

BETWEEN SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS: THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE RIBBENTROP-MOLOTOV PACT ON ROMANIA

Andrei-Dumitru OLTEANU

Andrei Dumitru Olteanu is a PhD student in history at the Babeş Bolyai University in Cluj Napoca where he teaches the "Analysis of Romania's foreign policy in the 20th century" seminar. Andrei holds a bachelor's degree in history, a master's degree in history memory orality in the 20th century. His main research interests include the social history of communism, cultural diplomacy and the study of propaganda.

Abstract

This paper examines the far-reaching consequences of the Non-Aggression Pact signed between Germany and the Soviet Union on August 23, 1939, and its detrimental impact on Romania in both the short and long term. The study draws upon a diverse range of primary and secondary sources, including diplomatic archives, memoirs of diplomats and politicians, official speeches, and contemporary press documents. The narrative highlights Romania's precarious position between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, resulting in significant territorial losses and geopolitical challenges. The paper also explores the Soviet Union's occupation of Romanian territories, which facilitated the establishment of communist regimes in Eastern Europe, including Romania. The study underscores the long-term effects of the pact, such as Romania's alignment with the Axis powers, the rise of communism, and the enduring repercussions on Romania's foreign policy and regional dynamics in the post-World War II era.

Key words: non-aggression pact, communism, diplomacy, treaty, security guarantees.

INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to address the magnitude of the effects of the Non-aggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union from August 23, 1939, and how it prejudiced Romania in both the short and long term. The narrative of the consequences of the so-called Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact continues to have effects to this day. An example of this is represented by the differences regarding the historical development of the Second World War and its preliminary events. In a post on the social media platform Facebook, the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on August 23, 2022, seeks to support¹ the statement of Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov². The Ministry writes that As it will be observed in the following, the supporting arguments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation are at least in disagreement with the diplomatic archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Romania and the diplomats' memoirs. Being part of the Soviet Union, during the Cold War, the Republic of Moldova is also faced with diametrically opposed opinions regarding the perspective of the current leadership in Moscow regarding its suzerainty after the election of Maia Sandu as president.³

Consequently, the objective of this text is to employ a diverse range of primary and secondary sources to construct a comprehensive account of the repercussions stemming from the non-aggression pact. This endeavor rests upon establishing the role that Romania assumed in foreign policy regarding immediate outcomes, as well as its ability to adjust to the shifting dynamics that emerged in post-World War II Europe.

METHODS OF INQUIRY

Before exemplifying the methodology, it is appropriate to provide some explanations regarding the use of the mythological metaphor. According to Homer, Odysseus⁴ was forced to choose which monster to confront while passing through the Strait of Messina. He chose to navigate past Scylla and lose six sailors rather than risking the loss of the entire ship by choosing to pass through Charybdis.⁵ Scylla represented a group of rocks⁶ where collision was inevitable, while Charybdis represented an unruly whirlpool.⁷ However, in Romania's case, it took a turn and encountered Germany (Charybdis), which swallowed not only the last

¹ "...the Soviet government's decision to sign a non-aggression pact with Germany was a forced, albeit natural and justified, step since it had failed to create an effective Anglo-French-Soviet coalition." - Russian Foreign Ministry - МИД России, <https://www.facebook.com/MIDRussia/videos/798798471298568>, accessed at 15.05.2023, 16:12.

² "In recent years, we have witnessed the start of a true historical aggression against Russia." - Russian Foreign Ministry - МИД России, <https://www.facebook.com/MIDRussia/videos/798798471298568>, accessed at 15.05.2023, 16:12.

³<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-cancels-decree-underpinning-moldovas-sovereignty-separatist-conflict-2023-02-22/>, accessed at 15.05.2023, 20:43.

⁴ His Greek name is Odysseus, the Latins give him the name Ulysses.

⁵ Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. A.T. Murray (London: Harvard University Press, 1945), 445-49.

⁶ Marisa Belmonte, Margarita Burgueno, *Dicționar de Mitologie. Zei, eroi mituri și legende*, trans. Daniela Ducu (București: Editura ALL Educational, 2013), 57.

⁷ Belmonte and Burgueno, *Dicționar de Mitologie. Zei, eroi mituri și legende*, 105.

remnants of Romania's democracy but also resulted in the loss of entire territories, including Bessarabia, Northern Bucovina and half of Transylvania.⁸

Therefore, In order to provide a clearer illustration of the consequences of the pact, the structure of this paper aims to present the preliminaries prior to the pact, the signing of the pact, and the short-term causes that extend for Romania until the Paris Peace Conference of 1947. The conclusions of this work will highlight the long-term causes highlighted by Romania's foreign policy during the Cold War period and after the fall of the communist regime.

To carry out this research, I had as primary resources documents from the diplomatic archives of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the faring office archives and documents from the archives of the Bibliotheque Diplomatique Numerique of the Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères.

Another element that aids in shaping the consequences of the pact signed by the two Foreign Ministers is derived from the memoirs of their colleagues who work in the field of diplomacy. I will consider memoirs from diplomats such as Grigore Gafencu, Juliusz Łukasiewicz, and Ivan Maisky. These memoirs will be complemented by the recollections of politicians of the time from Romania, including Armand Călinescu, Gheorghe Tătărescu, Winston Churchill, and Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev. As for official speeches and official treaties, I will consult public archives available online, contemporaneous press documents, as well as extensive document collections.

ROMANIA NAVIGATING BETWEEN NAZI GERMANY AND SOVIET UNION

As a historian, one must remark upon the irony that history often exhibits. With the non-aggression pact between Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union, Romania found itself for the second time in history facing a contender for supremacy in Europe and the cold coming from the East. The first time Romania found itself caught between two major powers without the possibility of choice was in 1808 when Napoleon and Alexander I met in Erfurt,

⁸ Reflecting back on the late 1930s, both Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union can be compared to these mythological creatures, in which Romania could not avoid the pact (the strait), thus having to sacrifice a part of its people during the passage into the 1940s and encountering the USSR (Scylla).

where Napoleon agreed that Finland, Moldavia, and Wallachia would be incorporated into Russia in exchange for recognizing Napoleon's brother as the King of Spain.⁹¹⁰

In his memoirs, Khrushchev asserts that Hitler was very eager to engage in battle with the Red Army, stating that the British and French were rubbing their hands in glee, thinking that they would watch us sink, while Hitler's madness would exact a blood tribute from us.¹¹ During that period, Stalin argued that the Soviet-Nazi pact was necessary to allow him to prepare his country for war, but if that was the case, it means that he did not effectively utilize that respite.¹²

As early as May 1935, Stalin pursued a political strategy to alleviate Nazi's anti-Soviet resentments while also attempting to establish a totalitarian brotherhood that would share the spoils under conditions of mutual respect.¹³

Between the Munich Agreement of September 28, 1938, and the dismantling of Czechoslovakia on March 15, 1939, Britain and France were willing to offer Germany most of its demands in order to limit armed confrontation as much as possible.¹⁴ However, Hitler's demands faced opposition when Germany presented claims regarding the issue of Gdansk and the railway network between Germany and East Prussia.¹⁵ As a result, the reaction of the British and French was swift, offering guarantees of state independence on March 31, 1939, with Romania and Greece receiving the same guarantees on April 13, 1939. The difference lies in Romania being guaranteed only state independence, not territorial integrity. However, the British signed a separate guarantee with Poland, defining mutual assistance in the event of German aggression.¹⁶

⁹ A.V. Boldur, *Istoria Basarabiei, Contribuții la studiul istoriei României. Vol.II. Sub dominația rusească (1812-1918). Politica. Ideologia. Administrația.* (Chișinău: Tiparul Moldovenesc, 1940), 284-85.

¹⁰This agreement was part of a secret treaty that also included military agreements. Additionally, this pact served as a prelude, giving both forces time to deal with other issues before their confrontation. A year prior, at Tilsit, the Danubian Principalities were of interest to both France and the Russian Empire in the context of the Russo-Turkish War and the Russian occupation of Moldavia and Wallachia. See, Armand Goșu, *Între Napoleon și Alexandru I: contextul internațional al anexării Basarabiei*, (Iași: Polirom, 2022), 134-35.

¹¹ William Taubman, *Hrușciiov. Omul și epoca sa*, trans. Dan Criste (Bucharest: Meteor Publishing, 2019), 165-66.

¹² Taubman, *Hrușciiov. Omul și epoca sa*, 764.

¹³ During his exile, Grigore Gafencu recalls in the Romanian publication that "during the Ribbentrop-Molotov treaty ..., Soviet newspapers rejoiced at the cultural and economic relations established between the two 'eternally friendly' countries."in Grigore Gafencu, *Învățămintele istoriei. Articole, discursuri, și interviuri din presa exilului* (București: Curtea Veche Publishing,2010) 57.

¹⁴ Dov B. Lungu (1985) The European Crisis of March–April 1939: The Romanian Dimension, *The International History Review*, 7:3, 390-414.

¹⁵ I. M Maiskii, *The Maisky diaries : Red ambassador to the Court of St James's, 1932–1943*, trans., Gabriel Gorodetsky (London: Yale University Press, 2015), 87-88.

¹⁶ Juliusz Łukasiewicz, *Diplomat in Paris, 1936-1939; papers and memoirs of Juliusz Łukasiewicz, Ambassador of Poland* (New York : Columbia University Press, 1970) 99-100.

In order to pave the way for future discussions with Hitler regarding a potential agreement and to avoid getting dragged into war, Stalin dismissed the Maxim Litvinov from the position of Foreign Minister on May 3 and replaced him with Molotov.¹⁷

As the Additional Secret Protocol of the Non-Aggression Pact begins, it added the conclusions that followed strictly confidential discussions regarding the issue of borders and perspectives on spheres of influence in Eastern Europe. Regarding the issue of Bessarabia, the German side declared complete disinterest in Southeast Europe, directing their attention entirely to the Soviet side.¹⁸

With the arrival of the Anglo-French delegation in Moscow, Hitler's hand was forced to make an agreement with Stalin, considering the possible danger of a Western alliance with Stalin. Thus, on August 20, the German Chancellery sent a letter to Moscow requesting the reception of the new Minister Ribbentrop three days later. The response arrived within 24 hours, indicating Stalin's burning desire.¹⁹

Approximately 22 years after the Soviet and German governments raised their glasses to celebrate the Russian Empire's exit from World War I, Stalin toasted to Hitler, expressing his knowledge of how much the German people loved their Führer.²⁰

The Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact dealt a devastating blow to Romania, completely altering its perception of border threats. Until then, Romania had primarily focused on the potential dangers from its western borders, anticipating a dual attack from Germany and Hungary as the worst-case scenario.²¹ However, the events following August 23, 1939, brought about a significant shift in the country's perspective, as the predominant threat emerged from the East, as later confirmed in 1944. Faced with these challenging circumstances, Romania found itself with limited political and diplomatic maneuverability, ultimately leading to the adoption of a stance of neutrality.

¹⁷ Mihai Țurcanu, *The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and the british security guarantees for Romania (september-october 1939)* in: Revista de Istorie a Moldovei, 2022, nr. 3-4(131-132), pp. 85-100.

¹⁸ To read the official text of the pact and secret protocol, see The Avalon Project: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/nonagres.asp, accessed at 16.05.2023, 11:10.

¹⁹ Henry Kissinger, *Diplomația*, trans. Mircea Ștefănescu, Radu Paraschivescu (București: Editural ALL, 2018), 306-307.

²⁰ Paul Johnson, *O istorie a lumii moderne. 1920-2000*, (București: Humaniras, 2019) 352-54.

²¹ *The Council of Ministers' Statement of July 1, 1940, regarding the evacuation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina; the definition of Romania's foreign policy in the "new European order" taking shape and the renunciation of the Anglo-French guarantees of April 13, 1939*, Volume 8, January – August 1940, 71/Romania fonds, Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Bucharest.

In light of the geopolitical complexities, Romania had to navigate a delicate balance to safeguard its interests. With the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact reshaping the regional landscape and presenting new challenges, Romania sought to preserve its sovereignty while avoiding direct entanglement in the escalating tensions.²²

Faced with the situation created by the division of Poland or its partition between Germany and the Soviet Union, Romania sought support from the British and the French regarding the guarantee of security in the event of a Soviet attack. The results were disappointing as Great Britain could not guarantee these things due to its restricted access to the Mediterranean Sea.²³ The war between the Soviet Union and Finland, which began on November 30, 1939, provided Romania with a period of respite. On March 29, 1940, Molotov addressed the Supreme Soviet regarding the unresolved issue of Bessarabia. Stalin was cautious about this matter until June 22, 1940, when France fell.²⁴

The leader in Moscow was convinced that it was time to swiftly resolve this problem since one of the guaranteeing powers had disappeared. The day after the signing of the French armistice, Molotov informed the German ambassador in Moscow that the Soviet Union wished to immediately make a demand to Romania regarding Bessarabia and all of Bukovina. Hitler's reaction presented concerns because he did not want the oil coming from Romania to encounter transportation issues, so Stalin requested only the northern part of Bukovina.²⁵

Thus, on June 26, 1940, Molotov presented the Soviet ultimatum to Gheorghe Davidescu, Romania's minister in Moscow, regarding the surrender of Bessarabia and the northern part of Bukovina. Grigore Gafencu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, believed that Romania should maintain its neutrality, while King Carol II increasingly hoped for assistance from the Germans, receiving advice to accept the Soviet terms in response.²⁶ The second ultimatum on June 28 forced Romania to accept the Soviet conditions. This can be identified as the immediate cause of the Non-Aggression Pact.

The Vienna Arbitration (also called the Second Vienna Award or Vienna Diktat), further exacerbated Romania's territorial losses and geopolitical position. The pact facilitated

²² Stephane Courtois, *Pata oarbă a memoriei europene. 23 august 1939: alianța sovieto-nazistă* (Bucharest, Editura Fundației Academia civică, 2009) 41-42.

²³ Frank Marzari (1970) *The Bessarabian Microcosm*, September 1939 -February 1940, *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 12:2, 128-141.

²⁴ Bucarest a Vichy, Document numer 293, 383 in *Documents diplomatiques français. 1940, Tome II, 11 junne -30 décembre / Ministère des affaires étrangères et européennes, Commission des archives diplomatiques*

²⁵ Marcela Salagean. *"Romania's status in the new European geopolitics imposed by the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact"*. *Journal of Global Politics and Current Diplomacy* 2:7-16.

²⁶ Grigore Gafencu, *Jurnal* (Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2012) 76-79.

Nazi Germany's pressure on Romania to cede territories to Hungary and Bulgaria. As a result, Romania was compelled to relinquish Northern Transylvania to Hungary, a region inhabited by a significant ethnic Romanian population.²⁷ This dictated territorial transfer was an additional blow to Romania's sovereignty and national cohesion, triggering a sense of injustice and resentment among the Romanian population.²⁸

Similar to the case of Czechoslovakia, Romania also faced other territorial claims, with Bulgaria requesting the ceded Southern Dobrogea. Romania eventually accepted the request from the government in Sofia and signed the Treaty of Craiova on September 7, 1940.²⁹

The consequences of the territorial losses and the dictation from Vienna had profound implications for Romania's political stability and foreign relations during the period from 1940 to 1944. The country faced internal strife and divisions, as public sentiment grew increasingly critical of the government's perceived inability to protect national interests. King Carol II's credibility suffered a severe blow, leading to political turmoil and ultimately his abdication in favor of his son, Michael I.³⁰

Moreover, the territorial losses fueled Romania's shift in alliances and its alignment with the Axis powers. Feeling abandoned by its traditional Western allies, Romania sought to secure its interests by joining the Tripartite Pact in November 1940. This alignment, however, would bring further consequences, as Romania became increasingly entangled in the war efforts of the Axis powers and faced military setbacks on the Eastern Front.³¹

The Soviet Union's occupation of these territories paved the way for the establishment of communist regimes in Eastern Europe, including Romania. The Soviet Union actively supported communist parties and movements in countries under its influence, and Romania

²⁷ Marcela Sălăgean, *Transilvania în jocul de interese al Marilor Puteri : 1940-1947* (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2013), 57-58.

²⁸ Bucarest a Vichy, Document numer 422, 154, Documents diplomatiques français. 1940, Tome I, 1er janvier-1 novembre, Ministère des affaires étrangères, Commission de publication des documents diplomatiques français

²⁹ *Relațiile bulgaro-române. Dezacordurile derivând din aplicarea Tratatului de la Craiova*, Vol 59, octombrie 1940 71/Romania fonds, Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Bucharest.

³⁰ Notă informativă a MAS din 9 septembrie despre stabilirea lui Carol II în Portugalia. Vol 410, septembrie 1940 71/Romania fonds, Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Bucharest.

³¹ „Potrivit politicii noastre de echilibru ne am ferit să ne legăm, fie cu Germania împotriva Rusiei, fie de Rusia împotriva Germaniei. Iată însă că ambele puteri răstoarnă vechiul echilibru. Ele se înțeleg între ele și se învoiesc să impuie Voința lor tuturor statelor răsăritene ca singura lege hotărâtoare.” [“According to our policy of balance we have refrained from allying ourselves, either with Germany against Russia, or with Russia against Germany. However, both powers are overturning the old balance. They agree with each other and agree to impose their Will on all the Eastern states as the only decisive law.”] Grigore Gafencu, *Însemări politice 1929-1939* (București: Humanitas, 1991), 341.

was no exception.³² The Soviet occupation provided an opportunity for the Romanian Communist Party, led by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, to gain strength and eventually seize power.

During the period between the signing of the pact and the fall of the Antonescu regime, the press of that time promoted the favorable factors that Romania would benefit from in case of a relationship with Germany. However, after the establishment of the Legionary State and Ion Antonescu taking control of the country, the discourse took a generally violent turn towards the allies.³³ The best example in this regard is the film "Odessa în flăcări" (Odessa in fiamme), where the narration focuses on the Soviet takeover of Bessarabia and the hardships faced by Romanian citizens following the abandonment of the territory by the Romanian population.³⁴

The year 1944 offers us yet another demonstration of the irony of history, as significant (and ultimately negative) changes occur once again on August 23rd. Romania did not experience the "luck" that this date would later bring to Michael Jordan, but rather the "misfortune" that Julius Caesar carried with him.

From a propagandistic point of view, changes occur in the discourse as well. The newspapers of that time no longer praised Romania's successes and good understanding with Nazi Germany, but instead applauded the change of sides alongside the Allies.³⁵ As seen after the conclusion of the Second World War, in communist propaganda, the main role in Romania's liberation, at least until the 1960s, was attributed to the USSR,³⁶ where the Soviet army played the role of the savior. Changes will occur regarding the role played by the Soviet army during the events of August 1944, when, alongside the "Tezele din Iulie" of 1971,

³² *Declarațiile făcute ziarului „Scînteia” de Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu, cu privire la demisia guvernului Sănătescu*, Vol 459, 11-20 octombrie 1944 71/Romania fonds, Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Bucharest.

³³ Cuvântarea rostită de M. Antonescu cu ocazia inaugurării expoziției anticomuniste organizate sub auspiciile asociației româno-germane („Universul”, 24 iunie). Vol 13, iunie 1943, 71/Romania fonds, Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Bucharest.

³⁴ The full movie can be found

here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=diAFsBJkomQ&ab_channel=TeodorB%C4%83lan, accessed at 16.05.2023, 09:08.

³⁵ Articol de presă în legătură cu semnarea armistițiului între România și puterile aliate. Declarațiile făcute de Gr. Niculescu-Buzești, ministrul de externe, referitor la semnarea armistițiului (12, 15 septembrie). Vol 15, 1944 71/Romania fonds, Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Bucharest.

³⁶ See the movies: "Nepoții gornistului" and „Valurile dunării” in Cristian Tudor Popescu, *Filmul surd în Romania muta. Politică și propagandă în filmul românesc de ficțiune (1912-1989)* (Iași: Polirom, 2011) 53-54.

begins the promotion, with the help of films, of the role played by the Romanian army and the reduction of Soviet involvement in the change of weapons.³⁷³⁸³⁹

LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF THE PACT

After the war during the negotiations, Romania aimed to mitigate the consequences of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact and secure favorable terms for its post-war future. While some of Romania's territorial claims were acknowledged, such as the restoration of Northern Transylvania, the country was unable to reclaim Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, which remained under Soviet control.

In the early years of Communist Romania, the annexation of Bessarabia and the subsequent re-annexation by the USSR were taboo subjects. However, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej initiated a limited emancipation from the Soviet Union, leading to the breaking of taboos surrounding the Bessarabian question. After Nicolae Ceaușescu came to power in 1967⁴⁰, interest in the Bessarabian question increased, and Romania began actively monitoring Soviet policies towards the Moldavian SSR. Efforts were made to remind both Soviet Moldovans and Romanians of Romania's historical ties to Bessarabia through radio and television broadcasts, while publications justifying the Soviet claim to the region were censored.⁴¹

Between 1977 and 1980, the issue of Moldova's historical identity is brought up again in Nicolae Ceaușescu's speech and especially in his discussions with Leonid Brezhnev.⁴² One of the key issues was Romania's non-class approach to historical studies, specifically concerning the territory of Moldavia. Moscow insisted that Romania edit the historical record

³⁷ Dennis Deletant, *România sub regimul comunism* (Bucharest:fundația Academia Civică, 2012) 183-184.

³⁸ See the movie „Pe aici nu se trece” (1975) in „Cinema”Magazin, Year XIII, Nr.4, april 1975, 1-5. Revista poartă următorul titlu pe copertă: „<<Pe aici nu se trece>> un film care vorbește, cu patos și epocă, despre lupta, jefă și abnegația ostașului român împotriva fascismului. Un film care vorbește despre prețioasa contribuție a României la dobândirea victoriei în cel de-al II-lea război mondial” [“<<You don't pass through this place>> a film that speaks, with pathos and emotion, about the struggle, sacrifice and selflessness of the Romanian soldier against fascism. A film that talks about Romania's precious contribution to achieving victory in World War II”]

³⁹ See the movie „Ziua Z” in „Cinema” Year XXIII, Nr.4, april 1985, 4-5.

⁴⁰ The National Archives, Romania: Claim to Bessarabia. United Kingdom. Retrieved from <https://history-commons.net/artifacts/2370256/romania/3391292/> on 09 May 2023. CID: 20.500.12592/pwdx59.

⁴¹ Kamil Cașu, *In the shadow of history.Romanian-Moldovan relations* (Warsaw: Centre for Eastern Studies, 2015) 14-15.

⁴² "Summary of the Meeting and Negotiations held by L. I. Brezhnev with N. Ceausescu in Crimea, on 5 August 1977", August 17, 1977, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Document No. 1 in Gheorghe Negru, “Disputa dintre URSS și RSR privind tratarea istoriei relațiilor ruso- și soviet-române” [The Dispute Between the USSR and the RSR Regarding the Historical Treatment of Russo- and Soviet-Romanian Relations], *Destin românesc* [Romanian Destiny], no. 3-4 (2010), pp. 182-187; Arhiva Organizațiilor Social-Politice din Moldova [AOSPRM], fond 51, inv. 44, dosar 13, filele 126-135. Translated for CWIHP by Larry L. Watts.

to erase any references to Moldavia's connection to Romania, its recognition as Romanians, and the similarity between Moldavian and Romanian languages.⁴³

The Soviet authorities viewed this issue as politically significant, considering it an assertion of territorial claims against the USSR. Romania vehemently opposed these demands, asserting that Moldavians and Romanians were not separate nations and that the languages were the same. The conflict over Moldavia's historical identity became a central theme in the discussions between Soviet and Romanian officials.⁴⁴

After the fall of the Ceaușescu regime and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the territories of the Black Sea became a subject of dispute between Romania and Ukraine. In its 2005 memorandum submitted to the International Court of Justice in The Hague during the process regarding the allocation of territories between the two countries, Romania presented historical arguments concerning the impact of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact on the takeover of Snake Island, previously held by Romania, and the Black Sea territory.⁴⁵

CONCLUSION

In the past decade, in Romania, on national roads, one can observe the message: "Bessarabia e Romania." At first glance, these messages, in my opinion, seem harmless as they refer to a unionist discourse. However, with the 2020 elections and the emergence of a new party in the political scene, its leader has proven to be the main representative of those who have written these messages. Thus, a message that initially appears harmless becomes a political weapon to shape nationalist discourses aimed at legitimizing the new government in Chișinău and its pro-European president.⁴⁶

⁴³ These things were also noted in cinematography, so films like Mihai Viteazul (Michael the Brave, 1070) or „Stefan cel Mare – Vaslui - 1975” (Stefan the Great, 1975) aimed to reintroduce the similarities between Romania and Moldova into the public discourse.

⁴⁴ "Journal of V. I. Drozdenko - Record of Conversation with V. Cazacu, Member of the RCP CC Political Executive Committee", March 15, 1980, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Document No. 7 in Gheorghe Negru, "Disputa dintre URSS si RSR privind tratarea istoriei relatiilor ruso- si soviet-române" [The Dispute Between the USSR and the RSR Regarding the Historical Treatment of Russo- and Soviet-Romanian Relations], Destin românesc [Romanian Destiny], no. 3-4 (2010), pp. 204-207; Archive of the Social-Political Organizations in Moldova [AOSPRM], fond 51, inv. 54, dosar 7, filele 48-54. Translated for CWIHP by Larry L. Watts. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114164>

⁴⁵ International Court of Justice, case concerning maritime delimitation in the black sea (Romania v. Ukraine), memorial submitted by romania, 19 august 2005. <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/132/14697.pdf>, accessed at 16.05.2023, 11:10.

⁴⁶

<https://www.mediafax.ro/politic/george-simion-romania-nu-mai-trebuie-sa-finanteze-nici-macar-cu-un-leu-guvernul-de-la-chisinau-21373216>, accessed at 11.05.2023, 15:33.

the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact had a significant negative impact on Romania, leading to territorial losses, political instability, and a shift in alliances. The consequences of the pact contributed to Romania's complex and evolving role during World War II.

In summary, the long-term consequences of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact for Romania after World War II included Soviet influence and occupation, the establishment of a communist regime, Romania's position within the Cold War, and ongoing border disputes. The pact's impact extended well beyond the war and continued to shape Romania's foreign policy and regional dynamics in the post-war period.

REFERENCES

"Journal of V. I. Drozdenko - Record of Conversation with V. Cazacu, Member of the RCP CC Political Executive Committee", March 15, 1980, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Document No. 7 in Gheorghe Negru, "Disputa dintre URSS si RSR privind tratarea istoriei relatiilor ruso- si soviet-române" [The Dispute Between the USSR and the RSR Regarding the Historical Treatment of Russo- and Soviet-Romanian Relations], *Destin românesc* [Romanian Destiny], no. 3-4 (2010), pp. 204-207; Archive of the Social-Political Organizations in Moldova [AOSPRM], fond 51, inv. 54, dosar 7, filele 48-54. Translated for CWIHP by Larry L. Watts. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114164>

"Summary of the Meeting and Negotiations held by L. I. Brezhnev with N. Ceausescu in Crimea, on 5 August 1977", August 17, 1977, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Document No. 1 in Gheorghe Negru, "Disputa dintre URSS si RSR privind tratarea istoriei relatiilor ruso- si soviet-române" [The Dispute Between the USSR and the RSR Regarding the Historical Treatment of Russo- and Soviet-Romanian Relations], *Destin românesc* [Romanian Destiny], no. 3-4 (2010), pp. 182-187; Arhiva Organizatiilor Social-Politic din Moldova [AOSPRM], fond 51, inv. 44, dosar 13, filele 126-135. Translated for CWIHP by Larry L. Watts.

„Cinema” Year XXIII, Nr.4, april 1985, 4-5.

„Cinema”, Year XIII, Nr.4, april 1975, 1-5

A.V. Boldur, *Istoria Basarabiei, Contribuții la studiul istoriei României. Vol.II. Sub dominația rusească (1812-1918). Politica. Ideologia. Administrația.*(Chișinău: Tiparul Moldovenesc, 1940).

Armand Goșu, *Între Napoleon și Alexandru I: contextul internațional al anexării Basarabiei*, (Iași: Polirom, 2022).

Articol de presă în legătură cu semnarea armistițiului între România și puterile aliate. Declarațiile făcute de Gr. Niculescu-Buzești, ministrul de externe, referitor la semnarea armistițiului (12, 15 septembrie). Vol 15, 1944 71/Romania fonds, Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Bucharest.

Belmonte and Burgueno, *Dicționar de Mitologie. Zei, eroim mituri și legende*, 105.

Bucarest a Vichy, Document numer 293, 383 in Documents diplomatiques français. 1940, Tome II, 11 junne -30 décembre / Ministère des affaires étrangères et européennes, Commission des archives diplomatiques.

Bucarest a Vichy, Document numer 422, 154, Documents diplomatiques français. 1940, Tome I, 1er janvier-1 novembre, Ministère des affaires étrangères, Commission de publication des documents diplomatiques français.

Cuvântarea rostită de M. Antonescu cu ocazia inaugurării expoziției anticomuniste organizate sub auspiciile asociației româno-germane („Universul”, 24 iunie). Vol 13, iunie 1943, 71/Romania fonds, Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Bucharest.

Declarațiile făcute ziarului „Scînteia” de Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu, cu privire la demisia guvernului Sănătescu, Vol 459, 11-20 octombrie 1944 71/Romania fonds, Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Bucharest.

Dennis Deletant, România sub regimul comunism (Bucharest:fundația Academia Civică, 2012) 183-184.

Dov B. Lungu (1985) The European Crisis of March–April 1939: The Romanian Dimension, The International History Review, 7:3, 390-414.

Frank Marzari (1970) The Bessarabian Microcosm, September 1939 -February 1940, Canadian Slavonic Papers, 12:2.

Grigore Gafencu, Înmemări politice 1929-1939 (București: Humanitas, 1991).

Grigore Gafencu, Învățămintele istoriei. Articole, discursuri, și interviuri din presa exilului (București; Curtea Veche Publishing,2010).

Grigore Gafencu, Jurnal (Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2012).

Henry Kissinger, Diplomația, trans. Mircea Ștefănescu, Radu Paraschivescu (București: Editural ALL, 2018).

here:https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=diAFsBJkomQ&ab_channel=TeodorB%C4%83lan, accessed at 16.05.2023, 09:08.

Homer, The Odyssey, trans. A.T. Murray (London: Harvard University Press, 1945).

<https://www.mediafax.ro/politic/george-simion-romania-nu-mai-trebuie-sa-finanteze-nici-ma-car-cu-un-leu-guvernul-de-la-chisinau-21373216> , accessed at 11.05.2023, 15:33.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-cancels-decree-underpinning-moldovas-sovereignty-separatist-conflict-2023-02-22/>, accessed at 15.05.2023, 20:43.

International Court of Justice, case concerning maritime delimitation in the black sea (Romania v. Ukraine), memorial submitted by romania, 19 august 2005. <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/132/14697.pdf> , accessed at 16.05.2023, 11:10.

Marcela Sălăgean, *Transilvania în jocul de interese al Marilor Puteri : 1940-1947* (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2013).

Marisa Belmonte, Margarita Burgueno, *Dicționar de Mitologie. Zei, eroim mituri și legende*, trans. Daniela Ducu (București: Editura ALL Educational, 2013).

Mihai Țurcanu, *The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and the british security guarantees for Romania (september-october 1939)*. In: *Revista de Istorie a Moldovei*, 2022, nr. 3-4(131-132), pp. 85-100.

Notă informativă a MAS din 9 septembrie despre stabilirea lui Carol II în Portugalia. Vol 410, septembrie 1940 71/Romania fonds, Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Bucharest.

Paul Johnson, *O istorie a lumii moderne. 1920-2000*, (București: Humaniras, 2019).

Relațiile bulgaro-române. Dezacordurile derivând din aplicarea Tratatului de la Craiova, Vol 59, octombrie 1940 71/Romania fonds, Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Bucharest.

Russian Foreign Ministry - МИД России, <https://www.facebook.com/MIDRussia/videos/798798471298568>, accessed at 15.05.2023, 16:12.

See the movies: "Nepoții gornistului" and „Valurile dunării” in Cristian Tudor Popescu, *Filmul surd in Romania muta. Politică și propagandă în filmul românesc de ficțiune (1912-1989)* (Iași: Polirom, 2011) 53-54.

Stephane Courtois, *Pata oarbă a memoriei europene. 23 august 1939: alianța sovieto-nazistă* (Bucharest, Editura Fundației Academia civică, 2009).

The Council of Ministers' Statement of July 1, 1940, regarding the evacuation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina; the definition of Romania's foreign policy in the "new European order" taking shape and the renunciation of the Anglo-French guarantees of April 13, 1939, Volume 8, January – August 1940, 71/Romania fonds, Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Bucharest.

The National Archives, Romania: Claim to Bessarabia. United Kingdom. Retrieved from <https://history-commons.net/artifacts/2370256/romania/3391292/> on 09 May 2023. CID: 20.500.12592/pwdx59.

To read the official text of the pact and secret protocol, see The Avalon Project: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/nonagres.asp, accessed at 16.05.2023, 11:10.

William Taubman, *Hrușciiov. Omul și epoca sa*, trans. Dan Criste (Bucharest: Meteor Publishing, 2019).