

## THE GREAT WAR AND THE BIRTH OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN ROMANIA

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**Rezumat:** *Marele Război și nașterea mișcării comuniste în România.* Înființarea Partidului Comunist din România în anul 1921, ca de altfel întreaga mișcare comunistă din țara noastră, a fost puternic influențată de evenimentele de pe plan mondial de la sfârșitul Primului Război Mondial – ne referim aici cu precădere la revoluția bolșevică din Rusia și la răspândirea ei spre Europa. Studiul nostru își propune să analizeze maniera în care comunismul românesc a urmat modelul sovietic, mai ales că vorbim despre o țară care nu avea tradiție în această direcție, iar clasa muncitoare era mult inferioară din punct de vedere numeric față de țărănime.

**Résumé :** *La Grande Guerre et la naissance du mouvement communiste en Roumanie.* La création du Parti communiste en Roumanie en 1921, de même que l'ensemble du mouvement communiste de notre pays, a été fortement influencée par les événements du monde depuis la fin de la Première Guerre Mondiale. Nous nous référons ici particulièrement à la révolution bolchevique en Russie et à sa propagation en Europe. Notre étude vise à analyser la façon dont le communisme roumain a suivi le modèle soviétique, d'autant plus que nous parlons d'un pays qui n'a pas de tradition dans cette direction, et la classe ouvrière était beaucoup plus faible en termes de nombre vis-à-vis les paysans.

**Abstract.** *The communist movement in Romania and the birth of the Communist Party in 1921 was a phenomenon strongly influenced by events at the end of the Great War. We are talking here mainly about the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and his spread towards Europe. Our study aims to analyze the manner in which the communism in Romania followed the Soviet model, in a country which had no tradition in this direction, and the working class was numerically too weak in comparison with the peasantry.*

**Keywords:** *communism, socialism, Great War, Komintern, Greater Romania*

## Introduction

The World War I started in the summer of 1914 was the result of major conflict of interest between the Great Powers. Very fast, the clash has spread at global level, engaging countries on all continents. Moreover, the historiography<sup>1</sup> talks about a new type of confrontation about a total war.

The consequences of the World War I were multiple and complex, affecting the organization of the international relations on the basis of established system at Versailles, as well as economic life, social and political state of the world. Without no doubt, the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and, as a consequence, the birth of the communist movement is one of, if not the most important repercussion of the conflict.

Our study proposes that starting from the political realities of the end of World War I, to analyze the impact of Bolshevism on the communist movement in Romania. For this we appealed mainly to documents of the time, whether we are talking about those emanating from the Komintern, whether we consider internal documents concerning the activity of the Communist Party of Romania. We wanted to highlight the discrepancy between the needs of Romanian society after the Great Union and the communist offer - one divorced from the domestic realities.

Regarding the historiography of the problem we should started with some references about the totalitarian phenomena, the contributions signed by Eckhard Hesse<sup>2</sup>, Ernst Nolte<sup>3</sup> or Leon Poliakov<sup>4</sup> being already considered classical. Also, there is a huge bibliography about communism, with special emphasis on the Bolshevik period and his totalitarian aspects<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For only two examples from a very rich collection see John M. Roberts, *Twentieth century. The history of the world, 1901 – 2000*, New York, 1999, pp. 238-267, and John Milton Cooper, *Woodrow Wilson. A biography*, Vintage Books, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Eckard Hesse (editor), *Totalitarismus im 20.Jahrhundert: eine Bilanz des internationalen Forschung*, Bonn, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> *Les mouvements fascistes. L'Europe de 1919 á 1945*, Paris, 1999.

<sup>4</sup> *Les totalitarismes du XXe siècle*, Paris, 1997.

<sup>5</sup> For only few examples see Nikolai Berdiaev, *Originea și sensul comunismului rus* [The origin and the sense of Russian communism], Cluj Napoca, 1994; Alain Besançon, *Originile intelectuale ale leninismului* [Intellectual origins of communism], București, 2003; Idem, *Présent soviétique et passé russe*, Hachette, s.a.; Vladimir Brovkin (ed.), *Dear comrades. Mensheviks reports on bolshevik revolution and civil war*, Hoover

Considering our topic, we must point out that historians as Mihail Bruhis<sup>6</sup>, Francis Conte<sup>7</sup>, Lidia Pădureac<sup>8</sup>, Ludmila Rotari<sup>9</sup> or Marin C. Stănescu<sup>10</sup> have contributed to his enrichment. Also, is the case for some very recent books written by Romanian historians Mihai Burcea<sup>11</sup>, Adrian Cioroianu<sup>12</sup> and Cristina Diac<sup>13</sup>.

### Socialist heritage in Romania

For Greater Romania, which achieved at the end of war her national unity, the communist threat was double. On the one hand, we talk about ideological

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- Institution Press, 1991; Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The great failure. The birth and death of communism in the twentieth century*, Collier Books, 1990; Isaac Deutscher, *The unfinished revolution: Russia, 1917 – 1967*, New York, 1967; Milorad Drachkovitch, Branko Lazitch, *The Comintern: Historical highlights, essays, recollection, documents*, New York, 1966; Marc Ferro, *La révolution d'Octobre et la mouvement ouvrier européenne*, Paris, 1967; François Furet, *Trecutul unei iluzii. Eseu despre ideea comunistă în secolul XX* [The past of an illusion. Essay on the communist idea in the twentieth century], Humanitas, 1996; Helmut Gruber, *International communism in the era of Lenin, a documentary history*, New York, 1972; Michel Heller, Aleksandr Nekrich, *L'Utopie au pouvoir. Histoire de l'URSS de 1917 à nos jours*, Calman Levy, 1995; Boris Souvarine, *Staline. Aperçu historique du bolchévisme*, Paris, 1985; Adam Ulam, *The unfinished revolution. An essay on the sources of influence of marxism and communism*, New York, 1969; Michael Voslensky, *Nomenklatura. The ruling class*, New York, 1984.
- <sup>6</sup> *Rusia, România și Basarabia, 1812, 1918, 1924, 1940*, [Russia, Romania and Bessarabia, 1812, 1918, 1924, 1940], Chișinău, 1992.
- <sup>7</sup> *Un révolutionnaire diplomate: Christian Rakovsky. L'Union Soviétique et l'Europe (1911 – 1941)*, Paris, 1978.
- <sup>8</sup> *Relațiile româno-sovietice, 1917 – 1934* [Romanian-Soviet relations, 1917 – 1934], Chișinău, 2003.
- <sup>9</sup> *Mișcarea subversivă în Basarabia între 1918 și 1924* [Subversive movement in Bessarabia between 1918 and 1924], Bucharest, 2004.
- <sup>10</sup> *Moscova, Cominternul, filiera comunistă balcanică și România, 1919 – 1924* [Moscow, Komintern, Balkanic communist network and Romania, 1919 – 1924], București, 1994.
- <sup>11</sup> „Apărând ordinea de stat”. *Siguranța pe urmele lui Gheorghe Crosneff în România interbelică* [“Defending the order of state”. Secret police following Gheorghe Crosneff in the interwar Romania], București, 2016.
- <sup>12</sup> Adrian Cioroianu (ed.), *Comuniștii înainte de comunism. Procese și condamnări ale ilegalistilor în România* [The communists before communism. Processes and convictions of illegalists in Romania], București, 2014.
- <sup>13</sup> Cristina Diac, *Zorii comunismului în România. Ștefan Foriș, un destin neterminat* [Dawn of communism in Romania. Ștefan Foriș, an unfinished destiny], Cetatea de Scaun, 2014.

aspects, which the Communist International involvement has affected the evolution of an extreme left party in our country. On the other, is the territorial issue of Bessarabia.

In fact, this issue has contributed decisively to the worsening of relations with the Kremlin, Lenin acting to this not only diplomatically, but also blocking at the same time the Romanian treasure sent to Moscow. From now, Moscow emerged as the strongest threat to Romania's territorial security and for the safety of the political system in Bucharest.

It should be stressed from the outset that in the Old Kingdom was a Socialist movement before World War I, but it was quite weak. Moreover, the Workers Social Democratic Party of Romania, formed in 1893, failed in 1899 through what was called "generous's betrayal", when a group of leaders left the movement for the National Liberal Party. However, in 1910, a new Social Democratic Party was founded.

We could discuss also about the situation of socialist movement in Bessarabia, Bukovine and Transsylvania. In these regions, the Russian influence (for the first case) and the Austrian (in the other cases), and also the economic and social realities conducted to specific situation<sup>14</sup>. We don't intend to discuss now the roots of the socialist movement outside of the Old Kingdom, but we need to mention the tragic fate of some socialist leaders after 1947<sup>15</sup>.

### **The Third International Communist**

The attraction of this party in the internationalist structures prepared by the Bolsheviks was to understand if we consider Moscow's plans for the dissemination of world revolution. Thus, Lenin and his entourage have decided to found the Third International Communist. In this regard, the invitation to the founding Congress was released from 24 January 1919. The document in question<sup>16</sup> is one of particular importance since it defines clearly the context, political objectives, and purposes for which it was elaborated. In the preamble of the paper it is shown that:

<sup>14</sup> See for Transsylvania, Sorin Radu, *Ion Flueraș (1882 – 1953). Social-democrație și sindicalism* [Ion Flueraș (1882 – 1953). Social-democracy and sindacalism], București, 2007.

<sup>15</sup> See Constantin Buchet, *Social-democrația încarcerată. Evoluții politice interne și reacții internaționale, 1946 – 1969* [Social-democracy in prison. International reactions and internal political evolutions, 1946 – 1969], București, 2005.

<sup>16</sup> <http://marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1924/ffyci-1/app04.htm>. Accessed in 10.12.16

„He undersigned parties and organizations consider it urgently necessary to convene the first congress of a new revolutionary International. During the war and the revolution, it became conclusively clear not only that the old socialist and social-democratic parties and with them the Second International, had become completely bankrupt, not only that the half-way elements of the old social-democracy (the so-called “centre”) are incapable of positive revolutionary action, but that the outlines of a really revolutionary international are already clearly defined. The gigantic pace of the world revolution, constantly presenting new problems, the danger that this revolution may be throttled by the alliance of capitalist states, which are grouping together against the revolution under the hypocritical banner of the “League of Nations”, the attempts of the parties of the social-traitors to get together and, having “amnestied” each other, to assist their governments and their bourgeoisie to deceive the working class yet again; finally the extraordinarily rich revolutionary experience already gained and the internationalization of the entire revolutionary movement compel us to take the initiative in placing upon the order of the day the convening of an international congress of revolutionary proletarian parties.<sup>17</sup>

The International objectives and tactics he met, the letter clearly point out that the immediate task of the proletariat was taking over political power, by destroying the State apparatus of the bourgeoisie and replacing them with those of the working class. This was to be imposed on the “dictatorship of the proletariat”, through the efforts of workers internationally.

Sure, in the context of strong ideological conflict of the period, was not forgotten the address criticism of the old socialist parties considered treacherous to cause proletariat weak policy against the bourgeoisie. As a result, a number of parties, 39 organizations and groups were invited to establish the Communist International. The list was open to the most powerful forces of the far left of the moment, the victorious Bolsheviks already in Russia and the Spartacus League of Germany, and among the guests was the Social Democratic Party of Romania.

Thus, during the period from 2 to 6 March 1919, it took place in Moscow the first Congress of the Third International Communist. In the opening speech, Lenin has outlined the main task of the new International:

“People are aware of the importance and significance of the battle that you now lead. All we need is to find practical form to be able to install the

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

dictatorship of the proletariat. Such a shape is the dictatorship of the proletariat with the Soviet system. ...<sup>18</sup>

On the basis of those discussed in Moscow, the participants remained in action in their home states. In Romania, the main problem was the transformation of the Social Democratic Party in the Communist Party, or at least a significant fraction of this, to separate in order to join the Komintern. From this point of view things were far more advanced, and naturally otherwise in Bessarabia.

An interesting document of the General Direction of Secret Police about the Bolshevik movement in the territory between Prut and Nistru<sup>19</sup>, written in June 1920, provides us with extremely valuable information in this regard. Firstly, the report's author pointed out that the strength of the movement came from the fact that it was fed on the Russian vein, as both the roots and the Organization, fighting tactic and financing.

Another important element for the development of the movement was, in the opinion of the Romanian Secret Police:

"...the fact that the population of Bessarabia know Bolshevik ideas since the time when the province was not attached to Romania, when these ideas gave only general promises of happiness, by land sharing, equality, the rule of the workers and poor peasants, some of which have been performed and before entering the Romanian army was therefore free to sharing lands..."<sup>20</sup>.

The synthesis pointed out successes recorded in 1919, and the arrest of more than 200 prominent Communists, accused for Bolshevik propaganda and for stealing military intelligence informations. This was the reason that, for several months, the communist activity languished in Bessarabia. In addition, two Bolsheviks staff members coming from over the Dniester in July 1919, Ivan Alekseyevich Cercash and Samuel Bantke, on which they found 250,000 roubles and a mandate to reorganize the movement, were arrested by Romanian authorities.<sup>21</sup>

In these circumstances, the reorganization of the Bolshevik Committee resumed as late as February 1920, when the Red Army troops not incidentally were again on the left bank of the Dniester River. Therefore, gathering of military

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Central Historical National Archives Bucharest (CHNAB), the Royal House Fund, Miscellaneous, file 312, pp. 1-6.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

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secrets and building of a military intelligence service, among others, were ones of the tasks of Communists in Bessarabia, as underlined in a well-documented synthesis:

“At the end of February 1920 one of our informers, sent on the River, brought us the news that the Bolsheviks intending to send in Bessarabia for revolutionary propaganda and espionage a number of well-trained people to carry out the mission which they entrust.

This news was then later confirmed by another informer who showed us that people are prepared and that will come before a team that will lead the entire revolutionary organization, and espionage.

As a result of these informations, Secret Police have taken the necessary measures and failed to arrest the first team composed by E. Steinlein said baron von Schnee, head of the Central Organization, and Saber Sobelman said Kasbec, Tighina region delegate David Ricsainic, said Arnab, on a courier of the organisation, namely Drofiscaia, Dumitru Crijanovski, Vladimir Timbalov, Denise Raicicova and Efim Zucan....”<sup>22</sup>

The safety capture of Eduard von Schnee has an excellent opportunity to learn that, in addition to political tasks (links with the Socialist leaders and other decision makers from Bucharest), he had the task to build a military intelligence service. In addition, von Schnee - using significant amounts of money considered available - had to procure arms and munition for the residents who had to be involved in acts of diversion in the event of an attack of Bolshevik troops over the Dniester River<sup>23</sup>.

From von Schnee has also known the existence of a Soviet plane in respect of Romania and Poland<sup>24</sup>. The Secret Police was also in possession of the names

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> „The arrested persons E Steinlein said baron von Schnee and Saber Sobelman, give us the two Governments plans of Soviets from Moscow and Kharkiv with regard to Romania and Poland, following informations collected from the army of the ruling circles of Odessa, from the boroughs of Odessa and 45 and 41 divisions of Smerinca, and sent to a military Commissioner of the South front and Rakovski.

Bolsheviks convinced themselves that Romanian army is the only army remaining disciplined in Europe and untouched by the Jewish Bolshevism and that military action against Romania in such conditions would be disastrous for the Jewish Bolshevism. They are determined to conclude peace with Romania as soon as possible ...”, *Ibid.*

of the leaders of the Bolshevik movement in Bessarabia, namely those of the Provisional Committee elected in September 1919<sup>25</sup>.

### **Birth of the Romanian Communist Party**

Finally, after many hesitations, but especially after Moscow gave its approval on March 17, 1921, it was decided to convene the Congress of the Communist Party of Romania in the period 8 - 11 May 1921. On this occasion was fixed the agenda of the scheduled Forum:

1. Moral and material report
2. The report of the delegation which was in Russia
3. Membership and program
4. The Agrarian Problem
5. Cooperatives
6. Press and propaganda
7. Amendments to the Statute
8. The question of nationalities
- 9.a. The Youth Movement.
- 9.b. Women's movement
10. Election of the Committee
11. Miscellaneous<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> "The first provisional Central Committee, after the arrests of the Bessarabians on May 1919, was established in early September 1919, and was composed of: Sasha Suslic, conspiratorial name Cristor, President; Calb, conspiratorial name Sustlov Saber, Treasurer; Iosif Roitman, Leib said Naum and Feodosia Cacianovschi Sandy, Augustine, members.

This Committee – follows the document of the Police and General Security Directorate has operated only one month, having a very low activity, dealing more with raising money for the Bolsheviks arrested and their families...", *Ibid*.

<sup>26</sup> Also now has been fixed and the system of representation for the Congress:

- a. a delegate for 25 members
- b. two delegates for 100 members; and for more than 100 members one delegate
- c. the Executive Committee
- d. a delegate of the Socialist Federation of the Prahova
- e. Two officials of the Youth
- f. one delegate of the parliamentary group
- g. a delegate of CC in women
- h. a delegate of the people's House



The works of the Congress of the Socialist Party of Romania were opened as planned on Sunday, May 8, 1921, at the office of the newspaper's editorial "The Socialism", whereas after the general strike of October 1920 party's central Club was closed. Without going into the details of execution of works<sup>27</sup>, we recall here that according to the report, submitted to the Commission for validation of more than 300 delegates, representing 45,000 members of the party, and most of them had a mandate to vote on membership of the Romanian Communist Party in the Communist International.

After reading several motions, Theodor Iordăchescu, on behalf of the unit fraction, made attention that they are not fulfilled conditions necessary for carrying out the work of the Congress. Immediately stormy discussions were started, Sandu Rozvany and Gheorghe Cristescu disputing his intervention on this idea.

Until the interruption of the work of the Congress, a number of issues of strategy were discussed. Very interesting from this point of view is the agrarian Program of the Socialist Communist Party of Romania, foreworded by a statement in which he claimed that the main purpose of its is taking power by the revolutionary proletariat's path<sup>28</sup>.

Here are the main ideas of the agrarian program of the Communists:

"The Earth was of those who work for it for centuries by the sweat of those who face them have created the wild forests productive Earth ...

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i. a delegate of Socialists

j. a delegate of the circle publishing

k. Central Commission of control complete

l. The full General Commission.

(Iași County Department of National Archives, Party Archive, fund A/2, file 69, p. 8.)

<sup>27</sup> CHNAB, Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party Fund, Chancellery, vol. III, file 8/1921, pp.1-57.

<sup>28</sup> "The first condition of the struggle for power in the outbreak - the motivation - but it's not increasing quickly piled white strakes in layer number to be entered with the ultimate goal of perfection of the struggle, because the capitalist system has monopolized for itself all the means of propaganda as they did illusions and a possible awakening of the masses.

The struggle for power can successfully lead and so, if only a part of the proletariat is infused with the ultimate goal of complete proletarian struggle until other layers' dissatisfaction towards the situation of capitalism which is currently character or prove a neutrality toward the struggle between capital and labour.", Idem, Agrarian Section, file 1/1921, pp.1-10.

The Earth was of peasants' farmers [...]

The Socialist-Communist Party recognizes that its debt and its main mission as abolishing such wrongs.

Agrarian reform

On the basis of the above, by virtue of the Socialist-Communist Party claimed carrying out agrarian reform, much promised, but so far not fulfilled, based on the following principles:

To expropriate all properties (estates) greater than 50 grounds, 3 (30 hectares) of land, expropriable entirely are church estates and those of the State, in all their extent, together with the buildings, cattle, agricultural tools that belong to them. <sup>29</sup>

The intervention of the Romanian authorities at the time that it was voted the membership without conditions of the new created party as a Department of the Communist Third International in Moscow ended the congress before all points of the agenda to be exhausted (including the election of the new Central Committee). In addition, those who expressed unconditional adhesion to the Komintern were arrested and implicated in the Spirii Hill (Rom. Dealul Spirii) trial.

However, Gheorghe Cristescu had time to inform, on May 12, 1921, the Executive Committee of the Third International about the fact that the Socialist Party of Romania decided on the occasion of the Congress held in Bucharest to join the Komintern with a smashing of 428 votes compared to only 111 centrists<sup>30</sup>. In the informing note of Cristescu, who signed in as Secretary of the Communist Party of Romania, it showed that the participants in the Conference have come to the conclusion that:

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* These doctrinal bases was adopted in the following motion in the agrarian question:

- "1. The Earth as the absolute property of the whole people, the country's worker, being expropriated without any compensation.
2. Allow and give everyone more so how can he and his family to work, without having to employ salaried workers.
3. Large agricultural tools: machine plowing, threshing, mills and what variety, will be confiscated and passed to the comrades to made on grounds of Communist agricultural.
4. You will keep all the farms and buildings with about 50 acres around... ", *Ibidem*, file 3/1921, pp.1-5.

<sup>30</sup> *Idem*, Foreign Relations Section, file 2/1921, pp. 1-2

*"tactical principles of the Communists are the only revolutionary principles; the tactics of The Communist Party stands against all forms of social existence in all their complexity, given to us through the prism of Marxism scientifically true and translating them into life will lead the proletariat to win the fight with the bourgeoisie."*<sup>31</sup>

These are the auspices under which the Communist Party of Romania was born, as Department of the Communist International from Moscow. Unconditional acceptance of Komintern directives, in particular in relation to national problem, constituted a real problem for the party in the difficult battle to win adherents.

Although after August 23, 1944, the communist propaganda has overestimated the interwar struggle of the Romanian Communist Party, the truth is another and he is even contained in the documents emanating from the leaders of the movement. Thus, on October 15, 1921, Alexandru Badulescu report entitled *Situation of the workers' Party of Romania*, in which emphasize that after the arrest of participants in the Congress "there is no communist movement"<sup>32</sup> in Romania.

Another document, from January 1922, entitled *Report on the Romanian Communist movement* show that following the arrests at the Communist Congress, however, rised a hope:

"After the Government of General Alexandru Averescu arrested the Communists from Congress, it seemed like a long time could no longer be any communist movement and even professional-class associations. However, very soon appeared the illegally Socialist Newspaper, and the Communist youth who continue to support the movement"<sup>33</sup>

On the same subject, on February 10, 1922, it was drafted at the Kharkiv an "external evaluation" entitled *Report on the direct action and the labour movement in Romania (1918-February 10, 1922)*<sup>34</sup>. In fact, we are talking about a fairly realistic picture of the situation in Bucharest with regard to extreme left:

"The labour movement in Romania is weak both quantitatively and qualitatively. Even in times when its degree of development was higher, it cannot be said to have had any serious influence on the bourgeois policy...

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Idem, Organizatorial Section, file 6/1921, pp. 2-8.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, file 1/1922, pp. 2-5.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, file 2/1922, pp. 2-10.

Until the end of his Government, led General Averescu never met in his way of labour organized opposition. The coup was one of the hardest in the history of the workers' movement, known in Romania, maybe the hardest.

Under the impression of unfettered terror following the general strike in May 1921, took place the Congress of Socialist parties in all of Romania after World War. It is understood that the Government could not Crown the work started: delegates who voted for membership of the Communist International were arrested. ...<sup>35</sup>

However, whereas in December 1921 most Communist leaders arrested in May that year were liberated, at the end of 1922, it was possible to hold a General Conference in Ploiești, who had to enter into history as the Second Congress of the Communist Party of Romania. Thus, on October 3, 1922 was presented the report of the Executive Committee of the Socialist Party of Communist Romania in front of the General Conference<sup>36</sup>. Here, however, the emphasis fell more on disputes and personal egos, set against a confrontation between the Secretary Gheorghe Cristescu and Marcel Pauker.

The confirmation comes from a report signed Marian, as Secretary of the Executive Committee, sent to Komintern on June 7, 1923. In this paper it is shown that:

"The Conference that took place in October 1922 at Ploiești aimed to settle personal disputes cropped up in the bosom of the party within the Provisional Committee and to give the party a solid, uniform Committee, with full authority to all members ... If a Committee has a result more appropriately, the causes are as follows:

The party does not have a high-value, related to the number and quality of participants.

Some of the present members refused to accept executive positions. In the new Central Committee comrade Gheorghe Cristescu was elected titular secretary and comrade Boris Ștefanov head of the Secretariat of the Party [...]

Despite this situation, for personal reasons, Comrade Boris Ștefanov has not assumed his post..."<sup>37</sup>.

The document signed by Marian evoked the conditions under which, in April 1923, as a result of the fact that Gheorghe Cristescu pointed out that he cannot work with Marcel Pauker, led to the replacement of Gheorghe Cristescu

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, file 17/1922, pp. 2-34.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, file 17/1923, p.2-6.

and Boris Ștefanov with Marian, seconded by Alexander Dobrogeanu-Gherea, as political Secretary, collaborator and Cruceanu as General Treasurer.

### Romanian Communist Party outlaw

An equally turbulent history has the Third Congress of the party. Initially it had been convened for 23 - 25 February 1924, after the informing document sent to Komintern by Gheorghe Cristescu (returned at the head of the party, as was written in a report of January 13, 1924)<sup>38</sup>. In this document is inserted the expected agenda too:

1. Moral and material Report of the Central Committee
2. The report on the international situation.
3. Project of the program of the party.
4. Agrarian problem.
5. The position on nationalities.
6. The organizational Staff of the Trade-Union and the interventionist.
7. Elections of the CC and the Control Commission.

The Third Congress was to take place in Bucharest, but developments in domestic and international events has led to its postponement for august, changed including the venue. This is the first forum of the Communists deployed outside the country, in Vienna<sup>39</sup>. It was basically an opening for two decades of illegal activity to the Communists in Romania.

The events in the autumn of 1924 in Bessarabia, namely the mutiny at Tatarbuniar in the period 16 - 18 September 1924, will contribute decisively to the isolation of the Communist Party and his passing into illegality.<sup>40</sup> The liberal government's gesture of removing the Communists outlawed is one fully justified.

On May 21, 1924, U.S. Ambassador to Riga, FWB Coleman, sent to State Department information about the provisions of the Romanian section of Komintern, which was designed to meet three main objectives:

- Secret Propaganda in the army
- Organisation of Cells for supporters

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<sup>38</sup> Idem, Chancellery, vol.III, file 1/1924, p.1.

<sup>39</sup> Erroneously, the late Victor Frunză, *Istoria comunismului în România* [History of communism in Romania], Bucharest, 1999, p. 41, places the work of the Congress from September in august 1924.

<sup>40</sup> Ludmila Rotari, *op.cit.*, p.242-244.

- Activity among minorities<sup>41</sup>.

In order to achieve those goals was made available a sum of 100,000 French francs.

The Third Congress of the Communist Party of Romania took place in august 1924, and opens a new stage in the history of the party. After that year, the native element appears marginal. Incidentally, replacement of Gheorghe Cristescu with Elek Kőblős was a strong signal in this direction.

How did it come to the Congress and to the postponement of his conduct in Vienna we learn from the informative report No. 161 of the Communist International in October 8, 1924<sup>42</sup>. According to the epoch sources, there were few participants: "11 the delegates from Romania, 4 guests, 5 members of the Central Committee, a member of the Board of Control, and four companions representatives of Balkan Communist Federation."

The agenda included nine points:

1. The report of the delegation to the Fifth Congress of the Communist International and the 7<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Balkan Communist Federation;
2. The economic and political Situation in Romania;
3. Activity report of the Central Committee;
4. The report of the audit;
5. The peasants' problem;
6. National Problem;
7. Trade-Union Issue;
8. The organizational Problem;
9. Miscellaneous.

Discussed in plenary were only reports about the economic and political situation, as well as the work of the Committee.

In the resolution adopted by Congress in the Affairs of the Central Committee a full suite of complaints for the period 1922 - 1924 was included. Thus, the document shows that:

"The Central Committee has been lacking throughout the period of the Congress in Ploiești a well-defined policy line and of a systematic programme of work. In the realm of the Central Committee did not do almost anything. The Central Committee had almost no connection with the mass party, did not give the organization any instructions or could not control their work. The upshot of

<sup>41</sup> National Archives of the United States of America, Washington DC, Record Group Number 59, Decimal File 1910-1929, doc.871.008/A.

<sup>42</sup> CHNAB, Fund CC of the RCP, Organizatorical Section, file 40/1924, p.2-6.

these shortcomings has been a complete misdirection of sections and party members in the face of events and especially to all the issues on the agenda. Central Conduct pasting permanently, local and regional organizations were compelled to work as were skilful sole, which of course led to mistakes such as: the neglect of work organization in the Old Kingdom (i.e. the so-called Little Romania, until 1918, our note), the neglect of political work in organisations in Transylvania and so forth. ...<sup>43</sup>

It should also be noted that concerning the national question, the Party resolution take over entirely Komintern point of view on the multinational character of Romania<sup>44</sup>. Not incidentally, on October 12, 1924 Soviet authorities took the decision to set up the left bank of Nistru River, with its capital at the pond, an autonomous Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic<sup>45</sup>.

### Conclusions

In conclusion, the communism has proved from the early years of its existence that cannot take roots in Romania. Economic realities (primarily the lack of a powerful industry) and the social one (predominance of the peasantry which accounted for over 80% of the population) was too obvious. Additionally, the fear of the Romanians to the Soviet Union played an important place in Romanians distrust in communism.

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, file 37/1924, p.2-7.

<sup>44</sup> „Bloody economic and political Oppression of Romanian nationalists explains why broad masses enough of it so fiercely fighting against imperialism and for their release under its yoke. Rental barracks owned and peasantry of Bessarabia, who lived the first period of the Russian Revolution and now they are under Romanian military dictatorship, manifests each day National Revolutionary endeavour to unite with the USSR, and thus further development and protect the interests of its life. As they suffer the labours and peasants' masses of Hungarian, Swabian and Saxon in Transylvania and Banat, working German and Ukrainian population in Bukovina and Bulgarian masses from Dobrudja. The policy of the Romanian bourgeoisie bottlenecks it and kidnaps the livelihood, push them to emigrate, they throw in a mess folded and gives them backwards on the economic and cultural viewpoint... ", *Documente din istoria Partidului Comunist din România*, vol. II, 1922 - 1928 [Documents from the history of the Communist Party of Romania], vol II, 1923-1928, Bucharest, 1953, doc. 71.

<sup>45</sup> Ludmila Rotari, *op.cit*, p.263.

Therefore, only six years after the end of World War I, the Communist Movement in Romania, fruit of the Great War and of the so-called Socialist Revolution in Russia, was far from being important in the domestic political game, Romanians basically preferring the democratic parties.