclusion that the Russian diplomatic reports are a crucial source not only for the narrower topic of the Russian-Romanian relations, but also for a better understanding of the mechanisms for the production and transfer of the Russian-generated perceptions concerning Romania and Romanian society. Given the particular importance of these sources, they will not only be used in a number of articles, but will

also be published as a series of three or four bilingual, Russian-Romanian, documentary volumes, with detailed interpretive introductory essays and appropriate historical commentaries. The project members have already started working on the first volume in the series (coordinated by Flavius Solomon), which would cover the years 1888-1898 (please see more details below). Also, together with the similar Austro-Hungarian and German documents, partially explored during this year, they will represent a serious starting point for a comparative approach towards the competing visions of the Russian, Austro-Hungarian and German Empires regarding Romania, on the eve and during the early phase of World War I.

The second aspect of special interest for Dr. Solomon concerns the change of paradigm undergone by the Russian diplomacy (especially in connection with Romania) during the 1917 revolutionary turmoil and particularly after the Bolshevik seizure of power. The archival documents identified during the initial project period (Russian diplomatic and military reports covering Romania; documents produced by Soviet organs, including their correspondence with the Romanian Social Democrats; reports sent back home by the Romanian diplomats in Russia; French, Austro-Hungarian, German, Swedish, American diplomatic documents pertaining to this period) proved that Romania represented, during late 1917 and early 1918, one of the first testing grounds for the radical new strategies of Bolshevik foreign policy. These sources, analyzed in the context of the arrest of the Romanian diplomatic mission in Petrograd, the break of diplomatic relations and the formation of an abortive 'Soviet Romanian' government in Russia, point to the conclusion that the transition from the 'classical' Russian diplomacy to the 'proletarian' Soviet diplomatic model was quite rapid, being based on the Trotskyist theory of 'permanent revolution.' The first results of this research were presented at the November Workshop. The presentation will serve as a basis for an article, to be published in a „Web of Science” or „ERIH, A”-indexed journal (see details below).

The International Workshop *Diplomacy and Society in Eastern Europe: Directions, Sources, Research Methods.* The Workshop, held on November 21-22, 2013, was an exploratory event that, on the one hand, served as a totalizing activity for the project's first stage and, on the other hand, sketched several priorities linked to the comparative context of the activities planned for the next three years. The project members presented the first conclusions and direct results that emerged after this year's research trips. Panel 2 within the workshop, reserved for our project, ('Romania and the Great Powers: Visions, Perceptions, Identities'), included several researchers specializing in the field of the history of diplomacy, but also in cultural history and imagology. The participants emphasized the link between the sphere of the political imaginary and the Great

Powers' practical policies. The project director presented a paper on *The 'Church Question' in the United Principalities and the Romanian Kingdom in the Mirror of Russian Imperial Discourse (1860-1914): Between Continuity and Transformation*, attempting to analyze Russia's position towards the Romanian Orthodox Church in the context of the Church-State relationship practiced in the Russian Empire, but also taking into account the priorities of the Russian imperial policies in the borderlands. He emphasized the link between the religious dimension, the (geo)political strategies and the various and competing nation-building projects. The members of the research team, Dr. Flavius Solomon and Dr. Bogdan Ceobanu, presented a paper on "World Revolution" and the *Infancy of Soviet Diplomacy: The Closing of the Romanian Legation in Petrograd in January 1918*, in which they analyzed the first major diplomatic incident resulting from the specific model of Soviet diplomacy. They concluded that the doctrine of 'world revolution' signified not only a radical rupture with regard to the classical diplomatic practices, but also a fundamental change in the strategy of the new Russian authorities towards the entire zone of East European contested borderlands. The workshop also included papers by several Romanian (Sorin Cristescu), Moldovan (Virgil Pâslariuc, Ion Varta, Tatiana Varta) and Russian (Oleg Grom) historians, who were closely associated with the project's topic and goals. The complete program of the workshop is available on the departmental website at: <http://history.uaic.ro/4566/21-22-noiembrie-2013-workshop-international-diplomatie-si-societate-in-europa-de-est/>, and on the project's own webpage.

The workshop proceedings will be reflected in a series of articles and other scholarly texts, to be elaborated by the project team members during next year.

2. Second stage: January – December 2014

During the current year, the activity of the project's research team envisaged three major objectives. First, we invested considerable time and efforts in the documentary publication series planned last year. This series could hopefully serve as a useful research tool not only for the interested area specialists, but also for the wider public. Thus, within the *Documenta diplomatica* collection, hosted by the "Al. I. Cuza" University Press, the first volume of Russian diplomatic reports on Romania (covering the 1888-1898 period) has been published. For the next stages of the project, we are planning to publish a separate volume of sources related to Emperor Nicholas II's visit to Constanta (in June 1914), as well as another installment of the collections of diplomatic dispatches / reports of the Russian representatives to Romania. We are already working on the next volume, which is to cover the period 1899-1905. Both volumes mentioned

above are to be published during next year. Second, the project members focused their efforts on the publication of their research materials in internationally recognized journals (including in ISI- or ERIH-indexed periodicals). Please see more details below. Third, the project members continued to work on the collection and systematic analysis of primary documentary sources relevant for the project's topic. The team members undertook several research trips abroad (Turkey, the UK, France, the Republic of Moldova etc.). This effort was determined, up to a large extent, by the necessity to contextualize the narrower topic of the Russian-Romanian relations in the late 19th and early 20th century, by placing them within the broader framework of the general process of transformation of the political sphere and of the collective imaginings, characteristic for this period as a whole. .

Research activities: Andrei Cușco. Throughout 2014, the project director coordinated and was involved in all three kinds of research activities described above. As a result of the earlier investigations in the St. Petersburg archives (see above), but also due to the analysis of a wide array of sources from the Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire (AVPRI; Moscow) and from the Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA, St. Petersburg) Dr. Cusco co-wrote, together with his colleagues, Dr. Flavius Solomon and Oleg Grom, a lengthy article on: *Discourses of Empire and Nation in Early 20th-Century Bessarabia: Russian-Romanian Symbolic Competition and the 1912 Anniversary*. This article is currently under review at the ERIH-indexed journal *Ab Imperio*, one of the most high-quality and innovative specialist publications devoted to the Russian and East European space. The article traces, in detail, the manifestations of the Russian-Romanian 'symbolic competition' for Bessarabia, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of this province's accession to the Russian empire, in May 1912. This moment represented a crucial stage in the crystallization of the opposing Russian and Romanian visions on the Bessarabian periphery. Bessarabia became an object of mutually exclusive Russian and Romanian claims at a moment when mass politics entered the region. Despite the weak effect on the local population, the anniversary celebrations were an opportunity to articulate the criteria for collective identity and belonging within the Russian imperial and Romanian national setting, highlighting both states' priorities and concerns in this sphere. The peripheral Bessarabian context acted as a mirror for the dilemmas of state-building and identity construction at a crucial juncture in both cases. On the Russian side, the older concepts of dynastic loyalty and Orthodox unity had to adapt to the nationalizing vocabulary of ethnicity and 'populist' rhetoric; on the Romanian side, the broadly shared national consensus was questioned in terms of priorities and ultimate goals. These larger processes intersected in May 1912, when

the Russian and Romanian ‘scenarios of belonging’ were enacted on the occasion of the festive ceremonies in Bessarabia and the opposing ‘rituals of commemoration’ in the Romanian Kingdom. Beyond the sometimes narrow perspective of diplomatic history, this article attempts to provide a more complex interpretation of the mutual Russian and Romanian visions through the analysis of the Bessarabian case.

In the fall of 2014, Dr. Cusco undertook two research trips to the British and French archives, which allowed for the collection and analysis of important documentary sources. During his work at the British National Archives in London (Kew), between September 2 and 17, he explored the British diplomatic documents (reports, dispatches, telegrams) concerning Romania during the last prewar years (especially 1911-1914) and during World War I. Given the broader framework of the Anglo-Russian and Anglo-Romanian relations in this epoch, the last prewar years and the period of neutrality (1914-1916) is a particularly relevant time frame for our project. The British sources offer a much needed ‘counterweight’ to the Russian diplomatic documents, thus allowing a more thorough analysis of Romania’s international status in the East European context. The project director focused his attention on the following funds stored in the British National Archives concerning Romania: the general diplomatic correspondence for 1909 (FO 371/724), 1910 (FO 371/975), 1911 (FO 371/1212), 1912 (FO 371/1464), 1913 (FO 371/1742), 1914 (FO 371/2089), 1915 (FO 371/2443), 1916 (FO 371/2740) and 1917 (FO 371/2993). Dr. Cusco was especially interested in the British diplomatic correspondence during World War I, that reflects the negotiations between the Romanian government and the Entente Powers, as well as Romania’s situation in comparison with other major regional players (Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary). Thus, the special collection of wartime documents was of major importance for Dr. Cusco’s research. He reviewed and digitalized the following archival funds: FO 371/1900-1906 (Romania in 1914), FO 371/2241-2282 (Romania in 1915), FO 371/2602-2634 (Romania in 1916), FO 371/3140-3160 (Romania in 1917-1918). Overall, more than 3750 pages of archival documents have been processed and photographed. This represents a solid basis for a complex and nuanced reading of the contemporary sources, transcending the (sometimes biased) interpretation of the Russian and Romanian sources of the time.

The same goal, this time with reference to the French diplomatic sources, was pursued by the project director during his research stay at the Diplomatic Archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris / Courneuve (October 27 - November 2, 2014). Most of the French diplomatic sources regarding Romania are available on microfilm. Dr. Cusco was mostly interested in the French diplomatic correspondence on Romania between 1896 and 1914 (code:

194 CPCOM), and especially in the files concerning Romania's relations with France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia and the Balkan countries. These documents are available in the microfilm collection under the headings P18709- P 18717 (especially interesting is P 18711). Another major research area was the vision that the French diplomacy articulated with respect to Romania during World War I (from the documents stored in the microfilm collection "La Grande Guerre", code 1CPCOM). The files directly covering Romania (nr. 337-369) are available in the microfilm collection under the headings P 17601-17609. In sum, over 2500 pages of archival documents have been processed and photographed. The investigations in this field will be pursued during the next year as well. The French and British diplomatic documents are a valuable addition to the thematic focus of the project and will surely allow a more complex and comparative analysis of the Russian-Romanian relations and mutual images.

The project director, together with Dr. Bogdan Ceobanu, was also involved in the editorial process that led to the publication of the collection of Russian diplomatic documents coordinated by Dr. Flavius Solomon (see details below). The publication of this volume represented one of the main priorities of the project activities during the current year.

Research activities: Flavius Solomon. In 2014, dr. Flavius Solomon focused his activities on the analysis and interpretation of the documentary sources identified and collected during the previous year.

The first research track in this sense involved the systematization and publication of the Russian diplomatic reports of the late 1880s and 1890s, which had been partially identified, transcribed and translated in 2013 (see above). The result of this activity was the editing and publication of the documentary collection *Rapoarte diplomatice ruse din România (1888-1898)*, which has just been printed by the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University Press. The sources gathered in this volume open a broad perspective on the role of the Russian diplomatic representatives in Romania in the elaboration of the Russian foreign policy in the Balkan region, as a whole, and in the Romanian setting, in particular. Another level in the interpretation of the published documents concerns the issue of the Russian diplomats' contribution, through their dispatches and letters, to the crystallization of certain images with respect to Romania in the Russian imperial context. A related problem is the way in which these, often stereotypical, but nevertheless always fluctuating, images contributed to the emergence of a general Russian attitude towards Romania. If analyzed in the context of the historiographical debates on the origins, outbreak and progress of the 'Great War', the reports and dispatches of the Russian diplomats from the period 1878-

1916 also provide a consistent chronicle of the profound changes Romania's image underwent in their eyes: from a hostile country, tightly bound to its alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary, to a country which, both because of its history and its 'natural' interests, essentially belonged to an alliance system of which Russia was also a part.

Another outcome of the documentary dimension of Dr. Solomon's activities was the publication of the article *In Search of a Dynasty or a Republic: Romania in the Postwar Projections of the Central Powers and of Soviet Russia. Documents from the Political Archive of the German Foreign Ministry, December 1917- January 1918*, in the Yearbook of the "George Baritiu" Institute of History in Cluj-Napoca (Series Historica), 2014 (indexed in CEEOL). These documents, stored in the Political Archive of the German Foreign Ministry, reflect the collaboration between the Central Powers and Soviet Russia and include valuable information on the German and Soviet plans to remove the Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen dynasty from the Romanian throne and to replace it with a Soviet Romanian government (according to the immediate plans of Soviet Russia) or with a new German dynasty (following the designs of the Central Powers).

In connection with the same subject of the Russian-Romanian relations in the final period of World War I, Flavius Solomon wrote, with Andrei Cusco's collaboration, a piece entitled *How much Ideology can Diplomacy Endure? The Early Phase of Soviet-Romanian Relations, November 1917- February 1918*, which is currently under evaluation at the ISI-indexed German journal „Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas“. Based on the most recent publications in the field of the history of international relations and of World War I and using a series of documentary sources hitherto partially or totally ignored by historians, the article examines the relationship between ideology and diplomacy during the first months of the Soviet state's existence. This case study reveals interesting patterns in the interaction between different perspectives which co-existed at the level of Bolshevik leadership regarding the role of diplomacy in the 'proletarian state,' the mechanisms of constructing its foreign policy, and the principles for interaction with foreign states viewed as ideological enemies. The authors conclude that revolutions represent crucial moments leading to profound changes within the system of international relations. On the one hand, the ideological factor has a very significant role in this process. On the other hand, from the point of view of its relations with other states, any successful revolutionary movement attempts to find a compromise between the strongly ideological revolutionary discourse and certain elements, techniques and strategies characteristic for traditional diplomacy.

The Russian-Romanian relations, this time during Romania's neutrality in the Great War (1914-1916), were the object of the public lecture *1914: Rumänien und der Kriegsausbruch*, delivered by Flavius Solomon in front of the professors and students of the Department of History (Institute of East- and Southeast European History) at the University of Vienna, on June 16, 2014. The lecture was an excellent occasion for an exchange of opinions on the role of mutual perceptions in the field of international relations on the eve and in the initial period of World War I.

Research activities: Adrian-Bogdan Ceobanu. Throughout the current year, Dr. Ceobanu's project activities were structured on several levels. During his two research trips to Chisinau and Istanbul, his attention focused on the archival materials that contained relevant information regarding the evolution of Russian-Romanian relations during the late 19th and early 20th century. On the other hand, as a part of his ongoing research at the Central University Library in Iasi, he concentrated his efforts on studying the central press organs that analyzed Romania's policy towards Russia at different crucial moments in the evolution of the bilateral relationship.

Another aspect of Dr. Ceobanu's activities was his participation at scholarly conferences. In this sense, he took part in the international symposium *World War I: Historical and Historiographical Perspectives*, Cluj-Napoca, June 3-5 2014, where he presented a paper on *Russian-Romanian Relations in the Context of the Outbreak of World War I*. In this paper, dr. Ceobanu emphasized the debates in historiography, the evolution of the bilateral relations as revealed by new documents from the Romanian, Turkish and French archives, but also the way in which the Russian press reflected on the various moments of the escalating crisis in the summer of 1914, according to its ideological orientation. Dr. Ceobanu also participated at a round table on *The Visit of Tsar Nicholas II to Constanța (in 1914)*, organized by the Slavic Studies Chair „P. Caraman” at the Faculty of Letters of the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași on October 27, 2014. On this occasion, he presented a paper on the attitude of the Russian and Romanian press, but also of the foreign diplomats accredited in Romania, towards Nicholas II's visit to Constanta on June 1/14, 1914.

Last, but not least, dr. Ceobanu devoted some efforts to the publication of his research results. Thus, his article *N. Shebeko e le relazioni romeno-russe nel contesto dello scoppio della Prima guerra balcanica* (p. 71-86) was published in the collective volume *Fra neutralità e conflitto. L'Italia, la Romania e le Guerre balcaniche*, a cura di Antonio D' Alessandri e Rudolf Dinu, Società Editrice Dante Alighieri, Roma. Also, another recent article, *Some Ottoman Documents*

Concerning the Russian-Romanian Relations (May – June, 1914), is forthcoming in the Yearbook of the “A.D. Xenopol” Institute of History, Iași, vol. LI, 2014.

In conclusion, the project has broadly reached the goals formulated at its outset. At the moment, we possess a wide variety of sources that we will work on, process and analyze throughout the next stages of the project. The subsequent project activities will be structured on the basis of the three main directions mentioned above. However, in the remaining time frame of the project special attention will be devoted to the proper dissemination of the research results. Thus, we intend to organize a number of local and international scholarly events during the next two years of our project.