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The Revolutionary Russian
Army and Romania, 1917

REES

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Preface

The growth of the revolutionary movement in the ranks of the Russian army on the Romanian front in 1917 has attracted the attention of a number of Soviet historians. M.M. Gitsiu, *Deiatel'nost' soldatskikh sovetov i komitetov na rumynskom fronte i v Moldavii v 1917 g.* (Kishinev, 1985), concentrates on the soldier's organizations and the growth of Bolshevik influence among them. E.N. Istrati, *Demokraticheskoe dvizhenie za mir na rumynskom fronte v. 1917 gody* (Kishinev, 1973), has a broader perspective emphasizing the question of war or peace. M.S. Frenkin, *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie na rumynskom fronte 1917 g. - mart 1918* (Moscow, 1965), is the best of this genre but despite the title, covers only one of four Russian armies attached to the Romanian front, and the one which was not on Romanian soil. Frenkin's second book, *Russkaia armia i revoliutsiia 1917-1918* (Munich, 1978), written after his emigration to Israel, is a welcome corrective to all Soviet accounts, including his earlier one. But in covering all four fronts, Frenkin devotes limited attention to the Romanian. By far the best general survey of the impact of the Revolution at the front is Allan Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army*, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1980, 1987), which is distinguished by balance and insight. However, neither Wildman nor the others mentioned deal with the Romanian response to Russian revolutionary agitation or with Russo-Romanian relations.

Romanian historiography on these subjects has oscillated wildly from the nationalist bias of the interwar period, which portrayed the Russians in malevolent terms (Constantin Kirițescu, *Istoria războiului pentru întegirea României 1916-1919*, 3 vols., Bucharest, 1922) to the anti-nationalist bias of the "Muscovite" period (1948-1961), which praised the behavior of the Russians and exaggerated the revolutionary response among the Romanian people (Vasile Liveanu, *1918: Din istoria luptelor revoluționare din România*, Bucharest, 1960). After the 1960s, neither of these

interpretations was in fashion and political considerations dictated a moratorium of sorts on the subject.

These issues are emphasized in the present study, which is a by-product of my long-time involvement in research and writing on Romania's participation in the First World War. It is based on materials in Romanian archives as well as the archives of those nations which were her allies and enemies in 1917. By viewing the interaction of the revolutionary Russian army and the Romanians with the aid of outside observers from both sides of the battle line, I have tried to steer a neutral course through the sea of nationalist and ideological emotion which has characterized this subject. I fully understand and accept the fact that some will feel I have not succeeded.

Seen in a broader perspective, the Romanian front was the unique example of large-scale military cooperation between Russia and her allies. The events of 1917 were also intimately connected with the Allied decision to intervene in South Russia in 1918. Hopefully this study will provide a helpful background for these subjects.

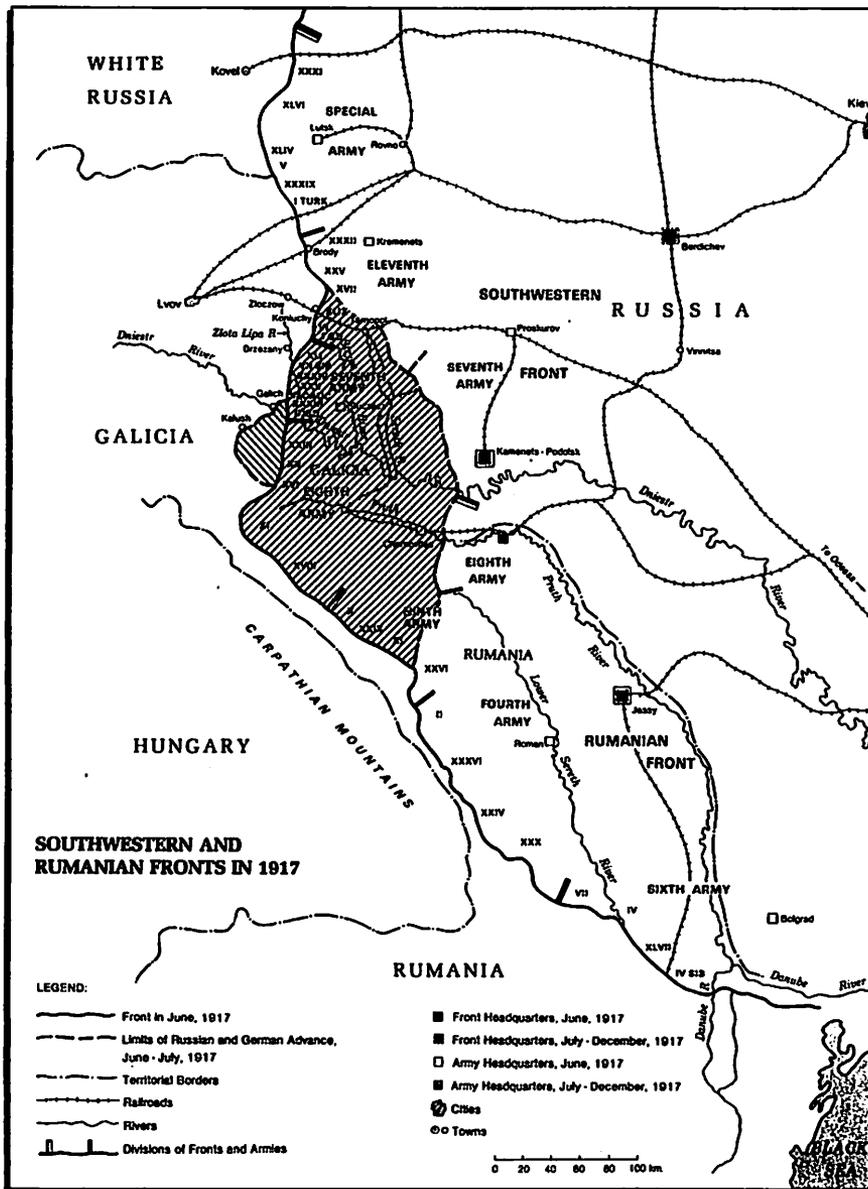
I am indebted to more libraries and archives than I can possibly mention here and to Fulbright and IREX grants, which, in addition to sabbatical leaves from Emporia State University, made it possible for me to visit them. Also, I am deeply grateful to my wife, Audrey, for encouragement and companionship, as she shared much of this travel.

All translations are my own.

The Revolution Comes to Romania

News of the Duma's decision to assume power in Petrograd reached Romania on 13 March, 1917. In fact, it was Prime Minister Ion Brătianu who presented the report to the as yet uninformed Russian minister in Iași while the latter was dining at his mission. Brusquely and silently, as if to say "I told you so," Brătianu thrust a deciphered telegram announcing the Revolution into the hands of the startled and confused envoy, A.A. Mosolov. As soon as the latter received official confirmation of the Tsar's abdication from his foreign minister in Petrograd, he conveyed the news personally to King Ferdinand. The latter was "dumbfounded," murmuring in tears, "What misfortune, what misfortune!...What a catastrophe....It is dreadful....What are we going to do."¹

The pessimism of the Romanian monarch was based on the realization that his country was then totally at the mercy of Russia. Over 1,000,000 Russian troops had been sent to stabilize Romania's military situation after the latter's disastrous defeat by the Central Powers in 1916. They were organized into three armies, the IV, VI, and IX, which shielded Moldavia, the only territory remaining under Romanian control. Together with a token Romanian force of 30,000 (II Army) and the VIII Russian Army in Bukovina, they were designated the "Romanian Front." (see map) Ferdinand was the titular front commander with a Russian chief of staff, then General V.V. Sakharov. Approximately one-half of the Russian soldiers were at the front, while the another 500,000 service troops crowded the interior of Moldavia. Most Romanian cities hosted Russian garrisons and near the front villagers were displaced to make room for their allies whose presence and behavior came to resemble an army of occupation. Little wonder there was much uneasiness among Romanians over the possible impact the upheaval in Petrograd might have on them.²



From: Allan Wildman, *The End of the Imperial Russian Army*, Vol. II
 @Princeton, 1987

The Reaction of the Russian Army

It has been argued that the relative remoteness of the Romanian front from the centers of agitation lessened or at least delayed the impact of the Revolution there.³ If true, the difference was only a matter of degree. Attempts by the Russian front command to control information about events in Petrograd were not successful. The contents of official Russian military telegrams were quickly spread by communications personnel. At some places on the front soldiers learned of the events in Petrograd when the enemy hoisted a placard: "In Russia revolution. Tsar was given his due." Others received the news through letters from home, or from newspapers. Austrian intelligence found detailed knowledge of the Revolution widespread among Russian troops on the Romanian front before the end of March.⁴

Awareness of events in Petrograd made it impossible for the many conservative generals on the Romanian front, "a veritable nest of incorrigible counterrevolutionaries," according to Wildman, to avoid the implementation of "democratic reforms" mandated by the Provisional Government. Sakharov and General P.A. Lechitskii, IX Army commander, who were particularly hostile to the Revolution, tried to ignore or control the organization of "Soldiers' and Officers' Committees," but their efforts ultimately failed and by late April Sakharov and Lechitskii were gone and well-functioning committees were in existence. Initially dominated by relatively conservative Social Revolutionaries, these committees worked to maintain order and discipline and to carry on the war. But as 1917 progressed, they either became more radical or lost control of the troops they represented. Consequently, the impact of the revolution on the Romanian front, although possibly more restricted initially, eventually became just as violent and disorganizing as elsewhere.⁵ Fraternalization, pacifism, poor discipline, and desertion quickly multiplied.

Fraternalization with the enemy had been widespread in the East even before the Revolution. On the Romanian front, Russian and Bulgarian soldiers, whose languages facilitated communication, had friendly meetings on the ice of the Sereth

River in February. After the Revolution, this fraternization included revolutionary overtones. Russian soldiers hoisted placards calling on their "Bulgarian brothers" to give their own Tsar Ferdinand the same fate as Tsar Nicolas. Letters of soldiers with the VI Army told of visiting German trenches to exchange "friendly handshakes and embraces" as well as food and cigarettes. Command and committee attempts to discourage this "treason against the fatherland" were ignored.⁶ Spontaneous Russian fraternization during the first weeks after the Revolution inspired the German command to organize contact on a massive scale. Detailed guidelines were sent out to intelligence officers and a three day Easter truce (14-16 April) all along the Eastern front was proclaimed unilaterally by the German and Austrian high commands. For the Romanian front, Oberkommando Mackensen (OKM) in Bucharest was ordered to abstain from "aggressive hostilities on the east front, especially during the Russian holidays." At the same time, a Russian language newspaper, *Siret* (The Sereth), was founded and printed at Brăila in many thousands of copies for distribution to the Russian positions.⁷

As a result of this effort, Easter weekend on the Romanian front witnessed a massive intermingling between the Russian and enemy forces. Liberated from fear of the harsh discipline of the imperial army, the Russians responded eagerly to their enemy's initiatives and met them in the neutral zone to drink and dance. One large Austrian contingent, led by a battalion commander and a military band, marched out in formation to meet them. Attempts by Russian officers to break up the celebration by pistol or artillery fire were thwarted by the bayonets of the angry infantry. In the vicinity of Dorna Vatra, another large enemy deputation, comprising 10 officers (including one colonel) and about 500 men were sent into the lines of the Russian IX Army with white flags and music. They brought gifts and holiday greetings. Russian soldiers responded enthusiastically, and for a few days the front was like a sieve.⁸

Although the intoxicating experience of Easter week was not repeated, fraternization continued to have an "epidemic character." Examples can be chosen from fronts of the IV, VI, and IX Russian armies. Near Suraia, Russian soldiers

came out of their trenches to receive propaganda newspapers; at Radulești, Russians handed over a written request not to shoot. In the area of the 40th Division, Russians stuck their weapons in the ground and called over the Sereth that they would not shoot. In the IX Army, a group of 50 soldiers spent nearly four hours with their German counterparts, singing to the accompaniment of an accordion. Leaders of unit soviets openly expressed hope that fraternization would lead to the spread of the world revolution, and there appeared to be reason for their hope. Romanian intelligence reported that "enemy soldiers discuss with ardor the events in Russia."⁹

The Central Powers, concerned about the impact mass spontaneous fraternization was having upon their own men, decided to change tactics. In the weeks after Easter, Austro-German emphasis shifted from fraternization to pacifism using trained propaganda officers and Russian-speaking agents operating in the front lines. High-ranking enemy parliamentarians asked Russian delegates to conclude armistices and attractive peace terms were mentioned. Romanian intelligence correctly interpreted this as an attempt "to incite the [Russian] army against its leaders and to cause trouble in the Romanian army."¹⁰ All these efforts contributed to the creation of "a great yearning for peace" among the Russian soldiers. A non-commissioned officer from the IX Army predicted to his Austrian interrogators that "the troops would eventually force peace negotiations through laying down their arms"; this would take place by 1 May, another insisted. The conflict between the hope for peace and the insistence of the Provisional Government that the war be continued strengthened the radicals and weakened the influence of the higher committees which supported Petrograd's policy.¹¹

The insistence that the war continue also stimulated the disregard of discipline. Prisoners bragged to enemy interrogators of more than singing the Marseillaise or their officers' lack of power over them. They told of units repeatedly refusing to attack and vowing to throw away their weapons and leave their positions. Russian, French, and Romanian sources testify that officers on the Romanian front, as elsewhere, were not only disobeyed but arrested and even beaten when they

attempted to enforce discipline. There were many incidents involving high-ranking officers, including General Fok, commander of the 3rd Rifle Brigade (VI Army), who was arrested by his own soldiers when he tried to punish 50 of them who refused to occupy their positions. Also, General E.K. Miller (IX Army) has described in great detail how he was mistreated and even stabbed when he attempted to enforce discipline and prevent fraternization. The decline of discipline in the Russian army in the spring of 1917 aroused acute dismay among the Romanians and their French advisors, who tended to blame it on "a lack of energy" on the part of the Russian officers.¹²

Desertion was another form of revolutionary protest on the Romanian front. Official statistics, unfortunately, are misleading. As Wildman has shown, lower echelons reported what headquarters wanted to hear, vastly understating the problem. They admit only about 190,000 desertions on the four battlefronts from the beginning of the war to August 1917. On the other extreme, claims of Golovin and others regarding huge numbers of deserters (2,000,000 for the entire army) cannot be substantiated. The Romanian front, where the Russian army was under surveillance of the Romanian army and security police, and where it experienced some military success in the 1917 offensive, would seem to have had a somewhat better record than other fronts.¹³ On the other hand, the cities and towns in Romania were crowded with idle Russian soldiers, jamming transportation facilities, vending wares on the street and causing much concern to local authorities.¹⁴ Furthermore, Russian units were continually in need of replacements—and not from casualties. While over 1 million Russian troops were assigned to Romania, on 1 May only 131,000 "bayonets" were reported as being at the front.¹⁵ Whether due primarily to once-for-all desertion, temporary AWOL, or other means of avoiding duty, Russian soldiers were forsaking their posts. The comment of General Berthelot, head of the French Military Mission, even if exaggerated, is indicative of the trend: "The [Russian] effectives are melting away from the voluntary departures of soldiers. In certain regiments, they have been diminished by 50%."¹⁶

Russian forces still manned the front in the spring of 1917 but there were ample signs of trouble to come. As elsewhere, command authority had been compromised, fraternization was widespread and the thirst for peace was growing. For Romanian leaders this posed life-or-death questions. Would the Romanian army follow the Russian example? Would the latter serve as a catalyst or vehicle for a socio-political revolution in Romania? These are issues we turn to next.

The Reaction of the Romanian Army

The February Revolution and the ensuing disorder in the Russian army might have been expected to spread to Romanian soldiers. The defeat of 1916 and the cruel winter of 1917 had brought their emotional and physical condition to the breaking point. Enemy debriefings of Romanian prisoners and deserters early in 1917 speak of widespread war weariness, depressed morale, wages in arrears, no meat, very little bread, poor clothing, many soldiers without shoes, and illness as "the order of the day."¹⁷ Although negative comments might be expected from these informants, especially deserters, they are confirmed by other sources. Members of the French Military Mission reported officers who neglected their men, "men left two days without food," some of whom died of starvation, and "bitter misery and almost famine." A report authored by the Russian front staff in March spoke of "growing dissatisfaction among Romanian soldiers....possibly revolution will be directed against the boyars."¹⁸

There were deliberate attempts of Russian soldiers to utilize these conditions to encourage a revolutionary response by their Romanian counterparts. Despite barriers of language and segregation, which kept front-line Romanian troops generally ignorant of details, discussions of the Revolution did take place in a variety of circumstances. One Romanian prisoner told Austrian interrogators of Russian soldiers who came to the front to persuade them to lay down their arms. According

to one Romanian officer, a Russian soldier visited Romanian soldiers on their training field but

instead of selling them cigarettes, he began to talk politics, [saying] that [the Russians] did not make war because they no longer had reason to fight. To our question, "But where does that leave us?," he responded, "Act and proceed as we: peace and republic! Don't you see that you are fighting for the boyars?"¹⁹

But most Russian attempts to spread revolutionary ideas among Romanian soldiers were more casual: off-duty meetings in towns and on trains. According to one Romanian security report,

Russians who know Romanian urge Romanian soldiers on the streets and in the markets to no longer fight or listen to their officers. They say to follow their example and no longer fight that the land be given to the boyars but rather take it themselves.²⁰

Despite the labored efforts of Marxist historians, evidence of a significant Romanian response to these revolutionary solicitations is lacking. Security organs did report revolutionary manifestoes in some Romanian units, where they were "passed from regiment to regiment" and one case where "Romanian and Russian soldiers distributed revolutionary literature on the railroad line Buhuși-Piatra Neamț."²¹ On the other hand, as enemy intelligence testifies, most Romanian soldiers in the front lines knew little about the Revolution. Poor morale, when noted, was attributed to other causes. What references there were to the Revolution by Romanian prisoners were almost always hostile. One of the few positive comments was from a soldier who welcomed the Revolution because he thought it might cause the Russians to go home.²²

In the area of desertion, however, the Russian revolutionaries seem to have had a more tangible influence, albeit on a relatively small number of Romanian soldiers. In 1917, both before and after the heavy fighting of the summer, the

number of Romanian soldiers deserting increased. Romanian Marxist writers admit that the majority of desertions were not politically motivated. Many if not most were primarily the consequence of miserable conditions of service and secondarily a response to an Austro-German offer of repatriation to their homes in Moldavia. Some deserters, however, did not take this last option but headed in the opposite direction, seeking refuge in the Danube Delta or across the Prut in Russian territory. They were aided by Russian troops, who sometimes provided them with Russian uniforms. In Iași and other cities groups of Russian soldiers, assisted by Romanian sympathizers, organized an "underground railway" for conducting deserters into Russia. The soviets of Russian garrisons on the banks of the Prut prevented their arrest by border officials. Some Romanian sailors followed the same course of action, passing from their ships or stations on the Danube into the delta vastness or onto Russian territory where, supported by Russian revolutionaries, a number formed a "revolutionary committee."²³ But one must be careful not to let the preoccupation of Marxist writers with such incidents obscure the lack of effect on the Romanian army of desertions and other problems that beset the Russian army. On this, enemy and allied observers agreed. There is no reason to dispute the conclusion of the Italian military attache: "The army and populace remain indifferent to the...solicitations of the Russian revolutionaries."²⁴

This relative immunity to revolution can be explained by a number of factors, including a history of mutual antipathy which had been exacerbated by the unfortunate experiences of the campaign of 1916.²⁵ Furthermore, during the succeeding winter of suffering, scarce food, fuel, and fodder had to be shared with the Russians who, from the Romanian viewpoint, were getting the best of this arrangement. The problem was not necessarily due to Russian ill-will. Deliveries of food and fodder to all the fronts fell sharply in the spring of 1917, despite strenuous efforts of the Russian command to increase imports from their homeland. Furthermore, Romanian landlords were often more willing to sell to the Russians who had ready cash than to fill Romanian government requisitions. But the Romanians were resentful nevertheless. Berthelot reflected this when he contrasted

Russian troops—"strong, rosy and fat as a pig"—with the "skeletons" of the Romanian army. This resentment was nourished by the Russians' propensity to help themselves to Romanian goods and property. Criticism of Russian soldiers "who steal and plunder" surfaced repeatedly. One Romanian prefect, after cataloging Russian misdeeds, warned that "if this does not stop, there will be a small war with our soldiers."²⁶

Both Russian and Romanian authorities recognized the danger of conflict and took steps to prevent it. Mosolov, the Russian envoy, asked King Ferdinand to take measures to avoid contact between Russian and Romanian soldiers in Iași. In the case of a brawl, he argued, "the death of one Russian soldier (accidentally or by provocation) would create grave complications. The troops at the front would advance on Iași in order to avenge the death of their comrade." Almost immediately Romanian troops disappeared from the streets of the capital.²⁷ General Alexandru Averescu, commander of Romania's only field army, was alarmed enough to issue a general order which blamed Romanians for some of the incidents and warned against drawing general conclusions from isolated cases of Russian misconduct. This, he said, could lead to

grave errors against our own interests if we tolerate the least unfriendly manifestations toward our allies....We stopped the enemy and saved our country only thanks to Russian aid, and will reconquer our territory only with the aid of our allies. Before this all other considerations, even based on indisputable evidence, must fall.

He called upon all Romanians to make every effort and "sacrifices" if necessary to maintain cordial relations with the Russians. He ordered Romanian officers to "promote camaraderie, tolerate incidents, and repress severely any hostile manifestations."²⁸

Nevertheless, hostility between Russians and Romanians continued to grow as new irritants were added to old. Fighting in and for Romania had always been a problem for the Russian soldier, who could hardly be blamed for lack of

enthusiasm to risk death in a country which had little connection with the welfare of *his home region*, often thousands of miles away. In addition, the Romanian attitude toward the Revolution gave the Russians new reasons for resentment. Austro-German debriefing of prisoners and deserters reveal that many Russian soldiers viewed the Romanians as enemies of the Revolution. "The Romanians are more hated than previously," one Russian commented, for allegedly having supported the old regime. Rumors that Romanian troops would be used to punish disobedient Russian units, circulating even before the Revolution, now proliferated. Other prisoners charged the Romanians with being "against the Revolution" and some even believed that Romanian troops would be sent to Petrograd to suppress it. Mutual antagonism and especially Romanian antipathy toward their ally grew as the Revolution progressed.²⁹

Another reason why the Revolution failed to echo loudly among the Romanians was that, in contrast to Nicholas and Alexandra, the Romanian monarchs Ferdinand and Marie were genuinely popular. Ferdinand addressed to the Romanian army on 5 April a proclamation containing firm promises he had first voiced in December to carry out electoral and land reform, offering some of his own domains for the latter. The King followed up his proclamation of reform with frequent praise for the sacrifice borne by his people and soldiers. Charismatic Marie was constantly among them, visiting hospitals and units at the front. Tirelessly, she imparted enthusiasm among the well, encouragement to the ill and wounded, and compassion to the dying. Marie was even able to work her magic on the Russians, leading one group of unruly soldiers to proclaim that she was a proper Queen, the kind they would like to become Empress of Russia.³⁰

The growth of a revolutionary echo in the Romanian army was also hindered by stern counter-measures imposed by the Romanian military authorities, who, unhampered by the restrictions of "democratization," imposed severe military discipline, including frequent use of the death penalty. Romanian troops were often confined to barracks at times of Russian revolutionary disturbances, revolutionary literature was banned as "German propaganda," and Russian troops were forbidden

to distribute any printed material other than in the Russian language. Later, as Russian soldiers became more aggressive in proselytizing for the Revolution, tighter controls were put on their contact with Romanian soldiers. There were standing orders to arrest and send to regimental headquarters any agitators who appeared at Romanian units.³¹

Command control over the Romanian army was made easier by the reorganization it was undergoing. Except for the small contingent actually in the trenches, most Romanian soldiers were involved in intensive training, supervised by French instructors, preparing for a planned summer offensive. Few opportunities for agitation existed, and earlier plans to send Romanian troops into Russia for refitting were rejected, ultimately to avoid revolutionary contamination. This reorganization, which included acquisition of new equipment and new skills, raised the morale of the soldiers and their sense of identity with their leaders.³²

But the most important factor preventing the spread of revolution was a pervasive, cohesive nationalism. The Romanian soldier, unlike his Russian counterpart in Moldavia, was fighting for goals which were simple and clear: his family, his fatherland, and his future. The slogans of the Russian Revolution calling for opposition to "the bourgeoisie," the "counter-revolution," or "capitalism" meant little to him. He found it difficult to see the Revolution furthering his goals. Indeed it seemed to endanger them. The rhetoric of Revolution, especially its pacifism, seemed to advocate placing what remained of his homeland at the mercy of the enemy, whose harsh regime in occupied Wallachia was well-known to him. Florence Farmborough, an English nurse with the Russian army, tells of a Romanian soldier being ridiculed by Russians because he affirmed his determination to continue fighting. His patient response was: "Haven't you heard that it is a man's duty to defend his country?"³³

The Impact on Romania's Internal Order

Although the Russian Revolution failed to disturb the discipline of the Romanian army, it created considerable concern on the domestic front. King Ferdinand clearly enunciated his apprehension to Sir George Barclay, the British minister in Iași, as early as 26 March, lamenting the fall of the Tsar as the loss of a "powerful friend" and opining that he also might become the target of "intrigues." Mosolov reported to Petrograd at the same time that events in the Russia capital worried the Romanian government and public lest similar discontent be provoked also in Romania. He cited this as the motive for Ferdinand reiterating promises of electoral and agrarian reform first made in December. Although directed primarily at the army, Ferdinand's words were addressed to all Romanian peasants. They were given prominent and repeated coverage in the official press.³⁴

But in the eyes of the Romanian authorities the real threat to the established socio-political order would not originate from their own people but from the huge numbers of Russian troops garrisoned in or near major cities such as Bacău, Botoșani, Galați, Piatra Neamț, Roman and, of course, Iași. It was the increasingly radical behavior of these unruly guests which created "agony" and even "terror" in Romanian circles. The potential threat they posed was graphically demonstrated in a continuing series of demonstrations staged by Russian troops in the spring of 1917. The earlier of these demonstrations had been orderly and were organized primarily to show support for the democratic reforms initiated in Petrograd. One of the first, in Galați on 25 March, is described by a French observer:

I saw a mob of 1,000 unarmed soldiers, with music and red flags, assembled before the headquarters of the 4th Siberian Army Corps. I requested an explanation from a non-commissioned officer who told me "we intend to ask General Sirelius to march at the head of our procession, crossing the city with us bearing the red flag." Happily, it did not come to this....The general calmed them, telling them that mistakes on both sides were inevitable in this period of transition. He ended by making an appeal

to the patriotism of the soldiers. Then he retired....Happily this mob was sober, by necessity, and docile....The demonstration has passed in perfect order. It is no less true that it is time to put an end to these meetings of soldiers. One good orator would be sufficient to unleash this mob.³⁵

Similar manifestations took place in other Romanian cities. In these initial demonstrations, the Russian soldiers were so absorbed in their own revolutionary agenda that they did not intervene directly in Romanian affairs. This soon changed as the Russian revolutionaries took up the cause of those Romanians with longstanding grievances: the Socialists, the Jews and the peasants.

The Romanian socialists, effectively intimidated since the outbreak of the war, were revitalized by the February Revolution. The more militant among them, including Alexandru Dobrogeanu-Gherea, Christian Rakovskii, Mihail Bujor, and Max Wexler, had ambitious plans to use the support of the Russian army to raise the revolutionary consciousness of the Romanian people. During April, in a series of discussions with the front committee, the militants agreed upon plans to join with their Russian comrades in a mass demonstration near Iași on the occasion of International Workers Day, 1 May. Pamphlets were prepared in Romanian as well as Russian and propaganda work was carried out among Romanian workers and soldiers.³⁶ The potential consequences of such a demonstration were foreshadowed a few days before 1 May when a band of Russian soldiers appeared at the residence of King Ferdinand offering aid to the palace guards in getting rid of their monarch.³⁷

On May Day, about 15,000 Russian soldiers gathered at the air park outside Socola, a garrison and transit point near Iași. This meeting and others in Romanian cities where Russian soldiers were stationed had been organized by local soldiers' committees with the approval of General D.G. Shcherbachev, the front commander. He understood that they would support the Provisional Government, including its determination to continue the war. Predictably, as the Socola meeting unfolded, several Russian orators turned to pacifist and then revolutionary themes. One expressed concern about a proposed offensive "because we are not defending our homeland." "We will consent to defend Romania only if they change their

government like ours...and show [King] Ferdinand the road." Another denounced the Romanian "oligarchy" and again asked that the Romanians imitate the Russians, foretelling for Ferdinand the same fate as that of Emperor Nicholas. It was proposed to begin immediately to propagandize for revolution in the Romanian army.³⁸

After the meeting, a large number of demonstrators, following prior plans and with the encouragement of militant Romanian socialists, marched into the city of Iași. Parading through the streets with banners in both Russian and Romanian, the procession attracted a number of Romanian followers. Filling the large Piața Uniri and overflowing onto the steps of the fashionable Traian Hotel, the assemblage heard more speeches including a call for the overthrow of Ferdinand and the establishment of a republic. At 3:00 PM Russian soldiers released Christian Rakovskii from house arrest and brought him to the meeting.

Rakovskii, prominent in European socialist circles, had been editor of the Socialist party newspaper, *Lupta* (The Struggle), before his arrest at the outbreak of war.³⁹ Prior to 1 May, his Romanian colleagues had requested the help of the Iași Committee of Soldiers' and Officers' Deputies in gaining his release. The latter, in turn, passed the request on to Foreign Minister Paul Miliukov, who supported it before the Romanian government. Brătianu, pointing out quite correctly that Rakovskii's prewar pacifist propaganda had been subsidized by the Germans, rejected the Russian *démarche*. He insisted that if released Rakovskii would resume his "crimes."⁴⁰

At Piața Unirii, Rakovskii praised the Revolution in Russia and criticized Romania's royal reforms as insufficient. He emphasized the need to mobilize discontent and called for the triumph of the republican principle in the entire Balkan peninsula. But he specifically rejected the notion of an immediate revolution, conditioning any such action in Romania upon developments in Petrograd. Other speakers were less restrained. The Romanian police watched the demonstration but exercised patience and tact. They reported that Romanian workers and French soldiers present "categorically refused" to join calls for a revolution. Following the meeting, Rakovskii, together with Bujor, who was serving in the Romanian army and

thus liable for courts-martial, were taken under the protection of Russian soldiers and escorted to the Russian frontier and then to refuge in Odessa.⁴¹

The obvious similarity between the events of 1 May and what had happened in Petrograd in March, caused a virtual panic among the Romanian court and government. There was special concern that the Russian army was preparing a revolutionary *coup de main* in connection with a new demonstration rumored for Sunday, 6 May.⁴² Queen Marie's diary reflects a widespread state of mind:

The Russian danger...troubles every heart....Our country is filled with Russians and suddenly these hordes are without discipline...perhaps I am sitting on a volcano....One is really anxious for Sunday....If ever there was a sickening position this is one, to be, so to say, at the mercy of a pack of headless anarchists.⁴³

Careful to avoid antagonizing Petrograd, the Romanians blamed "German agents" for inciting the Russian soldiers. They asked for the cooperation of the Provisional Government, the Russian Chief of Staff, General M.V. Alekseev, and the new front commander, General D.G. Shcherbachev, in avoiding similar incidents. The government in Petrograd was extremely sympathetic to the Romanian problem. It instructed the Russian press to denounce Rakovskii as an "agent of German money" and had Shcherbachev intervene with the front committee. The latter refused to back down from its support of the Romanian socialists, but its executive expressed "regret" if the Romanian government considered the action of 1 May "a violation of international law." It blamed "certain persons" who had violated guidelines established by the committee, especially in freeing Rakovskii.⁴⁴ A Russian-language newspaper, *Vestnik Rumynskago Fronta* (Herald of the Romanian Front), publicly apologized for the freeing of Rakovskii, criticized Lenin's call for peace, and promised not to meddle in Romania's internal affairs. The Romanian government accepted these declarations but was disturbed by the radical views expressed in the front committee's deliberations, and also by Mosolov's warnings that the committees of lower units might not be able to control the soldiers.⁴⁵

The Romanian authorities also took precautions in the event of new demonstrations, including the one rumored for 6 May. Official newspapers carried statements of loyalty by moderate Romanian socialists and reminded the peasants that they were fighting for their own land and a better future: "We have entered the war for a Greater Romania but we now fight for a New Romania." On 2 May military reinforcements were conspicuous by their presence in Iași, including artillery pieces at the palace. Mosolov warned Petrograd of the probability of armed clashes if Russian soldiers attempted to enter the King's residence. The Romanians were also aware of the extreme danger such a confrontation posed. As Marie put it, "...above all one must avoid any sort of hostility on our side, above all give no sign of trying to stop their screaming etc...."⁴⁶ In the end, the King and royal family were evacuated from Iași, the former going to Romanian Army headquarters at Bacău and the Queen and children to a summer home in the countryside. In addition, Romanian troops were ordered to stay off the streets. Foreign Minister Take Ionescu revealed confidentially to Mosolov that the cabinet and King had decided not to use weapons against the Russian demonstrators even if they penetrated the palace; but this decision was to be kept secret so as not to encourage the radicals. The police were told not to hinder marches and demonstrations by Russians. Despite widespread hysteria, including a rumor that a trainload of Russian soldiers was enroute to Bacău to attack the king, 6 May passed without major incident. Although Russian soldiers demonstrated in the suburbs and in other cities, Shcherbachev's prohibition of meetings in Iași was obeyed. The streets of the capital were deserted: "Yesterday, Iași was like a city of the dead," the British minister commented. He attributed it to "intense fear" on both sides that violence would erupt.⁴⁷

Following the May demonstrations, the focus of the militant Romanian socialists shifted to Odessa, where Racovskii and other emigrés had established close relations with leading Russian revolutionaries. They founded a "Committee of Action" which carried out an extensive campaign of agitation among Romanian refugees and naval personnel in South Russia, allegedly with the support and financial assistance of the Odessa soviet and the Russian army. Late in the summer

of 1917, publication of *Lupta* was resumed in Odessa with Bujor as editor; the Romanian consul at Ismail complained, "I have seen our sailors reading it and it will introduce unhealthy ideas among our fleet and troop officers."⁴⁸ The influence of the Odessa socialists soon radiated into Romania itself. Copies of *Lupta* denouncing "our unfortunate war" as a plot of the Romanian oligarchy to consolidate its own class position were distributed by Russian soldiers in and around several Romanian cities, including Bacău, Piatra Neamț, Tîrgu Ocna, Tecuci, and Iași. Romanian socialist emigres began operating out of Ungheni, the chief Russian border crossing into Moldavia. Some were supplied with Russian uniforms so they could travel and agitate in Romania with impunity. One of these was Bujor himself, who was observed residing at the premises of the Iași soviet and riding about with a Russian military escort. Fear of provoking the Russians prevented his arrest, but as his presence soon became embarrassing to the soviet, he moved on, eventually, to Odessa again.⁴⁹

Although public utterances by the Odessa socialists before the October Revolution fell short of advocating armed Russian intervention in Romanian affairs, their personal convictions were more radical. In an private letter, Bujor wrote:

In the clash between the Romanian people and its ruling classes, the revolutionary army of the new Russia must play an important and decisive role....It would be sufficient to seize Iași and Galați to finish the first part of our task to overthrow the oligarchy.⁵⁰

The Romanian authorities assumed as much. They constantly complained about the assistance the Russian army rendered these militants and attempted to curb their activity. On 17 August, Dobrogeanu-Gherea, another of those who had crossed back into Romania, was arrested and the government asked for the extradition of the "deserter" Bujor from Odessa. Captain Emanuel Tisenhausen, the front commissar of the Provisional Government, asked Premier Brătianu in person for Gherea's release, arguing that his imprisonment would arouse "agitation" unfavorable to Romania among Russian soldiers. Brătianu refused, insisting he could not allow

Russian army committees to interfere in Romanian internal affairs. On Bujor's extradition, Petrograd was sympathetic but, amid the mounting chaos of Russia's internal disorder, was powerless to satisfy the Romanian request.⁵¹

After the Bolshevik Revolution in October, many Odessa socialists sided with Lenin and openly called for something not previously advocated—a violent revolution in Romania. The Committee of Action, with Russian support, developed new revolutionary Romanian organizations, including military formations intended to invade Romania. None of these were active on Romanian soil, but they did join the Bolsheviks in opposing Romania's occupation of Bessarabia in January 1918.⁵²

Closely related to the Russian army's espousal of the cause of Romanian socialists was its advocacy of the rights of Romania's Jews. Romania had long been under pressure from the Western powers to grant them full emancipation.⁵³ The war and alliance provided more leverage on the issue. Following King Ferdinand's announcement of land and suffrage reform in April, Nicolae Mișu, the Romanian minister in London, pointed out the omission of any concession on the "Jewish Question" and suggested how beneficial such a concession would be for relations with England and America. Foreign Minister Ionescu was at first not very receptive, wondering if "Hungarian or Austrian intrigues" were creating an attitude unfavorable to Romania. He maintained that "many Jews have demonstrated very Germanophile sentiments." Mișu then insisted that it was "only by concessions in the Jewish question that we can gain the support in financial questions and political questions from the United States and England where the Jewish element plays a preponderant role. An official manifestation of the government is indispensable." Consequently, on 11 May, the King issued a proclamation promising equal rights to all "those who will have struggled to realize our century-old aspirations...be they Christians, Jews or of any other faith." Ionescu and Brătianu echoed this promise and some Romanian Jewish leaders professed satisfaction and renounced any identification with the Russian Revolution.⁵⁴

But the positive effect of this move was undermined by a continuing tendency to make the Jews scapegoats for Romania's misfortunes, labeling them as actual or

potential spies and traitors, often on no more evidence than their use of Yiddish which sounded like German.⁵⁵ When German shells fell near King Ferdinand on a visit to Romanian I Army headquarters, General Eremia Grigorescu blamed it on "espionage of the Jews" and ordered the evacuation of nearby Jewish populations:

Military operations do not permit me to allow these vipers in the vicinity of my headquarters. I have come to the conclusion that Jewish spies have underground telephones and they inform the enemy continuously of any movement such as the arrival yesterday of His Majesty at my headquarters.⁵⁶

As early as March 1917, lists of those condemned for espionage, treason, and desertion contained a disproportionate percentage of Jews. A number of Jews were among those socialists arrested after the May Day Demonstration, including Max Wexler, who was in non-combat military service. Suspected of complicity in Rakovskii's escape, he was sent under military guard to Bacău, where he was "shot while trying to escape" on 14 May. On 31 May a list of 33 "spies and traitors" condemned to death was published. A number were ethnic Jews.⁵⁷

Although there were also some Romanian protests against the deaths of Wexler and the other "spies," the government in Iași was more concerned about the reaction of the Russians. The executions were given great play in the Petrograd and Odessa press, which charged the Romanians with being anti-democratic and anti-semitic.⁵⁸ More serious was the response of Russian soldiers in Moldavia, among whom were significant numbers of Jews. The local soviet in Bacău, the newspaper of the committee of the IX Army, and soldiers' organizations in Cherson and Odessa, all voiced protests against Romanian "persecution of Jews and Socialists." A Romanian report described a street demonstration in Roman, in which 8000 Russian soldiers were reported to take part:

Jewish soldiers spoke in Russian, Polish, French, and Yiddish....They insulted the King, Romanian authorities, and the country with the

expression "*Schmutzige Lande*"....They forced pedestrians to doff their hats...and if they did not they were beaten on the head. The soldiers carried placards: "Down with the Death Penalty in Romania." "End Persecution of the People." The aim, ostensibly to protest against the death penalty, was, in fact, to promote the rights of Jews and to protest the shooting of 36 spies...who were not supposed to be spies but socialists. Jews of Roman took part and cheered the orators....Jewish shopkeepers saluted the demonstration, with great satisfaction.⁵⁹

Brătianu was quick to realize the potential danger in alienating the mass of Russian soldiers. General Averescu was called to Iași on 31 May to discuss the Wexler case. Also, Brătianu visited Stanislav Poklevskii, who had replaced Mosolov as the Russian envoy to Romania. Poklevskii found the Romanian premier "extremely anxious" or even "frightened" lest Russian Jews begin to agitate in the army committees where Wexler was well known. Brătianu promised that he would carry out a rigorous investigation. Poklevskii commented to Petrograd that the Wexler case had provoked "unfortunate commentary" in the soldiers' committee in Iași. Members suspected that the Romanian government was using murder to get even with political opponents.⁶⁰

Meanwhile, Commissar Tisenhausen reported to Polevskii that Russian soldiers were aroused, not only because of the ideology of the men executed but because of Romania's continued use of the death sentence, already banned in the Russian army. The men were angry since they were being asked to shed their blood to defend Romania. Tisenhausen asked Poklevskii to talk "unofficially" with the Romanian government. Poklevskii agreed but asked Tisenhausen in turn to exert influence on the committees, arguing that an "unknown hand was exciting the Russian troops." Poklevskii consequently stressed to Brătianu the importance to the Russian army of resolving the issue of democratic reform and Jewish rights. Brătianu promised to speak with the King about limiting the application of the death penalty in the future.⁶¹

Brătianu seemed truly to regret the death of Wexler, telling Constantin Diamandy, his envoy in Petrograd, that Wexler's "activity was less dangerous than the campaign of slander which has been unleashed against us." In this dispatch to Diamandy, which he also had forwarded to the British government, Brătianu elaborated the Romanian version of events.

From reports which have arrived from many sides it comes out clearly that a veritable organization works behind the Russian front in Romania for propaganda hostile to Romania. Begun by Jews in Russian uniforms in the form of Jewish, socialist, and anti-dynastic claims, they have addressed in recent days the local Jewish population for which speeches in Yiddish were made at Roman by individuals in Russian uniform. Thirty-two individuals, having been taken by surprise at the moment in which they crossed the line and having been convicted of espionage, were tried by courts-martial of the army of General Averescu and consequently executed for high treason. This act of justice has been exploited and presented in their subversive propaganda as being a pretext for the suppression of Jews and socialists....In the district of Roman, Jewish soldiers belonging to regiments 22 and 76 made revolutionary propaganda and encouraged the peasants to revolt.⁶²

In a request which was impractical to fulfill, General Coanda asked *Stavka* (Russian Supreme Headquarters)⁶³ that no more Jewish soldiers be sent to the Romanian front.⁶⁴

Before the furor over the 33 executions in May had died down, another 14 alleged traitors were condemned to death by military courts in June. These additional condemnations triggered a new round of anti-Romanian feeling. At Bacău, Russian soldiers protested in a similar fashion as at Roman earlier. Representatives of the Congress of Deputies of the IX Russian Army formally asked General Shcherbachev to seek a temporary suspension of the death penalty. Brătianu steadfastly continued to deny that race or politics was involved in any of the executions. But he also told a delegate from the Petrograd soviet that the High Command had agreed not to carry out these death sentences and that the King had

suspended capital punishment in order to "calm things." At the same time the Romanian government renewed its instructions forbidding the Russian army from distributing printed matter in the Romanian, German, or Yiddish languages.⁶⁵

But the controversy over the death penalty and the status of Jews in Romania refused to die. Tisenhausen continued to complain that the promised ban on the death sentence had never been published; that in the meantime a Romanian doctor had been executed; that Jews of Russian as well as Romanian citizenship were under surveillance; and that under cover of counter-espionage, minorities were being persecuted. Tisenhausen stressed that this "confused" the Russian soldiers and he asked for "participation" by representatives of "revolutionary democracy" in future investigations. Tisenhausen received only partial satisfaction. Poklevskii pointed out to Petrograd that the Romanians agreed that the death penalty would be suspended and orders had been given, although not yet published in the army. He warned that the Romanian government would reject Russian participation in any investigations or trials as interference in the internal affairs of Romania. Poklevskii promised to enter into "confidential, friendly" negotiations with the Romanian government for a favorable and fair solution to similar questions of mutual concern. But he also advised the Provisional Government that to avoid possible serious misunderstandings it was "extremely desirable" to give Russian forces "categorical orders relative to non-interference in the internal affairs of Romania."⁶⁶

Demonstrations late in July by Russian soldiers at Roman, Piatra Neamț, and Bacău repeated the demand for the abolition of the death penalty and equality for Jews. At these meetings, according to Romanian sources, local Russian committees also advocated the overthrow of the Romanian monarchy and the establishment of a republic. Despite allowing for "the customary exaggeration of Romanian information," Poklevskii considered the reports quite serious. As another example of interference in Romanian internal affairs, he pointed to the Russian-language *Vestnik Rumynskago Fronta* (Herald of the Romanian Front) of 20 July which said that the growing aggravation of relations between Romanians and Russians made it necessary for Russian division and regiment committees to open commissions to

discuss the issues. Poklevskii went on to point out to Petrograd that these issues "especially impact our soldiers" on the one hand but, on the other, the activities of the Russian committees were causing hostility toward Russia not only in government circles but among the local population. Poklevskii repeated his request for orders prohibiting interference in Romanian internal affairs.⁶⁷ Already deeply alienated from its own soldiers, Petrograd could do nothing and therefore, as a last resort, the Romanians sought to banish the worst of the offending Russian units. On 9 August, General Prezan forwarded a Romanian Secret Service report to the Foreign Ministry asking for the evacuation of several Russian units which "do not cease to cause tumult and rows" and which cooperated with Russian Jews and Romanian Jews in spreading revolutionary propaganda.⁶⁸

The Russian press, especially the Jewish press in Odessa, continued to carry a steady stream of articles detailing charges of Romanian discrimination and brutality against Jews. One such article in *Unser Leben* (Our Life) led the Russian commander of the Odessa Military District to send two Jewish representatives to Moldavia to investigate. Their report "called forth the greatest indignation." The Jewish population, it said, "groans under the regime of terror imposed upon them." A special report by Russian Jews entitled "Struggle Against the Jews in Romania" charged the Brătianu government with waging "a destructive war on Romanian Jews," using as an excuse their sympathy for the Russian Revolution. A copy was forwarded to the British Foreign Office.⁶⁹

In the late summer and autumn of 1917, as the Russian command increasingly lost control over its troops, the "Jewish Question" loomed larger in Russo-Romanian relations. Like the various other nationalities, Russian Jews began to organize ethnic associations and even separate military formations. The Iași garrison held a public meeting which led to the formation of a "Committee of the Union of Jewish Soldiers on the Romanian Front." Related organizations soon arose in the IX, VI, and VIII armies. According to Romanian reports given to the Allied ministers, at a special meeting of the Iași group

speakers inveighed with extreme violence against the situation in which their co-religionists were placed in Romania. Some of them went so far as to advocate violence and propaganda by deeds. The calmest of them declared the Jews of Russia ought to use the power given them by their large numbers in the service of their oppressed brothers.⁷⁰

Thoroughly alarmed by this prospect, the Iași government undertook new efforts to diffuse Russian agitation on the Jewish question. A Romanian emissary was dispatched to deliver a "reassuring" report to the Petrograd soviet. Brătianu, usually unapproachable, granted several interviews to Jewish leaders and Russian journalists, to whom he repeated the Romanian version of the problem. Trying to put it in perspective, he maintained that only 14 of the over 100 executed had been Jewish. Foreign Minister Take Ionescu utilized a trip to Odessa to meet with Jewish leaders.⁷¹

The issue remained unresolved through the fall of 1917, when the tension was eased thanks to evacuation of the Russian army. But the publicity given the Jewish question in Romania as a result of the agitation of the Russian revolutionaries gave new ammunition to advocates in western capitals for Romanian Jewish emancipation. It also helped insure that the issue would be addressed in the Peace of Bucharest (with the Central Powers, May 1918) and at the Paris Peace Conference. Reforms advanced by these settlements are indebted to the attention focused on the problem by revolutionaries in the Russian army.⁷²

Russian soldiers also took up the cause of the Romanian masses. There is some evidence they had limited involvement with Romanian workers in Moldavia. Marxist historians have gathered scattered evidence that Russian soldiers intervened several times to free arrested Romanian workers. And one strike in Iași can possibly be traced to Russian inspiration. Also, some workers were involved in the earliest Russian public demonstrations. But whether it was due to Romanian police security, patriotism or Russophobia, the Russian army had little success in revolutionizing the Romanian proletariat.⁷³

For the Romanian peasant there is more extensive evidence of Russian revolutionary involvement. Thousands of Russian soldiers were quartered in rural

areas where the ground was fertile for agitation. Only a decade had passed since the Great Peasant Revolt of 1907, which had begun in Moldavia. Many of the hated feudal obligations which the peasants owed the landlords still existed, including labor and a tithe of produce. Understandably there was a measure of receptivity to revolutionary rhetoric, which termed the King's recent promises of land reform "deceitful" and encouraged peasants to seize the land—or at least refuse their work obligations. In some cases, the Russians inspired the peasants to demand wages, an eight-hour work day, and to reject government requisitions for food. The Russian call for peace also found an echo, especially late in 1917, among a population which had contributed many sons to Romania's army.⁷⁴

Russian involvement with the peasants was not confined to propaganda. When Romanian authorities attempted to enforce peasant obligations to the landlords, Russian soldiers sometimes offered them armed protection, including patrols in the countryside. In the area around Vaslui, a focal point of the 1907 uprising, the Russian command found it necessary to establish a "safe haven" for Romanian landlords who fled their estates. Blatant interference of Russian soldiers on behalf of the peasants called forth Romanian complaints to the Russian authorities. Shcherbachev was sympathetic and ordered this interference in Romanian internal affairs stopped. The army committees supported him, but lower-level committees tended to sympathize with the revolutionaries.⁷⁵

Despite Russian attempts to revolutionize the peasant masses, which greatly upset the Romanian authorities, at no time does this appear to have reached major proportions or to have posed a imminent threat to Romania's internal security. In fact, positive response to the Russian agitation appears to have been more than balanced by the negative response to Russian pillaging and violence in the countryside. Romanian Ministry of the Interior reports are filled with complaints. One report described a relatively innocent brawl between peasant men and boys and Russian soldiers who tried to dance with village women.⁷⁶ Other incidents were much more serious. A French liaison officer visiting the IX Army reported:

Everywhere there are complaints against the Russian occupation, which is...throwing the population out, taking anything they need, paying for some things but taking most by force. Robberies are numerous, and assaults happen every day. Officers are able to do nothing.⁷⁷

Romanian prisoners often complained to enemy interrogators that Russian soldiers plundered villages and assaulted Romanian women and girls.⁷⁸ Nurse Florence Farmborough recounts numerous instances of Russian misbehavior. "You Russians only make our lives a torment," one peasant told her. On the other hand, Farmborough points out that plundering was often the result of acute need, created by a breakdown in the Russian supply system. "Some of the non-commissioned officers send the soldiers out at night to steal hay or oats; the soldiers return with sacks of booty, muttering 'We saw no owner, so we didn't know who to pay.'⁷⁹

While the Russian army did not succeed in becoming the midwife of revolution in Romania, its behavior did frighten Romania's ruling class and precipitated reforms that had long remained mere talk. As David Mitrany has recognized, the King's proclamation in April and the reform legislation of July were carried out under the "potential" pressure of a peasantry aroused by war and revolution.⁸⁰

Russo-Romanian Military Operations in 1917

At the same time the revolutionary agitation of the Russian army mounted in the interior, military operations escalated at the front. There was a relation between the two, as both the Romanian and Russian military leaders hoped that involvement in an offensive would restore the morale of the Russian army and help maintain it in the Romanian. Although a spring operation had been agreed to at an inter-Allied conference at Chantilly in November 1916, the Russians had soon insisted on a postponement until summer. At a meeting of all front commanders at *Stavka* on 14

May, called to discuss this offensive, a depressing picture of widespread fraternization, pacifism, and absence of discipline emerged. Nevertheless, Alekseev decided to go ahead, despite little confidence he could control his men, "perhaps with the belief that things could hardly get worse" as Feldman puts it. The leadership of the Romanian Front concurred. Sakharov had previously called for "active if not wide blows"; Shcherbachev, his successor, was of the same mind but wanted more extensive operations. He had departed for *Stavka* convinced that such an offensive was "indispensable to quell the anarchy."⁸¹

The Romanians had also been pressing for action as a means of sublimating the energy of the Revolution. General Constantin Prezan, when advised by Berthelot that it would be better "to wait some weeks in order to prepare more forces," objected, insisting it was necessary to take the offensive as soon as possible because of the state of morale of the Russian army, "which declines every day." Berthelot, admitting that "indiscipline is great and the discouragement of the [Russian] officers is complete," then agreed to take the offensive. He reported to Paris that "the sole means of saving the Russian army is to send it into the fire." Henri-Philippe Pétain, the French chief of staff, ordered Berthelot to work for a Russo-Romanian offensive not only to support operations on the Western front but because "it would be a means of countering ill-discipline and pernicious effects of German propaganda."⁸²

Preparations for the Offensive

At a meeting in Petrograd with the Provisional Government, Alekseev gained approval for the decision made at *Stavka*. The next task was to sell it to the troops who would carry it out. Shcherbachev returned to Romania accompanied by representatives of the Petrograd soviet to help him whip up enthusiasm among the forces on the Romanian front. They left almost immediately for Odessa to join other Russian leaders for the opening on 23 May of the initial congress of the soviets of the Romanian Front, the Black Sea Fleet and the Odessa District (*Rumcherod*),⁸³

which opened on 23 May. Shcherbachev as front commander addressed the congress first and set the tone. He told the more than 2000 assembled that "victory is necessary to carry out and secure the great reforms" and to achieve this, discipline must be restored. War Minister Alexander Kerensky and Admiral Alexander Kolchak, commander of the Black Sea Fleet, echoed his words. After the Russians spoke, several Allied consuls in attendance took the rostrum, including the Serbian representative who made an impassioned plea for the Russian army to fight on to save Serbia. The audience rose and with uplifted hands swore to do so. Only a few Bolsheviks dissented. The decision of the *Rumcherod* congress was widely promoted by the command and higher committees on the Romanian front.⁸⁴

Other extraordinary initiatives were undertaken to stir up enthusiasm for an offensive on the Romanian front. Albert Thomas, the French Socialist Cabinet Minister who had temporarily taken charge of the French Embassy in Petrograd, came to Romania to bolster Romanian morale and to raise the offensive spirit of the Russian troops. Thomas gave a much-needed lift to the Romanians, but his success with the Russians was ephemeral. Like Kerensky, who later undertook a similar visit to the front, Thomas aroused only temporary enthusiasm and his overall impact was negligible. Masses of soldiers that welcomed him with delirium were soon swayed in the opposite direction by Bolshevik orators. However, his impact on the executive committee of the Iași soviet, dominated by Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, resulted in a resolution supporting an immediate offensive. Russian units on the Romanian front also received visits from other allied diplomatic and military representatives—"missionaries," as their critics called them—including Emile VanderVelde, the Belgium socialist, St. Aulaire, the French minister, and the American general, Hugh Scott.⁸⁵

In the few weeks before the projected July dates for the opening of the offensive, the tempo of propaganda increased. Social Revolutionary and Menshevik majorities that dominated the higher committees loyally promoted the decision of the Provisional Government. Their views were reflected in front newspapers such as *Izvestiia Armeiskogo Komiteta 9-oi Armii* (News of the Army Committee of the IX

Army), *Voin-grazhdanin* (Soldier-Citizen), and *Vestnik 4-oi Armii* (Herald of the IV Army). Large quantities of other literature bearing the same message were distributed. At the same time, the Bolsheviks made opposition to the offensive the chief emphasis of their agitation. Their newspapers, including *Pravda* and *Soldatskaia Pravda*, were widely distributed despite efforts of the committees to restrict them.⁸⁶

In the last weeks before the offensive, the Provisional Government passed new decrees aimed at curbing anti-war agitation. In the 4th Siberian Corps of the VI Army, for example, some agitators were court-martialed and other units in the same army were broken up. Deserters reported arrests and corporal punishment for violations of discipline. Some observers believed unrealistically that the spirit of the Russian army had been altered. "General Shcherbachev reports that order in his army is being restored," Foreign Minister Mikhail Tereshcheno told his minister in London. General Berthelot, optimistic as usual, remarked at the end of May, "in the Russian army morale is improving, manifestations of a changing spirit multiply." But later he hinted, more realistically: "On the spirit of devotion and the offensive of the Russian troops, it is necessary to make here, as everywhere else, all reserve and to await the results."⁸⁷

As a matter of fact, there was abundant evidence that the spirit of the Russian soldiers remained hostile to an offensive. As Shcherbachev's chief of staff remarked: "the main thing about which they speak and about which they are interested is a quick conclusion of peace." One officer in the IX Army wrote: "Even the word offensive itself throws them [the soldiers] into a frenzy."⁸⁸ Some units, like regiment 120 of the 30th Division (VI Army) bluntly declared they would not attack. Other units in the IX and IV armies likewise voted not to participate. Disaffected units sent representatives to agitate in neighboring forces. The 47th Army Corps (VI Army), as reported by a Romanian liaison officer,

sends almost daily soldiers to Division 40 urging them not to work, neither to take the offensive; if this division should eventually begin to advance, the

soldiers of the 47th Army Corps would be obliged to fire on the soldiers of Division 40 in order to impede them from taking the offensive.⁸⁹

A report at *Stavka* admitted that the majority of units on the Romanian front did not want the offensive: "It is not certain that orders for an offensive would be carried out."⁹⁰ This conclusion received widespread confirmation in mass meetings, where Bolsheviks took the lead in protests against the war and the offensive. In the VI Army, where the Bolsheviks were the strongest on the Romanian front, one proclaimed: "Away with war! Peace!" A Bolshevik agitator in the IX Army argued: "War is not necessary for us, it is desired by the bourgeoisie and capitalists. For us peace and life are necessary." A Bolshevik from Petrograd, heard at another meeting of 30,000 soldiers of the IX Army, condemned the offensive and demanded that power be given over to the Soviet of Workers and Soldiers Deputies.⁹¹

Anti-war sentiment was not restricted to words. There was widespread resistance to carrying out preparations and moving into the line for the offensive. In the 4th Siberian Corps (VI Army), soldiers affirmed: "We don't have to work on repairing trenches. Let's go to Galați.... We don't have to take the offensive and we don't have to do work details." When the time came to move troops into the front lines (or areas adjacent) preparatory to the attack, many units refused to move or had to be cajoled into doing so. A large number simply refused.⁹² Although Berthelot still hoped for the success of the offensive, his earlier condition—if "the Russians march and march well"—seemed especially relevant.⁹³

The Romanians and their French allies were deeply disturbed about the state of the Russian army on the eve of the offensive. A Romanian liaison officer with the Russian IV Army, reporting on preparations at the front where the offensive was scheduled to be launched, commented:

Defensively the trenches are poor, incomplete and without communication trenches...the officers are demoralized, disorganized, lacking confidence in their troops....One sees troops straggling all over the field, without a purpose, tiring themselves out needlessly and exposing themselves to the

enemy....Commanders...report to authorities that they cannot undertake operations.⁹⁴

The American military attache, who had visited the IV, VI, and IX armies twice, also emphasized a "general atmosphere of disorganization" and poor preparations. Russian officers excused the latter by arguing that well-prepared trenches and dugouts could discourage the Russian soldiers from coming out to attack. The American concluded that "defense is all that can be expected of them."⁹⁵

Extraordinary measures were taken to persuade, threaten, or shame the Russian troops to take part in the offensive. In the 40th Division (VI Army) a Romanian liaison observed two delegates from the Petrograd soviet (one worker and one peasant) addressing a meeting of 200-300 soldiers on 16 July. The delegates made patriotic speeches urging the soldiers to fight or to take the offensive. At the end came a challenge: "Those who now refuse to fight or take the offensive should leave the ranks." Sixteen declared they would not fight or take the offensive, but wished peace and to return to their homes. Although the others apparently agreed, tacitly, to fight, a Russian lieutenant perceptively commented: "They are half convinced, but if tomorrow one tells them the opposite, they will reject the offensive once again."⁹⁶

Other methods of overcoming resistance to the offensive were tried. One hundred fifty student volunteers, recruited from a military school, arrived at the 4th Army Corps (VI Army) accompanied by three officers. It was decided to send them into the ranks of the regulars to "produce a true change." Their attempt to inspire by example was also the rationale for creating the so-called volunteer "shock battalions" and "death battalions." But, according to Russian deserters interrogated by the Austro-Hungarian I Army, men of the 40th Russian Army Corps (IX Army) threatened to kill members of a "death battalion" if they advanced; they also forced the Russian artillery to stop a preliminary bombardment. At an assembly of representatives of the 40th Army Corps the vote was 301 to 287 against an attack. Portions of its regiments then left their positions and demonstrated. There was a

general rejection of the operations order for the offensive, and the commanding officer gave up the idea of an attack. A "death battalion" in the IV Army was shouted down and in the VI Army, soldiers of the 21st Rifle Regiment threatened to massacre a "death battalion" of the 6th Rifle Division if it caused them to be sent into the offensive. Equally ineffective was General Shcherbachev's attempt to shame units which refused to execute orders by breaking them up and sending individuals to other units with identifying black arm bands. Officers at the front protested that this would simply spread the disaffection. Likewise, a Romanian liaison officer warned his superiors not to send arrested Russian deserters back to the front.⁹⁷ New units arriving for the offensive contained a dangerous mixture of men from previously disbanded units and fresh fillers from the politically charged interior. These often were involved in the most violent incidents of disorder. Although the forces on the Romanian front were still reputed to be the most reliable in the Russian army, *Stavka* was worried as the attack date neared. "Mood in the army on the Romanian front continues to remain unsteady and uncertain," read a weekly summary dated 8 July.⁹⁸

The dates set for the opening of the offensive varied according to front: 1 July for the Southwest Front, 19 July for the Western Front, 22 July for the Northern Front, and 24 July for the Romanian Front. This proved to be disastrous for the morale of the Russian forces on the latter front because, before they entered action, discouraging news of the defeat and disintegration of Russian armies on the other fronts reached them. Austro-German propagandists made sure of this. These reports told of German success and mass desertions of Russian troops in nearby Bukovina and Galicia. Visitors returning from the interior of Russia told of anarchy and pacifism there. This news stimulated a new wave of protest against the offensive. More regiments and even divisions proclaimed "Down with war! Peace!" and voted not to go on the offensive. A number of Russian officers expressed a desire to postpone the offensive and thought that they would be doing good just to hold their defensive lines. On the very eve of the attack a Romanian liaison officer with the 4th Russian Army Corps reported that General E.K. Aliev, "one of the best

Russian generals on our front," was pessimistic about the reliability of his troops and sought a transfer.⁹⁹

Quite understandably, Romanian uneasiness increased as the date for the offensive on their front approached. Reports of the failure of the initial phases of the Kerensky offensive, especially in nearby Galicia where enemy success could lead to the outflanking of Moldavia altogether, raised the possibility that instead of taking the offensive, the Russo-Romanian armies really might need to fall back into Russia. At a council of war in Iași on 17 July attended by Shcherbachev, Prezan, Berthelot, and the King, Brătianu raised objections "against the immediate execution of the projected offensive." Berthelot "combated energetically" any new delay. He was supported by Shcherbachev, who "affirmed that the Russian troops would respond." The council reaffirmed a determination to attack.¹⁰⁰ However, a few days later, Shcherbachev was less confident. He admitted on 23 July, the day before the offensive opened, that the morale level of his soldiers had "considerably lowered." Berthelot reported to Paris regarding the IX Army on the same day: "Indiscipline is at an endemic state; the trenches are sometimes abandoned at night by the troops, who prefer to go to take shelter from the weather in the villages of the rear."¹⁰¹ Given the condition of the Russian army, King Ferdinand's order of the day rousing his soldiers for the attack was based more on hope than reality when it asserted, "a powerful Russian army is our ally."¹⁰²

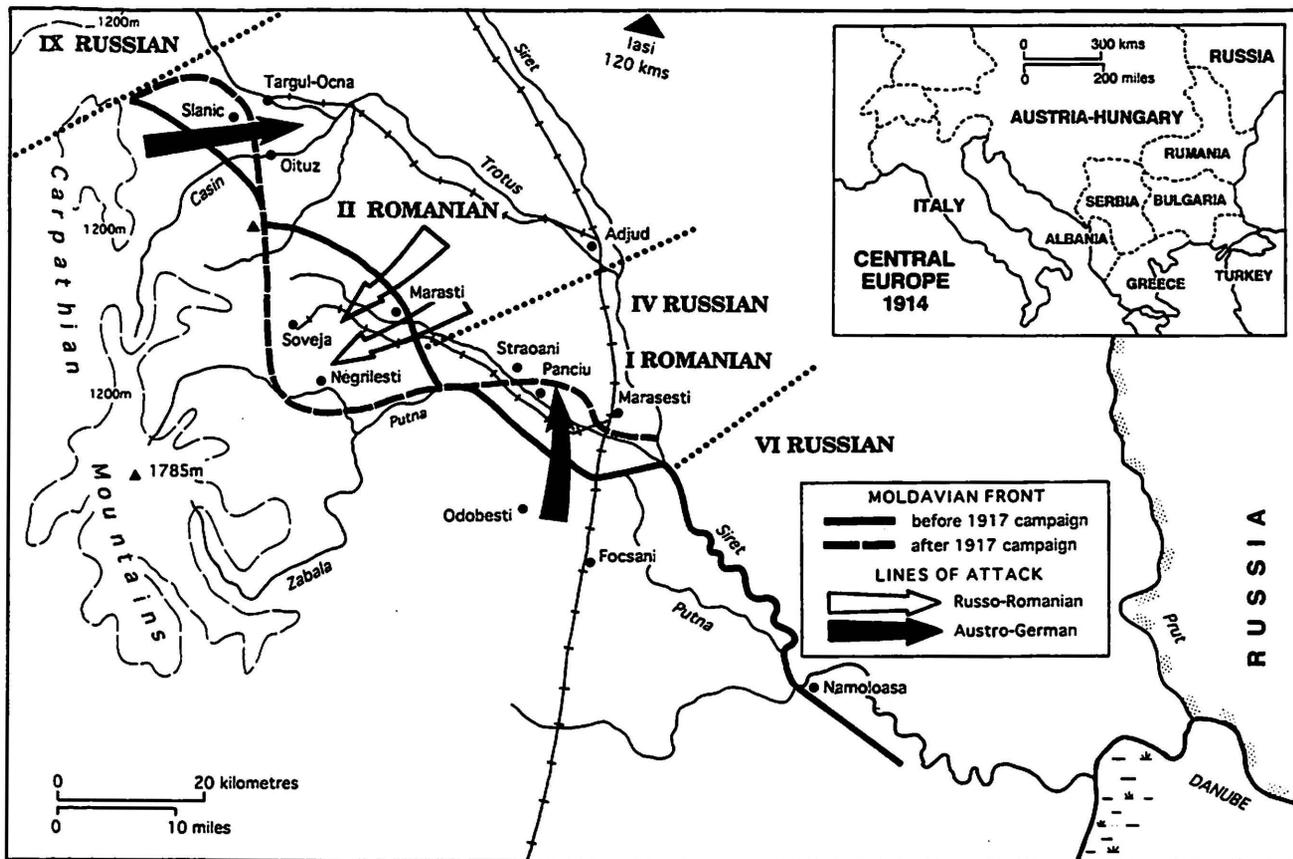
The Battle for Moldavia

The Russo-Romanian offensive in Moldavia had been planned as a two-pronged attack with a primary thrust by the Russian VI and Romanian I armies in the south at the Namoloasa bridgehead on the Sereth against the German IX Army (see map). A supporting role was assigned the Russian IV and Romanian II armies farther north against the Austro-Hungarian I Army. Despite intelligence reports of troop movements and other evidence of an impending attack, the enemy high

command did not anticipate a major offensive. Perhaps believing their own propaganda, they assumed that the Russians, at best, would defend but not attack.¹⁰³ As late as 22 July, Archduke Joseph, the Austro-Hungarian front commander, was greeted across the trenches with "Good morning, brother," by some 30 Russian soldiers. He replied, "Good morning, Russian brothers," and was assured by his Austrian escort that "the Russian soldiers do nothing. At the sound of gunfire [they] disappear."¹⁰⁴ Nor were the Romanian units seen as a serious threat. In light of their past performance, they were dismissed as "hardly very battle-ready, weakened by disease and depression."¹⁰⁵ The three major engagements of the battle for Moldavia (Mărăști, Mărășești, and Oituz) would reveal the enemy assessment of the Romanians to be dead wrong, and even too negative about the Russians.

At 4:00 AM on 24 July, the 8th Army Corps of the IV Russian Army kicked off the Russo-Romanian offensive in the north, the southern initiative being delayed by bad weather. Shcherbachev's description is only slightly colored: "Aware of the tremendous significance of the attack, they were full of revolutionary ardor and had great elan. They broke the enemy line and took many prisoners." Romanians agreed that this was a "beautiful success"; a French account reported that the Russians "swept away" the German lines. Austro-German accounts also praise the Russian performance, with special recognition for the Russian artillery. A coordinated attack of the Romanian II Army was even more brilliant, capturing the village of Mărăști and forcing the Germans into a precipitate retreat. By the end of two days of fighting, the Russo-Romanian attackers had captured almost 100 square kilometers of territory and more than 3000 prisoners.¹⁰⁶

But before this initial success could be exploited, the disastrous failures and virtual collapse of the Russian armies on other fronts led Kerensky to cancel all offensive operations, including those in Romania. Berthelot's suggestion to Shcherbachev that he ignore Kerensky and "put the order in his pocket" was unrealistic; communications personnel had already distributed its contents to the



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*troops.*¹⁰⁷ The anger and disappointment felt by the Russo-Romanian command was reflected in Shcherbachev's statement to his troops, which placed blame primarily on the Southwest Front:

Events of the last days have changed everything and put the Fatherland in danger as a result of the retreat, traitorously executed without pressure from the enemy....The troops of the army of the Southwest Front not only did not take the offensive at the same time as us, but now they have retreated from a considerable portion of the front without opposing resistance to the enemy...It is regrettable that the IV Army and the II Army cannot exploit the success they have achieved, and that the VI Army and I Army cannot profit from preparations made....¹⁰⁸

The Romanian II Army fought on a few days longer in order to win better defensive positions. But the order of Kerensky destroyed what had remained of the offensive spirit of the Russian army. The Russian 40th Corps (IX Army) even refused to occupy positions vacated by the retreating enemy. In the struggle with the enemy for local positions, a Russian "death battalion" at first agreed to cooperate but, when it came to the attack, they held their positions, forcing the Romanian army to extend its flank. In subsequent enemy counterattacks, units of the 40th Russian Corps gave the Romanians no cooperation but retreated to previously held positions. The Romanian command promptly replaced the troops of this army corps with those of their own.¹⁰⁹

The growing Russian refusal to fight, first on other fronts and then in Moldavia, depressed the Romanians. Upon hearing that the Russians were giving way without fighting, Queen Marie exclaimed:

Terrible news, disastrous news...I am afraid that this time it may mean the end of all....I know that disaster stares us in the face....Now our situation is more terrible because it is our ally Russia that causes us more despair than the enemy....All efforts seem so absolutely futile before the immense Russian chaos that threatens to drown us, in spite of all our efforts and in spite of the heroic feeling that is in our brave little army, so ready and

eager to throw itself into the fray with the hope of winning back its lost homes.¹¹⁰

Possibilities were explored in case evacuation into Russia became necessary. Some government officials even left Iași for Odessa, Cherson, and other Russian cities.¹¹¹ Fortunately, perhaps, the Romanian army had little time to ponder its fate. It was soon hit by a enemy counteroffensive which threw it into a bloody struggle for existence and which put to a test the oft-heard pledge of the revolutionary Russian soldiers that, while they would not attack, they would defend.

The Central Powers had planned a summer offensive in Moldavia for some time but the poor showing of Russian armies on other fronts caused them to advance their timetable to 6 August, even though reinforcements such as the famed Bavarian Alpine Corps were still in transit. Their attack, like the ill-fated Russo-Romanian offensive, had two foci. One was in the north, in the Carpathian foothills, near the town of Oituz. There the Austro-Hungarian I Army, including German units such as the Württemberg Mountain Battalion, would attack the recently victorious Romanian II Army and adjacent Russian forces. The second was in the south on the Șereth, where the German IX Army planned to advance eastward against the Russian VI Army, seeking to force a river crossing, as well as northward up the west bank of the river against the Russian IV Army in the direction of Mărășești. The goal was to "roll up the Romanian front" and occupy Moldavia. Field Marshal von Mackensen came from Bucharest to observe the triumph.¹¹²

The attack on the Șereth came in the midst of a shift of Russo-Romanian troops. Much of the Russian IV Army was being shifted to Bukovina to meet the threat created by a retreat of the Russian VIII Army there. Units of the new Romanian I Army, assembled east of the Șereth for the canceled offensive had not yet entered the line. Thus, at the time of the attack, even though the German IX Army outnumbered the Russian armies, there were six fresh but untried Romanian divisions waiting in the wings.¹¹³ The only units of the Russian IV Army left after the transfers were the 7th and 8th Army Corps, with three divisions each, and the

Zamurskaia Cavalry Division. The latter had a substantial number of Bessarabian-Romanian officers and men, and two divisions of the 8th Corps (14th and 15th) had a history of strong anti-revolutionary command. Supporting these units was excellent Russian artillery which, compared with the infantry by a Romanian observer, "appeared to be recruited from another planet."¹¹⁴ It was the 8th Corps and its supporting artillery that had opened the battle of Mărăști so brilliantly.

On the other hand, the Russian 34th Division (7th Corps) against whom the initial German attack was launched on 6 August performed poorly, although in fairness one must point out that it was heavily outnumbered. The 34th began to retreat during the preliminary artillery barrage without waiting to be attacked. When the German infantry did attack, some Russian units fled northward on the right (western) bank of the Sereth, while others fled eastward over some of the river bridges. Fortunately, they succeeded in destroying these bridges before abandoning them and Russo-Romanian artillery on the eastern bank prevented an enemy crossing. By the evening of the first day, all three lines of Russian defense had been abandoned and the Germans had ruptured the front on a breadth of 10 kilometers. Calls went out for aid to the Romanian I Army, assembled just east of the Sereth. The first units of the 5th Romanian Division crossed the river at about 8:00 PM. They were impeded by Russians attempting to flee across the same bridges the Romanians were using. Russian artillery and Cossack police were utilized to clear the way. Before the Romanians could take over the front lines, other Russians fled through their formations, hindering their movement and tearing up their telephone lines. The commanding officer of the 34th confessed that his unit was "incapable of more fighting and therefore cannot be counted on."¹¹⁵

The next day (7 August) the Germans gave up their attempt to cross the river and turned all their power northward. They attacked the remnants of the 34th where it now adjoined the newly arrived Romanians and opened a gap in the line. A Russian battalion attempted to fill this gap but failed. While some Russian units followed its example and tried to stand and fight, others fled in as much disorder as the day before. Some threatened to shoot their own officers who tried to stop them.

The hills and forests behind the front were reported to be "full of fugitives" from the 34th. The front had a gap of one kilometer defended by only 10 Russians. The commander of the Russian 7th Corps was unable to secure help from other Russian units and asked for the complete withdrawal of the 34th.¹¹⁶ A high-ranking French liaison officer who arrived on the scene that day commented:

This division is a very bad force. Of a group of so-called wounded (200-250) met along the route, 3/4 have absolutely nothing [wrong] and the remaining 1/4 are wounded in the hand or arms, being supported by a handkerchief or a string, and do not appear to be sick at all. These men are men who do not wish to fight.¹¹⁷

In fairness, one must point out that Austro-German sources mention some Russian units as "obstinately resisting" and "carrying out counterattacks." Also, the 5th and 9th Divisions of the Romanian I Army which were being fed into the battle line were also forced to give ground, albeit only after determined resistance which cost them heavy casualties. However, the same French officer quoted above was told that a Romanian battalion commander also retreated precipitately, causing most of a Romanian regiment to be taken prisoner.¹¹⁸

In the fighting that followed, known as the Battle of Mărășești, other units of the Russian IV Army followed the pattern established by the 34th Division: some heroic resistance, but generally a progressive disintegration. As General Berthelot put it:

The Russian troops have been extremely uneven: some flee cowardly at the first blow of the cannon; others have counterattacked vigorously, then, after having fought energetically for some time, have made a turnabout under a bombardment of ordinary intensity.¹¹⁹

A Romanian staff officer agreed. In summarizing the performance of the 7th Corps, which bore the brunt of the initial enemy assault, he drew some conclusions:

Division 34 fought poorly, fled; Division 71 fought good enough yesterday, today mediocre; Division 13...fought mediocre....My personal impression is that the Russian troops do not have any will to fight and that they can be forced to do it only with much difficulty. The enemy knows this, shifting the center of pressure toward the west, and presses all the time on the Russian forces in this sector, which retreat, compromising the entire situation.¹²⁰

A Romanian historian has perhaps overstated this last conclusion by attributing to Mackensen the maxim "evade the Romanians, attack the Russians." But it is true that, as the Romanian 5th and 9th divisions took over much of the front occupied by the 34th, the Germans did shift their attack westward to attack the 13th and 71st Russian divisions.¹²¹

On 8-10 August, the Germans continued heavy attacks on the Russians as well as on the Romanians, more of whom were being fed in as replacements. The 34th was soon totally disorganized and its withdrawal into reserve for reconstitution was authorized. The remaining divisions of the 7th Corps (13th and 71st) joined in a counterattack with the 5th Romanian Division, but were forced to retreat. As deaths in action usually indicate hard fighting, it should be pointed out that the 71st and 13th divisions suffered heavy losses. One German burial company interred 800 bodies in a single day.¹²² In the face of the relentless German attack, the Russians continued to yield. This placed greater pressure on the Romanians who were forced to replace them unit by unit or extend their own lines. Fortunately, six months of reconstruction had provided the necessary reinforcements. As Berthelot put it: "Our brave Russians have begun to give ground. But we have Romanian divisions at hand and thanks to them, the battle has been reestablished." Nevertheless the cost was heavy. Between 6 and 11 August, the 9th Romanian Division suffered 6451 casualties.¹²³

The Russian commanders, from General A.I. Ragoza (IV Army) down to small unit commanders, were embarrassed and frustrated. They could promise and plan operations with their Romanian colleagues but could not carry them out. This

breakdown of authority made the Russian commanders timid in their response to enemy pressure, favoring retreat over counterattack. This readiness to give ground angered the Romanians, whose homeland and future hung in the balance. General Grigorescu had little sympathy for his Russian colleagues: "I believe it is not so much the morale of the troops but of their commanders."¹²⁴ The result was a command crisis at the front. Between 11 and 13 August, the Germans, encouraged by previous success against the Russians, mounted a major assault on the 13th, 71st and the remnants of the 34th. Although aided by the Romanians in a counterattack, the Russians faltered and Ragoza unilaterally gave the order to suspend the attack. This precipitated a panic in the 34th and 71st, which withdrew in great disorder a distance of 4 or 5 kilometers. The Romanians, left in the lurch, suffered heavy losses. One regiment was almost entirely destroyed. This engagement convinced Ragoza that the divisions of the 7th Army Corps (13, 34, 71) were no longer capable of fighting, having less than 1,000 fighting troops each. Shcherbachev agreed and concluded that "Romanian troops must take on themselves the principal effort of the forthcoming operations." A single Romanian division replaced the three Russian ones.¹²⁵

Having disposed of the 7th Russian corps, the Germans turned their assault, led by the newly arrived Alpine Corps, against the 8th Russian Corps (divisions 103, 15, 14 and the Zamurskaia Cavalry Division). The 8th, which had fought so well in the battle of Mărăști, now formed the key connecting link between the I and II Romanian armies. Some of its individual units fought very determinedly and even counterattacked in two days of heavy fighting near Panciu. But in the end the result was the same. The 8th Corps, like the 7th, gradually lost its will to fight and began to retreat. The II Romanian Army was forced to extend its flank to the south. Ragoza, who had repeatedly fended off Romanian requests for more aggressive counterattacks, now recommended a major withdrawal across the Sereth. This would have been disastrous, surrendering not only Mărășești and the valleys of the Sereth and its tributaries but also allowing the enemy to outflank the strong mountain defenses to the north manned by the II Romanian and IX Russian armies. Anxious

telex "conversations" ensued between the Romanian General Headquarters (MCG)¹²⁶ and Shcherbachev, and between Prezan and his field commanders. Before the crisis was resolved, the Romanian I Army commander (General Constantin Christescu) and Ragoza, who had been blaming each other, were both relieved of command. The more energetic Grigorescu took over as commander of the battle front at Mărășești.¹²⁷

At the same time, additional Romanian forces (Divisions 10, 13, 14) entered the line so that the most important sectors of the front were now covered by Romanians. Where Russians remained, Romanians backed them up, tenaciously implementing Grigorescu's pledge, "They shall not pass." With Romanian backing, the Russian 8th Corps seemed to fight better for several days, repulsing three German attacks on 13 August. German intelligence summaries, while recognizing that the discipline of the Russians was not improving, concluded that the Russians fought well when together with the Romanians, whose morale was "good." Overall, the Germans stressed the "powerful counterattacks" of the Russo-Romanian forces. The Russians surprised the Germans by reconquering the important town of Panciu, temporarily, after having lost it.¹²⁸

Again, in the battle of Muncelu (14-15 August), in which Russian 8th Army Corps was involved, Romanian discipline and zeal in combat had a positive effect on some of the Russian units. The initial German attack split the Russian 15th and 103rd divisions, throwing them left and right in retreat. However, after Cossacks of the Zamurskaia Cavalry Division rounded them up, some counterattacked. A Romanian counterattack was aided by at least one Russian regiment which, after seeing the situation reestablished by the Romanians, was reported to be "infused with the desire to enter again into battle." The Germans, while emphasizing Romanian resistance, again gave credit to the Russians who fought at Muncelu. King Ferdinand, likewise, recognized the Russian contribution with decorations and a special honor to General Pogovskii, who had died in the battle.¹²⁹

But as a whole, the Russians could not sustain a consistent level of heavy combat. Consequently, Grigorescu concluded that the 8th corps, like the 7th several days previously, no longer had the capacity to fight because of losses over the last

three days: "It does not dispose of more than 6000 bayonets, men tired and extenuated who retreat at the first pressure of the enemy."¹³⁰ Of the six original infantry divisions of the 7th and 8th Corps, only one (14th) was retained at the front. It was joined by a fresh Russian division, the 124th. These units were on the extreme right wing of the Romanian I Army and therefore did not participate directly in the last full-scale battle over Mărășești on 19 August. But Russian artillery, which had always performed well, participated in this "battle of the Razoare forest" and cheered the Romanian infantry as it fought the Germans to a standstill. The unyielding nature of the Romanian defense and German troop needs elsewhere now convinced the enemy to give up their offensive at Mărășești.¹³¹

However, during late August and early September, smaller attacks continued in hope of a local success. On 26 August, the Germans attacked the Russian 14th and 124th divisions near Muncelu. The "fresh" 124th proved that it was no better than its predecessors. On 28 August, coming under enemy attack, it "fled almost without fighting, spreading panic as it went." The next night it left its positions without any enemy pressure at all. Not knowing that the Germans had renounced a general offensive, the Romanians feared this latest development would endanger the II Romanian Army, to which it adjoined. Consequently, MCG, in earnest and worried telex conversations with Grigorescu, sought to organize a counteroffensive including the Russians. Grigorescu was not optimistic. When this counteroffensive eventually came on 4 September, only one Russian division, the 15th, was available. Heavy Russo-Romanian casualties (35 officers and 2700 men) forced renunciation of the attack. On 6 September, it was decided to withdraw all Russian units from the Battle of Mărășești.¹³²

Meanwhile, on the northern part of the front, where General Averescu's Romanian II Army was engaged in the battle of Oituz, fewer Russian units were directly involved. But several times when Russian troops adjoining to the south retreated in the battle of Mărășești there was a danger the enemy would drive a wedge between the two Romanian armies. Consequently, assistance had to be sent from the II Army to stabilize the situation.¹³³ Also, when Averescu sought the

assistance of the Russian 24th Army Corps (IX Army) on his northern flank he found the commander "full of good will" but unable to give assurances of cooperation because of "a spirit of disorganization" in his troops. Later, after agreeing to participate in an attack, the Russian commander asked for a postponement. The Romanian liaison officer with the 24th reported that regiments 194 and 196 of the 49th Russian Division refused to occupy its positions of attack, alleging insufficient artillery support. To influence them to follow orders, a "battalion of death," the commissar of the Provisional Government, and members of the army committee were dispatched. Most battalions of these regiments did take their positions, but later regiment 194 had to be placed in reserve. The Romanian liaison reported the commanders' belief "that some Bolsheviks have slipped into this regiment." When news of the trouble reached the corps headquarters, "there was general consternation because division 49 is considered as the best division in the army corps." Generally, troops of the IX Army could be counted on for passive defense only.¹³⁴

As might be expected, the poor showing made by many Russian units in the Battle of Moldavia was resented by the Romanians. "The Russians have plundered the land and now they won't fight," complained one Romanian prisoner. Quite often Romanians, in anger and derision, shouted "Run, Russians! Run, Russians!" as they watched their erstwhile allies desert the field.¹³⁵ Yet there is also evidence that the Russians were sometimes blamed unfairly. A Romanian brigade commander charged that on the night of 16 August units of the 103rd Russian division had fled the front, hid in a forest, and even fired on the rear of a Romanian unit brought up to stabilize the situation. An investigation by Shcherbachev claimed that the 103rd had actually held its position and the charge was the result of a misunderstanding. He warned of the detrimental effect such a rumor would have on Russo-Romanian troop relations. Prezan annotated Shcherbachev's report: "It is in our interest to maintain at any price good relations with our allies." On 25 August Prezan, in an operations order from MCG to both the Romanian I and II armies, warned:

Some officers (even of higher ranks) voiced, in public or among comrades, insulting judgments of the Russian army, criticizing their mode of fighting, questioning their bravery, and suspecting the sincerity of the cooperation of Russian troops in the battle fought together with Romanian troops.

Such evaluations are unjust to our allies and injurious to our country. In truth, it is not right to contest the bravery and sincerity of the cooperation of our allies when, for example, it is known that the 7th and 8th corps alone lost almost 30,000 killed and wounded...proving through this the military value and sincerity with which they cooperated. It is harmful for our country to make such unjust evaluations, which will have the result of cooling the sentiments of our allies toward us and weakening the ties of camaraderie in battle and the solidarity which must bind us in mind and spirit.¹³⁶

This evaluation of the Russian contribution to the battle for Moldavia in the summer of 1917 contrasts with the tendency to predate the disintegration of the Russian army on the Eastern front. It affirms that, although the dissolution was already far advanced, it had not rendered the Russians totally ineffective. Individual units had displayed moments of heroic combat, testified to by ally and enemy alike.¹³⁷ A relatively objective aid in evaluating the Russian contribution to the battle of Moldavia is to look at casualty figures, as Prezan suggested. If the number missing (captured or deserted) is disproportionate to the number of dead and wounded, then one has reason to suspect fighting ability. The following comparison of the IV Russian and I Romanian armies,¹³⁸ which were composed of 8 and 7 divisions respectively, is instructive.

Romanian I Army			Russian IV Army		
	Officers	Men		Officers	Men
Killed	125	5,000	Killed	83	7,000
Wounded	367	12,100	Wounded	400	10,000
Missing	118	9,700	Missing	167	8,000
Total	610	26,800	Total	650	25,000

This table indicates that the Russians died, suffered wounds (although some may have been self inflicted), and disappeared at about the same rate as the Romanians. The percentage of deaths indicates that at least portions of the IV Army fought hard. In addition to the contribution of the IV Army as discussed here, the VI and IX Russian armies protected the flanks of the Russo-Romanian participants in this campaign and tied down important enemy forces. The defensive stance of these two armies, however suspect their offensive ability, limited the enemy's freedom of action. Although their performance was painfully disappointing to the Romanians, Russian soldiers made an indispensable contribution to the Battle of Moldavia.

The End of the Russian Army in Romania

Involvement in heavy fighting during the summer of 1917 contributed to a temporary revival of discipline in the Russian forces. Among their preparations for the offensive, *Stavka* and the Provisional Government attempted to reassert command authority, including reinstatement of the death penalty. General Levr Kornilov, who

commanded the VIII Russian Army (May-June) and then the Southwest front (June-July), was the leading advocate of this movement. His elevation to Supreme Commander on 2 August symbolized the attempt to reassert authority. During Kornilov's brief prominence, a number of high-ranking officers on the Romanian front openly praised him including, Ragoza (IV Army). Baron P.N. Wrangel (VIII Army) wanted to support Kornilov's "coup" in Petrograd with force but his action was blocked by the VIII Army party committee.¹³⁹ Shcherbachev was astute enough not to commit himself until he could judge the outcome of Kornilov's move. The Romanian government was "extremely worried" about the events in Petrograd but also hesitated to comment publicly. When Kornilov failed, Shcherbachev protested his loyalty to the Provisional Government and removed Wrangel from his command in the VIII Army. Nevertheless, there were rumors that Shcherbachev would be replaced, a move which Poklevskii opposed, arguing to Petrograd that the general "handles things brilliantly," pointing to the recent military success on the Romanian front, and stressing that he enjoyed the full confidence of the Romanian King, government, and army. He warned that Shcherbachev's departure would eliminate "one of the chief elements facilitating the support of Romania." Shcherbachev retained his command.¹⁴⁰ As for the rank and file on the Romanian front, there were many angry meetings and resolutions of protest against the action of Kornilov. General Berthelot's comment was well informed: "VI Army troops absolutely repudiate Kornilov."¹⁴¹

Although ultimately unsuccessful, the reassertion of authority associated with Kornilov, together with the fierce battles raging in Moldavia during July and August, did temporarily ameliorate the pace at which the Russian Revolution developed in Romania. Some commanders were successful in reviving discarded customs such as saluting and the traditional language of address. A French liaison officer with the IX Army expressed satisfaction in August that "courts-martial function in many army corps." In the IV, VI, and IX armies, prominent Bolsheviks and others who openly expressed revolutionary sympathies were arrested, including some committee members. In one jail at Tecuci (IV Army) more than 100 were incarcerated; other

jails were overflowing. German debriefings of Russian officers and men from the Moldavian front concluded that "discipline was good since the reintroduction of the death penalty."¹⁴² But as Wildman has pointed out, the temporary improvement of discipline associated with Kornilov came at a high price. It pitted the higher officers against not only the common soldier but against the higher committees who were still strong supporters of Kerensky and his policy of continuing the war. In the end the credibility of the Provisional Government and the higher committees was irreparably damaged and the Bolsheviks were in a position to benefit.¹⁴³

On the Eve of October

By late September, a backlash had set in, driven by a mounting wave of pacifism. A report from front headquarters in Iași to *Stavka* for the week of 23-30 September spoke of "a burning thirst for peace which seized wide soldier masses." The commander of the VIII Army admitted, similarly, that "thirst for peace is strong also among the officers." Austro-German intelligence reports, based on conversations with Russian soldiers, told of "strong sentiment for peace" in the Russian armies on the Romanian front. A Romanian liaison officer reported on 1 October that at a meeting of soldiers in the 30th Army Corps (VI Army) "the maximalists proposed to arrest the commanding officers of the army corps and divisions and to replace them with supporters of an immediate peace." In the 30th Division of the 4th Army Corps (VI Army) soldiers put up a placard, "Down with War," which was guarded with a sentinel and a threat of death for anyone who attempted to tear it down. In the IX Army as well, the command felt threatened by the increasingly militant calls for an end to the "imperialist," "purposeless" war and for a "revolution of fire and sword" against supporters of Kornilov.¹⁴⁴

The Romanian command was well informed about the mood of the Russian army. In addition to Romanian liaison officers with Russian units, MCG had access to French evaluations prepared by a host of French officers who were dispatched by

Berthelot in September, October, and early November to all four Russian armies. The VIII Russian Army, located north of Romanian territory in Bukovina, had experienced an "avalanche of meetings" demanding peace, some drawing more than 10,000 soldiers. At one meeting a speaker, who had been to Petrograd, repudiated the Provisional Government and the committee structure, urging the soldiers to conclude local armistices and organize fraternization with the enemy. Despite arriving in this atmosphere, Major Legros, a French visitor, was not totally negative in his assessment of the units of the VIII Army he observed. He characterized the morale as "passable" for many divisions, "good enough" in a few others but "good" in only one regiment. He praised the commander of the 23rd Corps as a "discovery of the revolution," elevated from the rank of captain only a few months before. But, offensive action was out of the question. One recent attack had made good progress, but neighboring units refused to join in, so all was lost. He also found the officers discouraged and without respect. The men now "have only one thought—peace." But Legros concluded that they would hold in case of an attack (which the enemy showed no signs of launching).¹⁴⁵

In the IX Army, adjoining to the south, the situation was essentially the same, with morale varying from unit to unit. In September and early October French observers agreed that some were well disciplined and obedient to their officers. "The committee of the IX Army has voted to fight to victory [and] works hand in hand with the commanding officer," stated one report. But other units, it said, influenced by "maximalist propagators," could not be counted on. Soldiers of the 4th Rifle Regiment had refused to attack and in fact abandoned their positions. "Higher commanders have no faith in their men and the men have no faith in their higher commanders."¹⁴⁶ By early November the situation in the IX Army worsened, dramatically illustrated by the murder of a division commander, General Zuborov. His 7th Turkestan Rifle Division (29th Corps) had been reorganized several times as the result of heavy fighting in the summer offensive. In each case the new filler units increased the pacifist element. Recently the committee of one regiment (26th) had passed resolutions demanding peace and protesting against a decision to break

up the division because of its resistance to command. Orders to arrest the authors of the resolution exacerbated the conflict. Appeals to the division and army committees and to Zuborov were without result. Then the latter, not well liked by his men because of his alleged "haughtiness" and lack of tact, went directly to the cantonment of the unruly regiment. As he was leaving around midnight after a five-hour discussion with the regimental committee, he was set on by a band of 200-300 soldiers who "beat him unmercifully to the point of multiple fractures and death ensued. A group of Cossacks sent for in haste arrived too late." A commission of inquiry came but "spoke softly and did not want to suffer the same fate as the general," adjourning without result. The French liaison officer quoted above added: "The officers were terrorized." The French observer advised that the entire army corps be removed from the front.¹⁴⁷

The VI Army posted on the lower Sereth and Danube with its headquarters in Bolgrad (Bessarabia) was plagued by similar if not greater disorder. Lt. Colonel De Menditte and French officers reporting to him visited its units in September and again in October. In Bolgrad, De Mendette received largely negative impressions: "profound discouragement of most officers"; "officers have no faith in their men" and they "carry revolvers in their pockets to protect themselves." Among the soldiers themselves he found a "deplorable attitude, negligent appearance, no one salutes, no one works on fortifications." Visits to the 4th Siberian Corps near Galați yielded very similar assessments: "men in disorder"; "officers have no confidence in their men"; "sanitary conditions very bad." A Russian colonel, who attempted to contradict soldiers critical of a talk by one French officer, was insulted and injured. In one regiment placards appeared urging the men to go to meetings with their guns. French impressions of a few regiments were better; some, coached by their committees, even greeted the visitors with "Hurrah." Isolated units with energetic officers might "appear very good" and the artillery usually made an excellent impression. The 4th Russian Army Corps adjoining to the north had also become a leading center of Bolshevik influence. Here French officers found that some units (30th Division) "categorically refused to listen" to their speeches about the necessity

of continuing the war. One French officer was constantly interrupted by shouts: "The war is made by the bourgeoisie"; "Peace and nothing more"; "Russians make war for France." As in other units, the French stressed that the officers were demoralized, had no trust in their men, and slept in their clothes at night should an enemy attack necessitate a hasty flight. Even the Cossacks, who were "also being infected," would not perform their usual task as enforcers. Officers were frequently humiliated. In the 117th Regiment (30th Division) officers of one battalion were arrested and forced to march left and right at the command of their men. Men of Regiment 119 stormed the officers' mess while their leaders were dining to the accompaniment of music, overturned the table, smashed the instruments, and destroyed everything. The officers fled by jumping out the window. Lt. Colonel Ion Antonescu, operations officer at MCG, commented: "Division 30 is not the only division which is found in a state of anarchy...The VI Russian Army does not wish to fight and the troops of this army...would retreat at the first move of the enemy."¹⁴⁸

It has been alleged that radicalism was less pronounced in the IV Army because it, unlike the VI and IX armies, was stationed totally on Romanian territory. But in the fall of 1917, the behavior exhibited by the IV was similar to the others. One regimental commander was removed for allegedly being a partisan of Kornilov, resolutions were passed by unit soviets condemning the Provisional Government, and a call made for granting all power to the soviets. Fraternalization with the enemy was widespread. Visiting liaison officers urging the men to continue the war were contradicted.¹⁴⁹

The growing desire of the Russian forces in Moldavia for peace was also fed by an aversion to spending another winter under poor living conditions. As Frenkin has documented so carefully, supplies of food, fodder, clothing, and footwear were falling far short of the need. For example, in the last two weeks of October, the Romanian front received 27% of flour and grain needs, 40% of cereal and bean needs, and 59.2% of fodder needs. On 15 October, the IX Army had only one and one half days supply of meat, the VI, 3 days. Needs existed also for warm winter clothing, especially boots. A French officer, attempting to encourage a Russian unit

to remain at the front, was told: "It is impossible for us to fight, clothed as we are." Inadequate nourishment and poor living conditions led to illness: scurvy, typhus, and other diseases. Jaundice was the most prevalent, and the Romanian front had more cases than other fronts. Even during the heavy fighting of July and August, over twice as many Russian soldiers were sick as were wounded. On the other hand, the Russian forces on the Romanian front were relatively better off when it came to food than those on other fronts.¹⁵⁰

Inadequately supplied, ill, homesick, weary of war, many Russian soldiers had little patience with command attempts to restore discipline and continue fighting. Nevertheless, not all Russian units were actively radical and some were still ready to defend the front. However, the general unreliability of the Russian forces not only increased Romanian concern about an Austro-German invasion of Moldavia, but heightened fears about the potential enemy within. It was a frightening dilemma for the Romanians. Field Marshall Mackensen put it rather well: "One [Russian] division remains completely passive, another negotiates, a third shoots, and a fourth fights and shoots among themselves. The Romanians do not know how to find their way out of this dilemma."¹⁵¹

In the face of the growing chaos in the Russian forces, contingency plans were made to back up or replace the most unreliable Russians with Romanian units. As early as 9 September, Colonel Victor Pétin, Chief of Staff of the French Military Mission, had been advised that Romanian reserves were being channeled into strategic rear areas behind the VI Army. Neighboring Romanian commanders made contact with commanders of the 4th Russian Army Corps and the 30th Division to work out a "plan of operations" for implementation in the event of an enemy attack. Throughout October even more extensive plans were made to move in Romanian units to back up the Russians. In the north, General Averescu assigned one of his best brigade commanders, Colonel Romulus Scărișorianu, to form a special "Group Taslău" to reconnoiter the most unreliable Russian sectors and provide backup in the event of an enemy attack. On the other hand, the Romanian command did not want to provoke a wholesale exodus of Russian units. The Romanians believed that they

had sufficient reserves to replace part or all of the Russian VI Army, but if more Russians than this should depart, then the front could not be held. The Romanians began to prepare contingency plans for a major retreat, all the way to the Prut, in case the last scenario developed.¹⁵² But the Romanian leaders, backed by General Berthelot, still hoped that the existing front could be held if most Russians could be kept in the line, as little actual fighting was expected in winter. However, Lenin's accession to power and his immediate call for peace destroyed this hope and touched off a massive homeward movement of the Russian army.

Lenin and Peace

The Bolshevik seizure of power in Petrograd on 7 November found little immediate support in the higher committees and soldiers' organizations on the Romanian front. In every election held in November and early December, whether it was for the Constituent Assembly, the Extraordinary Congress of the Russian Army on the Romanian Front, or the Congress of Peasant Deputies, let alone for the various nationality-based congresses of soldiers, the Social Revolutionaries (SRs) dominated, followed by the Mensheviks, with the Bolsheviks coming in a distant third. The higher army committees, which were similarly composed of better-educated and politically sophisticated elements, reflected a comparable party orientation. In fact, there were even overt expressions of hostility toward events in Petrograd. The committee of the 18th Army corps (IX Army) termed the Bolshevik coup "putschist" and on 3 December the *Rumcherod* formally decided not to recognize Lenin's authority.¹⁵³

But with the lower committees and the masses they represented, attitudes were quite different. While the average soldier had little understanding of the subtleties of political ideology, he could easily understand and relate to Lenin's call for peace on 9 November. It served as a powerful tocsin for his emotions. In meetings which blanketed the front, speakers raged against a command and

committee structure which still called for "continuing the war until victory." New elections and reorganization of lower committees reflecting this revolt took place in the IV and VI armies. Although the Bolsheviks seldom won an outright majority, they gained enough support to control some committees and congresses in alliance with left Social Revolutionaries. In a few units, such as the 3rd Turkestan Division of the IX Army, soldiers voted not to obey any orders until Soviet authority was recognized. Generally, however, while supporting the Bolshevik policy of peace, the soldiers were reluctant to endorse the Bolsheviks themselves.¹⁵⁴

While the command and higher committee structure on the other fronts sooner or later passed under Bolshevik control, the scenario on the Romanian front was markedly different. Right up to the final demobilization and departure of the Russian army, an anti-Bolshevik command and higher committee structure at the front level remained in control, and the Bolsheviks were suppressed. This situation can be explained by several factors: the energetic, anti-Bolshevik action of Front Commissar Tisenhausen; the independence and initiative of General Shcherbachev; the influence of nationalism, especially Ukrainian; and supremely, of course, the intervention of the Romanian army.

Captain Baron Emanuel Tisenhausen, of Baltic German descent, was an SR of longstanding. Before the war he had spent several terms of banishment in Siberia, and he served as the Provisional Government's commissar on the Romanian Front from the early days of the Revolution. As a right SR he had fought, on the one hand, for the original aims of the Revolution, including soldiers rights, but also, on the other, for socialist discipline and continuing the war. He was firmly opposed to the Bolsheviks and directed all his energies to prevent their seizure of power on the Romanian front. An example of this came early in November, when Lenin ordered the destruction of the existing committees and their replacement with Bolshevik-controlled Military Revolutionary Committees (MRC). Tisenhausen, outmaneuvering the Bolsheviks, formed his own front MRC which included Bolsheviks but was controlled by right SRs. Next, this front MRC, in agreement with General Shcherbachev, called for the creation of "reserve revolutionary divisions" for

protecting "democratic freedoms" against the Bolshevik threat. However, Tisenhausen rejected the suggestion of some reactionaries that forces from the Romanian front be sent to Petrograd to restore the Provisional Government.¹⁵⁵

The success of Tisenhausen in controlling the higher committee structure did not lead to acceptance of his policy of continuing the war. Opposition to recruitment for his "revolutionary divisions" was vocal and widespread. Even the commissar of the VI Army called them "useless and even harmful." The IV, VIII, and IX Army committees tried but soon abandoned recruitment; in the IV Army only 300 men volunteered. Fraternization escalated with Lenin's call for peace, and this increased contact with the enemy brought new details about developments in Petrograd. Unofficial truces were arranged early in November, especially between the Bulgarian army and units of the VI Army on the Danube. Orders to fire on those who fraternized or to arrest enemy soldiers who visited the Russian positions were ignored. Gaps began to appear in the front as more than one unit deserted the trenches.¹⁵⁶

Meanwhile all the Romanians could do was to keep as many Russians at the front as possible and fulfill General Shcherbachev's request that his least reliable forces be backed up with Romanian units. In the north, in the vicinity of the Russian IX Army, the forces of Colonel Scărișoreanu, Group Taslău, were active. In order not to cause alarm, Group Taslău was ordered to patrol behind the Russian lines "in a manner as discreet as possible," pretending to be looking for Romanian deserters in Russian uniforms. Some units of Group Taslău were disguised in peasant costumes. Agents were also to be recruited among Russian soldiers. General Averescu warned Scărișoreanu that "secrecy and tact in conducting these patrols are of the greatest importance, in order to avoid conflict with the Russian troops, among whom are men intelligent, devoted, courageous, and determined." In the event of an enemy offensive, Group Taslău was expected to step into the breach and fight to the last man. However, the Russians discerned some of the Taslău agents, and some units cut telephone lines in their areas so Romanian surveillance would be hindered.¹⁵⁷

While the Romanians were struggling to maintain the front, Lenin, lacking a positive response to his international appeal for a general peace, ordered *Stavka* to begin negotiations for a separate Russian armistice. Meeting resistance from Chief of Staff N.N. Dukhonin, he dismissed him and entrusted the Bolshevik ensign (*praporshchik*) N.V. Krylenko with the task. As armistices were initiated all along the front, the Romanians were overtaken by deep despair. Marie echoed this foreboding in her journal: "We all feel like condemned before some mysterious execution hovering somewhere in the dark like an axe to fall, we know not when."¹⁵⁸

Lenin's appointment of Krylenko and insistence on an armistice presented all the front commanders with the choice of recognizing Bolshevik authority or being replaced. Shcherbachev, however, had another option. Unlike Dukhonin, who was murdered at *Stavka*, he was not at the mercy of a Bolshevik-led mob. He could turn for support to the Ukrainian units on his front and especially to the Romanians and their well disciplined army. Consequently, he decided to ignore Lenin's authority and accept, instead, an offer of the Ukrainian Rada to become the independent commander of the Romanian front. His plan was to Ukrainize or nationalize his armies—that is, form non-Russian units to provide a stable basis for maintaining the front. The Western allies, especially the French, strongly backed this plan, financially supporting Shcherbachev and eventually extending diplomatic recognition to the Ukrainian Rada, which had declared independence from Petrograd on 20 November.¹⁵⁹

Shcherbachev's attempt to nationalize the Romanian front had antecedents. By the summer of 1917 many ethnic groups (Moldavian, Czech, Polish, "Muslim," as well as Ukrainian) had taken steps to form national military units at the front. As early as September, Simon Petliura had received Kerensky's approval to form purely Ukrainian units including the transfer of Ukrainian soldiers from other fronts to the Southwest and Romanian fronts where they would be closer to home and the defense of Ukrainian interests. Ukrainization was an especially important issue on the Romanian front, where one-third of the Russian forces fell into this category. (A congress at Botoșani, for example, brought together representatives of 252,000

Ukrainian soldiers; officer schools were set up in Kiev, and a general staff appointed.) But, the "nationalization" of the Romanian front turned out to be largely unsuccessful. A few Ukrainian units recognized Shcherbachev's command, and some did aid the Romanians in their efforts to control unruly Russian units.¹⁶⁰ But the desire for peace and interest in the land question made Ukrainian soldiers just as eager to return home as their Russian counterparts. Ultimately the attempt to form a Ukrainian Army Corps on the Romanian front failed and Shcherbachev ended up with virtually no forces with which to carry on the war.

On 22 November, at the same time as he had ordered Kyrlenko to make high level contact with the German command, Lenin had sent an uncoded radiogram addressed to all committees, soldiers, and sailors, ordering them to take the initiative in arranging local, ad hoc armistices. Attempts by the command and higher committee structure on the Romanian front to prevent these local armistices failed. The committee of the 32nd Division (VIII Army) arranged an armistice within 36 hours; units of the IV and VI armies reached agreements with the enemy two days later (24 November); only the IX Army lagged behind.¹⁶¹

Faced with this rash of local armistices beyond his control, Shcherbachev decided to seize the initiative and conclude a general armistice for the Romanian front on his own authority. His decision, taken in consultation with his Romanian allies, resolved for the latter a dilemma of their own: continuing the war to certain disaster or seeking a separate peace. The first alternative would mean enemy occupation of the remaining national territory, the exile of the government and dynasty and the probable disintegration of the army in Bolshevised Russia. The second alternative would violate the no-separate-peace clause of the treaty of 1916 and thereby endanger Romania's war aims. Shcherbachev's decision, however, gave the Romanians a credible excuse for choosing the latter. Consequently, they joined with Shcherbachev in signing an armistice with the Central Powers at Focșani on 9 December.¹⁶²

Demobilization and Evacuation

Shcherbachev hoped that the armistice, even though it was an explicit rejection of Lenin's authority and the Bolshevik negotiations with the Central Powers at Brest-Litovsk, would gain him credibility among his own troops and thereby enable him to keep them under his control. But for the majority of Russian soldiers the armistice was instead a reason to throw off all restraint and implement immediately the slogan "Peace, Demobilization, and Return to the Homeland."

Reports flooded into Romanian headquarters of incredible disorder among the Russian troops; divisions and even army corps were talking about departing for home *en mass*. The Romanian 5th Division reported that, on the sector of a neighboring Russian division (30th), only one soldier per kilometer remained in the line, with the majority of soldiers "wandering through the villages." Many Russians engaged in economic activity, setting up stalls on the streets of Romanian cities as well as towns near the front, selling whatever they could purloin from army supplies. Antonescu captured the atmosphere when he commented, "the whole front is transformed into a market." A German intelligence report stated that Russian soldiers "sell anything, a horse for a bottle of liquor; even gun harness is sold.... Completely drunk Russians travel in trucks throughout the countryside." Near Bacău, a group of celebrating Russians endangered railroad traffic by firing their guns and attempting to destroy a bridge with hand grenades.¹⁶³

The estates of Romanian landlords were the prime targets for plunder but peasant villages, by now composed largely of women, children, and old people, also bore the brunt of the Russian marauding. A circular order of MCG to all units on 15 December vividly described the problem:

- a) Isolated individuals and organized bands openly commit robberies, pillaging and even felonies, terrorizing the population with guns, grenades and all manner of violence....
- b) Detachments or units occupy by force camps not intended for them, refusing to leave...and taking by force the last means of life of the poor population.
- c) Bands, detachments and units

occupy trains without authorization [and force] the railroad officials to put trains into movement contrary to timetables established by rightful authority.¹⁶⁴

The order went on to point out how the unauthorized commandeering of trains would result in the breakdown of supply and raise the specter of famine. It then prescribed stern counter-measures:

1)...Any individual, unit or detachment which should occupy trains by force or should force railroad employees, through violence or threats, to change the destination of trains or hours established will be repressed on the spot and reduced to order through force of arms. 2) Troops are forbidden to pass through Iași....3)...Gatherings of troops are forbidden in the vicinity of railroad stations in general and Ungheni and Iași in particular. 4) All orders given by gendarmes or troops charged with maintaining order on Romanian territory will be executed without discussion or delay by individuals...soldiers as well as by detachments or units, whether they be Russian or Romanian. 5) Respect for the provisions above will be imposed by armed force, while non-compliance will be repressed immediately on the spot according to Romanian law.

In addition to combating the anarchic behavior of the Russian army, the Romanians also forcibly opposed attempts by Bolsheviks to take command control of the Russian army on the Romanian front. Incensed at the success of Shcherbachev and Tisenhausen in retaining control of the command and higher committee structure, Lenin dispatched Senen Roshal, a veteran revolutionary, to Moldavia early in December as the new commissar of the Romanian front. The arrival of Roshal and other "comrades" touched off attempts to displace Shcherbachev and subordinate commanders as well as committees which recognized their authority. One group of Bolsheviks visited Galați, where the radical 4th Siberian Corps was garrisoned. After strenuous agitation and persistent pressure on the old VI Army committee by Bolshevik cadres, an army congress was convened in Galați rather than at the site of the army headquarters, Bolgrad. After a reportedly intense struggle in the

congress, a new army committee dominated by a Bolshevik-led coalition was elected. This meeting in Galați, which wrested effective control over the units of the VI Army from its commander General Tsurikov, in distant Bolgrad, also approved Bolshevik resolutions favoring recognition of Soviet authority, democratization of power in the army, and relations with the Ukrainian Rada.¹⁶⁵

A similar "putsch" had already taken place in the 24th army corps of the IV Army at Bacău. On the night of 2-3 December a Bolshevik *praporshchik*, I.S. Kondurushkin, and 70 men armed with machine guns seized the corps committee, the telegraph facilities and arrested General Nicolaev, the corps commander. Hurriedly, and "almost at random," the group designated a new corps commander. A few days later Kondurushkin initiated an analogous action in the town of Roman, at the headquarters of the IV Army. General Ragoza, the army commander, was replaced by a young officer named Protopopov. But in the IX Army to the north a Bolshevik bid for power was unsuccessful. Krylenko had appointed a new commissar for the 18th Corps (IX Army) and ordered him to remove the corps commander and the commissar of the provisional government, to organize a new MRC, to strictly enforce terms of the armistice, and to make known the order to democratize the army. But while a number of the Great Russians units recognized the authority of this newly "elected" Bolshevik, ensign Safronov, Ukrainian units remained loyal to General Anatoli Kelchevskii, the incumbent commander.¹⁶⁶

In Iași, on 15 December, Roshal assembled representatives from local soldiers' organizations as well as those from Odessa and the IV Army, demanded submission to Soviet authority, and formed a new front committee. At 10:00 PM the same day, Roshal and other members of this self-appointed MRC, accompanied by 15 soldiers, overthrew the existing MRC and the next day proclaimed themselves the supreme authority of the Russian army on the Romanian front.¹⁶⁷ The front headquarters at Iași was also a logical target for a Bolshevik-led takeover. Ever since the assassination at *Stavka* of General Dukhonin on 3 December, General Shcherbachev had been acutely aware of his own vulnerability. He had confided to Berthelot that he did not have 100 Russians he could trust. He said he expected to

be arrested himself soon and requested Romanian protection. Queen Marie described Shcherbachev at the time as "a ghost of a man, a phantom general with nothing to command and always trembling for his life, seeing in each man who approaches him, his murderer; it must be awful." A first-hand account of Dukhonin's arrest and murder from General Constantin Coanda, Romanian liaison at *Stavka*, gave credibility to Shcherbachev's fears. On 17 December, immediately after the Roshal's purge of the old MRC, Shcherbachev used Ukrainian units to arrest some of the Bolshevik members of the new MRC. A number of these avoided arrest and, from the safety of the Russian garrison at Socola, continued to proclaim themselves the true MRC which was leading the struggle against "counterrevolutionaries." The arrests elicited protest resolutions from some committees of lower units.¹⁶⁸

On 19 December, a delegation of Bolsheviks visited the Romanian war minister, General Constantin Iancovescu, to ascertain the attitude of the Romanian government to their desire to send armed revolutionary units into the capital to arrest Shcherbachev. Iancovescu, of course, withheld his approval and warned them that any such attempt would be prevented by force. On 20 December, Shcherbachev, with the support of representatives of the Ukrainian Rada, called together a large meeting involving the Socola Bolshevik-dominated front committee and nationalist (non-Bolshevik) committee to try to form a "united-front" MRC, which he hoped would dilute the influence of the Socola Bolsheviks. Also, there was specific intention to gain agreement that Soviet authority would be recognized only on Great Russian territory.¹⁶⁹ The Bolsheviks led by Roshal could hardly accept these terms and, according to Shcherbachev as well as independent Russian, Romanian, and French sources, a Bolshevik in attendance threatened Shcherbachev, leveling a pistol at him. Shcherbachev was saved by the presence of some loyal Ukrainians and a Romanian officer. The Bolsheviks were arrested and Roshal disappeared. Later, a body believed to be his was found along a railroad track near Iași.¹⁷⁰ Shcherbachev promptly insisted that the Romanian authorities take action against the center of Bolshevik influence at Socola. He talked of resigning if he did not secure energetic support. All the allied ministers seconded his demand. Berthelot also put strong

pressure on Brătianu "to arrest the maximalists *en masse*." Brătianu was hesitant to do so, as he told the Italian minister, because he feared Russian troops from the front would march on Iași and other principal cities before Romanian troops could intercept them. If Kondurushkin can be believed, plans were already under discussion to isolate Iași by blockading the Romanian II Army at the front and then occupying the capital along with other Romanian cities. Unrealistically, Kondurushkin expected that the entire Russian IV Army, which he estimated at 420,000 men, 250,000 bayonets, would march on Iași and easily overcome its 40,000 Romanian defenders.¹⁷¹

The Romanian cabinet met throughout the night of 21-22 December in a dramatic session to consider the question of disarming Bolshevik-controlled forces. There seemed to be only two alternatives: either to use force now or face loss of control of the front and possibly a Bolshevik-led coup against the Romanian government. General Prezan moved that the Bolsheviks be disarmed; a plan had already been worked out and was ready for implementation in Iași and throughout Moldavia. He felt confident that the chaotic state of the Russians would make its accomplishment possible. Brătianu pointed out that it risked serious consequences: Bolshevik retaliation against Romanians in Russia, loss of the state treasury (then in Moscow), bloody fighting in Moldavia, and interruption of the Romanian supply route through Russia. He was willing to take these risks, but other ministers hesitated. At about 4:00 AM, after hours of discussion, Prezan reminded the ministers that time was fast running out and that he must have a decision. Brătianu left to awaken the King and get his opinion. Ferdinand was for action, and by 6:00 AM Prezan was able to order the army to initiate strikes against the Bolsheviks.¹⁷² Just as Prezan had promised, the Socola garrison was easily disarmed. Three Romanian regiments, led by a token group of Ukrainians to fraternize with and distract the Russians, disarmed a force of about 3000 "without the least shedding of blood." A contingent of 3500 Russians who had commandeered trains near Suceava were intercepted as they neared Iași and also disarmed without violence. Another contingent coming by foot was likewise stopped.¹⁷³

The action in and near Iași on 22 December was duplicated at other Russian garrison cities, where chaos reigned as the previous command structure was ignored or overthrown. The revolutionary committee of the 30th Division proposed to leave the front "in a state of war with infantry and artillery." Kondurushkin urged Russian troops to "fight with arms" against "those who oppose the Revolution." Widespread looting and pillaging accompanied these disorders. Romainan troops, including artillery, were dispatched. On the night of 23-24 December these troops, again using Ukrainians to mask their operation, arrested Kondurushkin and other "usurpers" at IV Army headquarters in the town of Roman. The MRC (Bolshevik) of the 24th Army Corps protested strongly and threatened to remove its troops from the front and march toward Roman to liberate Kondurushkin and his committee. The 30th Army Corps made a similar threat, promising to attack any Romanian who opposed them. According to reports of Austrian intelligence, both the 24th and 30th corps had actually turned their artillery from the front, pointing it toward the Romanians in their rear.¹⁷⁴

The Romanians continued to move substantial forces into the Bacău-Roman area, but at the same time tried to reason with the Russians, professing that they had no hostile intentions but insisting on observance of the guidelines for peaceful evacuation. Nevertheless, there were several armed confrontations with units of the 24th and 30th Army Corps. On 27 December, the 194th Regiment was challenged by Group Taslău at Moinești, west of Bacău, and asked to give up their arms. They refused and the next day, together with the neighboring 6th Infantry Regiment, they threatened to use force to continue on to Bacău-Roman to liberate Kondurushkin. Several salvos of Romanian artillery in front of the Russian column inflicted shrapnel wounds and threw the Russians into panic. Most fled, throwing down their guns; others were arrested by the Romanians.¹⁷⁵ Although these attempts were overthrown relatively easily, the Romanians remained apprehensive about new threats. As Queen Marie put it in her diary:

Not much news today, but in all Romanian towns the Bolsheviks were disarmed without the slightest resistance. Now we must await the results which may be serious. We must be prepared for anything, our situation is anyhow so completely awful.¹⁷⁶

The Romanian decision to disarm the Russian troops at Socola and elsewhere was accompanied by a decision to allow all the Russians leave Romania, provided they submitted to disarmament and followed orders of General Shcherbachev for evacuation. To ensure an orderly process, Moldavia was divided into eight military zones and guidelines for Romanian defense forces established: 1) Romanian troops were to avoid being drawn into the internecine political struggles of the Russian army, although "it is in our interest to support, if need be even directly, the Ukrainization of the Romanian front"; 2) No Russian unit was to leave for Russia without written authorization from the front commander, and all units headed for the Prut would be stopped and searched; and 3) Russian units which left on their own and without written orders would be disarmed. Some Russian units accepted these terms. The Zamurskaia division at Berești (north of Bacău) deposited its arms with a Romanian regiment and on orders from MCG was directed to a railroad station for embarkation to Russia. On the other hand, other Russian units resorted to confrontation and conflict.¹⁷⁷

The troubles accompanying the demobilization and evacuation of the Russian army were not just between Romanians and Russians but also between Ukrainians and Russians. This latter conflict was especially sharp in the IX Army. Tension had continued to grow between Ukrainian units loyal to army commander General Kelchevskii and many of the ethnic Great Russian units which had accepted the leadership of *praporshchik* Safronov.¹⁷⁸ On 21 December, Lt. Colonel Sichițiu, the Romanian liaison officer with the IX Army, learned of an order for the 7th Russian Rifle Division to leave the front and march on Keltchevskii's headquarters at Botoșani. Strong Romanian forces were mobilized and, as at Iași, they took steps to disarm the Russians. Four battalions of the 7th Romanian Infantry Division, plus cavalry and artillery, surrounded the Russians and called upon them to surrender

their weapons or return to the front. The Romanian command was flexible and allowed their leaders, accompanied by the Romanian liaison, to consult with Safronov and the Bolshevik committee in Botoșani. Safronov, "audacious and impudent" according to the Romanians, demanded an explanation of the state of siege imposed on the Russians. Sichițiu reiterated the Romanian demand for disarmament and attached a time limit of 1½ hours. But MCG, anxious to avoid a bloody encounter, ordered Sichițiu to withhold action pending the decision of the cabinet in Iași.

Early the next morning, 22 December, the Ukrainians thought they had reached an agreement with the Russians for transit of the latter back into Great Russia. Sichițiu made it clear that no crimes or aggression would be tolerated en route. The Russians appeared intimidated and gave up most of their original demands. But on the same day, a French officer arrived from MCG with orders to arrest, with the aid of the Ukrainians, the Bolshevik leaders in Botoșani and restore the authority of General Kelchevskii. This operation could not be accomplished immediately because the Ukrainians were not yet ready to act. However, on 25 December, a 3:00 AM strike against the Bolsheviks in Botoșani led to the Bolsheviks' arrest without incident.

The next day the disarmament of the 7th Rifle Division was completed by the Romanians. One regiment offered no resistance; another opened fire and had to be subdued with force; a third fled; and the fourth regiment was pressed into a dense circle of 200 meters surrounded by Romanian machine guns. After rejecting the Russian request to be evacuated by train with their arms, Sichițiu gave them a 30-minute ultimatum. With no positive sign from this regiment, and amid reports that another Russian rifle division might be en route, Sichițiu ordered a few artillery shells lobed into the center of this regiment and another that had as yet not laid down its arms. Among the Russians there was an immediate "return to reality" and they surrendered their arms. One additional regiment was disarmed by surprise in the middle of the night. The Italian minister reported 100 Russian and 10 Romanian casualties at Botoșani.¹⁷⁹ The encounter at Botoșani was evidently an object lesson for other Russian units of the IX Army. When Bolshevik leaders ordered the 1st

Rifle Division to march on the city, the men refused to obey and two regiments voluntarily gave up their arms.¹⁸⁰

In order to calm the other Russian soldiers on the Romanian front and avoid repetition of the confrontations at Botoșani and Roman, the Romanian MCG promulgated guidelines¹⁸¹ for disarmament and repatriation:

- a) The measures do not have a character hostile to Russian troops but are taken to guarantee life and property of [Romanian] inhabitants against bands of soldiers which plunder, kill, and burn.
- b) Romanian troops have formal orders not to mix in political battles which take place between Russian troops if our population does not suffer from them.
- c) The Romanian command does not oppose the demobilization of Russian troops and their going into Russia as long as these measures are taken by the Russian high command. However, the Romanian high command desires and insists that troops which go into Russia be transported with train, or by foot only in the case they have organized along the roads the necessary depots with which they can provision the troops in transit. If these depots are not organized, troops cannot go by foot because...they will turn to plunder in order to live. No plundering will be tolerated and traitors, however numerous, will be punished according to Romanian law.

To make sure these guidelines were understood, the commander of the 4th Romanian Army Corps met with the chiefs of staff and two soldier representatives of the 24th and 30th Army Corps (IV Army), explaining the Romanian demands and providing many printed copies to be distributed in the ranks. When the 24th Army Corps complained about restrictions on its movement, the Romanians met with its command to work out perimeters within which the Russian troops could move without being "annoyed" by Romanian police detachments.¹⁸²

The firm but conciliatory attitude of the Romanians convinced most Russian units not to challenge the guidelines with force, although there was a lot of discussion and complaining. For example, the 30th Army Corps sent to the II Romanian Army headquarters its plan for movement into Bessarabia on 31 December but threatened

that "if the attitude of Romanian troops along the roads eastward did not improve," they would not permit disarmament even if this resulted in a resort to arms. MCG remained firm and told them they were not authorized to leave the front and, if they departed without orders, they would be disarmed and left in their present zone.¹⁸³

The Russian evacuation was far from organized, however, as many Russian units disregarded these guidelines and tried to move eastward on their own. Consequently, throughout December the Romanians strengthened their control of the rear area between the front and the Prut river by the use of newly created units and others withdrawn from the front. By 1 January seven divisions were assigned to this police action.¹⁸⁴ But, despite some success in controlling the Russians, the Romanians were not optimistic. As Brătianu wired to General Coanda, formerly Romanian liaison at *Stavka* and now liaison with the Ukrainian government in Kiev:

With great effort they [Russians] have been restrained from transforming the retreat into systematic devastation....Even if we can, under the threat of our army, finish the evacuation without a pitched battle, nevertheless it is certain that hundreds of thousands of veritable enemies will be found also soon in Bessarabia and in Podolie, rendering impossible our connections with the Ukraine.¹⁸⁵

Brătianu's hope to complete the evacuation without a pitched battle was not realized. Early in January Krylenko exacerbated the already volatile question of evacuation when he sent an order to the Bolshevik MRC of the Romanian Front prescribing a "methodical withdrawal" of Russian units from Romanian territory, by force of arms if hindered by Romanian troops. Ukrainian troops were invited to join in the movement. The Romanians tried to stop or confiscate this order but it became known among the Russian troops, in some cases through Austrian propagandists who also gave the impression that the enemy would assist if the Russians encountered Romanian resistance.¹⁸⁶

The order of Krylenko stimulated a renewed urgency and heightened militancy among Russian units to depart for the east, armed and in military

formation. In the IV Army there were rumors that help would come from Russia should the Romanians block their way. The exodus of armed Russian units eastward raised Romanian fears that their supply lines and depots in Bessarabia, now guarded by Romanian troops, would be threatened. The attempt of Russian units to leave without authorization led to several large-scale pitched battles with the Romanians. Heavy Romanian concentrations around the main transportation route into Russia through Iași encouraged the Russians to gravitate toward the extreme south and north of Moldavia. On the southern route they hoped for assistance from Bolshevik military and naval units in Southern Bessarabia (Bolgrad, Reni) and in the north from the VIII Army in Bukovina—as well as the encouragement of the Austro-German enemy, who stood to profit from the quick departure of the Russian army from the Romanian front.¹⁸⁷

Russian forces stationed on the lower Sereth and the Danube had long been considered the most pro-Bolshevik on the Romanian front. Several divisions, including the 13th, 30th, and 34th, had already openly expressed their intention to disobey the Romanian guidelines for departure. The 34th, which had fought poorly in the summer and was now causing serious devastation locally, proposed on 4 January to leave for Russia in 10 days. MCG ordered the 4th Romanian Division, which controlled the hinterland between the Russians and the Prut, to warn the Russian division committee "energetically" that they would be stopped by force.¹⁸⁸ The 13th Russian Division committee, backed by a delegation from the IV Army committee, also announced they had decided to evacuate without authorization. And they warned that if impeded by the Romanians they would use "violence, destroying everything they met on the way." The Romanians answered in an equally decisive manner, warning that they would oppose this "at any price." Romanian military units made extensive preparations to enforce this edict.¹⁸⁹

Almost immediately Russian units began to challenge the Romanians. On 16 January, the 40th Division started out for the east but was turned back by the Romanians without major bloodshed. Two days later the 12th Russian Division was handled in a similar manner.¹⁹⁰ However, a violent and bloody confrontation did

occur at Galați, where the 4th Siberian Corps was headquartered. Early in January, German intelligence reports revealed "strong animosity" in the 9th and 10th Siberian divisions toward the Romanians. The Romanians had closed off postal service after reports of Krylenko's order, so the Russians were reduced to getting news from the Germans. Also, these divisions had been trying to avoid disarming by sending some of their weapons to the rear, presumably to be picked up after their units had been searched and passed for transit. Finally, in mid-January, the 9th Division was reported on the verge of departure for home, armed, and intending to pass through Galați enroute. The Romanians mobilized units of their 4th Division as well as marine forces inside the city and monitors operating on the Danube. The 10th Russian Division, quartered inside the city, decided to assist its sister division in its march-through.¹⁹¹

The battle began at noon on 20 January when Russian infantry and machine gun units attacked a Romanian position on the western outskirts of Galați, capturing a number of Romanian soldiers and officers as well as two machine guns. At 2:00 PM, still farther to the west, other Romanian units were "vigorously" attacked and forced to retreat. At the same time, a delegation from the 9th Division, including its commander (a mere captain), warned that if the Russian forces were not allowed free passage by 3:00 PM they would bombard the city with artillery and force their way through. The Romanians refused, and the bombardment began that evening and lasted into the night. A call went out for additional Romanian troops and artillery.¹⁹²

After a futile attempt to persuade the Russians to lay down their arms, the Romanians launched a night attack which pushed the Russians back. But at 8:00 AM on 21 January, the Russians launched a counterattack all along the front. At the same time, word arrived that Romanian units along the Prut to the east had been disarmed by Russians and that the latter, assisted by a heavily armed Russian warship, were headed for Galați. In the battle which raged all day the Russian attackers almost reached the marine batteries defending the city. However, determined Romanian use of bayonets, marine artillery, aerial bombardment, and

gunfire from monitors threw the Russians into disorder. And, by the evening of 21 January, the Russian units from the east had turned and fled back into Bessarabia. The 9th Division, after calling for German help but being told it was not feasible, capitulated and agreed to disarm and leave Romania peacefully, provided they could take their carts and horses. After signing an agreement at 5:00 AM on 22 January, the entire 9th Division passed westward into the German lines. Two days later the 10th Division agreed to disarm and it was allowed to cross the Prut into Bessarabia.¹⁹³

German intelligence reports confirm that the "Battle of Galați" was a major engagement and that the Russians were far from being a rabble. The arrival of units of the 4th Siberian Corps and the 13th Division in German-held Brăila made "a surprisingly good impression" on their German hosts. Their march discipline and attitude toward their Russian officers was termed "flawless" and even the supply and baggage train exemplary. Their clothing and the outfitting of their horses were "good," and they marched to the tune of their own regimental band. The morale of the men appeared "excellent," although the officers were more reserved, some saying privately that they had been forced to go along. All agreed that the battle of Galați was "bitterly fought." A total of 110 artillery pieces were used. The Russians complained that they had been in a particularly unfavorable position between the marine batteries and the Romanian forces. The Romanians, they admitted, had inflicted heavy losses and had taken 1000 prisoners. But some Russians remained defiant, claiming the Romanians would "long remember the 4th Siberian Corps and the battle of Galați." However, the bloody defeat reportedly convinced the remaining Russians in the area not to fight any more but to accept the Romanian demand for disarmament and transport into Russia.¹⁹⁴

In the north, in the region around Suceava, Dorohoi, and Botoșani, Russian units also attempted to force their way out of Romania. Despite the successful repression of December, the disruption of public order had never ceased in the region. The call of Krylenko stimulated a new challenge to Romanian authority. The situation had become even more critical. At the end of December there were

reports of a Bolshevik-led division marching toward Botoșani to burn the city. There were reports that others were seeking the aid of the VIII Army in forcing their way out of Romania. Some Russian units sought to march south into the heart of Moldavia.¹⁹⁵

As before, the Romanians were determined to use force to ensure compliance with their guidelines. Large Romanian troop formations (confirmed by Austrian intelligence reports) were moved toward the north, including the 7th, 9th, and 15th divisions in full battle equipment. The total was put at 15 regiments. The Romanians repeated their demand that the Russians disarm; they then would be allowed to march northward and exit into Bessarabia. The 49th Russian Division sent a request to the commander of the Austro-Hungarian I Army for food and protection against the Romanians, as well as aid in forcing the Romanians to give permission to march fully armed into Russia. He produced a written protest against Romanian "violence" and asked that it be forwarded to *Stavka*. As elsewhere, the enemy declined to become involved in the conflict.¹⁹⁶ In this instance and in other confrontations, the Romanians gave the Russians only one alternative to disarmament: a return to the front. As at Galați, some Russian units decided to challenge the Romanians. Also, as at Galați, there was fierce fighting which involved the use of artillery. Austrian intelligence reported that "great battles have taken place." In Botoșani, the nearby shelling could be distinctly heard while groups of Austrian officers, free to cross the unattended lines, window-shopped in the city. Units of the Russian VIII Army immediately to the north were eventually drawn into the conflict.¹⁹⁷ The outcome in these confrontations was essentially the same as at Galați. Attempts by the Russians to fight their way through were abandoned in the face of determined Romanian resistance, which invariably inflicted heavy casualties on the poorly led Russian forces. A German intelligence report of 2 February sums up the results:

The 2nd [Russian] Army Corps, in an attempt to march through to Bessarabia...was routed and in the most part disarmed. A portion, about

1000 men, went over to us....Armed transit of 18th and 40th Army Corps has likewise failed. Battles near Sereth and Mihaileni with Romanians ended in disarming of troops. Only part of 43rd Infantry Division has fought through to Russian territory. Approximately 800 men...as well as 50 trucks and 20 motorcycles...deserted to us. Greater part of both corps, thrown into disorder, may seek to reach the border unarmed. 2nd, 18th and 40th Army Corps can be considered dissolved....The 9th Romanian Division takes over this sector....8th Army Corps, because of Romanian opposition to transit to Russia, has returned to its old position.¹⁹⁸

Although one can hardly speak about organized demobilization as Shcherbachev and the Romanians originally intended, the Russian army, whether peacefully or violently, quickly evacuated Moldavia. Between 14 December and 17 January, the 30th Army Corps, for example, shrunk from 24,000 to 2,000. From the beginning of November until the end of January, the overall Russian troop strength on the Romanian front declined from over 1,200,000 to about 50,000.¹⁹⁹ Reconnaissance by the Romanian 1st Division on 14 January of a neighboring Russian sector reported, "not a single Russian soldier was found in all the length of the Russian trenches or in the huts nearby." In another area, only 200 Russian volunteers out of an entire division agreed to man the trenches.²⁰⁰ At the beginning of February MCG reported:

The entire front, previously defended by [Russian] armies VIII, IX, IV and VI, is now with rare exceptions almost completely exposed. The Russian units are completely disorganized and with reduced effectives have retreated on their own initiative behind the front, where they continue demobilization.²⁰¹

After 1 January, Russian troops were no longer counted in the troop strength of the Romanian front, and at the beginning of February MCG proclaimed that the "Russian army no longer exists." During February and March, large numbers of unattached Russian soldiers wandering about were rounded up, gathered in detachments, and transported into Russia. Soon, only commissions to liquidate depots of Russian

supplies remained. But there was still evidence of the once mighty Russian army in Romania. As Antonescu put it, "Moldavia was full of abandoned horses, cannon, guns and wagons."²⁰²

Conclusions

Because commentary has been offered along the way, only a few summary remarks on the role of the revolutionary Russian army are necessary. First, the effect of the Russians' presence in Romania has been painted in colors altogether too dark by most Romanian and Western accounts. Quite understandably, strong emotions aroused by the Revolution and Russia's exit from the war led to the use of such words as "treason," "defection," and "criminal" in describing the Russian action and to stereotyping Russian soldiers as wild-eyed, brutish Bolsheviks. While there are sufficient examples, as this study has shown, to underpin these images, they do not accurately reflect the impact of the Russian army in Romania during 1917. As even Romanian leaders acknowledged repeatedly, many Russian soldiers fought hard to defend Moldavia, and others were willing to man the trenches passively, making possible the refitting of the Romanian army and its victories in the summer.

The emphasis upon the contribution of Russian revolutionaries to the military collapse of the Romanian front has obscured their more indirect influence. For example, although scholars have long recognized the impact of the Russian Revolution on the timing of electoral and land reform in Romania, it has not been made sufficiently clear that this influence was mediated not through news of events in Petrograd but through the presence of over one million potential Russian revolutionaries in Moldavia. Romania's leaders were moved to give these reforms high priority by fear of what their guests might provoke. But the same disorder which induced reform eventually alienated Romania's soldier and peasant masses, bringing the Revolution into discredit.

Only those groups traditionally alienated from the mainstream of Romanian nationalism, especially militant socialists and some Jews, welcomed the presence and patronage of the Russian revolutionaries. For the Jews, the revolutionaries offered protection and support against a legacy of persecution and discrimination which had been exacerbated by the frustration of military defeat. Under the direct pressure of Russian agitation, the Romanian government reluctantly took steps toward Jewish emancipation. Probably more influential for the future was the world-wide attention this agitation focused on the problem. At the same time, however, it must be pointed out that the presence of Jews among the Russian revolutionaries fanned the coals of Romanian anti-semitism.

For the socialists, the support of the Russian revolutionaries brought a breath of new life and, briefly, the hope of radical political and social change. But the relationship with the revolutionaries proved, ultimately, to be disastrous for the party, creating a permanent split. The militants embraced Lenin and followed an anti-nationalist program in regard to the war effort and Bessarabia. They went on to form the Romanian Communist Party, which, like most interwar communist parties in Eastern Europe, became a client of Moscow. This completed its alienation from the Romanian people. The moderate socialists also suffered from guilt by association and proved to be an ineffective political force in the interwar period.

There were also several unforeseen consequences of the behavior of the revolutionary Russian army in Romania. Quite contrary to King Ferdinand's early fears, the anti-dynastic agitation of the Russians actually strengthened his popularity. A backlash developed which made the defense of the royal family an issue of national pride for the masses and a point of honor for the army. As Berthelot perceptively remarked after the revolutionary demonstrations in May, "the dynastic question has ...been solved by the Russian agitators."²⁰³

Also, it was the revolutionary disorder of the Russian army which precipitated the Romanian occupation of Bessarabia in 1918. Although a full consideration of this issue lies beyond the scope of this study, it can be pointed out that the initial entry of Romanian troops into the province was not motivated

primarily by imperialistic covetousness but by the need to quell the disorder arising from the disintegration of the Russian army and the appearance of Bolshevik military formations which threatened Romanian supply lines and public order in Bessarabia. The invitations of General Shcherbachev and the Sfatul Țării (National Council) in Chișinău, as well as the urging of both the Allies and the Central Powers, convinced a timid and reluctant Romanian government to act.²⁰⁴ The occupation of Bessarabia, which called forth a Bolshevik declaration of war, was the climax of the conflict between the Russian revolutionaries and Romania which began with the February Revolution. The alienation created by the events of 1917 not only ended a rapprochement between Russia and Romania, which had blossomed in 1914 and borne fruit in the alliance of 1916, but it reestablished a pattern of hostility between them which has lasted for most of the twentieth century.

Notes

1. Arhivele Statului [AS] (Bucharest), fond Casa Regală, A.A. Moslov, "Mémoires," 122-124.
2. For a discussion of the campaign of 1916 and Russo-Romanian relations, see Glenn Torrey, "Indifference and Mistrust: Russian-Romanian Collaboration in the Campaign of 1916," *The Journal of Military History*, 57, 279-300.
3. Allan Wildman, *The End of the Russian Army*, vol. I (Princeton, 1980), 285.
4. M.M. Gitsiu, *Deiatel'nost' soldatskikh sovetov i komitetov na rumynskom fronte i v Moldavii v 1917 g.* (Kishinev, 1985), 12-13; Gerhard Wettig, "Die Rolle der Russichen Armee im revolutionären Machtkampf 1917," *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte*, 12 (Berlin, 1967), 177-178, 181; E.N. Istrati, *Demokraticeskoe dvizhenie za mir na rumynskom fronte v. 1917 gody* (Kishinev, 1973), 16; Kriegsarchiv [KA] (Vienna), 1st Armeekommando, Fasz. 123, 24, 25, 26 March.
5. Archives de la Guerre [AG] (Vincennes), fond 17N, carton 541, Sakharov, "Order of the Day," 30 March; Gitsiu, 14; M.S. Frenkin, *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie na rumynskom fronte 1917 g. - mart 1918* (Moscow, 1965), 72-73; Wildman I, 228-230, 258-264, 285-286; Istrati, 15, 18, 21. Among the conservative generals who served on the Russo-Romanian front at one time or another were: Kornilov, Drozdovskii, Wrangel, Golovin, Shcherbachev, Miller, Denikin, Rogoza, Keller, Kaledin, Monkevitz, Mannerheim, and Vinogradskii.
6. Istrati, 33.
7. KA (Vienna), Verbindungsoffiziere, Fasz. 6272, 12 April, Fasz. 6273, Pflugl to AOK, 15 April; Wildman I, 348-349; Wettig, 266-267.
8. Ministerul Apărării Naționale [MApN], Arhiva, Fond Marele Cartier General [MCG] "Bureau des Informations," 17 April; Istrati, 34.
9. AG (Vincennes), 17 N 541, "Notes D'informations," 22 April; Istrati, 53; MApN/MCG, "Bureau des Informations," 17 April; KA (Vienna), Verbindungsoffiziere, Fasz. 6280, 27 April, 2 May.

10. MAPN/MCG, "Bureau des Informations," 22 May; Wildman I, 359; Wettig, 265. Terms mentioned included: no annexations except "frontier rectifications" mutually agreed on, "probable" approval of change in Straits agreement, no indemnity, financial aid to Russia.
11. KA (Vienna), Verbindungsoffiziere, Fasz. 6280, 27 April, 2 May; Wettig, 268.
12. KA (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz. 123, 12 March, 15, 17 April; Ibid., Verbindungsoffiziere, Fasz. 6280, 4 May; Istrati, 19, 32, 33. Wildman I, 287-289; Glenn Torrey, ed., *General Henri Berthelot and Romania. Mémoires et correspondance 1916-1919* (New York, 1987) [hereafter cited as Berthelot, *Mémoires*], Berthelot to Georges, 23 April.
13. M.S. Frenkin, *Ruskaia armii i revoliutsiia 1917-1918* (Munich, 1978), 194-196; Wildman I, 363-371. From February to August, of all the fronts, the Romanian reported the fewest desertions.
14. AG (Vincennes), 17 N 541, "Notes D'informations," 22 April; Charles Beaupoil Comte de Saint-Aulaire, *Confession d'un vieux diplomate* (Paris, 1953), 381; Nicolas de Monkevitz, *La décomposition de l'armée russe* (Paris, 1919), 40-41.
15. Istrati, 41-42.
16. AG (Vincennes), 16 N 2994, Berthelot to Guerre, 29 May.
17. KA (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz. 123, 19, 24, 27 Feb., 24 March and 3, 4, 5, 23 April.
18. Berthelot, *Mémoires*, Berthelot to Louise, 16 March; MAPN/MCG, Marchal to Berthelot, 14 Feb.; V.N. Vinogradov, *Rumyniia v gody pervoi mirovoi voiny* (Moscow, 1969), 204.
19. KA (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz. 123, 24 March, 15 May, 3 June; Vasile Liveanu, *1918: Din istoria luptelor revoluționare din România* (Bucharest, 1960), 136; Ibid., "Influența revoluției ruse din februarie 1917 în România," *Studii: Revistă de istorie*, IX, 33, note 3.
20. Liveanu, "Influența," 33.
21. Ibid., 32.

22. KA (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz. 123, 3 April, 22, 26 May; Verbindungsoffiziere, Fasz. 6280, 27 April.
23. KA (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz. 123, 3, 4, 5 April, 25 May, 7 Sept.; Liveanu, 1918, 136-137; Florea Dragne, "Momente din activitatea defășurată la sate de militanții aripii revoluționare a mișcării muncitorești în frunte cu grupurile comuniste (1917-1921)," *Studii și materiale de istorie contemporană*, vol. II (Bucharest, 1962), 11; Liveanu, "Influența," 34; C. Dumitrescu and E. Bantea, "Lupta revoluționară în rîndurile armatei ruse de pe front român în 1917 și începutul anului 1918 și influența ei asupra țării noastre," *Contribuții la studiul influenței marii revoluții socialiste din octombrie în România* (Bucharest, 1957), 98.
24. Raul Gueze, "La partecipazione della Romania al primo conflitto mondiale," II, *Storia Contemporana*, 1976, 40; KA (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz. 255, 8 April, 25 June, 1 Sept., "Referat über Rumänien. Nachrichten, 8/9 bis 14/9."
25. See Torrey, "Indifference and Mistrust."
26. Berthelot, *Mémoires*, Berthelot to Louise, 16 March; Frenkin *Russkaia armia*, 284; AG (Vincennes) 16 N 2994, Berthelot to Guerre, 9 April; AS (Bucharest), Ministerul de Interne 469/1918, Prefect of Tutova to MI, 1 May. Reports from the British legation in Iași give much information on all of the problems discussed in the above paragraph. See Public Record Office, Foreign Office [PRO/FO] 371/2880, 2883.
27. Mosolov, 154.
28. AG (Vincennes) 17 N 541, "General Order," c. 30 March.
29. KA (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz. 123, 25, 26, 29 March, 3, 8, 15 April, 22 May; Torrey, "Indifference and Mistrust," 281, 285.
30. Vasile Liveanu, ed., *Relații agrare și mișcări țărănești în România, 1908-1921* (Bucharest, 1967), 205-206; AS (Bucharest), fond Casa Regală, Marie, "Memorii," 23 April. See also the articles by and about Marie in *România*, 15, 16, 17, 22 February.
31. O. Maticescu, "Acțiunile revoluționare din Iași desfășurate în cursul lunii Mai 1917," *Studii: Revista de istorie*, XX, 876-877. M. Gheorghe Bujor, "Lupta pentru apărarea revoluției ruse (1917-1919)," *Contribuții la studiul influenței marii revoluții*, 61; KA (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz. 123, 31 May, 18 June, 29 Sept.; Liveanu, 1918, 122 ff.

32. PRO/FO 371/2880, Thompson (military attache) to War Office, 20 April; AG (Vincennes) 16 N 2994, Berthelot to Guerre, 1 April; National Archives [NA] (Washington, D.C.), War Department [WD], Reports of Military Attache to Romania, Parker to War Department, 27 April, 30 June; *România*, 1 April, 10 June.
33. Vinogradov, *Rumyniia*, 215; Florence Farmborough, *With the Armies of the Tsar* (New York, 1975), 336; *România*, 10, 13, 15, 17, 21 March and almost every issue thereafter carried accounts of suffering in Wallachia and patriotic exhortations to fight on.
34. PRO/FO 371/2883, Barclay to FO, 26 March, 6 April; Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossii [AVPR] (Moscow), Chancellery 1917, fond. 58, Mosolov to Petrograd, 11 April; *România*, 10, 25, 26, 27 April.
35. AG (Vincennes), 17 N 541, "Journal," 25 March.
36. Keith Hitchens, "The Russian Revolution and the Rumanian Socialist Movement, 1917-1918," *Slavic Review* XXVII, 270-272; Matichescu, "Acțiunile revoluționare," 864-866; Bujor, "Lupta pentru apărarea," 58-59; Liveanu, "Influența," 21.
37. Mosolov, 159.
38. Documentation of the May crisis in this and succeeding paragraphs is based on the following contemporary accounts: AVPR (Moscow), Chancellery 1917/58, Mosolov to Petrograd, 2 May; Mosolov, 161; I. G. Duca, *Amintiri politice*, vol. II (Munich, 1981), 183-184; and especially the detailed account of Foreign Minister Take Ionescu to Diamandy, his minister in Petrograd, 2 May, Ministerul Afacerilor de Externe, Arhiva [MAE] (Bucharest), fond 71/1914 E2, vol. 33. See also the report of the Romanian General Staff to Berthelot, 2 May, AG (Vincennes) 17 N 541; and the report of the British minister, Barclay to FO, 2 May, PRO/FO 371/3011. Marxist interpretations are found in Istrati, 36, and Vinogradov, *Rumyniia*, 205-206, Matichescu, "Acțiunile revoluționare," 867-869, and Liveanu, "Influența," 21-23.
39. On Rakovskii's career, see Francis Conte, *Christian Rakovskii* (New York, 1989) and MAE (Bucharest), 71/1914 E2, vol. 79, Report of the Romanian police magistrate, 11 May.
40. AVPR (Moscow), Chancellery, 1917/58, Mosolov to Petrograd, 26 April; Vinogradov, 205; AS (Bucharest), Casa Regală, Ferdinand, Diverse, 1917, Brătianu to Ionescu, 27 April; Conte, 72-76.

41. MAE (Bucharest) 71/1914 E2, vol. 33, Ionescu to Diamandy, 2 May, Grecianu (Odessa) to Ionescu, 7 May. PRO/FO 371/2880, Barclay to FO, 6 May; Matichescu, "Acțiunile revoluționare," 878; Vinogradov, *Rumyniia*, 207.
42. AG (Vincennes), 17 N 1457, Pétin to Guerre, 6 May; AVPR (Moscow), Chancellery, 1917/58, Mosolov to Petrograd, 4 May.
43. Marie, "Memorii," 3, 4 May.
44. MAE (Bucharest), 71/1914 E2, vol. 33, Colonel Palada (military attache in Petrograd) to Ionescu, 5 May; AVPR (Moscow), Chancellery, 1917/58, Mosolov to Petrograd, 4, 5 May; AG (Vincennes), 17 N 541, "Appeal of the Committee of Russian Soldiers and Officers," 5 May; Biblioteca Centrală de Stat [BCS] (Bucharest), Fond St. Georges, "Letter of Delegates of Soldiers and Officers of Russian Troops on Romanian Front," 3 May.
45. AG (Vincennes), 17 N 541, "Appeal of the Committee of Russian Soldiers and Officers," 5 May; Marie, "Memorii," 5 May; AS (Bucharest), Fond Casa Regală, Ferdinand, Diverse 1917, Ionescu to Diamandy, 4 May; AVPR (Moscow), Chancellery, 1917/58, Poklevskii to Petrograd, 4 May.
46. *România*, 2, 3, 8 May; PRO/FO, 371/3011, Barclay to FO, 4 May. A Romanian deserter told Austrian debriefers that his unit had been held back in Iași "to guard against a possible Russian Revolution," KA (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz. 123, 12 June. AVPR (Moscow), Chancellery, 1917/58, Mosolov to Petrograd, 5 May; Marie, "Memorii," 4 May.
47. AVPR (Moscow), Chancellery, 1917/58, Mosolov to Petrograd, 5, 6 May; Alexandru Averescu, *Notițe zilnice din război 1916-1918* (Bucharest, 1935), 156; PRO/FO 371/2880, Barclay to FO, 7 May.
48. Hitchins, "Russian Revolution," 272-273; MAE (Bucharest), 71/1914 E2, vol. 89, Forescu to MAE, 14 Oct.
49. Vinogradov, *Rumyniia*, 220, 223; Liveanu, "Influența," 24, 30; V.N. Vinogradov, "Dva obrashcheniia rumynskikh sotsial-demokratov k revoliutsionnoi Rossii," *Voprosy istorii*, 1967, 74.
50. *Ibid.*, 77.

51. Mihail Cruceanu and Florian Tănăsescu, *Alexandru Dobrogeanu-Gherea* (Bucharest, 1971), 29-30; AVPR (Moscow), Chancellery, 1917/58, Poklevskii to Petrograd, 18 May, 20 Aug., 8 Oct.; Vinogradov, *Rumyniia*, 211, 220.
52. Conte, 95-96, 104; Hitchins, 274-277, 285, 288.
53. An authoritative survey is Carol Iancu, *Les Juifs en Roumanie 1866-1919. De L'exclusion a l'emancipation* (Aix-en-Provence, 1978); the same author has a detailed study of the war period (*L'emancipation des juifs de Roumaine, 1913-1919*, [Montpellier, 1992]) but does not deal with the role of the Russian army.
54. FO/PRO 371/2893, Barclay to FO, 12, 13, 22 May; MAE (Bucharest), Fond 71/1914 E2, vol. 29, Mișu to Ionescu, 3, 12 May, Ionescu to Mișu, 8, 9 May; Great Britain, Foreign Office, *Daily Review of the Foreign Press*, 19 May; Iancu, *L'emancipation 1913-1919*, 117-138. The American government also raised the Jewish question. Ion Stanciu, *Aliași fără alianță. România și S.U.A. 1914-1920* (Bucharest, 1992), 197.
55. Iancu, *L'emancipation 1913-1916*, 95.
56. MApN/Dosarul Grigorescu, Grigorescu-Prezan (telex conversation), 20 Aug.
57. "Jidaniile în Războiu," *Apărarea Națională*, 1 Feb. 1923, 2; Bujor, "Lupta," 60; Iancu, *L'emancipation 1913-1916*, 115.
58. AS (Bucharest), Fond Casa Regală, "Note...Wexler," c. 1 June; Brătianu to Diamandy, 30 June; Vinogradov, *Rumyniia*, 209-210. There had been demonstrations in Odessa as early as May protesting alleged ill treatment of Jews in Romania. *Daily Review of the Foreign Press*, 19 May.
59. PRO/FO, 371/2893, "Informations," 25 June; Frenkin, *Russkaia armia*, 117.
60. Averescu, 158; AVPR (Moscow), Chancellery, 1917/58, Poklevskii to Petrograd, 6 June. Poklevskii reported that the Wexler case had provoked "great displeasure among the local Jews." Vinogradov, *Rumyniia*, 209.
61. AVPR (Moscow), Chancellery, 1917/58, Poklevskii to Petrograd, 19 June.
62. AS (Bucharest), Fond Casa Regală, Brătianu to Diamandy, 30 June, 1 July;

PRO/FO, 371/2889, Brătianu to Diamandy, 23 June.

63. *Stavka Verkhovnogo Glavnokomanduiushchego* was located at Mogilev (Belorussia).

64. Frenkin, *Russkaia armiia*, 117-118.

65. PRO/FO, 371/2893, "Informations," 25 June; AVPR (Moscow), Chancellery, 1917/58, Poklevskii to Petrograd, 21 June; AS (Bucharest), Fond Casa Regală, Brătianu to Diamandy, 30 June, 1, 3 July.

66. AVPR (Moscow), Chancellery, 1917/58, Poklevskii to Petrograd, 18, 19 July.

67. *Ibid.*, Poklevskii to Petrograd, 21 July.

68. MAE (Bucharest), Fond 71/1914 E2, vol. 18, Prezan to MAE, 9 Aug. Brătianu commented resignedly on the margin: "I have already intervened many times with the Russian government over this."

69. S. Bernstein, *Die Judenpolitik der rumänischen Regierung* (Copenhagen, 1918), 153, 157, 164, 178; AVPR (Moscow), Chancellery, 1917/58, Poklevskii to Petrograd, 14 July; PRO/FO, 371/2883, Wolf to Oliphant, 28 Sept.

70. PRO/FO 371/2892, Barclay to FO, 16 Oct.; Frenkin, *Russkaia armiia*, 716-717; Ministero degli Affari Esteri [MAE]; Archivio Storico [AS] (Rome), Telegrammi in arrivo [TA], Fasciotti to MAE (Rome), 23 Oct.

71. Bernstein, *Die Judenpolitik*, 166; *Daily Review of the Foreign Press*, 5 Dec. quoting a Iași newspaper of 28 Aug.

72. Iancu, *L'emancipation 1913-1919*, deals exhaustively with the Jewish question at both peace conferences.

73. C. Cușnir-Mihailovici et. al., *Mișcarea muncitorească din România 1916-1921* (Bucharest, 1971), 36-37, 40; Matichescu, "Acțiunile revoluționare," 872, 877.

74. M.S. Frenkin, "Sodeistvie russkikh revoliutsionnykh soldat bor'be rumynskikh trudiashchikhsia v 1917 godu," *Voprosy istorii*, 1973, 34. On the peasant revolt of 1907, see Philip Eidelberg, *The Great Peasant Revolt of 1907* (Leiden, 1974).

75. Frenkin, "Sodeistvie russkikh," 35-36.
76. AS (Bucharest), Ministerul de Interne, Dosar 109/1917, 6, 9, 17 Sept.
77. MApN/MCG, Legros to Dentz, 26 Oct.
78. KA (Vienna), Nachrichten. Rumänische Armee, Meldung 21, 14 Sept.
79. Farmborough, 301, 318.
80. David Mitrany, *The Land and Peasant in Romania: The War and Agrarian Reform 1917-21* (London, 1930), 99-102.
81. Robert A. Feldman, "Between War and Revolution: The Russian General Staff, February-July 1917" (dissertation, Indiana University, 1967), 165ff, 190-192; *Ibid.*, "The Russian General Staff and the June 1917 Offensive," *Soviet Studies*, XIX, 532; AG (Vincennes) 7 N 1457, Berthelot to Guerre, 19 April, 13 May, St. Aulaire to MAE, 10 May; Hoover Institution Archives (Stanford), V.W. Rumania H562, D.G. Shcherbachev, "Situation politique et stratégique sur le front roumain et le Russie en 1917 et 1918," 3-4.
82. AG (Vincennes) 16 N 1994, Berthelot to Guerre, 14 May; 16 N 2995, Pétain to Berthelot, 7 May; Berthelot, *Mémoires*, 17 April. Pétain's reasoning seems ironic given his advocacy of defense only for the French army in 1917.
83. *Sovetov Soldatskikh, Matrosskikh, Ofitserkikh, Rabochikh, i Krest'ianskikh Deputatov Rumyskovo Front, Chernomorskogo Flota, i Odesskogo Voennogo Okryga*. The central executive committee of this new organization, known by its acronym *Rumcherod*, would exercise increasing influence over events on the Romanian front.
84. PRO/FO 371/3010, Bagge (Odessa) to FO, 25 May; Istrati, 42-43.
85. AG (Vincennes) 16 N 2994, Berthelot to Guerre, 5 June; Duca II, 185-186; Frenkin, *Rusaskaia armiiia*, 120; Farmborough, 269-270; Istrati, 45-46. On the Scott mission, see Stanciu, 94-100.
86. Gitsiu, 27-28; Istrati, 44, 51.

87. PRO/FO 371/3010, Tereschenko to Nabkov, 5 June; Wildman II, 57; AG (Vincennes) 16 N 2994, Berthelot to Guerre, 29 May, 22 June; KA (Vienna) 1st Armeekmdo Fasz. 123, 5 June.
88. Istrati, 52, 59.
89. MApN/Dosarul Grigorescu, Mavrocordat to MCG, 20 July; KA (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo Fasz. 123, 21, 29 June, 3 July.
90. Istrati, 59-60.
91. Frenkin, *Russkaia armia*, 365-366; Istrati, 48-49, 62.
92. Wildman II, 57; Istrati, 53.
93. AG (Vincennes) 16 N 2994, Berthelot to Guerre, 22 June.
94. MApN/MCG, Vasilescu (Liaison) to MCG, 5 June, 3 July.
95. NA (Washington), WD, "Reports of the Military Attaché to Rumania," 30 June.
96. MApN/Dosarul Grigorescu, Mavrocordat to MCG, 17 July.
97. KA (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz. 124, 23, 24, 29 July; Istrati, 46; MApN/MCG, Shcherbachev to IV, VI armies, 20 July; MApN/Dosarul Grigorescu, Mavrocordat to MCG, 17 July.
98. Istrati, 60.
99. Reichsarchiv, *Der Weltkrieg*, vol. XIII (Berlin, 1942), 181; *Österreich-Ungarns letzter Krieg 1914-1918*, VI (Vienna, 1936), 343; Istrati, 62; MApN/Dosarul Grigorescu, Mavrocordat to MCG, 21 July; MApN/MCG, Vasilescu to Antonescu, c. 24 July.
100. AG (Vincennes) 16 N 2994, Berthelot to Guerre, 18 July.
101. Frenkin, *Russkaia armia*, 359; AG (Vincennes) 16 N 2994, Berthelot to Guerre, 23 July.
102. MApN/MCG, Ferdinand, "Order of the Day," 23 July.

103. KA (Vienna), Verbundungsoffiziere, Fasz. 6173, 15 July. Ibid., 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz. 123, 17 July; KA (Vienna), *Österreich-Ungarns letzter Krieg*, VI, 343.
104. G.A. Dabija, *Armata Română în războiul mondial 1916-1918*, vol. IV (Bucharest, 1936), 87. Dabija, a member of the interwar historical service of the Romanian Army, had access to foreign documentation for his study.
105. KA (Vienna), AOK Nr. 41/388, 29 May; 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz. 118, 2, July; *Österreich-Ungarns letzter Krieg*, VI, 345.
106. MApN/MCG, Shcherbachev, 25 July; Kriegsarchiv [KA] (Stuttgart), Nachlass Gerok, no. 6, "Armeegruppebefehl," 29 July; *Österreich-Ungarns letzter Krieg* VI, 350-51; Dabija, 94-103; General Vinogradskii, *La guerre sur le front oriental* (Paris, 1926), 356; *Der Weltkrieg XIII*, 182; AG (Vincennes) 16 N 2994, "Opérations offensive du front roumain," 29 Aug.
107. Berthelot, *Mémoires*, 25 July.
108. MApN/MCG, Shcherbachev, 25 July.
109. Ibid., Armata II, 27, 28, 29, 30, July, 1, 3 August; Averescu, 194; *Österreich-Ungarns letzter Krieg* VI, 353, 356-357; *Mărăști, Mărășești, Oituz: Documente militare [MMO]* (Bucharest, 1977), 147, 149, 158-159, 162, 174.
110. Marie, "Memorii," 25 July, 1 Aug.
111. PRO/FO 371/2892, Barclay to FO, 26, 28 July.
112. KA (Stuttgart), Nachlass Gerok, no. 6, "Armeegruppebefehl," 3 Aug.; *Der Weltkrieg*, XIII, 182-183; *Österreich-Ungarns letzter Krieg*, VI, 358-360.
113. Kirițescu, II, 493ff. It is difficult to ascertain the exact balance of forces due to the instability of the Russians, but at the outset of the battle for Moldavia the Russo-Romanian forces enjoyed about a 1-1.7 superiority (on paper). Ilie Ceaușescu, ed., *România în anii primul război mondial [RAPRM]* (Bucharest, 1987), vol. II, 141.
114. MApN/MCG, Vasilescu to MCG, 5 June; Dabija, 88-89; Monkewitz, 81.

115. MApN/Dosarul Grigorescu, Prezan to Armata I, 7 Aug.; Constantin Kirilăescu, *Istoria războiului pentru întregirea României 1916-1919* (Bucharest, 1922), II, 505-508; *RAPRM*, II, 222-224; *MMO*, 201-207.
116. MApN/MCG, Armata II, 7, 8 August; Dabija, 379, 391, 400, 437.
117. MApN/MCG, Caput to Pétin, 9 Aug.
118. Bundesarchiv [BA] (Koblenz), Archiv des Reichskanzler [RK] F2732, von Lersner to RK, 7 Aug.; *Österreich-Ungarns letzter Krieg*, VI, 367-368; *RAPRM*, II, 224-226.
119. AG (Vincennes) 16 N 2994, Berthelot to Guerre, 18 Aug.
120. MApN/Dosarul Grigorescu, Tenescu to Ferdinand, 12 Aug.
121. Kirilăescu, II, 514.
122. MApN/Dosarul Grigorescu, Prezan to Armata I, 9 Aug.; Dabija, 464-466; Kirilăescu, II, 514-516.
123. Berthelot, *Mémoires*; Berthelot to Louise, 16 Aug.; Dabija, 465.
124. MApN/Dosarul Grigorescu, Prezan-Grigorescu (telex), 13 Aug.
125. *Ibid.*, Shcherbachev to Grigorescu, 13 Aug.; *MMO*, 243.
126. *Marele Cartier General* located at Birlad.
127. *MMO*, 255, 256, 265, 278-279. On the controversy involving Christescu and Ragoza see Dabija, 466-472, and the documentation in MApN/Dosarul Grigorescu.
128. MApN/Dosarul Grigorescu, Grigorescu to 5th AC (Romanian), 13 Aug.; KA (Vienna), Verbindungs-offiziere, Fasz. 6274, 13 Aug.; Dabija, 495-500; BA (Koblenz), RK F 2732, von Lersner to RK, 13 Aug.
129. *Ibid.*, von Lersner to RK, 16 Aug.; MApN/Dosarul Grigorescu, Prezan-Grigorescu (telex), 20 Aug.; Kirilăescu II, 555.

130. MApN/Dosarul Grigorescu, Prezan-Grigorescu (telex), 15 Aug.
131. MApN/MCG, Letellier (French liaison), "Compte Rendu ... 10-15 August"; *RAPRM*, II, 257-269; *Österreich-Ungarns letzter Krieg*, VI, 391-392; Kirijescu, II, 580.
132. AG (Vincennes) 16 N 2994, Berthelot to Guerre, 31 Aug.; MApN/Dosarul Grigorescu, Antonescu to Samsonovici, 4 Sept., Prezan to I Army, 6 Sept.; Dabija, 623, 629.
133. MApN/MCG, Averescu to MCG, 12, 13 Aug.; Averescu, 198, 200, 202, 206.
134. *RAPRM*, II, 327-328, 331-332; Dabija, 163, 199, 231 *passim*, 309.
135. KA (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz. 123, 9 Aug.; Kirijescu II, 547.
136. MApN/MCG, Shcherbachev to Prezan, 20 Sept.; MApN/Dosarul Grigorescu, MCG to Armata II and Shcherbachev, 25 Aug.
137. Norman Stone (*The Eastern Front 1914-1917*, New York, 1975, 300) warns against assuming the Russian army completely disintegrated early in 1917.
138. Dabija, 641.
139. Istrati, 71.
140. AVPR (Moscow), Chancellery, 1917/58, Poklevskii to Petrograd, 10 Sept., 9 Oct.; Istrati, 72.
141. AG (Vincennes), 16 N 2994, Berthelot to Guerre, 11 Sept.; Frenkin, *Russkaia armiiia*, 441; *Ibid.*, *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie*, 132-136.
142. MApN/Dosarul Grigorescu, Dentz to Berthelot, 11 Aug.; Kriegsarchiv [KA] (Munich), Alpenkorps 1^a, Band 44 (1), 11 Aug.; Istrati, 67-68.
143. Wildman, II, 221-225. There are several articles on the growth of Bolshevik influence on the Romanian front in *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie v russkoi armii v 1917 gody* (Moscow, 1981).

144. MApN/MCG, Averescu to Ferdinand, 1 Oct., Antonescu-Samsonovici (telex), 9 Oct.; KA (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz. 124, 3 Sept.; Istrati, 72-76; Wildman, II, 211.
145. Frenkin, *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie*, 159, 160, 167; MApN/MCG, Reports of Legros, 22, 26, 27 October.
146. MApN/MCG, Reports of Dentz and Plee, 7, 8, 9, 10 Sept., 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, 15 Oct.; Reports of Boisfleury, 9 Sept., 27 Oct.
147. MApN/MCG, Legos to Pétin, 6 Nov.
148. MApN/MCG, Reports of Vassoigne, 7 Sept., 24 Oct.; de Menditte to Berthelot, 8 Sept., 21, 27 Oct.; Averescu to Ferdinand, 2 Oct.; MApN/MCG, Antonescu-Samsonovici, 9 Oct.
149. Vinogradskii, 308; Istrati, 72, 76-78, 86; MApN/MCG, Averescu to Ferdinand, 1 Oct.
150. MApN/MCG, de Menditte to Berthelot, 21 Oct., Frenkin, *Ruskaia armia*, 478-481, 492-495, 503-504.
151. MApN/MCG, Armata I to MCG, 3 Nov.; Wolfgang Foerster, *Mackensen: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* (Leipzig, 1938), 338.
152. MApN/Dosarul Grigorescu, Pétin to MCG, 9 Sept.; Prezan to Grigorescu (telex), 9 Oct.; Antonescu-Samsonovici (telex), 9 Oct.; Prezan to Armata I, 6 Nov.; Romulus Scărișorianu, *Fragmente din războiul 1916-1918* (Bucharest, 1934), 313.
153. Frenkin, *Ruskaia armia*, 625, 629-630.
154. Istrati, 92; Wildman (II, 366-370) has an excellent discussion.
155. Frenkin, *Ruskaia armia*, 623-624; Istrati, 96; Wildman II, 370-372. See the sketch of Tisenhausen in KA (Vienna), Nachrichtenoffiziere, Fasz. 6277, 13 Dec.
156. Istrati, 97, 99-101; Berthelot, *Mémoires*, 17 Nov., MAE/AS (Rome), TA, Fasciotti to Rome, 13 Nov.

157. MApN/Dosarul Grigorescu, Armata I to MCG, 10 Nov., Prezan to Armata I, 15 Nov.; Averescu to MCG, 23 Nov.; Grigorescu to MCG, 17 Nov.; MApN/MCG, Averescu to Scărișoreanu, 27 Nov.; Scărișoreanu, 313-315, 321, 329.

158. Wildman, II, 380-381; Marie, "Memorii," 7 Dec.

159. Frenkin, *Ruskaia armiia*, 634; Berthelot, *Mémoires*, 29 Nov., 6, 7, Dec.; Wolodymyr Kosyk, *La Politique de la France à l'égard de l'Ukraine, mars 1917-février 1918* (Paris, 1981), 145 ff; MAE/AS (Rome), TA, Fasciotti to Rome, 18 Nov.

160. On Ukrainization, see Frenkin, *Ruskaia armiia*, 220-223, 528ff.

161. Wildman, II, 381-382; Frenkin, *Ruskaia armiia*, 660-661.

162. Glenn Torrey, "Romania Leaves the War: The Decision to Sign an Armistice, December 1917," *East European Quarterly*, XXIII, 287; idem., "The Ending of Hostilities on the Romanian Front: The Armistice Negotiations at Focșani, December 7-9, 1917," Richard Frucht, ed., *Labyrinth of Nationalism, Complexities of Diplomacy: Essays in Honor of Barbara and Charles Jelavich* (Columbus, 1992), 318-330.

163. MApN/MCG, Armata II, "Events of 1-10/14-23 December", Mărdărescu to Armata II, 19 Dec.; MApN/Dosarul Grigorescu, Armata I to MCG, 12 Dec.; Archives Diplomatiques [AD] (Paris), Guerre 1914-1918, vol. 113, Sauerwein (*The Times*), 2 Dec.; St. Aulaire, *Confessions*, 381; Ion Antonescu, *Români: origina, trecutul, sacrificiile și drepturile lor* (Bucharest, 1919), 40; KA (Vienna), Nachrichtenoffiziere, Fasz. 6284, 23-28 Dec.; MAE/AS (Rome), TA, Fasciotti to Rome, 28 Nov.

164. MApN/Dosarul Grigorescu, Prezan "Circular Order," 15 Dec.; Scărișoreanu, 319.

165. *Bol'sheviki Moldavii i rumynskogo fronta v bor'be za vlast' sovetov (mart 1917-ianvar' 1918). Dokumenty i materialy* (Kishinev, 1967), nr. 275; Liveanu, 1918, 164-165; Wildman, II, 377; Frenkin, *Ruskaia armiia*, 631.

166. *Bol'sheviki Moldavii*, nr. 169, 277, 279; Frenkin, *Ruskaia armiia*, 632-633; Ivan Kondurushkin, "Velikii Oktiabr' na rumynskom fronte," *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia* (Moscow, 1922), 429-432; Berthelot, *Mémoires*, 3 Dec.

167. *Bol'sheviki Moldavii*, nr. 258, 265; Frenkin, *Russkaia armia*, 632; AG (Vincennes) 16 N 2994, Berthelot to Guerre, 17 Dec.

168. AD (Paris), Guerre 113, Berthelot to Guerre, 3 Dec.; Berthelot, *Mémoires*, 2 Dec.; PRO/FO 371/2892, Military attache to Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS), 16 Dec.; Marie, "Memorii," 25 Jan.; BCS (Bucharest), fond St. Georges XCVII/7, Coanda to Brătianu, 3 Dec.; Frenkin, *Russkaia armia*, 634; *Bol'sheviki Moldavii*, nr. 279, 285, footnote #1.

169. Duca, III, 31; Berthelot, *Mémoires*, 15, 16, 17 Dec.; AG (Vincennes) 16 N 2994, Berthelot to Guerre, 17 Dec.; MApN/MCG, MCG to Armata II, 18 Dec.

170. Shcherbachev, "Situation politique et stratégique," 11; AG (Vincennes), Fond Berthelot 1 K 77, Berthelot to Guerre, 22 Dec.; Berthelot, *Mémoires*, 22 Dec. In his 1965 book written in the USSR, Frenkin dismisses the threat to Shcherbachev as "fabricated." In his 1977 book, written in Israel, he affirms it. Frenkin, *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie*, 233; *ibid.*, *Russkaia armia*, 635. See also Istrati, 118; Kirîţescu, III, 34.

171. PRO/FO 371/3140, Brătianu to Mişu, 25 Dec., Bertie (Paris) to FO, 27 Dec.; Berthelot, *Mémoires*, 22 Dec.; MAE/AS (Rome), TA, Fasciotti to Rome, 18 Dec.

172. Duca, III, 36-41; Berthelot, *Mémoires*, 22 Dec.

173. MAE/AS (Rome), TA, Fasciotti to Rome, 23 Dec.; BCS (Bucharest), St. Georges XCVII/7, Brătianu to Coanda, 23 Dec.; Kirîţescu, III, 35.

174. AG (Vincennes), 4 N 40, Berthelot to Guerre, 25 Dec.; MApN/MCG, Armata II, Reports of 23, 24, 25, 26 Dec.; KA (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz. 123, 26 Dec. Kondurushkin and 73 comrades were imprisoned until April, 1918, when they were exchanged for Romanians held by the Bolshevik authorities in Odessa (Kondurushkin, 440-441).

175. MApN/MCG, Armata II, Reports 26, 28 Dec., Summary Report 14 Dec.-2 Jan.; Scărişoreanu, 335-336.

176. Marie, "Memorii," 24 Dec.

177. MApN/MCG, Armata, II, Reports 24-28 Dec. See also AG (Vincennes) 1 K 77, Berthelot to Guerre, 26 Dec.; BCS (Bucharest), St. Georges XCVII/7, Brătianu to Coanda, 25 Dec. German intelligence reported that every railroad car transporting the disarmed Russians was guarded by three armed Romanian soldiers. KA (Vienna), Nachrichtenoffiziere, Fasz. 6284, 22-28 Dec.
178. Frenkin, *Russkaia armia*, 641. The following paragraphs on the confrontation at Botoșani are based on: AG (Vincennes) 17 N 541, Lt. Colonel Sichițiu, "Rapport," 5 Jan.
179. MAE/AS (Rome), TA, Fasciotti to Rome, 28 Dec.
180. AG (Vincennes), 17 N 541, Lt. Colonel Sichițiu, "Rapport," 5 Jan.
181. MApN/MCG, Armata, II, Report, 26 Dec.
182. Ibid., Report, 28 Dec.; Scărișoreanu, 338; MApN/MCG, Armata, II, Report 2 Jan.
183. Ibid., Reports 31 Dec., 1 Jan.
184. Ibid., Summary Report 21-31 Dec.; PRO/FO 371/3140, Barclay to FO, 1 Jan.
185. BCS, St. Georges CXVII/7, Brătianu to Coanda, 2 Jan.
186. Frenkin, *Russkaia armia*, 721; MApN/MCG, Armata II, 12 Jan.
187. KA (Vienna), Nachrichtenoffiziere, Fasz. 6284, 5 Jan. (debriefing a Russian deserter).
188. MApN/MCG, Armata, I, Journal of Operations, 30 Dec., 4, 11, 12 Jan.; Romanian troops quickly "secured" the area from the front to the Prut, according to German intelligence. KA (Vienna), Nachrichtenoffiziere, Fasz. 6284, 19 Jan.
189. MApN/MCG, Armata I, Journal of Operations, 11 Jan.; Kirijescu, III, 36; KA (Vienna), Nachrichtenoffiziere, Fasz. 6284, 23-28 Dec.
190. Kirijescu, III, 37.
191. KA (Vienna), Nachrichtenoffiziere, Fasz. 6284, 6, 13 Jan.; MApN/MCG, Armata I, Journal of Operations, 20 Jan.

192. Ibid.

193. Ibid., 21, 22 Jan.; Kirițescu, III, 38-40; KA (Vienna), Nachrichtenoffiziere, Fasz. 6284, 21, 22 Jan.

194. KA (Vienna), Nachrichtenoffiziere, Fasz. 6284, c. 22 January. Some Russians who stayed retained a sense of humor. Austrian radio intercept of one Russian station: "We travel home soon." Another answered, "We have the same intention but one absolutely cannot get away. We will still have to eat *mămăligă* and beans." (*Mămăligă* is cornmeal, the Romanian staple.) KA (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz. 255, 1 Feb.

195. Paul Bléry, *En Mission en Roumanie* (Paris n.d.), 180; KA (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz. 255, 12 Jan., Nachrichtenoffiziere, Fasz. 6284, 19 Jan.

196. Ibid., 9 Jan.; Ibid., 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz. 255, 12, 26 Jan.; Ibid., AOK Ops. nr. 49, 269, 7 Jan.; Kirițescu, III, 44; *Österreich-Ungarns letzter Krieg*, VII, 107.

197. KA (Vienna), Nachrichtenoffiziere, Fasz. 6284, 9 Jan.; Bléry, 184; Frenkin, *Revoliutionnoe dvizhenie*, 244.

198. KA (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz., 255, 2 Feb.

199. MApN/MCG, Armata II, 17 Jan., 2 Feb.; Frenkin, *Revoliutionsionnoe dvizhenie*, 244.

200. MApN/MCG, Armata II, 14, 21 Jan.

201. Ibid., 13 Feb.

202. Ibid., 14, 21, Jan., 2 Feb., 21 March; Berthelot, *Mémoires*, 4 Jan.; Antonescu, 41; *Österreich-Ungarns letzter Krieg*, VII, 107.

203. AG (Vincennes), 16 N 2994, Berthelot to Guerre, 29 May.

204. Interpretations of the occupation and the subsequent union with Romania (April, 1918) have varied widely. Soviet historians in the interwar period and in the Moldavian SSR (1944-1989) condemned them as the result of a "reasonable plot" hatched by the "bourgeois-nationalist" leaders of the Sfatul Țării, aided and abetted by Romania and her imperialist allies. The latter's motives were interpreted as purely ideological and anti-Soviet. This

interpretation ignores the military situation and the desperate Allied attempt to sustain Romania and to construct a coalition in south Russia to fight on her side. Romanian historians, with few exceptions, have viewed these events as a glorious chapter in the history of the unification of all Romanians. Bessarabians then and now, while recognizing that the Romanian action saved them from sovietization, have reservations about the authoritarian conduct of the Romanian army in 1918 and the subsequent reduction of Bessarabian autonomy in interwar Romania. A balanced and informative historiographical review of the situation in 1917-1918 is Ion Țurcanu, "Unirii Basarabiei cu România în 1918," *Patrimoniul* (Chișinău), 1993(2), 4-44.