

Coordinators
Florin Anghel Cristian Andrei Leonte Andreea Pavel



THE IMAGE OF THE OTHER:
MEMORY AND REPRESENTATION
OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AND THE WORLD

DOBRUJA IN THE GREAT WAR (1916-1918): PERCEPTIONS AS REGARDS THE UNITED STATES JOURNALS

Emanuel Plopeanu*

The analysis of 4,000 articles in point of the United States press on the topic of the Romanian province (between 1916 and 1918) has proved that around 90% are war news and articles that presented the region as a logical outcome of the military clashes in the above-mentioned area or in the more extended region. The selection of articles that have approached the history of the province and the tragic experience in the war has had a significantly reduced number of materials as basis for the present study, having Dobrudja as core issue.

The historiography of the Romanian-United States relations with focus on the Great War period is a considerable landmark for the text. The book of Ion Stanciu¹ refers to the particular case of the Romanian-United States relations that finally led, in November 1918, to the recognition of the Romanian national objectives. Furthermore, biographies of personalities promoting Romania on American territory² are accompanied by pre-war relations³ the Versailles negotiations, Interwar period⁴ and the Second World War and Cold War⁵. A particular reference that represents an essential point to be emphasized is the collective book, edited by Gheorghe I. Florescu⁶, which includes important studies of Romanian historians, namely Dumitru Ivănescu, Ion Stanciu, Gelu Neamțu, Ion Ciupercă, Gheorghe I. Florescu, Dumitru Șandru, Nicolae Dascălu of the period 1859-1940. Broadly speaking, the mutual relations are to be considered inconsistent: until the First World War the economical interest of the United States, especially

* Universitatea „Ovidius” din Constanța, România („Ovidius” University of Constanța, Romania).

¹ Ion Stanciu, *Aliați fără alianță. România și S.U.A. (1914-1920)*, ediția a II-a revizuită, Editura Cetatea de Scaun, Târgoviște, 2010.

² Ioan Opriș, *Vasile Stoica în serviciul României*, Editura Oscar Print, București, 2008, p. 51-61 (with details about the American experience of the Romanian Patriotic Mission).

³ Most notable and important is the book of Dumitru Vitcu, *Relațiile româno-americane timpurii: convergențe-divergențe*, Editura Albatros, București, 2000.

⁴ Paul Cernovodeanu, Ion Stanciu, *Imaginea Lumii Noi în țările române și primele lor relații cu Statele Unite ale Americii până în 1859*, Editura Academiei R. S. România, București, 1977; Idem, *Distant Lands: the Genesis and Evolution of Romanian-American Relations*, East European Monographs, Boulder, Colorado, Columbia University Press, New York, 1985; Ion Stanciu, *Afaceri noi în lumea veche. Relațiile economice ale Statelor Unite ale Americii cu țările din centrul și sud-estul Europei până în 1939*, Silex. Casă de Presă, Editură și Impresariat, București, 2000.

⁵ Gabriel Stelian Manea, *Un adulter în familia comunistă. România și SUA în anii '60*, Editura Cetatea de Scaun, Târgoviște, 2016, p. 39-45.

⁶ *Relațiile româno-americane în timpurile moderne*, edited by Gheorghe I. Florescu, Editura Universității „Al. I. Cuza”, Iași, 1993.

in the oil industry, are not accompanied by political relations, at the same level. Consequently, a lack of knowledge on the side of Romania and its objectives, is observed in the United States⁷. A feature that will resist also during the war, at least until the arrival of Romanian Patriotic Mission (June 27, 1917), is represented by the establishing of Romanian Legation in Washington (January 15, 1917) and, finally, the recognising by the United States of the political and territorial objectives of Romania along with the rights of *all* Romanian people (November 5, 1918). Instead, the activity of American Red Cross is worth to be taken into account in Moldova, between September and November 1917. The funds that were involved came to the third place in general expenditures of American Red Cross, after those in France and Syria-Armenia⁸.

Within the structure of journals, the American reader could find mixed descriptions in the articles dedicated to Dobrudja: *geographical and historical insights, the war and its impact on Dobrudja, stories of war*. For latest, particular mention on the aspect of not being verified and certified (and, of course, potentially derailed from the truth), must be kept in mind. the Summer of 1918.

The type of articles on the above mentioned points of interest appeared mostly from the mid-September until the beginning of January, 1917. Dobrudja re-entered in the focus of U.S. journals in the context associated to the Bucharest Peace Treaty (April 24/May 7, 1918)⁹ and the quarrels of Central Powers on this province.

To continue with, attention to particular observations is to be taken into account before presenting the actual content of the articles. Until 1918 press articles were mostly in *local journals*, with reduced coverage (little towns, as Clarksburg, West Virginia, with 9,201 inhabitants at the 1910 census¹⁰ and Potter, South Dakota, with 4,466 inhabitants at the same census¹¹). As regards the journals with a wider coverage, Dobrudja appeared mostly in the comments that were related to the news of war, but without further details. The presence of the province (along with Romania as state) were topics of interest mainly in 1918, before and after the signing of Bucharest Treaty.

⁷ Ion Stanciu, *Alianți fără alianță*, p. 63-67.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 134.

⁹ Signed by Romanian Prime-Minister Alexandru Marghiloman, in a desperate situation for Romania, after Russian Empire collapse, the Bolshevik take over of power (October 25/November 7, 1917) and the concluding of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty (March 3, 1918), between Central Powers and Bolshevik Russia. By the Treaty of Bucharest, Romania was forced: to abandon Southern Dobrudja (already annexed by Bulgaria), to accept the German-Bulgarian occupation in Northern Dobrudja and the Austro-Hungarian Empire extension until the Carpathian Mountains including its passess, to concede the oil exploitation and shipyards to Germany and the rights of controlling the navigation over Danube, for Germany and Austro-Hungarian Empire.

¹⁰ <http://population.us/wv/clarksburg/>.

¹¹ <https://www.census.gov/population/cencounts/sd190090.txt>.

A specific aspect of the articles under discussion is to be underlined, namely the hypothesis according to which the texts were “conceived and written” in Bucharest and, after its fall, in Iași (*ad-interim* capital in 1916-1918) or by Romanian Americans community¹², without possibility, in the present state of research, to certainly affirm which was the source of these articles. However, some evidences which suggested *Romanian propaganda* are as follows: 1. the identity of two (possible more, not known to us) articles¹³; 2. the presence of some historical facts, from Antiquity until 1878 and the reference to the modernization of the province, since then.

In respect of the article published in two local journals, the American reader found, firstly, a description of the province as presented in a bulletin issued from Washington by the National Geographic Society (the data of this could not been established):

“When the low-lying, treeless, largely fen-and-swamp province of Dobrudja was ceased to Rumania in 1878 and in exchange this nation was despoiled of the rich, thickly populated province of Bessarabia which had been a part of her domain since it had been taken from Russia after the Crimean war, the Rumanians believed more than ever in their ancient proverb, ‘Guard me, O God, against my friends, for against my foes I can guard myself’¹⁴.

This article means, in fact, an attempt to describe the evolution of Dobrudja under Romanian administration, as opposed to the present state of war:

“In the 38 years which have intervened, however, Dobrudja has taken rapid strides, thanks to the advances in agriculture and to the prosperity of the several Black Sea ports of the province. So striking has been the development of the region that at the conclusion of the second Balkan war in 1913, Rumanian demanded as her share of the spoils from Bulgaria an enlargement of this formerly despised area. Including this newly acquired territory the Dobrudja now embraces nearly 9500 square miles, with a population of 500.000, made up of many elements – Bulgars, Turks, Rumanians, Gypsies and Jews”¹⁵.

¹² However, the articles which we mention, covering the Autumn of 1916, appeared before the arrival of Romanian Patriotic Mission, in June 1917, lead by Vasile Lucaciu.

¹³ See, for example: *Dobrudja plain is fertile spot. Takes Rapid Strides as Result of Advance in Agriculture and Seaport Prosperity*, in “The Daily Telegram”, Clarksburg, West Virginia, September 18, 1916, p. 3.; *Interesting Dobrudja*, “Forest City Press”, Potter, South Dakota, September 27, 1916, p. 5. Both articles are similar and unsigned.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

The potential development was secured, the journalist write, „by an ironic whim of fate”, through a loan of 300,000,000 francs “floated in Germany just prior to the outbreak of the great European conflict”¹⁶.

The geopolitical position and importance of Dobrudja was not to be overlooked. The mention of the Trajan's Wall („a double rampart extending from the Black Sea, at a point near Constantza, to the banks of the Danube”)¹⁷, the ancient Getic and Dacian populations (and of Plinius and Herodotus, whose definition of these populations is relevant: „the bravest and most honorable of all the Thracian tribe”), the expedition of the Philip of Macedonia, the invasions of Bulgarians led by Isparith in the seventh century (who, in the opinion of the author, “experienced the same fate that the Normans encountered with the Saxons in England, namely-the conquerors were absorbed by the conquered”)¹⁸ are the main historical references. The mention of the episode of the war from 1877 (“in which the Romanians distinguished themselves at Plevna” and “Dobrudja was ceased to Russia by Turkey, the express design of the former being to acquire the land, and force Romanians to accept it in exchange for coveted Bessarabia”¹⁹) ended the article in a very picturesque manner, leaving the impression of an exotic but desolated region:

“From the point where it becomes the western boundary of Dobrudja the Danube is a wide stream, flowing between low banks. Its waters are studded with numerous islets which are the homes of vast flocks of waterfowls – wild swans, wild geese, pelicans and herons. A famous traveler described the impression which this region makes upon passengers of the river steamers, thus: <<At night pelicans and storks stalking about on lonely islands uttering at times a wild cry, which, more than anything I know, brings to the mind the images of solitude and desolation>>”²⁰.

The war stories represented an opportunity for the American reader to discover Dobrudja, yet underlying the aspect that this type of narrations *could not* either be verified from another source or strictly placed in time. A detailed description (not assumed by anyone from the journal) in a provincial paper²¹ (from Ogden City, 25, 580 inhabitants according to 1910 census²²) had in the center three

¹⁶ *Ibidem.*

¹⁷ In fact, there are three defence walls, two build from soil and one from stone, in the X-XI centuries, with no connection with the Roman Emperor

¹⁸ *Ibidem.*

¹⁹ *Ibidem.*

²⁰ *Ibidem.*

²¹ ****Blocking the Danube to Save Rumania. Lieutenant's Chance to Win Honors Comes in Terrific Fighting at Wrecked Bridge*, in “The Ogden Standard”, Ogden City, Utah, December 2, 1916 [with photos].

²² <http://population.us/ut/ogden/>.

significant names: *Romania*, *Dobrudja* and the German Lieutenant Heinrich von Richtshofen, eager to show his skills to the superiors and, consequently, self-involved in the destruction of the Romanian resistance from Cernavodă²³. However, the above mentioned article is practically divided in two with the author (non-identified) explaining in detail the first part. In his opinion, for example, Romania's entering into war was the major event:

*"Since Romania entered the European war it had been the center of all eyes, except during those comparatively few hours when British made large gains on the Somme, or the French drove back the German crown prince from some of his strongholds at Verdun, or the Italians conducted a new assault on the Austrian fortifications outside Gorizia"*²⁴. "Assailed from all quarters, except the Russian boundary", the Romanian front imposed that *"the ablest generals at the service of the German general staff have been employed to direct the armies endeavoring to enter her territory and wrest from allied hands control of the extensive oil fields which are one of the chief sources of Rumanian riches"*²⁵.

It was the moment in which *Dobrudja* appeared and the author admitted that due to important and fast military success of the Central Powers here (which was not the case in the rest of the country) this type of stories ought to be presented and recorded. General historical considerations agreed that *"Dobrudja has been for centuries considered the most strategically located section of territory in its part of the world. The Romans recognized this fact, for they erected a strong stone wall, some thirty-five miles in length, running from Constantza, the Black Sea port, to Chernavoda on the Danube, on a line now almost paralleled by the modern railway that connects the seaport with Bucharest"*²⁶. Once again, the Roman defense wall²⁷ was mentioned, as we had observed in previous newspapers, from South Dakota and West Virginia. One interesting detail of the author as regards the period between 1878-1913 was the mentioning of the fact that Southern Bessarabia was promised to be returned to Romania "as one of the rewards for a successful outcome of the present war"²⁸. In addition, the economical and demographical reality (the

²³ Probably, the whole story refers to the most heaviest battle, from October 24, 1916, in fact a desperate resistance of Rumanian forces. The Cernavodă bridge, opened in 1895, was one of the most impressive work of industrial architecture. It uphold the railroad, through which Dobudja was connected with the rest of Romania, and was the longest in Europe and second in the world.

²⁴ ****Blocking the Danube to Save Rumania. Lieutenant's Chance to Win Honors Comes in Terrific Fighting at Wrecked Bridge*, in "The Ogden Standard", Ogden City, Utah, December 2, 1916 [with photos].

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

²⁷ See footnote 17.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

subject of certain confusions in the following interval, due probably to the oversimplification) after 1878 was also highlighted:

“Dobrudja, when first acquired by the Rumanians, was almost barren on its steppes and productive of nothing valuable in its swamps. The population was almost anything but Rumanian. Later, however, the alien element gradually disappeared and the Black Sea ports proved of inestimable value to the little country, and were a source of much prosperity”²⁹.

The control/conquer of Constanța (October 22, 1916) was mentioned along with the retreat of Romanian forces, through Cernavodă bridge, on the Western shore of Danube. Except *“another part left there at Chernavoda, whose duty it was to defend the place to the last ditch, to prevent the spread of the Teutonic invaders into the heart of the country and to maintain as long as possible the warfare on the Eastern side of the Danube. This little party was left in a desperate position, for the huge bridge was destroyed³⁰ as the defenders retreated, cutting off the remaining Rumanians from communication with their home country, preventing their retreat to safety, except through the Bessarabian country and making it almost impossible for them to get supplies or re-enforcements. But it also would prevent the Germanic armies from entering Old Rumania, for it is the only practicable bridge over the Danube”³¹.*

Finally, after other considerations about the desperate position of the Romanian and Russian forces on the Dobrudja's front, our German hero found his place within the framework of the text. Lieutenant Heinrich von Richtshofen was an officer of the engineering corps of the von Mackensen army but *“because of the nature of the work performed by his branch of the service, he had but little opportunity to get into actual engagements, and none at all to distinguish himself. Lieut. Von Richtshofen, be it known, was ambitious to attain promotion and continually had been on the lookout for a chance that would enable him to do something of exceptional value to the army, that he might attain higher rank, and, too, the Iron Cross”.*

In the economy of the article the author continued with the whole inner struggle of the German officer for finding an opportunity and accomplishing it, in order to be fully appreciated by his superiors (*“All through Dobrudja campaign he had been waiting for this chance – even had lain awake nights scheming ways to overcome imaginary difficulties”*). Moreover, as the author warned us, we had to acknowledge a very ambitious character with a constantly rising desire to aspire:

²⁹ *Ibidem.*

³⁰ In fact, only the secondary bridges (Iezeru and Borcea) were destroyed, Romanians failed to blow up the main bridge, the most important one.

³¹ *Ibidem.*

“when he entered the Dobrudja campaign he was more than ever determined that he should have at least a paragraph in the history of this great war, in which all the print that the average soldier get is the name on the regiment rolls. He made up his mind that before the armies entered Bucharest he should have accomplished something which would force the superior officers to acknowledge him as the city’s captor”⁸².

The chance for him was the possibility of participating, with his expertise, to the rebuilding of the bridge, being in that part of the army that would enter first into Cernavodă. The Romanian resistance was crushed in Cernavodă (after October 24, 1916), except for an isolate position, from which the Romanian soldiers controlled, with some heavy machine guns, the approaches to the bridge. The situation delayed the operation of repairing the bridge, eagerly expected by the engineering corps and, of course, by our officer. None of the solutions envisaged seemed attractive, involving either heavy casualties (for massive attacks) or wasting time (until the heavy machine guns and artillery could be dispatched to the German forces and used against Romanian resistance).

Lieutenant Heinrich von Richtshofen, our character, suddenly had been left in command, his superior being departed, who gave him the opportunity to act. The article continued in a cinema style description, very detailed, of the project of underground passing, through tunnels, to the Romanian point of resistance, using the drainage system of the town. The reflection and the decision of our character (approved also by superior headquarters), to plant a mine under Romanian “fortress” and to attack the Romanian defenders from underground and surface, soon after the explosion, were also depicted into the article. The sequel was the story of the actual attack, which proved to be a mortal trap for the German soldiers who followed the plan of the lieutenant. A situation that was because of the fact that the falling debris of the explosion choked the tunnel at the point of which they had to cross and invade the Romanian blockhouse. As a consequence, orders were changed and the soldiers tried to go back and join to the soldiers who attacked on the surface “who they could hear marching over their heads”. Yet the force of the explosion and the thudding tramp of the soldiers above provoking the falling of the walls of the drainage, on the soldiers, who were literally buried alive, without any possibility to find the way out. In the words of the author, *“they were cut off on both sides, imprisoned in a subterranean excavation, without tools to dig their way out and in a position rendered all the more dangerous because of the liability of further caveins”*. Ironically, the explosion blew out a large section of the foundation and permitted to the surface German troops to execute a heavy attack, to which

⁸² Ibidem.

Romanian defenders could not resist. They were "so surprised and demoralized but the unexpected happening that they could not gather to make headway against their attackers. Later, they formed in groups and attempted to withstand the attack, but soon discovered that resistance was futile; and it was scarcely twenty minutes from the time of the explosion that the last man had been killed or taken and Chernavoda was undisputedly in the hands of the Germans"³³.

In the category of Dobrudja's war description we identified an article, at some distance from the previous one in the category of war news. The city of Măcin³⁴ was occupied "one day before after two weeks [in which] Russo-Rumanian forces had held out under a steady stream of steel which finally reduced the bulwark to an untenable heap of ruins"³⁵. The city was important, being "the last barrier holding up the Teuton Dobrudja army's drive against the fortified Danube city of Braila, eight and a half miles to the west". The article made reference also to the advances of the Central Powers forces to the Focșani-Brăila line, on Siret, but more important was the final phrase of it, a dramatic conclusion: "The question of the complete subjection of Rumania is merely a matter of time"³⁶.

Fourteen months later, Dobrudja was depicted, in United States press, this time in "The Sun", as a province heavily ill treated by the occupants, Bulgarians being solely responsible for this treatment. And comparatively with its status between 1878 and the present war, period in which „Rumania developed the waste into a fertile country, and at a tremendous cost she built the port of Constanza on the Black Sea. The ports of Braila and Galatzi became the most important wheat centres of Europe. Hundreds of ships cleared weekly. The most modern landing facilities were installed by the Government and the beauty of the ports was unrivalled by any of their neighbors on the Danube. During all this time the Bulgars remained inactive"³⁷. Under a trenchant subtitle (*Bulgars Can Only Destroy*), the author, Konrad Bercovici, a Romanian established in United States in his childhood, noted that "the Teutons and the Bulgarians have destroyed this achievement [the development of Dobrudja]. Should the Dobrudja remain in the hands of the latter there can be no hope of restoration. The Bulgarian can only destroy. And even if it remains in the hands of Rumanian no capital will be invested for any restoration as long as there is a gap anywhere in the natural border line".

As it could be easily observed, the allusion at the Dobrudja frontiers restauration, established in 1913, was extremely clear and firmly expressed. In fact,

³³ *Ibidem*.

³⁴ North-Western corner of Dobrudja, near Brăila and Galați (across Danube).

³⁵ ****Macin succumbs to Teuton Drive. Mackensen's Forces Capture important Danube Bridgehead City*, in "The Washington Herald". Washington D.C., January 4, 1917.

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁷ Konrad Bercovici, *Rumania the Belgium of the Balkans. Bulk of Country Already Looted by the Hun and Its Fate Depends Wholly on Victory of Allies*, in „The Sun”, New York, March 24, 1918, p. 15.

this opinion was to be found even from the start of the article, in which Romania was presented as a country well defended by natural frontiers (Pruth river, Black Sea, Danube, "Transylvanian Alps"):

*"Only in the southwest for a distance of about a hundred miles was there a dangerous gap in the natural protective line: the southern border of the Dobrudja toward Bulgaria"*³⁸.

The present article, as the title assumed, represented a large analysis of the whole situation of Romania, close to the signing of the Bucharest Treaty accompanied by the pictures of King Ferdinand, Prince Carol ("heir apparent") and Queen Maria. The general tone was one of hostility for the conquerors ("not since the invasion of Europe by the Goths, Tatars and the Magyars under Attila, the Scourge of God, has the world witnessed such devastation") but also for the French Allies, French and United Kingdom (who did not know the realities from the Balkans and pushed Romania to enter into war) and Russia, who betrayed Romania. On the whole, the present study as regards the extreme situation of Romania, at that moment, is presented in the most dramatic way.

After the signing of the Bucharest Treaty, which confirmed the Romania's collapse and the division of its territories among Central Powers: Austro-Hungarian Empire, Germany and Bulgaria, Dobrudja become a publicly subject of debate, in the United States journals, also. For example, in May 26, 1918, a large article in "The Sun" had appeared, signed by F. Cunliffe-Owen³⁹. The whole article had in the center a picture with the following legend: "Czar Ferdinand of Bulgaria, who aspired to rule all the Balkans"⁴⁰. No way of understanding between Bulgaria and Ottoman Empire was possible, the article mentioned the almost impossible reconciliation:

"Karl von Helfferich⁴¹, Richard von Kuehlmann⁴², Count von Bernstoff⁴³, even the Kaiser itself, have all tried their hand at it, but without success. But the Turks, who, since the collapse of Russia, have retaken all the strongholds in Asia Minor, captured by the forces of Grand Duke Nicholas

³⁸ Ibidem.

³⁹ ***Huns Quarrel About Possible Loot of War, in "The Sun", New York, May 26, 1918, p.14.

⁴⁰ Ibidem.

⁴¹ Karl von Helfferich (1872-1924), Graduate of Law and Political Studies, a career diplomat, director of Anatolian Railway and Deutsche Bank before Great War, Ministry of Treasury and Interior of German Empire (1915-1917), then ambassador in Moscow.

⁴² Richard von Kuehlmann (1873-1948), a career diplomat, posted in St.Petersburg, Tehran, Tangier, Washington, The Hague, London, Constantinople. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (August 1917-June 1918), chief of the delegation that concluded the Treaties from Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest.

⁴³ Johann Heinrich, Count von Bernstoff (1862-1939), a career diplomat, posted in Constantinople (twice, last one during the war, after his mission in Washington), Belgrad, St. Petersburg, London, Cairo, Washington (last one between 1908 and 1917).

Nicholaievitch, and who are, so to speak, flushed with victory, do not feel in a surrendering mood, even though they have lost Jerusalem"⁴⁴.

From the Turkish side, moreover, they *"bitterly complain that in this controversy of theirs with Bulgaria, the latter is being favored at their expense by the Kaiser. Indeed, the position of Count Bernstoff at Constantinople is being rendered so difficult by reason of the attitude of his sovereign in the matter that he is threatening to resign"*⁴⁵. In opinion of the Romanian historiography, the attitude of Ottoman Empire, of opposition to the Bulgarian claim (if was not accompanied with large compensation, especially in the Thrace region) was encouraged by the Germany, despite of the public Ottoman reactions of criticism, against Germany again⁴⁶.

In June, under the label of a hostile title, a large article appeared regarding the above mentioned controversies: *"Turkey and Bulgaria had fallen out over the disposition of the territory surrendered by Rumania as the price of peace"*⁴⁷.

Also, the article mentioned a statement from June 21 in Reichstag, by von Kuehlmann, former German Foreign Minister according to whom *"differences had arise between Bulgaria and Turkey over the division of lands taken from Rumania under the peace agreement with the Central Powers"*⁴⁸. In other words, a *"difference of opinion between two of Germany's allies, to whom Germany was bound by exactly equal ties"*⁴⁹.

In this prestigious U.S. journal it was stated that *"von Kuehlmann was foresighted enough to stipulate when the Rumanian treaty was drawn that the Dobrudja should pass into control, not of Bulgaria, but of Quadruple Alliance"*. And the analyst imagined the whole geopolitical context, starting from 1878 (a series of confusions were to be observed, because Dobrudja was not taken from Bulgaria as they had stated at the end of the Russian-Ottoman war, neither *"all this territory is Bulgarian"*). The article continued with a detailed picture of 1918: Ottoman Empire, demanding the return of Thrace, as a compensation for the Bulgaria's pretensions in Dobrudja, the *"ambitions"* of Ottoman Empire as consequence of Russian Empire disintegration, to be recognized as a Black Sea, Caspian and Central Asia hegemon, the demand for turn over, by Germany, of the entire sequestered Russian Black Sea fleet. However, the main conclusion is quite correct, in term of the victors psychology:

⁴⁴ ****Huns Quarrel About Possible Loot of War*, in *"The Sun"*, New York, May 26, 1918, p.14.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁶ Adrian Rădulescu, Ion Bitoleanu, *Istoria Dobrogei*, Editura ExPonto, Constanța, 1998, p. 387.

⁴⁷ ****Looters at Odds*, in *"New York Tribune"*, New York, June 26, 1918, p. 8.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*.

“the Brest-Litovsk and Rumania treaties opened a path for Germany to Siberia and the heart of Asia. But they have excited other cupidities than her own. The puppet states allied with her must be placated and humored. Austria-Hungary wants Poland. Bulgaria and Turkey want something equally substantial out of the great divide. Can the Eastern spoils be apportioned without shaking the Quadruple Alliance to pieces? It is a delicate problem for German diplomacy, which has never been noted for tact and self-denial in the distribution of military loot”⁵⁰.

A month later, the same topic was observed by the “New York Tribune”:

“for a long time there had been rumors that Turkey was opposed to the share of Rumania that Bulgaria was to receive and that Turkey was also looking with interest toward the Black Sea littoral, the Caucasus and the Balkans”⁵¹.

In direct connection to the discussed issue was mentioned that some clashes between Ottoman and Bulgarian forces had occurred on the streets of Adrianople, in April, “in which many soldiers were killed on both sides”⁵². It is important to notice the opinions extracted by the “New York Times”, in point of same subject matter, from the German journals during a few weeks of monitoring. In both “Kölnische Zeitung”. and “Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung”, the Bulgarian-Ottoman dispute was perceived as a serious problem, which might alter the “work of hegemony achieved by the Central Powers at Bucharest” and Germany ought to remain reserved, “if Germany was not to assure heavy responsibilities for the future to come”. A practical item of information came from “Vossische Zeitung”: *“political censorship in Turkey had been abolished in order to permit Turkish newspapers to attack Bulgaria”⁵³.*

Finally, the article from United States newspaper was accompanied by a map of Romania (and Dobrudja) with explanations in reference to the Dobrudja’s division and the demands of the Ottoman Empire⁵⁴.

“The Washington Times” did not put aside the subject. At the beginning of August 1918, the hopes were quite high: *“Bulgars fume at Turks and open break is expected soon”⁵⁵.* More precisely *“relations between Bulgaria and Turkey have reached a stage where a break is inevitable unless the Turks back down from their*

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

⁵¹ ****Division of Rumanian Territory Seen as a cause of Turko-German Dispute*, in “New York Tribune”, New York, July 30, 1918, p. 6.

⁵² Ibidem.

⁵³ Ibidem.

⁵⁴ Ibidem.

⁵⁵ ****Discussions Reported between Two Teutonic Allies Over Spoils in the Balkans*, in “The Washington Times”, Washington, August 4, 1918, p. 3.

present attitude, according to semi-official advices received in diplomatic circles”⁵⁶. In this context, the American journal concluded that Germany was, in fact, in a extremely difficult situation: “with both Bulgaria and Turkey calling for a showdown from Germany and neither agreeing to abide by the decision, a break between one or the other is inevitable, diplomats here believe. They hope it will be with Bulgaria but in either case Germany will lose two allies or gain one enemy”⁵⁷.

However, more interesting, at least at the level of diplomatic gossip, were the references to the possible course of action which the Entente allies might follow, in order to exploit the quarrels among the adversaries. There were quoted, under a general formula, opinions of Allied diplomats in Balkans, which “vary as to whether this [action] should be belligerent or conciliatory”. Two categories of attitudes were inventoried: 1. A “determined campaign” against Bulgaria, “insisting that there were the likelihood for Bulgaria to be <<frightened>> into breaking with the Central Powers” (an option that was agreed by Greece and Serbia) and 2. A diplomatic approach (sustained by United Kingdom, France, Italy and United States), considering that a forceful initiative (including military) “would reunite the antagonistic factions in view of a common peril”⁵⁸.

As for the Bulgarian discontent, an article, entitled *Bulgars May Break with Kaiser* was paid particular attention. The heading is relevant, inducing a possible breaking of the Central Powers Alliance. But the journal itself was a local one (Marshalltown, Iowa – 13,374 inhabitants in 1910⁵⁹), with quite a reduced if no impact on public. However, we would mention this article and particular items of information, especially for the simple fact that some Bulgarian journals were involved. In the American journal opinion, “indications that an influential section of Bulgarian opinion is so dissatisfied with Bulgaria’s recent treatment at the hands of the Central Powers, particularly in their refusal to give her all of the Dobrudja outright, as to be willing to talk of the desirability of getting out of the alliance, are contained in extracts from the Bulgarian press”⁶⁰.

Conclusions

In conclusion, we might observe that, in the few cases in which Dobrudja appeared as a topic of interest in the journals of United States, the reference to its geostrategical importance was present. Aspects related to its populations along with the general progress since 1878 were included. The details (especially the

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁹ <http://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/marshalltown-ia-population/>.

⁶⁰ ****Bulgars May Break with Kaiser*, in “Evening Times-Republican”, Marshalltown, Iowa, July 23, 1918, p. 3.

reference to the historical past) have led to the conclusion that the specific of articles had as source Bucharest, so they were part of Romanian propaganda.

The image of the Romanian province was completed with rare (and difficult to verify) descriptions of war and, in the Summer of 1918, with the unexpected debate about the further evolution of it. The presence of the feeling of victory in the East as regards the Central Powers was to be regarded as significant, feeling that was shadowed by the quarrels over gainings. One of the quarrels was provoked by the Romanian province, eagerly desired, integrally, by Bulgaria. As a consequence, the described situation had as outcome the Ottoman Empire to claim compensatory measures in the Balkans, too. In 1918, however, the entire Romania, with its particular situation, became a more known topic for the United States press.