

## **ROMANIA AND THE BALKAN PACT (1934-1940) A SHORT HISTORIOGRAPHY STUDY AND GENERAL CONSIDERINGS**

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***Rezumat:** Istorici români dar și străini – din spațiul balcanic sau din afara acestuia – au abordat diverse aspecte ale relațiilor interbalcanice cu prioritate pentru primii ani după Conferința de Pace de la Paris și pentru perioada premergătoare declanșării celui de-al doilea război mondial. Amintesc doar o parte dintre aceștia: Emilian Bold, Constantin Botoran, Constantin Bușe, Ion Calafeteanu, Eliza Campus, Florin Constantiniu, Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu, Mehmet Ali Ekrem, Constantin Iordan, Gelu Maksutovici, Viorica Moisuc, Cristian Popișteanu, Dumitru Preda, Mihai Retegan, Ioan Scurtu, Antonina Kuzmanova, David Mitrovici, Milan Vanku, David Funderburk, Georges Castellan, Eduard Driault, Barbara Jelavici, Andreas Hillgruber, Hugh Seton-Watson. Relațiile militare, au o pondere restrânsă în studiile respective.*

*Cunoașterea formulelor de colaborare interbalcanică din perioada interbelică reprezintă o necesitate pentru decidenții politici de astăzi, fie ei responsabili naționali, instituții europene sau mondiale. Astăzi în Balcani se încearcă diverse formule de colaborare, inclusiv în domeniu militar. Preluată critic, experiența interbelică poate oferi soluții planificatorilor din zonă. Necunoscută sau neglijată, această experiență poate să producă aceleași disfuncțiuni sau altele și mai grave.*

Our opinion is that there are at least three reasons for studying the evolution of the inter-Balkan relations between the two world wars. Firstly, because during that period, the political and state entities in the region, which had been quite precariously configured as a result of the fall of the Ottoman Empire, had a trend towards their consolidation and also met an almost general international acknowledgment. The vanishing of the neighboring imperial powers (the Russian Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire) was a challenge to them; as a result of their answer to that challenge, the Balkan states could demonstrate to the “civilized world” that they reached a state of maturity in defining and promoting their own interests or, on the contrary, a new “monitoring” period had to be imposed until the “gunpowder barrel” was deactivated and European peace would no longer be threatened by its South-Eastern region.

The consolidation of the Balkan political and state entities was not a smooth development. It was neither a linear nor an isolated evolution process. This complex and contradictory process with many unknowns for each and every Balkan state also engaged the economic, political, cultural, and military relations among the states in the region into a similar dynamics. Secondly, a new vision on the relations among the South-Eastern European states between the two World Wars has become necessary as

soon as the access to new, first hand, sources was opened and an important volume of interpretation papers, document collections and memorial works<sup>1</sup> have been published.

Soon after the euphoria generated by the first post-revolutionary years, when authors coming from different fields of expertise (political analysts, sociologists, essayists, journalists) recommended the inter - wars state of affairs as “the perfect model” to be translated to nowadays Romania, the historical analysis, the critical studies started to gain relevance. The critique of the sources based on a serious analysis have revealed both the capabilities but also the drawbacks, mainly in the domestic policies of most of the Balkan countries, in this period. In their turn, the works on foreign policy contributed with a lot of information - the information deficit was obvious. Nevertheless, in the field of interpretation the action of reevaluation is far from being completed.

Thirdly, an analysis of this subject is required on the grounds of immediate opportunity; the daily reality records major events taking place in the Balkan space. From the responsible officials to the media everyone ask themselves how to diminish and put an end to these conflicts. The general impression is that of all, the very scientific factor is eliminated from the equation of conflict analysis. The result is that institutions with an European or global vocation in the management of peace are repeatedly taken by surprise and cannot explain themselves the virulence of emerging conflicts in a region that “has just calmed down.” It is more than obvious that those that want to “calm down” the Balkans are not familiar with the historical motives of the disputes and try to expediently solve them by superficial analysis. We note that the favorite formulas for this region, nicknamed “the gun-powder barrel of Europe” is *peace enforcement* or *conflict management*, which would better suggest the supporting of these conflicts rather than their remission.

It is obvious that the formula for crisis management in present day Balkans is different from the between the wars one. I don't state weather it is better or worse. The readers are connected through many information channels to this crisis and can make their own judgement. In this study, I inform the readers about another model of Balkan crisis management which was able to maintain the balance in the region for the entire period between the two World Wars.

The realities at the beginning of this century are, of course, different from that at the middle of the previous century. Nevertheless, through the insight given by the historical experience it looks obvious that the solutions of the European political leaders, including the governments of the Balkan states, answered to the imperatives of the moment and ensured a balance – even if a dynamic and precarious one – in the shadow of which consolidation and emancipation was a reality. I consider that the Balkan Pact could be rather included into that kind of regional alliances which were signed in 1921-1922 with the intention to maintain the situation defined by the Peace Treaty of Paris. As it is generally known, peace was defined by treaties and was consolidated by instruments of maintaining it. This is the reason why I am thinking at the role of diplomacy in articulating this system of central and East-European alliances which was so necessary.

In this context I am also considering the system of military relations within the Balkan Agreement which implied a certain responsibility. The difficulty of the research results from the specific of the relations and the instruments of cooperation among the Balkan allies in the military field. Any difficulty is a challenge for the researcher, mobilizes him, but also gives substance and meaning to the scientific work. We retain as a specific that the military measures have been taken much later than the political decision of signing of the Balkan Pact (february 9, 1934, Athens). It took three years of sterile discussions, untill finally, the military conventions of the Pact were signed (1937). Then, It is noted that they were the first to fail at the "live fire test", preceding with two years the "de jure" end of the alliance.

Nowadays, in the Balkans, various formulas of co-operation are tested, including the military field. The experience between the wars period can provide solutions to the planners in the region. Unknown or neglected, this experience can produce again the disorders it produced then or even worse.

The concept of regional alliances in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe is a subject of extreme controversy. Within this study, I do not concentrate on the motives that the interested governments in the region had when they made the decision to join those alliances. I felt that such a subject deserves a separate study. There is a Romanian concept concerning the regional alliances. This concept was only partially brought to life and promoted by a figure of European size, Take Ionescu. Eliza Campus, in her monograph "The Little Entente," Milan Vanku in his synthesis "The Little Entente and the foreign policy of Yugoslavia, 1920-1938. Moments and their significance," and Nicolae Dascalu in "The Romanian-Polish Relations between the World Wars" are only a few of the historians that dedicated their works to the making and functioning of the anti-revisionist alliances. From the West the role of these alliances was perceived in a different way: they were interpreted as either the alternative to the former traditional French-Russian alliance<sup>2</sup> which had the role to balance the German demographic superiority over France, or as a "sanitation barrier"<sup>3</sup> against the danger for Europe represented by the communist ideology. In the end, as it was seen, it served mainly the interest of the communist government in Moscow which lead an abusiv domestic policy hidden to the foreign eyes.

Obviously, the goal of the Romanian diplomacy was to determine the West to assist the states of South-Eastern Europe in maintaining the *status-quo*. But, towards the end of the pre-World War II period, Britain and France, that had initially saluted the founding of the Balkan Pact, ignored its role and (after 1937) treated separately with each of the member states. Even within the alliance there was no unity of opinions. While Turkey and Greece limited the responsibilities of the Balkan Entente only to the Balkan region, and Yugoslavia limited its role to a nominal presence to the debates and the decisions of the Permanent Council, Romania intended to connect it to the others Eastern alliances "protected" by France. The European political context during the second decade of the between the world wars period did not provide Romania a wide space of maneuver.

After the Locarno agreements, France and, most of all, Britain, chose to change their European political management, choosing the appeasement policy

towards the former losers in the war. Romania remained committed to the initial concept of collective security, even if it accepted some corrections in the political tactics and tried to persuade the democratic West to denounce its “appeasement”<sup>4</sup> policy. Even when the political changes in Romania brought into power a right-wing government (Goga-Cuza) that had better connections with the political circles in Berlin, the issue of a basic re-orientation of the Romanian foreign policy was not taken into consideration<sup>5</sup>. “The swinging policy” which was recommended later to Ion Antonescu by Dinu Bratianu in his well known wartime letters was in fact aligned to a political current well articulated in all its components which made it rather feasible<sup>6</sup>. Now, we find again in the specialized works a too optimistic presentation of the success of the Romanian foreign policy dedicated to the “Collective security”, as the one that best matched the national interest. Any other orientation or simple mentioning of an alternative to it was labeled “ab initio” as dangerous and hazardous for the country. The criticism regarding the “defection” of Poland (1934) and Yugoslavia (1937) that considered that they would gain from a closer relation with Germany and Italy, respectively, served, indirectly to the supporters of the Romanian governmental action, that did not give any sign of abandoning the orientation it was committed to.

The objectives of the Romanian foreign policy between the world wars were maintained, in spite of the domestic political changes. As far as the political tactics and the methods to achieve the established objectives are concerned, there were more or less obvious changes. The replacement of the minister Nicolae Titulescu (august 1936) was one of the moments when such changes occurred but, the departure of the firm Romanian diplomat marked only an improvement of the relations with Poland - frozen for a while - and increase in the distrust regarding USSR.

If we can speak about a change in the Romanian political tactics in the field of foreign affairs, during the third decade of the last century, it should be rather identified during the years 1933-1934. Only later, on May 28, 1940, change has affected the basic orientation of the Romanian foreign policy.

My statement is based on the following fact: the spirit of reconciliation among the winners and losers that emerged after the Geneva Protocol and mainly after the Locarno Agreements, enforced a new logic in the European political system where the idea of peace reinforcement made way, for the next ten years, to the diplomatic instruments and public debates within the Society of Nations. Without completely discarding its initial methods, Romania included its political action into this new orientation and became actively present in the debates of the Society of Nations (it also held the presidency of the Assembly for two mandates). Romania tried to redefine its relations with the Balkan neighbors, joined the Briand-Kellogg Pact and the other instruments that were included in this new orientation. We will see that, for a while, Romania and its allies (Poland and the nations of the Little Entente) reduced a lot the military component of the defensive regional alliances, changed partially the contents of the military agreements, limited the co-operation in this field to discussions and operative arrangements agreed at the level of the general staffs.

The beginning of the fourth decade (with Japan's force action in China) and mainly the acceding to power, in Germany, of a political force with a clear, stern and explicit revisionist program marked the moment of the coming back for the original kind of political action of the anti-revisionist governments in the Balkans. This decision is even more important because it represented a separation from the usual course and orientation which were managed by France and Britain.

While France maintained its commitment to the policy it had promoted for the former eight years (after the Locarno Agreement) by simulating ignorance regarding the breeches of the Peace Treaty by Hitler and Mussolini, Romania and side by side with it all the anti-revisionist states in Central and South-Eastern Europe (excepting Poland and partially Yugoslavia), - made the decision to meet the changes produced by the installation of a new political regime in Berlin by falling back to the political method in use during the first post-World War I years. Under the influence of experienced diplomats (Benes, Titulescu, Rustu-Aras), two major events take place in Eastern Europe: the signing of the Pact for the Organising of the Little Entente (February 16, 1933) and, a year later, on February 9, 1934, of the Balkan Pact. These documents make the sharp difference between the countries situated in opposite camps. This was a signal, a direct message that in the Balkans and in Central Europe the reconciliation policy had to meet, from then on, changed standards; the anti-revisionist states were prepared to ask Hungary and Bulgaria to abide by the terms of peace. According to some authors, the signing of the Balkan Pact corresponds to the phase of "multiplication" in Romania's alliance system between the World Wars<sup>7</sup>. They point out the novelty that occurred in the regional policy of Bucharest with the signing of the Pact for the Organising of the Little Entente and, a little later, The Balkan Pact.

In spite of being warned on the major political turn in Berlin, the British-French Block remained fixed within the framework which had been build during the preceding years<sup>8</sup>, inflexible to the warnings and the "counseling" of the small friends in the East<sup>9</sup>. That is why, the Western reaction to the forceful action of Germany, which beginning with 1934, systematically breached the Versailles Peace Treaty, was conjectural (the French-Soviet Pact sent contradictory signals), inconsistent, ineffective. Even the direct hit given to France and the Locarno Agreements, after the occupation of Rheinland by the German Army was not able to convince the democratic West and to mobilize it towards a strong retaliatory action. "The Stresa Front" had also consumed its energy into sterile discussions<sup>10</sup>.

A new change in the foreign policy of Romania is recorded after the fall of Cheko-Slovakia and the dismantling of the Little Entente. In spite of appearances, the dismantling of the Little Entente had a serious impact on the Balkan Pact.

In the end, they were not able to keep themselves outside the kind of foreign policy that was sanctioned by the Great Powers in Europe and in the summer of 1938 (July 31) as a result of the Salonik Agreement, the Balkan Pact accepts the re-arming of Bulgaria, giving its consent to an action that had taken place *de facto* many years before.

At that time, the appeasement policy was generally present in Europe.

The period of re-synchronization of the Romanian foreign policy (and its Balkan allies) to the British-French political orientation (which began with the signing of the Salonik Agreement on July 31, 1938), had a very short life. After March 1939, France and even more Great Britain make the decision to denounce once and for all the appeasement and conciliation policy at Berlin's the acts of force and to sanction in the sternest way the new attempt of the Fuhrer to place Europe before an already completed deed.

This time, the allied Balkan governments will not follow this policy of the Great Democratic Powers (excepting Turkey, Romania and Greece that accepted the unilateral British-French guarantees), they did not even completed the "study" phase on the consequences of that Western decision. Under the pressure of the ongoing European developments, where the actors were the Great Powers, they fell back under the precarious political formula of "neutrality", trying to keep themselves away from any of the camps which were involved into open conflict. In the outcome, the neutrality did not provide them safety and, going on with the policy of understanding with the neighbors in the region, they ended by proposing new concessions to Bulgaria (encouraged by Britain or France or as a result of their own judgement) based on the desiderate of "extracting" the Balkans out of the equation of the war.

As a result, after the Cheko-Slovak "shock" (October, 1938 and mainly in March 1939) the Balkan states didn't have any more political resources for a "confrontation" with the traditional enemies. Finally, they decided to answer favorably, in concessive manner, to most of their neighbors' demands. In this context, Germany and Italy force their own political and economic interests into the Balkans.

The firm decision of London and Paris, after March 1939, to admit no further German provocation without a unequivocal answer found the Balkan states (excepting Turkey) concerned with maintaining their neutrality from both sides engaged into a conflict that had become imminent. The initiative of founding a "Balkan Block of the Neutrals", proposed by Grigore Gafencu – the president of the Balkan Agreement – was a futile attempt to keep alive a precarious political organism at the price of changing its basic original role.

The Balkan Agreement did not necessarily represent the expression of the superior level of integration attained by the Balkan community, as would have desired most of the delegates participating in the Balkan Conferences, in the early 30's. By taking over very little from the spirit of the Conferences, the alliance rather divided the states of the region. It was going towards a different direction from the evolutions that had been legitimated at an European level during the previous ten years (1924 – The Geneva Protocol, Locarno, Briand-Kellogg Pact, The Convention for Defining the Aggressor, Rio de Janeiro Treaty). From this perspective, it can be stated that the Balkan Pact corresponded to the moment of the breaking of the balance, the change of the power balance between the anti-revisionist and the revisionist currents. It was a warning, a reaction to the utterly inappropriate response of the Western democracies to the changes that occurred in Berlin in January 1933.

The Romanian historical literature was generous on this issue.

The foreign historians have also approached many subjects of interest about the Balkan space but, none of them has ever dedicated a developed study focused on the Balkan Agreement itself. Retains the attention Rene Ristelhueber with his *Histoire de Peuples Balkaniques*, Paris, 1950, a very extended work (500 pages) including a special chapter<sup>11</sup> (V) about the Balkan states during the period between the World Wars. We remark the suggestive maps included in the aforementioned study and also the chronology of the important events from the entire Balkan space. Chapter VI (or rather a part of it) also of interest: Before the Balkan War. Referring to the international policy of the majority of the states in the region, the author states that it "... reaches an aggregate of conventions aimed at integrating the peninsula into a wide system designed to maintain the peace in Europe."<sup>12</sup> He gives a particular appreciation to the Romanian foreign policy, which he calls "genuine European"<sup>13</sup>, and he considers Nicolae Titulescu as "one of the most popular figures in the Areopagus of Geneva"<sup>14</sup>.

About the other Balkan states he believes that they do not have the will to develop a foreign policy beyond an purely regional interest<sup>15</sup>. The author did not develop very much the his assessments concerning the Balkan Agreement but, he considered it as "a purely defensive organization, designed to maintain the status-quo..."<sup>16</sup> in the region. It is interesting to mention the connection Rene Ristelhueber makes between the German-Soviet Pact of August 23, 1939, and the situation in the Balkans: "The signing of the German-soviet agreement produced a feeling of panic in the Balkans, especially in Bucharest. The Balkan Agreement, that had been encouraged by Russia, lost in its eyes any reason to exist. From now on, it was nothing more than an abstraction without substance."<sup>17</sup>

Very interesting pieces of information about the relations of France with the Balkan area are partially presented by Pierre Renouvin<sup>18</sup> and more elaborated by Rene Massigli<sup>19</sup>, who also illustrates the efforts of the members of the Balkan Agreement for adapting to the realities of the war. Rene Massigli, marked by the atmosphere of suspicion which is specific to the great events, believed that the "Balkan Block of Neutrals" is a petty politics maneuver of Von Papen, the German representative in Ankara<sup>20</sup>. After some assessments not quite in agreement with the real meaning of Romania's official policy, he conducts a correct analysis of the way that part of the Romanian political establishment understood the value of the tri-party British-French-Turkish Treaty of September 19, 1939, and Bucharest's hopes in the effectiveness of this political instrument. Massigli, an opponent of Munich (and all what it represented) seems to make a severe analysis regarding the actions of his country's government. His descriptions (many of which quite subjective) of the foreign policy of certain Balkan countries are supplemented by those of the French minister in Belgrade who for three years (1937-1940) has kept an almost daily diary on all the important events in the Yugoslav capital and more. Surprising analyst, quite impartial, the latter proves severity and sarcasm regarding the French authorities supported by the Popular Front<sup>21</sup>. He noted on January 26, 1939, that the French written media "commits an error while attempting to present Romania as the last stronghold of French influence in Danubian Europe."<sup>22</sup>

The recent foreign historical literature provides interesting information and interpretation concerning every Balkan state and, in a certain measure, about the relations among them. Very useful for understanding the Balkan issues is *The Little Entente and the Foreign Policy of Yugoslavia 1920-1938*, (Bucharest, 1979) of the Yugoslav historian Milan Vanku, a researcher with a good knowledge of the contemporary history of the Balkan communities. As the author specifies "... the new states (Yugoslavia, Ceko-Slovakia and Romania) made the decision to associate in an alliance..."<sup>23</sup> "in order to defend themselves against the attempts of changing the terms of the peace treaties."<sup>24</sup> Milan Vanku presents the circumstances of the founding of this defensive block, and the interpretation he proposes regarding the risk factors and the compensation of the security deficit for the three allied countries (with a reference to the Little Entente).

Milan Vanku presents a solid argumentation regarding the role of the Little Entente for signing The Balkan Pact<sup>25</sup> during the reunion of the Permanent Council in Zagreb on January 22, 1934. On the other hand, he considers the founding of the Balkan Agreement as an expansion of the security system towards Southern Europe<sup>26</sup>, the Pact being "... an important factor in the effort of the small and medium size states to assert an unitary political concept with the goal of defending the territorial *status-quo*, the peace and security."<sup>27</sup>

The monograph of Milan Vanku contains the important excerpts from the memoirs of the former strong hand in Belgrade, Milan Stoiandinovi, "*Ni rat, ni pakt. Jugoslavia između dva rata*" (Neither war, nor pact. Yugoslavia between the two World Wars, Buenos Aires, 1963), from which are retained the motives of the signing by Yugoslavia of the friendship treaties with Bulgaria and Italy, respectively, and their impact on the Balkan Agreement at the beginning of 1937. The main ideas are reiterated by the author in the synthesis *Nicolae Titulescu - promoter of the peace and cooperation policy in the Balkans*, Bucharest, 1986 which includes a very extended introductory analysis (25 pages) of Viorica Moisuc. The author of the synthesis, acknowledging the role of Nicolae Titulescu in the articulation of a credible system of alliances in Central and South-Eastern Europe, warns on his excessive availability in acknowledging France as a "guarantor" ("support point") of the aforementioned system. He mentions the words of Atatürk: "Rather than helping us, France wishes to help herself."

The other monograph, "*Nicolae Titulescu*"<sup>28</sup> by Walter M. Bacon Jr., represents a modern, very useful interpretation. Walter M. Bacon Jr., who studied in Romania, uses the figure of Nicolae Titulescu as a pretext to project the Western view on the Balkan reality, thus succeeding in demonstrating that disregarding the moment the Balkanians were not able to act "free from the control" of France, Germany and Italy. The Balkan Pact is viewed by the author as the result of the most direct determination of Titulescu. Bacon Jr. insists on the inter-Balkan diplomatic "carousel" of the year 1933 (which he explains as a result of the insistent request of France) which materialized into repeated assemblies, meetings and contacts among the chiefs of state, prime ministers and chiefs of the of the diplomacies in the region. He describes the Turkish-Greek uneasiness, to which the Romanians joined soon,

when facing the perspective of a Bulgarian-Yugoslav alliance, a fact that explains the rush of Titulescu and Rustu-Aras in the negotiation and the signing of the Pact. The author considers that Titulescu achieved then “the most exhausting diplomatic action.”<sup>29</sup>

Bacon Jr. noted the assessment of Eliza Campus<sup>30</sup> who states that the Balkan Agreement was rather a regional understanding for securing and maintaining peace than a security system. He also presents the opposite interpretation supported by Stavrianos (in “Balkan Federation”, page 240) and Theodore I. Gashkoff (in “Balkan Union: A Road to Peace in South-Eastern Europe, New York, 1940, page 216”) according to which the Balkan Pact was undoubtedly aimed at Bulgaria and Albania<sup>31</sup>. He concludes, a bit risky, that if Titulescu had not seized the power, Carol would have followed the course of his own preference and, as a result, closer relations with Germany<sup>32</sup> could be produced.

Otherwise, in the entire work and mainly in the rich critical contents, the author gives an exaggerated importance to the matters of personal nature on the development of events. One has to accept that even if they did not really had the importance suggested by the author yet, they could not be completely ignored: “... the fact that Carol was fascinated by “what was German” did not pass unnoticed. He admired the uncomplicated order of fascism that was such in a sharp contrast with the disorder that reigned in Romania’s political life. He had a soft spot for the military insignia ... He admired the German discipline in the field of raising children and copied the Nazi organization “Hitler Jugend” with his “Homeland’s Watch”.”<sup>33</sup>

We retain also, the book of Jean Marie Le Breton, who is not a historian but a diplomat. The idea that an ambassador on mission in the region of “Middle Europe” develops an analysis of the history of a few communities and states is highly appealing (Jean Marie Le Breton was the ambassador of France in Bulgaria, Romania and Portugal). In his book *Central and Oriental Europe between 1917-1990* (Bucharest, 1996) he refers to Poland, Yugoslavia, Romania, Albania, Hungary and Cheko-Slovakia.

I do not insist on the importance of the information he offers to the reader in his attempt to develop a parallel history of the Eastern-European communities. Otherwise, the author advances some very original conclusions that reveal his training as a political analyst. The editor has proposed in the design of the book’s cover a design including the heraldic shields that the four Balkan states had between the World Wars and with the title “Entante Balkanique” written on the imprint of the design. Obviously, any researcher would have expected to find an analysis of the author on the Balkan Agreement. Regrettably, such expectations are not fulfilled at all. Nevertheless, the book is useful for my thesis because Jean Marie Le Breton proposes extremely stimulating interpretations. As an example, he proposes an interesting conclusion: “The destiny of Middle Europe is played not only in Paris, Bonn, Moscow, London or Washington. It is also played in Tirana, Bucharest, and Sofia, in Zagreb, in Belgrade, in Budapest and in Prague.”<sup>34</sup>

Referring to the topical interest of a regional cooperation formula (“We have in mind the Vishegrad Group ... the formulas innovated by the Italian

diplomacy during the mandate of Giovanni de Michelis, the efforts undertaken in 1986 for organizing an inter-Balkan cooperation”<sup>35</sup>), Jean Marie Le Breton concludes: “In short, the idea of regional organizations is coming back. *The period between the World Wars reminds us their limitations* (underlined by A.I.O)”. Eager for defending an existing order, they did not resist when the conditions of the global balance were changed.”<sup>36</sup> Excellent, there is now an opportunity to meditate for all those who have a very critical attitude regarding the anti-revisionist alliances between the World Wars. They consider them, unjustified, simple diplomatic exercises having no relevance for the Balkan crisis management model between the World Wars.

I was able to find very interesting information and interpretations in the works and studies dedicated to the bilateral relations, either between countries in the region or between the Great powers of the period and Romania. I mention as a special remark the contributions of Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu, together with Ion Patroiu, Gheorghe Nicolescu, Doru Tompea, Ion Constantin, Ionel Sârbu to the elaboration of very well documented synthesis on the Romanian-British, Romanian-Italian, Romanian-French relations. I remark also the recent work of Petre Otu, *The Anaconda's embrace* (Bucuresti, 2007)

Information and evaluations about the Balkan Agreement are present in all these works in special chapters and sub-chapters because, the authors have connected with professionalism the bilateral relations between the Great Western Powers and Romania to the inter-Balkan relations.

Interesting evaluations are also the valuable synthesis “Romania and Nazi Germany. Romanian-German Relations between the Political Commandments and Economic Interests (January 1933 - March 1938)”, of the historian Ioan Chiper. More realistic and objective in his assessments, regarding the action of Nicolae Titulescu which is considered by many authors as anti-German, Ioan Chiper states: “His attitude was designed to show, not only to Berlin that the security augmentation he sought was not anti-German a priori, but also to the domestic political groups that, in fact, Germany had no intention to engage into guaranteeing either Romania’s security or Europe’s peace.”<sup>37</sup> This assertion demonstrates once more how complicated the equation of peace in the Balkans really was.

The Balkan Pact - together with its implementation instruments, political and military - is the subject that I have been working on since 1992. Under the guidance of Professor Ioan Scurtu, I completed the my license paper on this subject which I published slightly reorganized together with Gheorghe Nicolescu with the title “*A Balkan Crisis? Treaties, Military Agreements and Secret Protocols (1934-1939)*”, in 1994.

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<sup>1</sup> Those from the list of references, with a special remark for Grigore Gafencu, Political Notes, Bucharest, 1991.

<sup>2</sup> A.J.P. Taylor, The Origins of WWII, page 39.

<sup>3</sup> Jean Marie le Breton, Central and South - Eastern Europe, 1996, page 24-27.

<sup>4</sup> Mihai Retegan, In the Power Balance, Bucharest, 1997, page 97-98.

<sup>5</sup> Ioan Talpes, Diplomacy and Defense, 1933-1939, Bucharest, 1988, page 201-202.

<sup>6</sup> Gheorghe Buzatu (coordinator), Titulescu and the Strategy of Peace, Iassy, 1982, passim.

<sup>7</sup> Mihai Retegan op.cit. p.16, Milan Vanku, The Little Entente and the Foreign Policy of Yugoslavia, 1920-1938, Bucharest, 1979.

<sup>8</sup> A.J.P. Taylor, *op.cit.*, p. 33-37; 39

<sup>9</sup> Ion Patroiu, Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu, *Romania and Britain in the thirties*, Craiova, 1997, page 79-84.

<sup>10</sup> A.J.P. Taylor, *op.cit.*, p. 58-74

<sup>11</sup> René Ristelhueber, *Histoire des peuples balkaniques*. Le Grandes Études Historiques, Librairie Arthème Fayard, Paris, 1950, p. 346-380

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 375

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 377

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p.378

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 379

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 392

<sup>18</sup> Pierre Renouvin, *Histoire des Relations Internationales. Les crises de XXIème siècle*, Tome huitième, II-Partie, Hachette, Paris, 1955

<sup>19</sup> René Massigli, *La Turquie devant la guerre. Mission à Ankara 1939-1940*, Paris, Plon, 1964

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 323

<sup>21</sup> The Nantes Diplomatic Archives Center (C.A.N.D.), The Bucharest Legation, file 66, page 1-34.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 10

<sup>23</sup> Milan Vanku, *op. cit.*, p. 21-23

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem* There is a sub-chapter in the paper dedicated to this project (p. 95-99)

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 97

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>28</sup> Walter M. Bacon Jr. Nicolae Titulescu, Iassy, 1999

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 111

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 120

<sup>31</sup> *ibidem*, p. 131

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 191

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 8

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 288

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>37</sup> Ioan Chiper, Romania and Nazi Germany. Romanian-German relations between Political Commandments and Economic Interests (January 1933-March 1938), Bucharest, 2000, page 121.

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\*Alexandru Oșca, Gheorghe Nicolescu, A Balkan Crisis? Treaties, Military Agreements and Secret Protocols (1934-1939), Pitesti, 1994.