

ON IMPERIAL AND NATION – STATE DIPLOMACY

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Abstract

This study of the history of diplomacy is a result of our research on modern and contemporary diplomacy. The main goal was to see how the transition from “Old” to “New Diplomacy” occur both in international and Romanian environments. The Renaissance period and the Westphalia system are the roots of the modern diplomacy and since 1648 there are many arguments to looking to the diplomat as a profession. The action of diplomacy through negotiation experienced a particular intensity at the Congress of Vienna (1815) and after that in the framework of the European Concert. It was a period of a dual context, maintaining the power of Empires and strengthening the application of the principle of nationalities. At the end of the 19th century important international processes were taking place. The nation-states and nations were the most dynamic actors in Europe, at the beginning of the 20th century. The application of the principle of nationalities in international politics has marked the history of international relations for more than a century. It found the focal point at the Paris Peace Conference (1919–1920). The Versailles system recognized the nation-state as the main actor of the international system. The practice of economic, commercial and financial diplomacy registered a wide development. The Romanian case is very well illustrated by Gheorghe I. Brătianu’s work: *Organisation de la paix dans l’histoire universelle*. We think that the modern Romanian diplomacy was born at the same time as the Romanian national state and had to manage its interactions with the Great Powers. The outbreak of the First World War created opportunities and problems for Romanian diplomacy. We took the examples of Ion I. C. Brătianu and Take Ionescu for presenting the transition to modern and national diplomacy in Romania.

Keywords: Imperial diplomacy, Great Power, nation-state/national diplomacy, Westphalia system, Versailles system, foreign policy, diplomatic practice, negotiation, principle of nationalities, balance of power, European Concert.

Diplomacy has been talked about more frequently in the last decades, either in the context of diplomatic actions, or of their results, or in the context of the lack of diplomatic efforts. The meanings given to the term diplomacy, from the Renaissance to the present day have been very different. For example, for the French in the 18th century, “diplomat” was that person who had received the mission to negotiate on behalf of the state. For Adam Watson (1986), diplomacy defines the nature of relations between states at various stages of the international

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system. More precisely, diplomacy is today a tool of international relations/society through which the actors of the international system carry out a civilized process of dialogue, of continuous exchanges of ideas and goods, seeking to find mutually acceptable solutions to disputes and conflicts of interest.¹ For his part, R. P. Barston believes that modern diplomacy refers to the management of relations between states, and of states with other categories of actors.² The functions and operating mode of diplomacy have experienced an evolution determined by the great changes in the structure, norms and meanings of the international system.

The history of diplomacy is studied from the periods of its rudimentary manifestation (4th–2nd centuries BC) until today, being a field that justifiably claims to have a rich tradition. The greatest attention has been given to modern diplomacy, with its early origins in the Renaissance era, and the contemporary characteristics outlined after the First World War. This phase brought bilateral diplomatic dialogue to the fore, opened up to the public, emphasized multilateralism, and the principle of national self-determination; many European nations were involved in diplomatic actions, international law and policies promoting the equal rights of nations around the world.³ Siddiqui & Alam lists the types of diplomats after the First World War, having their roots after the French Revolution and the Vienna Peace Congress (1815). It also includes the so-called *Great Power diplomacy*—practiced by the empires of that era and other Western and Asian states that possessed the Great Power criteria (territory/population, resources, economic capacity, political stability, military capabilities, and strength). It also mentions the “national diplomacy”, with the meaning of the foreign policy action of a country, carried on to the advantage of the country as a whole or of a region, industry, etc. belonging to that country, in which case “diplomacy becomes an extension of domestic policy”.⁴

Therefore, the transition to the characteristics of contemporary diplomacy did not occur instantly, by crossing only one chronological threshold. For example, during the French Revolution a “new diplomacy”, able to function on the basis of European political relations, to replace the “diplomacy of kings” was proposed. Attacking dynastic legitimacy, Merlin de Douai asserted that “the only legitimate foundation of all sovereignty claims is the free consent of the people”.⁵ Consequently, diplomats no longer had to be in the service of the monarch, but of the nation. It was believed that “royal warmongering” was the cause of successive wars on the European continent. That is why the Constituent Assembly issued the

¹ Adam Watson, *Diplomacy* (London: Routledge, 1991), 20.

² R. P. Barston, *Modern Diplomacy*, 3rd ed. (London: Pearson; Harlow: Longman, 2006), 1.

³ Kamal Siddiqui and Quamrul Alam, *Diplomacy and Statecraft – Cases and Readings*, 2nd ed. (Pahran: Tilde University Press, 2010), 27–28.

⁴ Siddiqui and Alam, *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 46.

⁵ Alain Pekar Lempereur and Aurelien Colson, *Négotiations européennes d’Henri IV à l’Europe des 27* (Paris: A2C Medias Éditeur, 2008), 140.

“Declaration of Peace to the World” (1790) in which the leaders of the Revolution pledged that “the French nation renounces to undertake any war of conquest and its forces will never be trained against the freedom of any people”.⁶ The same Constituent Assembly, through the voice and arguments of Mirabeau proposed the practice of a “transparent, honest, direct and without intermediaries” diplomacy and decreed that “the right to declare peace and war belonged to the nation”. In this context, all “foreign business agents” = diplomats, even if they were under the authority of the king, were members of the civil-public service and subordinated only to the nation. They had to justify their activity and expenses before the National Assembly. The elements of public revolutionary demonstrations also intervened, so that “transparent diplomacy” tended to become “arena diplomacy”. And finally, in 1792, the path of wars resumed, stopped only by the defeat of Napoleon. Even in the case of France, the passage from the Old Regime’s diplomacy to its contemporary stage meant, as Marie-Christine Kessler⁷ said, a specific manifestation of French foreign policy. Within it, the stability vectors of a bureaucracy and a “referential” (i.e., old) diplomatic body were always reshaped by the unfolding of successive periods of the country’s politics.

Gheorghe I. Brătianu has studied this phenomenon of the reshaping of foreign policies and diplomacy in *Organization de la paix dans l’histoire universelle* (1943–1945). On that occasion, the well-known historian explained the fact that the world has known a hierarchical/imperial formula for organizing the international system, carried out by one or more Great Powers through hegemonic, imperialist attitudes and a federative formula; the latter was created by the understanding between several states with the aim of the peaceful organization of peoples’ lives and by their participation on an equal basis in the process of governing the international system.⁸ Foreshadowing Buzan & Little’s work,⁹ Gheorghe Brătianu analyzed the concepts and methods underlying the foreign policy of states in their attempts to avoid war and to restore or maintain peace, from antiquity to the end of the Second World War. In such an intellectual enterprise, he also insisted on how state-makers and diplomats acted in different historical eras. Brătianu’s conclusion is interesting that after the medieval federalist episode of the Christian Republic (*Respublica Christiana*), placed at the service of the Crusades and under the auspices of the Sovereign Pontiff, through the Westphalian Treaties, a policy of balance in the European/international system was adopted, but equally a secularization of the relations between the European states that maintained monarchs, as holders of the attributes of state sovereignty, and

⁶ Pekar Lempereur and Colson, *Négociations*, 141.

⁷ Pekar Lempereur and Colson, *Négociations*, 169.

⁸ Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *L’organisation de la paix dans l’histoire universelle* (București: Editura Enciclopedică, 1997), 14.

⁹ See Barry Buzan, Richard Little, *International System in World History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

recognized by public law. On this occasion, we moved from predominantly inter-principalities relations to inter-state relations. Mystical impulses reappeared only through the initiative of Alexander I of Russia to establish the Holy Alliance after the Napoleonic wars (1815), which also aimed to suppress any innovative efforts,¹⁰ including those with national meaning announced by the French Revolution. Le Mercier de la Riviere wrote about the relations “from nation to nation” in 1767, but the idea had already germinated in Jean Jacques Rousseau, through the “Social Contract”—1762. It conceived the state as a free association that conducted its action according to the rule of the general will, not the sovereign’s desire.

Throughout this period, princely/royal/imperial diplomacy continued to operate according to the monarchical tradition of the medieval era. It adopted some appropriate methods to the changes of times, especially after the Westphalia moment. It remained linked to state governments but directed by monarchs and accountable to sovereigns. The *Acta Pacis Westphalicae* stage portrayed to Europe the role and importance of negotiators, as diplomats were put before the will to negotiate for the complex objective of achieving understanding, unity and peace between the parties. The negotiators had to bring satisfaction to the states, while the princes and monarchs claimed new honors in a clearly designated princely hierarchy, which also extended to the rank of ambassadors of the powers. The “reason of state” notion was introduced into politics, which superseded certain religious and moral principles to justify the attitude towards certain state interests. The old process of compensation was maintained, but the states were the ones that could claim/receive territorial, financial rewards, etc., just as princes or dynastic houses used to behave.¹¹ So, a normal interweaving of old and new, as the European political system continued to depict an ensemble of princely and dynastic states. But a “professional” group of negotiators/diplomats emerged, belonging to the aristocratic world, which began to consider itself a community concerned with elaborating common concepts of interaction that would have European acceptability in the cultural diversity of the continent. These signs of diplomatic modernity are the consequence of the evolution of European society. The sovereigns realized that they could achieve better results by combining force and negotiations, because often military victories brought only short-term advantages if a lasting peace was not negotiated. And the costs of wars could no longer be covered by the dividends of a superficially arranged peace. Thus, negotiation became almost continuous, becoming itself a source of power. A century after Westphalia, European states, monarchs and negotiators/diplomats had intellectual and legal tools for conducting interstate relations, such as *Droit Public de l’Europe* (1746), published by Gabriel Bonnot de Mably. The same author also printed *Les*

¹⁰ Brătianu, *L’organisation de la paix*, 27.

¹¹ Lucien Bely, *L’art de la paix en Europe* (Paris: Press Universitaire de France, 2007), 254–255.

Principes des Négociations in 1757.¹² However, the ideas generated by “la Grande Nation” and promoted by “la Grande Revolution” were replaced by “le Grand Empire”, and France’s announcement that it supported a new international law based on the freedom of peoples gave way to Napoleon, who behaved like a monarch from the 18th century.¹³ The situation brought back to the table of the Vienna Congress (1815) the confrontation between the imperial order and the new national trends.

The action of diplomacy through negotiation experienced a particular intensity at the Congress of Vienna (1815) and after that, in the framework of the European concert and the Holy Alliance.¹⁴ It is worth noting that the Regulation of March 19, 1815 and its refinement at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle (1818) agreed on the manner of diplomatic representation of the Powers, which was an initiative to establish the modern diplomatic service that will take the form of the service public. The representation was structured in four categories of diplomatic functions: 1) ambassador and papal nuncio; 2) envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary; 3) resident minister; 4) chargé d’affaires.¹⁵ On that occasion, the rules of ambassadorial precedence and the status of the position of dean of the diplomatic corps were established. The idea of solidarity between states and nations was the basis of many organization projects of the European system in the 18th century, but in Vienna it received a precise conservative meaning. The Congress had the intention of creating those instruments that would temper the centrifugal forces of the nations and preserve the dynastic positions at the head of the European states and policies. It was Talleyrand who set the tone for the negotiations in the sense shown above. His main objective was to defend the principle of legitimacy, with the aim of restoring the Bourbons at the helm of France. But the principle of legitimacy was also supported by the other powers, because they were projecting a European order in which the right of principles would be strengthened, to recreate “a society of sovereigns and a world of princes”.¹⁶ Talleyrand’s negotiation objectives also consisted in restoring France’s status as a power, along with the powers that had defeated Napoleon, and creating a rapprochement with England and Austria, in order to counter Prussia and Russia. This means that the defeat of Napoleon led to the rise of the European peoples and nations and on the other hand, accentuated the action of the monarchs to restore the

¹² See comments on the two works also in Pekar Lempereur and Colson, *Négociations*, 123–136.

¹³ Jean-Pierre Bois, *De la paix des rois à l’ordre des empereurs* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2003), 390.

¹⁴ Details in Gheorghe Cliveti, *Concertul European* (București: Enciclopedica Publishers, 2006).

¹⁵ Harold Nicolson, *Diplomacy* (Washington D.C.: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy–Georgetown University, 1988), 14.

¹⁶ Bely, *L’art de la paix*, 659.

old order. After the Congress of Vienna, the tendency of the sovereigns to clothe their power in the imperial cloak, in order to use it against revolutionary movements, became even more intense.¹⁷ Metternich also wanted to return to the traditional dynastic order, but also to create a society of states that would draw closer to each other through the rule of reciprocity. He wanted to find solutions for a return to the order of the 18th century when European society showed signs of a dynamic of nations. That is why he was interested in inventing new guarantees for sovereigns, who also had the right to decide military interventions, to practice cabinet diplomacy and to use historical law. The Alliance of Powers had the purpose of guaranteeing the authority of treaties, but also of resolving differences between the same Powers through negotiations and strengthening trust between sovereigns. The introduction of the procedure of consulting sovereigns and ministers in various formats/congresses/conferences was not of long duration as each Power was more interested in its own development. In addition, there were decisive objections from other non-European powers, such as the Ottoman and even the USA (Monroe Doctrine), which did not agree a “European mediation”.¹⁸ In addition, there were decisive objections from other non-European powers, such as the Ottoman and even the USA (Monroe Doctrine), which did not approve of “European mediation”. The European “revolutionary fire” of 1848–1849 further emphasized the reactionary character of some Powers, such as Russia and Austria, but also revived the national principle in Central-South-Eastern Europe. This principle began to be implemented on a European scale, as in the case of the Romanian Principalities, when Napoleon III tried to undermine the old continental alliances through new political-territorial configurations, such as supporting the Union of the Principalities in 1859.¹⁹ The European “revolutionary fire” of 1848–1849 further emphasized the reactionary character of certain Powers, and shortly thereafter, military confrontations again arose between the same Great Powers that had initiated the Concert of Europe, which paved the way for another Congress of peace, that of Berlin (1878), which only rearranged a new hierarchy of powers on the continent. But during all this time, the European states evolved more and more from the traditional monarchy to the nation-state, and the government expressed itself in the name of the people. Interstate relations had already become international relations. Smaller or middle powers were looking for ways to survive in an archaic order and sovereignty passed to the states. The states were sovereign, and the sovereigns put themselves at the service of the state, often becoming only quite appreciated symbols. The imperial temptation was still strong at the end of the 19th century, which also led to the exacerbation of nationalisms and independence movements, including in the colonies on other continents. In his

¹⁷ Bois, *De la paix des rois*, 426.

¹⁸ Cliveti, *Concertul European*, 767.

¹⁹ Cliveti, *Concertul European*, 775.

work on comparative history of imperial power in the 19th and 20th centuries, Tony Smith shows that the imperialism of that period took the form of the effective domination of strong states (Great Powers) over weak states and the former sought to impose and maintain a certain order in the international system.²⁰ Hence their insistent preoccupation with foreign policy and international politics, of course with the instrument of diplomacy being given even greater attention.

It is understandable how intensively diplomacy was manifested in such a dual context (maintaining the power of empires and strengthening the application of the principle of nations). It was precisely the mentioned conjuncture that determined the diplomatic activity to use secret methods. For this reason, diplomacy was under permanent siege from the governed who requested transparency, in the same sense as the democratization of public life, and the increasing role of the media. Under these conditions, diplomacy also had to use the press more, in order to inform public opinion, without implying the abandonment of diplomatic secrecy. The panoply of diplomatic traditionalism still preserved excessive formalism. Diplomatic language has changed a lot, due to the need to inform public opinion, but at the same time, secrecy has remained. This resulted in an emptying of the substance of the diplomatic communication from the substance of the negotiations. Instead, the frequent use of metaphors, allusions, etc. appeared, which made the diplomat look like a rather strange character.²¹ At the same time, the increasing speed of the circulation of ideas and individuals had forced diplomacy to a certain suppleness, even spontaneity of reactions, because the diplomatic response had to be more and more adapted to circumstances that differed greatly from the past. The diplomacy of states already had its own discourse, set of attitudes, rules, conventions, etc. At the end of the 19th century, important international processes were taking place, facing uncertain structures and organizations of the international system, while they were under the impetus of change also from the perspective of scientific and technological progress.²² The European Concert system and the balance of power, managed until then by a group of Great Powers, no longer corresponded to their projections of interests, nor to the other European states. The diplomatic environment was part of a distinct world, mostly belonging to the aristocracy. It was only towards the end of that century that the procedures for recruiting diplomats on a competitive basis began (see the case of the Foreign Office), but those with a noble genealogy were still preferred. However, the option to attract some personalities to diplomatic activity, especially from the field of letters and sciences, is noteworthy, but diplomats continued to be seen as a special group among those in the service of the state.

²⁰ Tony Smith, *The Pattern of Imperialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 6–7.

²¹ Bely, *L'art de la paix*, 678.

²² Brătianu, *L'organisation de la paix*, 305.

The national state and the nation were the most dynamic entities in Europe at the beginning of the 20th century,²³ says Girault. The same author shows that imperialism was taking new forms, the most persistent of them was economic imperialism. However, the new national states and national movements in the European empires spoke for a “decolonization in Europe”, while empires such as Russia and Germany were looking for new areas and methods of expansion, areas of influence, often under the pretext that the territory and resources they had were not sufficient to maintain their status as a Great Power. So, the imperialist accents (English, French, German, Russian, etc.) were accompanied by militaristic tendencies and a competition for new resources on a global scale.²⁴ National states opposed these imperialist developments and sought to cooperate with each other in order to face the pressure of the Great Powers they clashed with, inclusively through the internationalization of interests. The monarchical-dynastic traditions and their conception of the power balance had begun to be visibly antagonized versus the new international system whose actors were the nation states. At the end of the 19th century—the beginning of the next century—the signs of the transition to a new reconfiguration of international relations appeared. The First World War began in the mentioned context, and at its end an international system formula was tried which left its mark on the 20th century.

The application of the principle of nationalities in European life and beyond has marked the history of international relations for more than a century.²⁵ It was present in the foreign policy projections and decisions of states and in European politics after the Napoleonic wars. It found its focal point at the Paris Peace Conference (1919–1920) and in the decades that followed. It is notable that the effect of the application of the principle of nationalities multiplied and changed the qualities of the units in the international system, the role of the 14 points of American President Woodrow Wilson being indisputable. It is worth pointing out that the themes on the principle and rights of nationalities between 1919–1939 were aggressively exploited in European politics and in international relations, especially through the contradictory and ambiguous debate of the concept of “national interest”. However, at the time it was appreciated that, although imperfect, the system promoted by the “nationalist treaties” of 1919–1920—as George Sofronie called them—constituted “a moment of considerable progress and more justice in international life”.²⁶ In one way or another, the empires that entered the First World War disappeared or some were hardly maintained through major

²³ Rene Girault, *Diplomatie Européenne – Nations et Imperialismes, 1871–1914* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1997), 422.

²⁴ Tony Smith, *The Pattern of Imperialism*, 46.

²⁵ Pierre Renouvin and Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *Introduction à l'histoire des relations internationales* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1991), 179.

²⁶ George Sofronie, *Principiul naționalităților în Tratatul de Pace din 1919–1920* (București: Albatros, 1999), 3.

restructuring, sometimes at the level of the political regime. Even the British Empire survived only through a series of “zigzags of concessions and resistance”.²⁷

The Versailles system recognized the nation state as the main actor of the international system. The contemporary international system has the same body of voters, of course, with changes in internal and external attributions, including the relationship with other categories of non-governmental actors.²⁸ In the first post-war years, there was not so much talk about the principle of balance in achieving peace, but it did not mean that it was not present in the political thinking of the era. Edward H. Carr was speaking about the need for harmony in the international system for avoiding conflicts and new wars. He had certain doubts because after the First World War there was a need to ensure harmony between nations and their state units, especially through the reconciliation procedure, but he noted that the POWER element did not disappear from the system and that it had different dimensions, according to the territorial extent of the states.²⁹ Inequalities and inequities as such persisted through the new qualities of the national state unit, making harmony between the entities in the system difficult; international relations registered new competing state groupings. Gheorghe I. Brătianu, who had read the 1939 edition of Carr’s work, believed that its author was still making a distinction between Great Powers and Small and Middle Powers, on a territorial basis. But the Bucharest professor was of the opinion that the post-Versailles international system should not be based only on interactions defined by quantitative characteristics of state actors, because the post-Versailles system, through the League of Nations, also initiated qualitative formulas, such as certain state groupings or alliances that could be equal partners of the Great Powers, following the prescriptions of justice and law.³⁰ Gheorghe Brătianu made no comments on the way Carr approached the issue of sovereignty, especially in the environments of small and medium-sized states, emphasizing their distinctiveness and not leaving more room for the creation of welded state groupings and emitting power comparable to that of the Great Powers. It should be noted that E. H. Carr excluded from the start the possibility that the European national states could reach the invoked harmony, and the path he saw—just theoretically—was the integration and establishment of wider economic and political units. This possibility was spotted only as a result of the development in the respective areas of capitalism, industrialism, communications and other “technical instruments of power”.³¹ In

²⁷ Raymond Sontag, *A Broken World, 1919–1939* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1971), 92.

²⁸ John M. Hobson, *The State and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 5–9.

²⁹ Edward Hallet Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis, 1919–1939* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1964), 228–229

³⁰ Brătianu, *L’organisation de la paix*, 333–334.

³¹ Hallet Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis*, 229.

Carr's vision, POWER was "the necessary ingredient of any kind of order".³² Ironically pointing out Wilson's "prophetic dream" he warned that up to that moment, the European/international order had been shaped by a "superior power", and after the withdrawal of the USA from the Versailles system, there was one single hope, relying on the emergence of "a sufficiently coherent and strong power unit"³³ to demonstrate its superiority over rivals or other weaker units. Because in the same vision of Realpolitik the aspiration towards an international conciliation was still distant, the League of Nations itself being an "elegant superstructure" that had no solid foundation.

The very first of the 14 points announced by President Wilson incriminated the diplomacy of that time for favoring the state decisions that led to the First World War. The subject of secret treaties had entered the public debate in the USA and Great Britain, the end of the conflagration also bringing the conclusion that the post-war diplomatic activity of the states had to take a new course. At that time there was already talk of the "old diplomacy" of the empires and the "new diplomacy" that the peoples/nations/democratic powers would promote. Sir Harold Nicolson reproduces in his famous book on diplomacy the existing discussions in the European diplomatic circles of the time about the "old" and the "new" diplomacy. He states that indeed the year 1918 can be seen as a milestone in the evolution of diplomacy, although diplomacy had not taken a completely new turn then. According to the insights of the well-known French diplomat Jules Cambon, the discussions on old and new in post-war diplomacy should be seen "as a distinction without any difference",³⁴ for the substance of diplomacy remained unchanged, but there were innovations, as it seemed normal to him, with respect to the operating methods. The Conclusion of Nicolson was that the "art of negotiation gradually adapted to the political changes"³⁵ from the period after the First World War. Many contemporary authors continue to believe that through the treaties agreed at the Paris Peace Conference (1919–1920) and through the attempt to transpose them into international life, the old and the new in diplomacy were manifested. In their well-known work *The Diplomats*, Gordon Craig and Felix Gilbert estimated that the diplomacy practiced by the Polish foreign minister Beck, in the 1930's, rather resembled the old diplomacy. This fact seemed peculiar to the two authors considering the fact that Poland experienced divisions undertaken by the Great Powers, adherents of the "old diplomacy".³⁶ Samy Cohen, in "Les diplomates", is convinced that "a new diplomacy" resulted from the world

³² Hallet Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis*, 232.

³³ Hallet Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis*, 235.

³⁴ Nicolson, *Diplomacy*, 29.

³⁵ Nicolson, *Diplomacy*, 29.

³⁶ Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert, *The Diplomats, 1919–1939*, vol. 2 (New York: Atheneum, 1977), 584.

conflagration at the beginning of the 20th century.³⁷ And the authors of the volume 1 mentioned earlier, Siddiqui & Alam, confidently claim that after the First World War “a new diplomacy appeared”.³⁸ We underline the fact that these considerations come from authors who deal strictly with the subject of diplomacy, and some of them are involved in the diplomatic exercise. We assume that the diplomatic circles still frequented the debate which Sir Nicolson referred to, about the “old diplomacy” of imperial, dynastic, monarchical and “new diplomacy” of nation states, that of an international system, which hoped to democratize the interactions of international actors. In one of the studies on the sociology of international relations, Dimitrie Gusti also made a severe criticism of the policies of balance, alliances, European concert, etc., proliferated after the Treaty of Westphalia, including what he called the “old diplomacy”, impregnated only by opportunism and immoral compromise.³⁹

It is true that at the end of the First World War there was much discussion on the topic of secret treaties, being associated with the outcome of imperial diplomatic activity. Edward Carr even opens his famous work—*The Twenty Years Crisis*—with some considerations about the secret treaties, saying that post-war international politics could no longer remain only an attribute of professional diplomats, although he could find no evidence that the secret treaties had caused the war. Criticizing Wilson’s utopia, Carr noted that the American president opposed the contribution of “intellectuals” and “bureaucrats” = professional diplomats to the formulation and application of foreign policy. Moreover, at the Paris Peace Conference, President Wilson did not hide his suspicion of diplomats—bureaucrats and European politicians, showing his preference to work with experts from among scientists.⁴⁰ This antithetical attitude of the most important official participating in the international Areopagus at the end of the First World War also had consequences on the beginnings of the League of Nations. This needed not only political concepts and directives, but also empirical conduct, the experience of the “bureaucrats” in diplomacy and the governments of the states that supported the new international organization in Geneva. Harold Nicolson said almost brutally that after the interlude of the two interwar decades, diplomacy ended up being “more personal, more secret, even more occult than it had been at the end of the 19th century”.⁴¹

The British diplomat rightly drew attention to the fact that the political system in a particular country was the one determining the main characteristics of diplomacy. After 1918, diplomacy retained certain virtues of the old diplomacy

³⁷ Samy Cohen, *Les diplomates* (Paris: Éditions Autremont, 2002), 24.

³⁸ Siddiqui and Alam, *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 27.

³⁹ Dimitrie Gusti, *Opere*, vol. 4 (București: Editura Academiei RSR, 1970), 161.

⁴⁰ Hallet Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis*, 18.

⁴¹ Nicolson, *Diplomacy*, 30.

that were introduced into diplomatic practice, some innovations generated by post-war developments, the tendency towards democratic control of the application of foreign policy, the increase in the importance of economic and financial issues, the results of scientific research, and the imposition of topics of interest for the international community. Among the innovations of post-war diplomatic methods, Sir Nicolson put in the foreground the meetings in conferences and committees that often brought together diplomats and experts at the same negotiating table. They were setting up a real machinery for coordinating the multitude of national policies, with the aim of obtaining solutions of common interest, to the satisfaction of the national interest and that of international cooperation.⁴² Of course, such diplomatic practice greatly favored the functioning of the League of Nations, but it was present in many other European and international actions. For instance, the League of Nations was itself a remarkable innovation for international politics and the practice of multilateral diplomacy. Sir Nicolson also emphasized the fact that diplomacy through conferences often facilitated a better knowledge of the political decision-makers in the participating states, which helped solve complex problems faster and could strengthen trust between governments and states. In 1920, this seemed to be the main lesson of political-diplomatic practice learned by European leaders from the experience of the war and the Paris Peace Conference.

As for the democratic control of the application of foreign policy, it depended on the maturity of the democratic regimes in the European states, on the powers that the parliaments had in this field. For example, in Great Britain, USA, France there were Business/Foreign Relations Committees that supervised the development of foreign policy and received reports on its application. Through such activity, the work of the Foreign Ministries increased, and public opinion received systematic information about the diplomatic actions of the governments, with the assurance of confidentiality required by bilateral or multilateral interactions. In other countries, foreign policy only became the subject of general discussions in the plenary session of the Parliament, following speeches of the heads of state, prime ministers or foreign ministers.

The practice of economic, commercial and financial diplomacy registered a wide development. Diplomats of the “old school”, adherents of the *laissez faire* thesis and used to deal mainly with the political aspects of inter-state relations, were more restrained at the beginning of the interwar period, but the multiplication of national states’ commercial, financial and economic themes led to the emergence in embassies and legations of the commercial/economic/financial sections, and determined a more diverse training of diplomats on the object of diplomatic action. Often, experts from economic-financial ministries were also involved in the negotiations with such objectives. Which meant that work in an external representation of the state became more complex and specialized.

⁴² Nicolson, *Diplomacy*, 84–85.

Paying more attention to the public communication of the foreign ministries and diplomatic missions was another consequence of the evolution of the post-war society. Press *attachés* appeared in embassies/legations as a result of the greatly increased power of the press. At the same time, the importance of propaganda in producing favorable moods of public opinion was understood, and cultural *attachés* were sent to certain foreign representations who also effectively practiced cultural diplomacy.

The lingua franca of diplomacy was Latin, until the 18th century. The Age of Enlightenment increasingly imposed French in diplomatic communication, with most diplomats adopting it as their “official” language by the middle of that century. Some diplomatic services also used French in written communications sent to their country, to sovereigns or their own governments. At the Paris Peace Conference (1919–1920), English had the same rights as French. And because some political leaders present at the Peace Conference were not polyglots, it was decided that the official representatives of the participating states should express themselves, if they wished, in their national language and use interpreters for translation.⁴³ The respective innovation in diplomatic communication created a certain comfort for a part of the political leaders, but there were cases in which even the intergovernmental dialogue was marked by shortcomings in correctly understanding the expression of the desired meanings. This was one of the disadvantages of diplomatic language that diplomats had to deal with in order to diminish or eliminate the “diplomatic ambiguity” of national languages. At one point even Sir Harold Nicolson regretted abandoning French as the language of diplomacy, as it had offered not only a kind of “standardization” of diplomatic language, but also more accuracy and precision in diplomatic communication.

Of course, other arguments can be made that post-war innovations in diplomatic methods and practices kept pace with the political trends of the era, states, and the international community, and that sometimes there was a feeling of going back in time. Terminological confusions have often generated misunderstandings at the level of public opinion. Everyone can agree that foreign policy should not be secret. But it must be admitted that in certain situations, negotiations need confidentiality. However, diplomacy is involved both in the application of foreign policy and in negotiations. In 1918 and after, the “old” and the “new” diplomacy had a common denominator—namely that the main mission of the diplomat was to create a feeling of trust in the country where he was accredited. Confidence, said Sir Nicolson, was and is the principle—the eternal value of diplomacy.⁴⁴ It is true that before 1918 many procedures, techniques, diplomatic conventions were disapproved by public opinion. They were judged and subject to elimination by the post-war political and moral values that hoped for

⁴³ Nicolson, *Diplomacy*, 125.

⁴⁴ Nicolson, *Diplomacy*, 143.

other meanings of good, evil, truth, etc. But those meanings were confronted during the interwar period with duplicity, forgery, and antagonisms that favored the return of certain old practices.⁴⁵ All this also affected diplomacy, which was in a continuous oscillation between “old” and “new”. And it is no wonder that we find this dispute/confrontation sharpening around the outbreak of World War II.

Romania’s Case

We don’t intend to do a quick research on our entire history to demonstrate that the state units in the Romanian space have used diplomacy very insistently. But it is worth emphasizing the fact, together with Gheorghe I. Brătianu, that since the beginning of the existence of the Romanian medieval states, their voivodes and rulers entered the group of “athletes of Christ” who fought against the Turks.⁴⁶ We assume that they possessed military combat capabilities, and also participated in the discussions/negotiations with other medieval entities for the assembly of strategies and tactics in the Crusades and other forms of anti-Ottoman resistance. And it is not only about the brilliant political-military actions of the Transylvanian voivode Iancu of Hunedoara and his successor, King Matia Corvin, but also of the Orthodox principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia that were also inspired by the Byzantine experience. Nicolo Machiavelli also drew a good part of his governing advice from it. And remembering these, it is worthy to show that the eighth chapter of the second part of the Teachings of Neagoe Basarab to his son Theodosius book contains a true guide to be used by rulers regarding messages, both in receiving and sending them to the principalities they interacted with.⁴⁷ This text demonstrates the level of sophistication diplomacy reached at the Court of the Romanian rulers, at the beginning of the 16th century. We can be convinced that such diplomatic conduct also existed in the time of Mircea the Elder and Stephen the Great. And the Transylvanian princes from the second half of the 16th century and the first part of the following century, although under Turkish suzerainty, were active in shaping the Holy League by Pope Clement VIII. Later, together with their neighbors from Wallachia, Moldavia and Poland, they constituted real barriers against the advance of the Turks towards Central Europe. The ambitions of the same Transylvanian princes also involved them in European religious conflicts, becoming signatories of the Treaty of Westphalia. Even during the Phanariot era, diplomacy was used in the Extra Carpathian Romanian Principalities, with certain characteristics from the dignitaries of the Ottoman Porte.

⁴⁵ Elizabeth Wiskemann, *Europe of the Dictators, 1919–1945* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 256.

⁴⁶ Brătianu, *L’organisation de la paix*, 162.

⁴⁷ See Dan Zamfirescu, Florica Moisil, and George Mihăilă, *Învățăturile lui Neagoe Basarab către fiul său Theodosie: Text ales și stabilit de Florica Moisil și Dan Zamfirescu. Cu o nouă traducere a originalului slavon de G. Mihăilă: studiu introductiv și note de Dan Zamfirescu și G. Mihăilă* (București: Minerva, 1971), 265–284.

An interesting case about the transition from the Byzantine and Ottoman diplomatic methods to the modern European ones is that of Costache Negri, who functioned as an envoy, delegate, ambassador of the Moldavian ruler in Constantinople. Then he was appointed “diplomatic agent” by Alexandru Ioan Cuza, after the Union of the Romanian Principalities, equally at the Sublime Porte, and was entrusted with several very important diplomatic missions.⁴⁸ Costache Negri was not a career diplomat but was selected to carry out diplomatic missions due to his education and governing skills. Prince Cuza created the first Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1862, and the first diplomats who represented the United Principalities and Romania abroad were among those militant intellectuals for the Romanian cause, but at the same time also brilliant literati, historians, lawyers, etc. Career diplomats began to be recruited for the country’s diplomatic service through methods similar to those used in France and Germany, very well known by Romanian political leaders from the second half of the 19th century. A very recent work on the history of Romanian diplomacy describes the organizing way in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from Bucharest, which was following the structure of diplomatic functions in accordance with the Protocol approved at the Congress of Aix-aux-Chapelle. At that time, it was not very easy to enter, as criteria related to social origin were taken into account (preference for candidates from among the local aristocracy), but also a very good school and university education.⁴⁹ Applicants with knowledge of foreign languages, with legal, literary, economic training, etc., were selected, going through a very severe competition, including works written in Romanian and French on history or the current state of the country’s foreign policy. In moments that involved negotiations and important decisions, the first minister of the Government and the head of Foreign Affairs were directly involved. They were technically assisted by career diplomats and/or experts. This is what happened at the Berlin Congress (1878), the Triple Alliance Treaty (1883, initiated by King Charles I himself), the Bucharest Peace Conference (1913), the Entente Treaty (1916), the Paris Peace Conference (1919–1920).

Modern Romanian diplomacy was born at the same time as the Romanian national state and had to manage its interactions with the Great Powers. These determined, through their diplomatic directions and methods, the characteristics of the European/international system and the evolution of small and medium-sized states, with the new national states or national movements in Central-South-Eastern Europe. Even the Union of the Principalities was a result of the policy of the Great Powers in the area, in the sense that Napoleon III instrumentalized the national movement of the extra Carpathian Romanians by supporting the formation of a Romanian national state, but pursuing his own interests in expanding French

⁴⁸ Dan Berindei, “Costache Negri”, in *Diplomați Iluștri*, vol. 5, ed. Dan Amedeo Lăzărescu et al. (București: Editura Politică, 1986), 75–140.

⁴⁹ Ioan Opreș, *Pagini din istoria diplomației românești* (București: Editura Altip, 2020), 17.

influence in the area.⁵⁰ That is why the diplomacy of the new Romanian national state had to shape its concepts, discourse and methods of consolidating its own statehood, always threatened by the policies of the Great Powers in the area, with the aim of perfecting national-state unity and cooperating with the new national state entities from the south eastern Europe and from the immediate vicinity of Romania. The Romanian diplomatic agents and the diplomatic missions of Romania followed first of all and in whatever capital they were located, the political-diplomatic movements of the Great Powers, in order to notice their possible effects (positive or negative) on Romanian interests.⁵¹ For such missions, not only intellectuals known to the Romanian cultural-political environment were sent, but especially those with solid and valuable relationships in the capitals where they were accredited to the Romanian diplomatic representations. In Romanian diplomacy from the second half of the 19th century—the beginning of the 20th century—there were prominent names from Romanian culture and politics, from Negri and Ghica, whom I have already mentioned, to Alecsandri, Kogălniceanu, Duiliu Zamfirescu and the list could go on.

Romania's foreign policy discourse had to take into account the European context where the principle of the balance of power was applied on.⁵² The monarchs still had a very important say in diplomatic games, but at the same time national movements in central and south-eastern Europe became increasingly violent. The principle of the self-determination of nations, the pursuit of the “national interest” took place not only in the geographical areas mentioned above, but also shook the “sick” empires and the Western chancellery, including in Washington.⁵³ The reason why Romanian diplomacy had to be inspired by the diplomatic techniques and methods of the Great Powers is that the imperial expressions of the West and the East were joining hands on top of the Romanian state; the diplomats sent from Bucharest proved to be quite well-versed in finding inspiration from both sides, through education being qualified at Western schools, and through cultural-political traditions benefiting from the Byzantine experience.

⁵⁰ Charles Jelavich and Barbara Jelavich, *Formarea statelor naționale balcanice, 1804–1920* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1999), 153.

⁵¹ See some illustrations of such diplomatic activities in Berindei, “Costache Negri”; Vasile Netea “Ion Ghica”, in *Diplomați iluștri*, vol. 3, ed. Dan Amedeo Lăzărescu et al. (București: Editura Politică, 1973), 244–281; Opreș, *Pagini din istoria diplomației românești*, 32–39.

⁵² The young historian from Iași Adrian-Bogdan Ceobanu appreciated that the Romanian diplomats from the end of the 19th century had the training of the European diplomats of that time. See Adrian-Bogdan Ceobanu, “Reflections on Romanian Old Diplomacy: Romanian Diplomats in Sankt Petersburg (1878–1918)”, in *Romanian and European Diplomacy. From Cabinet Diplomacy to the 21st Century Challenges*, ed. Gheorghe Cliveti et al. (Iași: Editura Universității “Alexandru Ioan Cuza”; Trieste: Beit Casa Editrice, 2012), 238.

⁵³ Hallet Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis*, 76–80. On the political and cultural European atmosphere of that time see also Jose Ortega y Gasset, *Europa și ideea de națiune* (București: Humanitas, 2002).

Such a combination did not always give the expected results.⁵⁴ For example, at the Congress in Berlin, the conceptions and methods of Kogălniceanu and Ion C. Brătianu clashed, and the Romanian delegation returned from that European political-diplomatic event with great dissatisfaction, although its independence from the Ottoman Empire had been recognized. Kogălniceanu proposed a pragmatic perspective, accompanied by negotiations with all the Great Powers, but Prime Minister Brătianu hoped that Romanian interests would be recognized on account of Romania's merits and geostrategic importance. The Great Powers pursued their own interests, and Brătianu returned to Bucharest frustrated because he could not win within the combinations of the same game of balance of power, practiced by the Imperial Powers, and with an accentuated mistrust of Russia.⁵⁵ The Romanian representatives also had to experience Disraeli's words: "in politics, ingratitude is often the price of the best services"⁵⁶. Five years later, King Carol I himself took the initiative for Romania's accession to the Central Powers (1883)⁵⁷. Faced with the understandings between the monarchs, the government and diplomacy from Bucharest had nothing else to do but to agree with the respective empires on the political-legal arrangements for participation in that alliance.

The Balkan Wars (1912–1913) gave Romanian politicians and diplomats the opportunity to demonstrate, through the projection of their aspirations, the qualities obtained in over half a century of national statehood. Through the Conference of the states in the area and the Treaty of Bucharest (1913), Romania demonstrated that it had the capacity to negotiate with the neighboring national states in order to achieve cooperation between them and peace in the region, without harming the interests of the Western Powers. Charles and Barbara Jelavich noted, quite rightly, that the Treaty of Bucharest not only drew stable borders in this area, but also meant the elimination of the Ottoman Empire from Europe (except Constantinople and a small Thracian portion), and through these results applied the principle of national self-determination without disturbing the balance of power in the Balkan Peninsula.⁵⁸ The main Romanian political actors involved were the Prime Minister Ion I. C. Brătianu, the son of Ion C. Brătianu, previously mentioned, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Take Ionescu, a cultured man, with experience and special European relations, also dedicated to the same country objectives as

⁵⁴ Ion Pătroi "The recognition of Romania's independence and the establishment of Anglo-Romanian diplomatic relations (1878–1880)", in *Diplomație și diplomați români*, vol. 1, ed. Gheorghe Buzatu, Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu, and Horia Dumitrescu (Focșani: DMPress, 2001), 61.

⁵⁵ Keith Hitchins, *Ion I. C. Brătianu – Romania* (London: Haus Publishing Ltd, 2011), 10.

⁵⁶ Pătroi, "The recognition of Romania's independence", 64.

⁵⁷ See Rudolf Dinu, "Romanian Foreign Policy from Berlin to Sarajevo, 1878–1914. Some Characteristics", in *Romanian and European Diplomacy. From Cabinet Diplomacy to the 21st Century Challenges*, ed. Gheorghe Cliveti et al. (Iași: Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza"; Trieste: Beit Casa Editrice, 2012), 207. "In pre-war Romania, diplomacy was a domain reserved to King Carol I, the sovereign being seen, /.../ as the only guarantor of the foreign policy's continuity".

⁵⁸ C. Jelavich and B. Jelavich, *Formarea statelor*, 264.

Brătianu. It's just that the attitude of the two in front of the obtained results was different. Ion I. C. Brătianu tended to project Romania as a Power in the region, to emphasize his qualities as a statesman and national leader, transferring the emotional perceptions of diplomatic and military success to the dynamism of Romanian national action in order to achieve full national and territorial unity. Take Ionescu considered permanent consultations with the Great Powers necessary in order not to provoke aggressive imperial reactions in the area, and Romania not to be crushed by the adversities between the Western and Eastern empires. At the same time, using the basis of the agreements in the Treaty of Bucharest, the Romanian Minister of External considered useful the continuation of the negotiations between the young states of South-Eastern Europe. The goal was not to create pretexts for the intervention of the Great Powers and at the same time to demonstrate that through cooperation national states could build areas of peace and stability in Europe. In this sense, Take Ionescu mediated, at the end of 1913, the divergences between Greece and Turkey, managing to bring them to an understanding⁵⁹. All this took place without generating suspicion among the other Balkan states or in the Chancelleries of the empires. It was no longer a question of secret treaties, disavowed by the minister of foreign affairs from Bucharest as a political-diplomatic practice of the Great Powers, but also in cases imposed on small and medium-sized states.⁶⁰ But Ion I. C. Brătianu considered it necessary to appear before the leaders in Sofia, whose attitude represented a disruptive factor in the Balkans, as a representative of a political and military Power—Romania. This attitude did not find support in European diplomatic circles. At the same time, Take Ionescu was recommending all the states in the Balkans to use the mutual exchange of concessions instead of the threat of force.⁶¹ It is easy to see that these are two different mindsets of using diplomacy in the application of the country's foreign policy objectives. Not only through the memory of his father, coming from personal events from the Berlin Congress (1878), but also through education, his own political experience and temperament, Ion I. C. Brătianu manifested rather in relation to the old diplomacy of the principles of territorial compensation, of historical law and military force, as a Middle Power Realpolitik, while Take Ionescu portrayed the

⁵⁹ Take Ionescu, *Amintiri. Originile războiului. Depoziția unui martor*, ed. Cătălin Turliuc (Iași: Junimea, 2019), 191–192, coordinated edition and introductory study by Cătălin Turliuc. This edition includes the texts from the volume *Souvenirs*, published by Take Ionescu in Paris, 1919 that included particularly suggestive portraits of European politicians and diplomats, to which was added the well-known plea about *Politica instinctului național*, from 1915. Same structure in the printed edition from Tîrgu Mureș (2007), entitled *Amintiri* (Translation from French Letiția Tăut, Supervised Edition, notes and index by Mihai Monoranu, Foreword by Cornel Sigmirean). On this occasion, we point out that also after the mentioned French edition, was printed in New York the volume Take Ionescu, *Some Personal Impressions*, with an Introduction by Viscount Bryce, O. M., Frederick A. Stokes Company Publishers, 1920. In this edition have been added several portraits of King Charles I and Emperor Wilhelm II of Germany.

⁶⁰ Ionescu, *Amintiri.*, 58–59.

⁶¹ Ionescu, *Amintiri.*, 194–195.

qualities of a true European and Romanian⁶², as Georges Clemenceau labeled him after the Balkan wars. This is because he tried to combine the national interest with the wider European interest, primarily using negotiations and the rule of compromise, and not the pressure of a Great Power. Therefore, the traditionalist and innovative tendencies were permanently present in the short history of modern Romanian diplomacy until the First World War. There were open and intense demonstrations a few years before the Paris Peace Conference, as we could see in the more general case of European diplomacy.

The outbreak of the First World War created opportunities and problems for Romanian diplomacy. The opportunities consisted in the possibilities of highlighting the role of the diplomacy of the national states in the development of international relations through cooperation and not through war, the problems being given by the geostrategic position, the level of military and economic preparation of the country and the existence of the secret treaty, from 1883, with the Triple Alliance led by Germany. In that context, the objective of the Bucharest policy was to achieve full national-state unity. Most of Romania's leaders hoped that the Entente would be victorious, and that the Treaty of 1883 would disappear as a result of the breakup of the Triple Alliance. In any case, too few minds in Bucharest imagined that the Romanian army could fight against France and England.⁶³ The way Romanian state diplomacy acted in the mentioned conjuncture gives us the opportunity to further analyze its evolution, also by referring to traditionalism and modernization. And for the coherence of the historiographic narrative, we will use the cases of the same two previously mentioned personalities—Ion I. C. Brătianu and Take Ionescu—because they continued to play an important role in Romania's foreign policy and diplomacy during the war and the first post-war years.

Since the Treaty of 1883 had a defensive character, Ion I. C. Brătianu used the opportunity not to engage in war immediately and to continue military and diplomatic preparations. His pro-Western choices were well known in Paris and London, even though he had repeatedly expressed his admiration for Germany. He professed the belief that Romania had to convince the leaders of the Great Powers and their public opinion about the justice of the Romanian national cause, through a permanent diplomatic offensive. He was convinced that the Romanian state should have a professional and responsible diplomacy, and the country's political leaders had the duty to develop and support a moderate and energetic foreign

⁶² Gheorghe Calcan, *România în relațiile internaționale ale Conferinței de Pace de la Paris–Versailles, 1919–1920* (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2013), 62.

⁶³ In a discussion with the newly elected president of France, Raymond Poincare, on September 9, 1913, Take Ionescu told the dignitary from Paris: "I don't know anything about any treaty. What I know is that the Romanian army will not be in the camp of your enemies." See Ionescu, *Amintiri*, 59.

policy strategy.⁶⁴ Consistently pursuing the realization of the Romanian national ideal, Ion I. C. Brătianu—as a leader of the Romanian National Party and Prime Minister of the Romanian Government—continued to operate with the classic terms of Realpolitik, such as “military power, size of the territory and number of populations”.⁶⁵ He was a man of firm and consistent principles, as his son Gheorghe Brătianu describes him and he cared a lot about the principles of national preservation, intransigence, transaction, opportunity, reciprocity, expectation and non-interference in the internal affairs of the country with respect to the application of foreign policy of the country.⁶⁶ What he proved abundantly in his relations with the Great Powers and the other states participating in the Paris Peace Conference, where he behaved as if he were the leader of a great Power.⁶⁷ Which he amply proved in his relations with the Great Powers and the other states participating in the Paris Peace Conference, where he behaved as if he were the leader of a great Power and not of a country with “limited interests”, as it had been classified by those in charge of reorganizing the post-war international system. Moreover, negotiating the agreement with the Entente Powers for Romania’s participation in the war (1916), the Romanian Prime Minister had the attitude of a negotiator who necessarily had to appear as a “winner”. He did not want to sign the document until the specification was accepted in the text that at the Peace Conference the Romanian state shall be treated in the same way as the other signatory Powers. In reality, the Entente Powers accepted such demands of Brătianu with a secret understanding that they would not be respected after the end of the war.⁶⁸ These points of view and attitudes of Ion I. C. Brătianu made him neither agreeable nor convincing in front of other leaders of Great Powers, with strong authoritarian characteristics (for example Georges Clemenceau), as even Gheorghe Brătianu admitted.⁶⁹ These points of view and attitudes of Ion I. C. Brătianu made him neither agreeable nor convincing in front of other leaders of Great Powers, also with strong authoritarian characters (for example Georges Clemenceau), as Gheorghe Brătianu himself had admitted. Furthermore, the Entente states settled the accounts in the field of diplomacy, at the Peace Conference, when they were no longer under the pressure of the gravity of the situation on the Western front.

⁶⁴ Ion Novăcescu, *Ion I. C. Brătianu și opțiunea occidentală a României* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mesagerul, 1996), 68.

⁶⁵ Novăcescu, *Ion I. C. Brătianu și opțiunea occidentală*, 62.

⁶⁶ Novăcescu, *Ion I. C. Brătianu și opțiunea occidentală*, 70–73.

⁶⁷ Novăcescu, *Ion I. C. Brătianu și opțiunea occidentală*, 84.

⁶⁸ Sherman David Spector, *România la Conferința de Pace de la Paris. Diplomația lui Ion I. C. Brătianu* (Iași: Institutul European, 1995), 32.

⁶⁹ Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *Acțiunea politică și militară a României în 1919* (București: Corint, 2001), 40.

Take Ionescu was not in the same political party as Ionel I. C. Brătianu during the First World War and had even openly expressed his opposition to some of the methods used by the liberal leader, even if in essence they both aimed to achieve the same national objective of the Romanians. But he was more connected to the most important leaders and press in France and England; in matters of diplomacy, he was influenced by the movements of the Foreign Office, which influenced his concepts and methods, and at the same time, he was informed through London of Washington's intentions. Also, he had a well-recognized prestige among the majority of South-Eastern European states, which expressed their opposition to Turkey and Russia and therefore were accepted to certain extent by the Great Powers. He said even before the war that he was a follower of open diplomacy, that secret treaties would no longer be considered at the end of the conflagration. He was convinced from the first day of the war that the Entente would win, and pleaded for an association with it, in order to have a chance to win the national cause when peace would be concluded. He did not approve of Brătianu's transactional tactics during the two years of neutrality, arguing that the prime minister's game will affect Romania's credibility. Brătianu did not insist on the application of the principle of national self-determination, conditioning instead the military support of the Entente with territorial compensations, as stated by the imperial diplomacy formula from the Berlin Congress. In a famous speech in the Romanian Parliament, entitled Politics of the National Instinct, in mid-December 1915, Take Ionescu was particularly critical of Brătianu's policy, of his manner of procrastinating and haggling over everything, without any clear horizon. He warned that the war will bring radical changes on the international scene, and outdated political formulas will be replaced by the action of nations and democratic political forces, and Romania's entry into the war would "coincide with the possibility of a European role".⁷⁰ He considered that the decision of 1916 came quite late and caught Romania still militarily unprepared, but he agreed to support Brătianu's government so that it could serve the national interest. He also did not agree with Brătianu's solution in 1917, when he proposed a separate peace with the Central Powers, the prime minister being supported by the king as well. Take Ionescu's suggestion, presented even during the Crown Council that discussed this topic, was to conclude with the Triple Alliance only a military armistice,⁷¹ because he envisioned nervous reactions of the Entente Powers, with possible negative effects on the Peace Conference. He was aware that through the decision of the separate peace, Romania was entering an even more serious political-diplomatic crisis, and in order to alleviate its effects, he decided to go to Paris, in the summer of 1918. He founded the Romanian National Council, recognized by France and England, and later by the USA, as an authentic representative of the complete

⁷⁰ Ionescu, *Amintiri*, 221.

⁷¹ Spector, *România la Conferința de Pace de la Paris*, 41.

Romanian nation. In the fall of 1918, Take Ionescu was convinced that the Entente Powers would no longer support Romania's claims, as they were written in the Treaty of the summer of 1916, under the pretext that the Romanian government had violated the agreement through the separate peace of 1918, plus the American insistence to does not recognize the validity of a secret treaty. Moreover, in Paris and London, Take Ionescu found that some nations in South-Eastern Europe (Greeks, Serbs, Czechs) were quite advanced with new negotiations about their post-war situation.⁷² This situation led him to work hard on diplomatic and propaganda grounds, in Paris and London, but also with Serbia, Greece, etc., planning a federative structure in the Balkans, after the war, an idea that Ionel I. C. Brătianu did not agree with at that date.

Romania's preparation was quite superficial, Ionel I. C. Brătianu relying more on self-confidence and the existence of the Treaty of 1916, although it was assumed that the old would face the new at the Peace Conference. The delegation he led to Paris was made up of his political supporters, and technically of professional diplomats and some experts from the university ranks. During the discussion and voting in the Romanian Parliament (1920) of the 1919–1920 Treaties, Iuliu Maniu reproached the Romanian governments and negotiators for not effectively using the expertise (“a whole host of competent people”) that the Governing Council sent to Paris, in this way explaining the leader from Transylvania the inclusion in the post-war agreements of some “oppressive provisions” for Romania.⁷³ Although he did not like Take Ionescu, seeing his valuable relations in the West, the prime minister thought of including him in the Romanian delegation, but Take Ionescu set the condition that his party participate in the government. Brătianu did not accept and was even satisfied, because he did not like certain agreements that Take Ionescu would have made in Paris (including those with Pasic) and that he had not approved.⁷⁴ In this way, the Romanian delegation was vulnerable, through the absence of a personality that could best express the projection thought by the victorious Powers in the war for post-war Europe, having instead to eliminate the negative perceptions of the leaders of the same Powers about the leader of the Romanian negotiators.

In Romania, throughout Europe and throughout the world there were enormous hopes related to the Paris Peace Conference. The end of the war, in the autumn of 1918, did not eliminate the feeling of panic and concern, because the Bolshevik revolution induced new fears that were intrinsically connected to the feelings generated by the First World War. Therefore, the leaders of the victorious Powers were seen as heralds of a new international reality that had to be established by the post-war treaties. But these leaders were themselves divided

⁷² Spector, *România la Conferința de Pace de la Paris*, 54.

⁷³ Gheorghe Sbârna and Ion Calafeteanu, *Ratificarea Tratatelor de Pace de la Paris (1919–1920) în Parlamentul României Întregite* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Școala Ardeleană, 2022), 365.

⁷⁴ Sbârna and Calafeteanu, *Ratificarea Tratatelor*, 91.

about the world they were to build. They also had behind them the guilty specter of the Congress of Vienna (1815) and imperial arrangements from the 19th century, which added an extra impetus to political-diplomatic innovation. President Wilson crossed the Atlantic with the Peace Program, and stated the prerequisites of fair and impartial arrangements, cooperation between states and nations, respect for the principle of self-determination and a fair ethics of relations between all actors of the international system. In concrete terms, it involved a blend of the principle of self-determination with democracy, the creation of a League of Nations to achieve arms reduction, the elimination of economic barriers, open diplomacy and high standards of bilateral and multilateral interaction. But, in Clemenceau's words, "it is much easier to make war than peace".⁷⁵ The victorious powers very quickly showed that they had divergent interests, they only accepted Wilson's program in public speeches and sought to prove by concessions that they still cared about the unity of the Allies.

Ion I. C. Brătianu quickly noticed the misunderstandings between the Great Ones and tried to enter their circle, but he did not succeed and thought that he could speculate between their contradictory positions.⁷⁶ However, he did not understand the fact that the Great Powers saw the treaties they were negotiating only as the beginning of a process of restoring peace and through mutual concessions, they were finding a way of collaborating, and not only at the expense of the vanquished, but also of the other small and middle states. The Prime Minister of Romania stated that he supported the principle of self-determination of nations but continued to request the recognition of the clauses of the agreement done in 1916, with the Entente, although the territory of Bessarabia was not among them. However, he did not grasp the fact that the Great Powers saw the treaties they were negotiating only as the beginning of a process of restoring peace and as such, through mutual concessions, they found a way of understanding, and not only to the detriment of the defeated, but also to the others small and medium states. The Prime Minister of Romania stated that he supported the principle of self-determination of nations but continued to request the recognition of the clauses of the agreement done in 1916, with the Entente, although the territory of Bessarabia was not among them. As a result, the Council of the Four Greats approved Romania's borders in Banat and Bucovina on June 21, 1919, but left Bessarabia and Dobrogea in charge of the Council of Heads of Delegations.⁷⁷ Brătianu continued to insist on the clauses of the secret treaty of 1916, although the Allies said in unison that they no longer recognized the secret agreement with Romania. He antagonized both Wilson and Lloyd George and Clemenceau. The Romanian Prime Minister hoped that the Bolshevik threat in Germany, Austria, but especially

⁷⁵ Margaret MacMillan, *Peacemakers. The Paris Conference of 1919 and Its Attempt to End War* (London: John Murray Publishers Ltd., 2001), 6.

⁷⁶ Spector, *România la Conferința de Pace de la Paris*, 114.

⁷⁷ Spector, *România la Conferința de Pace de la Paris*, 192.

in Hungary would convince the Great Powers to give him the right, to accept Romania becoming a Power to defend the West from Soviet Russia. But neither the military campaign in Hungary nor its results did convince the Great Ones, much to the disappointment of the leader from Bucharest.⁷⁸ Queen Maria's visit to Paris and London, in the spring of 1919, did not win Brătianu's cause, who also had to face political criticism from Romania, although Romanian public opinion was firmly on the side of the head of the Romanian delegation at the Peace Conference. This context generated a real crisis in the negotiations that Romania was conducting in Paris. Although they had accepted, in principle, the methods of the "new diplomacy", according to which the territorial regulations had to be submitted to an examination of the interested parties, he did not reconcile himself to the thought that the agreement with England, France and Russia, in 1916, was again a subject for discussion, that the said states signatories did not respect their commitments.⁷⁹ This gesture of the Great Powers towards Brătianu gave them the opportunity to simulate the separation from the old-imperial diplomacy and the rapprochement with the new Wilsonian diplomacy. Even if he noticed this nuance that put him alongside the old imperial diplomacy, Ion I. C. Brătianu kept consistently his own interpretation, although it disfavored him, but he was convinced that he could build a strong personal image in Romania as a fighter for the cause of state sovereignty.⁸⁰ To the subject of the 1916 treaty, he added other topics with contradictory positions, such as minorities, Jews, oil, etc., which created an antagonistic position towards the Council of Four. And in the face of such a situation, Ion I. C. Brătianu preferred to withdraw from the position of head of the Romanian delegation at the Peace Conference and, shortly after, that of President of the Council of Ministers. In a discussion with the newly elected president of France, Raymond Poincare, on September 9, 1913, Take Ionescu told the dignitary from Paris: "I don't know anything about any treaty. What I know is that the Romanian army will not be in the camp your enemies." His withdrawal from the Peace Conference was a positive move, as it opened the way for de-tensioning of Romania's relations with the Great Ones in Paris and saved their own political position from erosion in the country. A change in the Romanian style of negotiation was felt only after taking over the leadership of the government by Alexandru Vaida-Voevod (December 1, 1919),⁸¹ replacing the confrontational tone with a conciliatory one, which even allowed him to obtain some changes in the Treaty with Austria and that of the Minorities, but

⁷⁸ Brătianu, *Acțiunea politică*, 131.

⁷⁹ Spector, *România la Conferința de Pace de la Paris*, 194.

⁸⁰ Hitchins, *Ion I. C. Brătianu – Romania*, 125.

⁸¹ Hitchins, *Ion I. C. Brătianu – Romania*, 129. On August 12, 1920, Alexandru Vaida Voevod recounted the image of Romania when Ion I. C. Brătianu left Paris: "The atmosphere was that Romania has the habit of making commitments and not keeping them, that it has the tactic of acting as if it wants to execute a commitment but knows how to paralyze the possibility of execution. In a word, that he does not know how to conduct a loyal, clear, consistent, and honest foreign policy." See Sbârână and Calafeteanu, *Ratificarea Tratatelor*, 208.

also to move forward in the discussions regarding Romania's borders with neighboring states. Although in Paris there was also an attempt to connect the subject of Bessarabia with the treaty with Hungary, in the end the Treaty of Trianon was also signed (June 4, 1920). Averescu government reached an agreement with the Council of Ambassadors regarding Bessarabia (October 28, 1920).

These last and very sensitive political-diplomatic steps coincided with the official re-entry of Take Ionescu, the critic of Ion I. C. Brătianu, on the diplomatic scene. On June 13, 1920, he again took over the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, which he held until December 17, 1921. This time he had one of his brilliant disciples—Nicolae Titulescu—both “great Europeans” by his side. At the same time, they were admirers of their homeland, which they served for the purpose of a higher destiny in Europe.⁸² In April 1920, on the recommendation of Take Ionescu, Marshal Averescu appointed Titulescu as a delegate from Romania to the Peace Conference.⁸³ From this position, the future great diplomat of interwar Romania was also a signatory of the Treaty of Trianon, and was also involved in the negotiation of the agreement regarding Bessarabia. He is the one who managed to convince England and the other Great Powers not to recognize the USSR any right of appeal against Romania, as far as Bessarabia and the eastern borders of the Romanian state were concerned.⁸⁴ Probably also at Take Ionescu's proposal, on June 13, 1920, Prime Minister Averescu appointed Nicolae Titulescu as Minister of Finance, to carry out the negotiations regarding war reparations, but also the external financial loans that post-war Romania badly needed.⁸⁵

The spirit of “new diplomacy”, promoted by Take Ionescu, arrived in Bucharest and prevailed in a whole series of problems that Romania had to solve during the Paris Peace Conference. Recently appointed to the Romanian Delegation, Nicolae Titulescu sent Take Ionescu the following description of the political-diplomatic situation: “It is an era of confusion, of *sauve qui peut* (every man for himself), of lack of directives, those of Clemenceau not being applied in time, appearing as outdated, the new ones not being better”.⁸⁶ In the speech I

⁸² Cătălin Turliuc, “Take Ionescu și Marele Război”, in *Amintiri. Originile războiului. Depoziția unui martor*, ed. Cătălin Turliuc (Iași: Junimea, 2019), 8.

⁸³ Calcan, *România în relațiile internaționale*, 66.

⁸⁴ Nicolae Titulescu, *Politica externă a României* (București: Editura Enciclopedică, 1994), 113.

⁸⁵ It is known that in the Averescu government the man with political and strategic thinking was Take Ionescu. Often the Averescu government was called “Averescu–Take Ionescu”. Writing to Take Ionescu from Paris, in May 1920, Titulescu told him: “I worked a lot here in the direction of finance. I also have a whole schedule. However, I cannot harness myself to such a thing until after a certain time and only in a government where it is possible to work, and not only the intrigue”. Which means that Take Ionescu played the main role of bringing Titulescu into the Averescu government. See Ion M. Oprea, *Nicolae Titulescu* (București: Editura Științifică, 1966), 63.

⁸⁶ Oprea, *Nicolae Titulescu*, 123.

mentioned earlier, *The Politics of the National Instinct*, Take Ionescu convincingly emphasized that the mission of his generation, the one that was living the moments of the First World War, was to fulfill the national ideal that he defined by “national unity, not only intellectual, but also political”. And this achievement was supposed to mean that the foundations of a “new Romania”, of a “new Romanian state” were laid.⁸⁷ In his opinion, the national state was the product of a nation’s will to live in the territory it inhabited and to realize its aspirations through its own self-government based on law and assumed commitments, unlike states formed by conquests, with permanent imperial claims that were only recognizing the law of the strongest and professing the cult of force.⁸⁸ And from a description of Count Czernin, Vienna’s envoy to Bucharest, we better understand the state principles facing in the First World War, namely the imperial and the national ones. When he explained Romania’s national policy to the Austro-Hungarian ambassador, in 1916, Take Ionescu received the following answer: “If we are winners, we will suppress Romania. If we are defeated, there will be no more Austria-Hungary”.⁸⁹ And the words of Count Czernin expressed exactly the imperial thinking of the era—through the Treaty of Buftea (May 1918), Austria-Hungary wanted Romania to disappear at the end of the war. It’s just that the termination of the war marked the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, with new or reunified national states appearing in its place (such as Romania). The advantage of the entry of the international system into the interaction phase of the national states was clearly seen by Take Ionescu, the foreign minister of post-war Romania, who took over the political philosophy of the League of Nations and considered that peace was not a utopia but had to be achieved by “improving relations between peoples”. He sustained and demonstrated it as a possibility in the area of the Balkans even before the outbreak of the First World War.

After the end of the Great War, in the years 1920–1921, Foreign Minister Take Ionescu dedicated most of his energy to the Project of collaboration of the states of Central-South-Eastern Europe. Diplomat Raoul Bossy, the chief of staff of Minister Take Ionescu, and a friend of his family, believed that the head of diplomacy from Bucharest “gave a new turn to our foreign policy”,⁹⁰ by moving towards a stable alliance with neighboring states and maintaining the support of the West, especially of France. The effect expected from such a foreign policy of Romania was, according to the same Raoul Bossy, ensuring “the maintenance of peace and the international order established by the peace treaties signed in the vicinity of Paris”.⁹¹ Another renowned diplomat of interwar Romania, Frederic

⁸⁷ Ionescu, *Amintiri*, 223.

⁸⁸ Ionescu, *Amintiri*, 205.

⁸⁹ Ionescu, *Amintiri*, 116.

⁹⁰ Raoul Bossy, *Amintiri din viața diplomatică (1918–1940)* (București: Humanitas, 1993), 44.

⁹¹ Bossy, *Amintiri din viața diplomatică*, 45.

C. Nanu, emphasized that Take Ionescu's vision of an alliance of states "from the Aegean Sea to the Baltic Sea" had primarily the value of a long-term pragmatic project, exceeding the size of the "sanitary cordon", through the evolution towards a "block" of "powers with limited interests"—Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Serbia and Greece—that would have had the "authority of a Power" in relations with the Great Ones.⁹² At one point, Take Ionescu was of the opinion that Austria should also be part of that bloc. Take Ionescu's initiative required a lot of bilateral negotiations with the states of the central-southeast European area, but also with France and England, having to take into account the events in Soviet Russia. Of course, the obstruction of the revisionist states was a real obstacle, but apart from the negotiations with Hungary, difficulties also arose from the ambitions of each of the mentioned states to impose themselves in the area and in interactions with the West (France, for example, did not have in the first post-war years a clear conception on the role of the cooperation among the states in the region under discussion).⁹³ Being aware of all these aspects, Take Ionescu considered that bilateral and group negotiations could be reached through negotiation and mutual concessions, within a certain time frame. Between 1920–1921, the Little Entente was created, through bilateral agreements (between Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia—August 14, 1920, Romania and Czechoslovakia—April 23, 1921, Romania and Yugoslavia, June 7, 1921). The historian of diplomacy Mario Toscano recognized that Take Ionescu played a particular role, through the option of preserving peace and developing political and economic relations between the successor states, as the peace treaties themselves stipulated. The Romanian minister had in mind the subsequent invitation of Austria, but also of the defeated states—Hungary and Bulgaria. He found that Hungary had revanchist intentions, but still considered that good neighborhood relations were absolutely necessary, especially in the economic field.⁹⁴ The defensive tone of those agreements prevailed, and the actions carried out under the umbrella of the League of Nations were remarkable,⁹⁵ and later, the years of the economic crisis (1929–1933) further proved the correct conception of Take Ionescu, taken over and carried forward by Nicolae Titulescu, about the need for the cooperation of national states in the central-southeast European area. Unfortunately, there were works on the history of international relations from the post-1989 period, which insisted more on what was considered to be the phenomenon of the "fragmentation" of the European and world space after the First World War, in connection with the process of

⁹² Frederic C. Nanu, *Politica externă a României, 1919–1933* (Iași: Institutul European, 1993), 62.

⁹³ Mario Toscano, *Designs in Diplomacy – Pages from European Diplomatic History in the Twentieth Century* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), 20–24.

⁹⁴ Toscano, *Designs in Diplomacy*, 31.

⁹⁵ Keith Hitchins, *Rumania, 1866–1947* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 431.

globalization and the “crisis” of the national state,⁹⁶ without having shown the historical experiences in interwar Europe that insisted on cooperation, coordination and even regional integration of national states, such as the Little Entente. These studies did not show that in interwar Europe there were also historical experiences that insisted on cooperation, coordination and even regional integration of national states, such as the Little Entente, without having reached the point of establishing a proper supranational structure. And I think it is worth underlining the fact that the achievement and actions of the Little Entente were supported by all post-1921 Romanian governments, until just about the outbreak of the Second World War.

This success of the new diplomacy, illustrated by the creation of the Little Entente, was well received in Romania, it even brought Take Ionescu the dignity of president of the Council of Ministers, for a very short period of time (December 17, 1921—January 17, 1922). His death in the spring of 1922 interrupted a prodigious political-diplomatic activity with notable results in conceptual innovation and operating mode in foreign policy and international relations. But not all his efforts to replace the old diplomacy received support. And it is not just about the well-known rivalry with Ion I. C. Brătianu, because some of his diplomatic actions encountered strong barriers in the European and international political-diplomatic context. There were, for example, attempts at bilateral negotiations with Soviet Russia, suggested by Cicerin during the time of Alexandru Vaida-Voevod's government. There was an internal public pressure in Romania aimed at obtaining a clearer recognition of Moscow for the Romanian borders that had incorporated Bessarabia, simultaneously with a feeling of categorical rejection of Bolshevism. In August 1921, when Take Ionescu was foreign minister, a Romanian diplomat was sent to Vienna to probe the Soviets' willingness to negotiate. After almost two months of discussions, the Soviet delegation approached the subject of Bessarabia, and the Romanians raised the question of the Treasury. At one point, the head of the Soviet delegation took a more conciliatory tone, stating that the Bolshevik government could recognize that Bessarabia belonged to Romania, but only in exchange for the Romanian government's recognition that it renounces the Treasury taken over by imperial-tsarist Russia from the Romanian authorities in refuge in Iași (1917). This was the classic method of compensation practiced by imperial diplomacy. General Averescu was inclined to accept the Soviet offer, but Take Ionescu did not trust that Moscow would keep its word and that, sooner or later, after Vrangel's pressure would be removed and Soviet Russia will strengthen, it will claim anew the Bessarabian territory.⁹⁷ In addition, an understanding with

⁹⁶ See also Jean-Jacques Roche, *Relations internationales*, 36. Other opinions, we also rally to argue that the true process of globalization does not imply the decline of nation states and that an integrative synthesis does not mean the destruction of national cultures, see Marie-Claude Smouts, *Les nouvelles relations internationales* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po., 1998), 65.

⁹⁷ Bossy, *Amintiri din viața diplomatică*, 47–50; more details about the Romanian-Soviet negotiations, in the early 1920s in Nanu, *Politica externă a României*, 112–122.

Moscow would have meant a recognition of Soviet Russia, which France and England did not agree to at the time. These were the main Powers that had signed the Paris Agreement of 28 October 1920. Take Ionescu opposed the compensation solution and insisted on strengthening the Agreement of October 28, 1920, i.e., in accordance with the West's policy. That is why the Soviet suggestions were refused. This political-diplomatic position was also agreed by Ion I. C. Brătianu, being convinced that only France and England could guarantee the agreements adopted at the Paris Peace Conference.⁹⁸ In fact, the resumption by Soviet Russia of the practices of imperial diplomacy was a clear signal that Bolshevik Moscow was on the line of an imperial foreign policy, which was also seen after the Rapallo episode (1922), and more clearly in the late 1930's the last century.

As noted, the trend of renovating diplomatic concepts and methods accelerated in the last quarter of the 19th century as the rivalries between the imperial powers of the era intensified and worsened. Neither the so-called "new imperialism" nor the construction of other alliance systems could save the "classic" balance of power practiced by the Great Powers until then, because more and more new actors of the international system have considered it to be tyrannical.⁹⁹ In the 19th century, the empires and other European Great Powers were able to manage European relations through the European Concert system, but the latter failed to be extended on a global scale, as the internationalization of economic, political, etc. processes developed. That is why diplomacy has always combined the old with the new, without being able to save the international system that was heading towards war. That's why diplomacy has always combined the old with the new, without being able to save the international system that was heading towards war. By the end of the First World War, the pressure for the transition to a "new diplomacy" increased and intensified by the entry into the international arena of the United States of America, a major actor that also proposed the renovation of the international system. However, the Americans withdrew from the process of rebuilding the international system and thus encouraged the return of the old imperial conceptions transferred to the conduct of the states that had reached the status of Great Powers. In 1981, Jean-Baptiste Duroselle published his famous work *Toute Empire périra* that he republished in 1992, with the announcement that the last empire—the USSR—had ceased to exist.¹⁰⁰ We can see even today that political options and "classic" imperial methods still persist in the conduct of some Great Powers who want the return to a reality of imperial history. In reality, the leaders of those Great Powers desire to exercise imperial powers on a global scale. Which means that today's diplomacy, although it has added new techniques and languages, still preserves in some Chancelleries of the Great Powers remnants of

⁹⁸ Hitchens, *Ion I. C. Brătianu*, 144.

⁹⁹ Smith, *The Pattern of Imperialism*, 46.

¹⁰⁰ Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *Tout empire périra: théorie des relations internationales* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1992), 14–15.

imperial diplomacy. This is despite the fact that the important acting role of the national state in the international system is still reconfirmed, and the diplomacy of the national states is recognized as the main instrument of the foreign policy of all the states in the United Nations system.

This study is only proposing a reconstruction of a changing phenomenon from the history of diplomacy. It is a historical stage when the entire international system was undergoing transformation, modernization of European society, especially in the 19th century and the first decades of the next. We noticed the orientation of the diplomacy of the Romanian Principalities and then of the national state of Romania towards innovations in the field of European diplomacy as a synchronic phenomenon. We registered the preservation of some forms extracted from imperial diplomacy, all the more so since the very development of modern Romanian statehood happened through interaction with neighboring empires or Western Great Powers. We focused our research on the period of the First World War and the following years because, as we noted, the renewal of diplomacy was more intensively discussed, and new diplomatic methods were experimented in that period. In the case of Romania, the thinking and action of some personalities political-diplomatic, such as Ion I. C. Brătianu and Take Ionescu, are very illustrative of the process of transition from the old to the new diplomacy. Sherman David Spector said about Brătianu that “he was a master of subtle, clairvoyant and sometimes reprehensible diplomacy which, in other times, was called «Byzantine»”.¹⁰¹ For the American historian, the term “Byzantine” has the meaning of practicing “unorthodox” maneuvers; but he did not mention that such techniques were also often used by the imperial diplomacy that the Romanian dignitary had to deal with. Brătianu wanted to pursue a policy of Power in the area, but in the end, he understood that in order to be accepted alongside the Great Powers, increased military and economic capabilities were needed, and not just resources and potentialities. He believed that domestic imperialism and autocracy would serve his personal, party and even national interest. In their work on the Balkans in the 19th and early 20th centuries, Charles and Barbara Jelavich wrote that “through shrewd diplomacy and exploiting the fear of Bolshevism, Romanian diplomats have succeeded in carrying out to the fullest their program”,¹⁰² at the end of the First World War.

Of course, the two American historians referred to the fact that the union of Transylvania and Bessarabia with the Kingdom of Romania has been recognized by the treaties of the Paris Peace Conference (1920). It is certain that Ion I. C. Brătianu, Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, N. Mișu, together with Take Ionescu, and Nicolae Titulescu have worked a lot. The latter represented the vision of renewal in Romanian political-diplomatic activity, leaving a strong and valuable imprint in the

¹⁰¹ Spector, *România la Conferința de Pace de la Paris*, 297.

¹⁰² C. Jelavich and B. Jelavich, *Formarea statelor*, 357.

diplomatic action of the Romanian government in the first post-war years and in the interwar period. As Nicolae Iorga wrote, during the war, and at the Paris Peace Conference it was visible that Romania had “two Romanian policies”, one of Ion I. C. Brătianu and the other of Take Ionescu.¹⁰³ In the end, their complementarity was reached, although a fusion of the energies of the two great personalities would have created an even better European visibility of Romania. In any case, Nicolae Titulescu learned from the divergent experience of the two and always tried to have a constructive relationship with all political parties in Romania. Even Ion I. C. Brătianu and his followers eventually came to appreciate Take Ionescu’s efforts. I. G. Duca, for example, future Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Brătianu government, praised the innovative trends in Romania’s post-war politics and diplomacy, considering them absolutely necessary from the point of view of historical evolution and especially for the consolidation of the unitary state of Romania.¹⁰⁴ Of course, idiosyncrasies also play a considerable role in political and especially diplomatic decisions. And in a historical stage in which the old and the new face each other, they stand out even more prominently. What was clearly seen in the case of the political-diplomatic activity of Ion I. C. Brătianu and Take Ionescu, in the context of the interaction between imperial and national, in the process of modernization of diplomacy, during the first decades of the 20th century.

¹⁰³ Gheorghe Buzatu, Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu, and Horia Dumitrescu, *România și Conferința de Pace de la Paris (1919–1920)* (Focșani: Empro, 1999), 165.

¹⁰⁴ Eliza Campus, “I. G. Duca”, in *Diplomați Iluștri*, vol. 5, ed. Dan Amedeo Lăzărescu et al. (București: Editura Politică, 1986), 383.