

# THE PEACE MISSION FULFILLED BY THE ROMANIAN ARMY IN GALICIA IN 1919

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## Abstract

The union between Bukovina and Romania belongs to some unitary mass movements with consonant ideals. The gatherings organized by Romanian leaders in Chisinau, Chernivtsi and Alba Iulia took place in difficult conditions, while the Bolshevik gangs, the Ukrainian nationalists and the Austro-Hungarian authorities exerted a systematic harassment, intimidation and domination campaign in order to destabilize and to trigger a red revolution associated with the one from Russia.

In these difficult conditions, one can say that The Great Union took place due to the imperative desire of the Romanian people, but this wouldn't have been possible without the presence, protection and intervention of the Romanian Army.

The political decisions of the government in Iasi were prompt and enjoyed a real success. The May 1918 Bucharest peace with the Central Powers obliged Romania to substantially reduce its military power. Although only four contingents were kept under arms, the Infantry Divisions 6 and 7, respectively Hunters Divisions 1 and 2, they got into Transylvania and strengthened the Mures lines, a division originally agreed with the Entente Powers and Infantry Division 8 got into Bukovina and it protected it until the clashes with Galicia and Pocutia.

We possessed ideals and objectives of ethnic unity which this nation fulfilled under extremely unfavourable conditions. This is exactly why the Romanians' state existence throughout the millenniums has not been interrupted, as history records in the case of some neighbouring countries, Hungary (1526) and, some years later, Poland (1772).

**Keywords:** *ethnic unity, red revolution, military power, Romanian army, state existence.*

## 1. THE NORTHERN AREA OF BUKOVINA - SHORT HISTORY

Pocutia was a territory that belonged to Galicia from ancient times. This region, which spread up to the country of Sipontin, was attached to Moldova because of the debt contracted by Poland under Latcu's reign (1365-1375), the son of Bogdan I, later on taken over by Petru Mușat (1375-1391).

This substantial loan granted to the ruler of Moldova could not be recovered and as a consequence "the pledge" represented the entire territory of Pocutia, including the cities Sniatyn and Colomea up to Halici, who were joined to Moldova (UNGUREANU, 2003).

The dispute has not even later been resolved during the reign of Alexandru cel Bun, because of his death, and not even by the great voivode Stephen the Great who decided to rob Pocutia and with this money to pay his debt to the Ottoman Empire.

In reply, the Polish king John Albert unsuccessfully besieged Suceava fortress in 1497, but during his retreat, somewhere close to Codrii Cosminului, he suffered a clear defeat. From that moment on, Pocutia, a less populated territory, became Moldavian.

Not even Stephen the Great's successor, Bogdan the third, managed to normalize the relationships with Poland on the rights of domination and therefore he undertook a series of actions in order to rob Pocutia.

Later on, the last attempts to preserve control over this territory are made by Petru Rareș, who is defeated in the battle of Obertyn, in 1531 (SCURTU et al., 2001).

The last action in force belongs to Lord John the Terrible (1572-1574) who, during his short reign, initiates the anti-Ottoman struggle, which ends with his dramatic end.

For over two centuries, Pocutia, comes out of the Moldo-Polish interest space, due to the change and increase in the geostrategic interests, of the increase in the Ottoman influence, of Russia's expansion towards the West and of the Habsburg's Empire towards the East. Starting from 1772, the kingdom of Poland disappears

from the map of Europe, being divided into the three major empires at that time, respectively Russia, Prussia and Austria.

Managing to take over Galicia and Lodomeria, Austria possessed economic and political-military interests in preserving a direct connection with Pcutia, aspect accomplished in 1775 by taking hold of the northern part of Moldova, a territory later known as Bukovina (HITCHINS, 2013).

## 2. THE NEED AND THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A MILITARY INTERVENTION IN GALICIA

Immediately after the end of World War I, and especially in the first part of 1919, significant military clashes between Poland and the recently

established Republic of Ukraine, concerning the territory of Galicia and Pcutia. With the substantial support of England and France, Poland sets up a well-organized and endowed army with which it intends to rebuild its territory with the borders from 1772 (KIRIŢESCU,1989).

The clashes with the Ukrainian army started on May 13, 1919, with offensive actions which led to few limited results and this determined the Polish government to ask Romania for armed support in order to fully control the situation in Pcutia. The acceptance and the intervention of the Romanian army in this geographical space, in the context of the end of the war, belongs more to some historical logic, emphasized by the long failure of solving this territorial dispute for more than half of millennium.

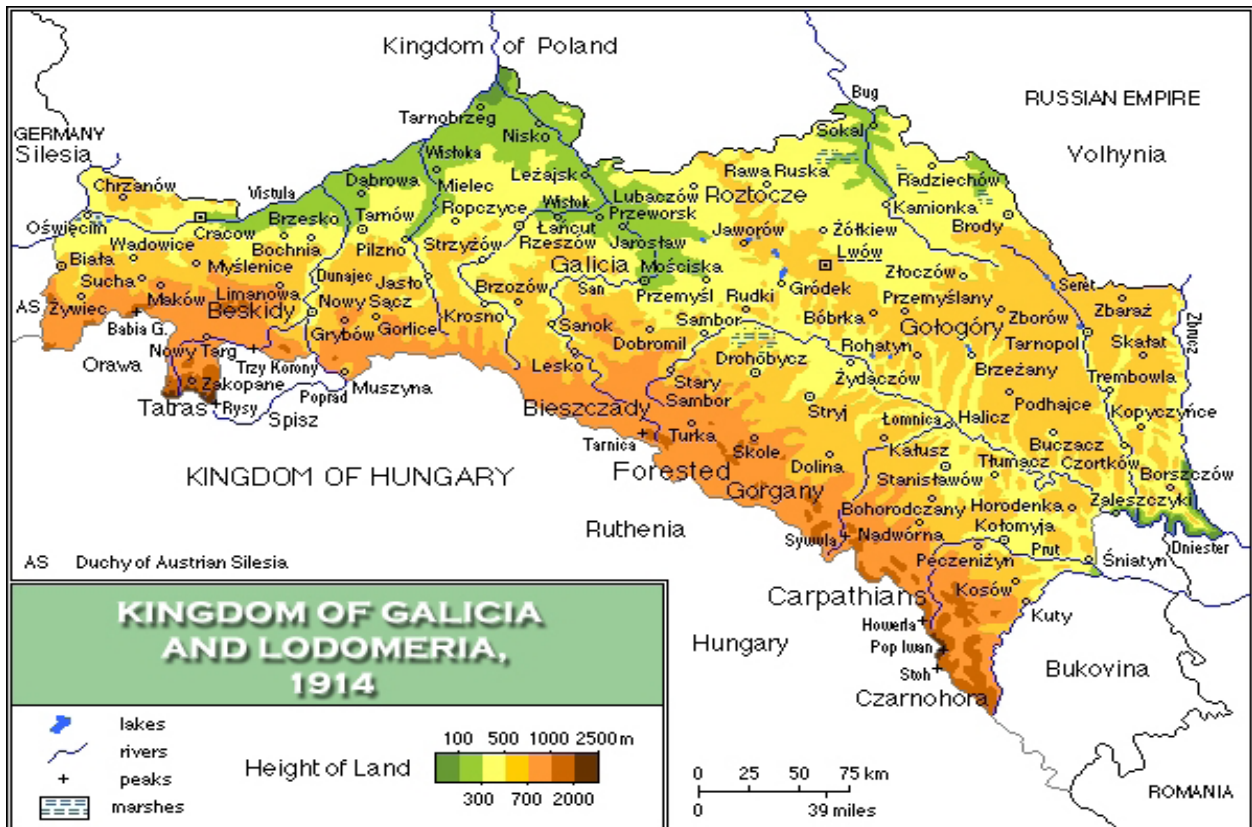


Fig. 1. Galicia and Lodomeria in the composition of Austria-Hungary, year 1914 (WIKI, n.d.)

The Polish request was accepted. On May 22, 1919, Infantry Division 8, led by the General

Iancu Zadik entered into Galicia in order to establish an operative connection between the Romanian troops operating in Transylvania and Maramures with those that ensured stability in

Bukovina and to maintain an operative connection with the right wing of the Polish army (PREDA et al., 1994).

The main actions continued up to May 26, when all detachments occupied the sectors of responsibility. The control of the socio-economic

stability and of people's security in Pocutia achieved its goals, reaching the alignment set on the Tumacz line, Oltynia, Sodzawisk. The whole territory was organized and consolidated as an operation area with strict rules and military attributes, according to the provisions of the Romanian Campaign Regulation "On the Laws and Uses of the Offshore War".

### **3. PEACE - CERTAINTY MESSAGE AND ARGUMENT FOR SOCIAL STABILITY**

With the purpose of avoiding unwanted conflicts, normal relationships were preserved with the Ukrainian army, which was frequently informed of the operative and cooperation opportunities with the Romanian troops placed in the Maramures machine, including the forces engaged in the actions in Hungary (NISTOR et al., 1997).

Maintaining control over the railway which linked Cernivts to Kolomeea at Sighetul Marmtiei had a major significance. At the same time with informing the Ukrainian command on the necessity of the military actions, a "Proclamation" was issued on May 23, 1919, in Russian, Polish and Romanian, in order to inform and calm the population of the area, with the following content:

*"The Romanian royal troops felt the need to establish a connection between the Romanian troops from Maramures and those from Bukovina and this connection can only be established on the Sniatyn - Kolomea - Delatyn- Korosmezo railway.*

*The troops' supreme command took the decision to occupy the particular territory of Galicia in order to ensure the safety of the connection on this line.*

*Therefore, the Romanian army does not enter Galicia in order to fight against the Ukrainian army or with the population of Galicia and we ask all the militaries and civilians in the region that we are going to occupy to willingly hand over all weapons, munitions and war material and to take care of their daily chores.*

*We, in turn, assure all citizens, regardless of their nationality and religion, that the Romanian troops will respect the life and fortune of all the inhabitants who will not commit any act of hostility.*

*The administration will continue to function according to the old laws, executed by your clerks under the surveillance of the Romanian army.*

*All clerks as well as leaders of the localities who will commit or will not prevent any sort of attempts against our troops, warehouses, works of art or telegraph or telephone lines, will be subjected to the Romanian war laws." (signs the Romanian troop commander in Bukovina, General I. Zadik and the Chief of staff, Lieutenant Colonel Rovinaru).*

The full compliance with the rules imposed by the Romanian presence in the region facilitated the gradual development of a state of normality, especially among the civilian population seriously affected during the five years of war.

At the same time, on the military line exigent measures were imposed in order to ensure efficient control over the territory of Pocutia. Division detachments undertook dynamic actions and occupied an extended machine, with the following succession:

- The North detachment moved in the direction Kiselev, Horodenka, Niezwiska, Czerniatijn, Iesianov, Polny, stopping east from this locality;
- The Central detachment went ahead in the direction Snyatin, Colomea, occupying the left bank of the Belelnaia river and the Kartow village;
- The South detachment went ahead through Văscăuți over the Ceremuș river, up to the Zalaucze locality;
- The division substitute continued to stay in a central place, in Luzon.

After taking control of Pocutia, defence organization measures and of the occupied alignment were ordered and put into practice. The division's responsibility strip was divided into two central main sectors, in the Horodenka și Oltynia localities. The new fighting machine was achieved by dissolving the three detachments and entrenchment the new group of powers. After the establishment of this defensive machine, basically all communications with the enemy were banned and the purpose was not to allow Ukrainian troops to enter Pocutia. The defence machine was structured on successive alignments clearly configured in the main areas and in the points of resistance.

The proximity of the Polish troops generated a series of potential risks and this imposed the permanent contact between General Iacob Zadik



and the commander of the Polish troops in Galicia and Pocutia.

At the same time, the Romanian commandment undertook the necessary measures to ensure genuine control in the occupied territory, by *proclaiming a state of siege* and by gradually developing the army's safety measures, guaranteeing the territory and public order, in order to eliminate the loss of human lives and material damages.

Therefore, Ordinance 1 from May 28, 1919 (extras) is eloquent:

*"We, General I. Zadik, the commander of the Romanian occupation Army in Galicia,*

*Following the May 23, 1919 proclamation and in the interest of maintaining public order and general safety, threatened by anarchic current from the occupied territory, we proclaim:"*

Curfew

on the territory of Galicia, which will deal with the Romanian Army.

By applying the curfew, suspending some constitutional guarantees, we bring to the public knowledge, in the following, the modifications brought to the regime of freedoms.

Consequently, we order:

Art. 1. Nobody, except for the Romanian militaries, has the right to wear or to keep, in any place, any kind of weapon...

Art. 2. Nobody has the right to possess any type of ammunition,

They have to be deposited, as well as the weapons, at the same authorities which have the same obligations as when weapons are concerned...

.....  
Art. 8. Gatherings, celebrations of any kind, either in pubs or at home and any manifestation in the streets or public markets are forbidden.

For legitimate reasons they can be handed in to the authorities by the military Commander of that particular county

.....  
*Given to our commander from Kolomea, today, May 28, 1919.*

*(signed by the Romanian Royal troop Commander in Bukovina, General I. Zadik).*

The Romanian-Polish meeting, at the level of the military commanders in the area, took place between 29 and 30 May, 1919, recording significant

communication deficiencies, both on the political and the military field because both parties did not know exactly the demarcation lines established by the state authorities, sometimes leading to conflictual situations. Territorial claims of the Polish military leaders were in the ascendant of the convention established by the governments of the two countries. Therefore, a short-term agreement was necessary on behalf of both parties, especially of the Polish one which requested the intervention of the Romanian army.

Both Romanian and Polish commanders proved, in that difficult context, some diplomatic qualities in the art of communication and compromise. After taking effective control on the territory of Pocutia, general Iosif Zadik presented the final mission of the troops, that of not allowing hostile forces, regardless of their ethnicity, to enter Pocutia and Bukovina, to oversee the border with the forces at this disposal, to maintain order on the front and to administrate the territory according to some specific rules, which was to be administrated and led by a military commandment (PREDA et al., 1994).

The action plan for the simultaneous defence of the territories of Pocutia and Bukowina provided:

- an initial line of surveillance with support points organized on the main directions of interest with human forces, weapons and technical equipment available for the sectors;
- a main defence alignment which included the localities of Peczenizyn, Slobovska, Lesna, Korszow, Obertyn, Okna, Cternyatin, Iasienov Polny, Verenceanca, Iurcăuți, Balamutovca, organized on support points with the main forces;
- the reserve of the division, rather small located in a central district (PREDA et al., 1994).

In the event of some offensive actions, the enemy who would have passed the Nistru river, had to be successively harassed, up to the resistance position, an alignment where the main forces, and if needed, the reserve of the division, had to intervene on any direction through fixation, defence or counterattack actions.

In order to develop the new machine, troop movements, regroupings and replacements took place, which ended on June 8, 1919.

In the area where the forces of the Infantry Division 8 were placed, there was also the Polish Hunters Division 4, moved from the south of Bessarabia, where it concentrated after it was rejected by Ukrainian forces. General Iacob Zadik requested immediate evacuation because in Chernivtsi and the dislocation localities it produced disorders, robberies and it endangered the fulfilment of the proper missions in the whole reference space. Under these circumstances, the Romanian forces took over in order to defend and to administrate including the north of Bessarabia, the responsibility being disproportionately big in report to the existing forces and to the possibilities of achieving an adequate leadership, to the oversize space and especially to the specificity of the composite communities formed from Romanians, Ruthenians and Pols.

The gradual continuation of security, safety and control measures simultaneously presented in all interest localities represented a major benefit for the reference districts. The results were mostly above expectations.

The promotion of synthetic posters in the crowded regions, on the local and regional buildings and administrative spaces facilitated the correct information of the citizens of all ethnicities, the calming of the spirits or the annihilation of the dangerous elements/groups.

All these synthetically presented aspects were controlled by the Romanian commands, mainly appealing to the understanding of the civilian and military population, potentially opposed, the acceptance of the situation for a determined period of time, and later on to the techniques and processes of intimidation or discouragement, according to the situation, without excluding them.

We can remember the optimum combination of military-force arguments and those of a human-persuasive nature, which immediately and completely achieved their goals, that of maintaining full control and of fulfilling the mission.

Therefore, Ordinance no. 2 from May 29, 1919 (extract) was issued, and it included:

*"We, general I. Zadik, Commander of the Romanian occupation Army in Galicia,*

*On the basis of the dispositions from art. 32, paragraph 1 and art. 57 from title II, additional from the Code of military justice, in the interest of the safety of the army, of guaranteeing the territory and public order,*

*Order the following*

*for the territory of Galicia, occupied by the Romanian Army:*

*In addition to the offenses provided for by common law, the following actions are also considered offenses, which are punished as following:*

*Art. 1. Anything that will be offered or received to serve as guide to the Romanian troops, and which will lead them on wrong path, shall be punished...*

*Art. 2. Anyone who poisons or infects wells, springs, flowing waters or food of any sort, shall be sent to prison...*

*Art. 5. Anyone who, in good faith, takes photos, takes over any kind of plan, sketch or takes measurements and drawings without the written consent of the military authorities, shall be punished with...*

*Anyone who transports or spreads, without any bad faith, newspapers or manifests, without the approval of the Commander, until the establishment of the censorship bureau, shall be punished with...*

*Art. 23. Posting will be observed by drafting a protocol and under the control of the county's military commandments, by the mayors, by the police in rural and urban areas or by any judicial military police officers who will be especially requested to carry out this task.*

*Dated at our commandment in Kolomea, today, May 28, 1919.*

*Commander of the Romanian Army in Galicia, General I. Zadik.*

The sporadic contact between the Polish and Ukrainian troops imposed a new cooperation activity in order to avoid any incidents.

In a new organization of machines and with an extended area of responsibility, starting from June 20, 1919, the regrouping of the forces on other sectors took place according to the change of the machines of the Ukrainian forces engaged in often changing clashes with the Polish troops with the purpose of avoiding major conflicts.

Starting from July 3, 1919 a defence plan was developed and put into action according to the Romanian political and military requirements of that time in order to protect the country's northern and eastern border and to oversee and defend the northern border of Bessarabia, Bukovina and the demarcation line between the Romanian and Polish troops on the west side of Pcutia (PREDA et al., 1994).

#### **4. THE FULFILMENT OF THE MISSION AND THE EVACUATION OF GALICIA BY THE ROMANIAN ARMY**

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The military actions from central Europe were favourable, a context in which the Great Romanian Headquarters considered that "... Polish and Czechoslovakian troops being able to occupy the above-mentioned regions, Pcutia and Cszan-Muncaci it was agreed upon with those respective commandments the Romanian troops to evacuate..." (PREDA et al., 1994). Since the mission ended, "... the evacuation of Pcutia by the troops of 8<sup>th</sup> Division will start as soon as the commander of that division establishes the executory details with the Polish commander who he is in touch with...(PREDA et al., 1994)".

The commanders of the Romanian and Polish troops decided that the delegations should go to Sanislav in order to decide on the schedule of withdrawal and the details of that particular operation.

The staff was warned through a series of posters regarding the activities that were about to take place, by applying prudent measures by the Romanian side which did not neglect the problem of maintaining the operativity state of the troops since in that period the fights between the Romanian and Hungarian army started once more.

It is to be noticed that the military vectors took place at the same time with the political decisions, in full consonance. The discussions between the two delegations regarding the signing of the Romanian-Polish convention on the evacuation of Pcutia took place in Lemberg at the request of the Polish side between July 30 and August 2, 1919 and negotiations ended with the signing of a convention and of a protocol by general Iacob

Zadik for the Romanian side and by general count De Lamezan-Salins for the Polish side.

The signed documents contain basic, transient and general aspects regarding the evacuation of Pcutia, among which the most important refer to the ending of the evacuation, to the goods belonging to the Austrian state and to the individuals and legal entities in Pcutia. The date of August 17 was chosen as the first day of evacuation which had to take place between August 18 and 25, 1919.

With the purpose of avoiding any events during the evacuation, on August 19, 1919, general Iacob Zadik summoned the staff responsible, Romanian and Polish officers, prefects and mayors from Pcutia, analysed and established the details of the operations, on the best friendly terms among all military and civilian elements of both parties (PREDA et al., 1994).

On this occasion, a Proclamation was issued which thanked "... the authorities and the whole population for the peace and order that they preserved during the time of the Romanian occupation".

The evacuation of Pcutia began on August 18, 1919, "...according to the movement table...", took place without any special problems and ended of the night of August 24, when the troops regrouped in the districts from the north of Moldova.

#### **5. CONCLUSIONS TO THE SAGA FROM GALICIA**

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We can appreciate that the actions of the Romanian army in Pcutia took place over a relatively short period of time, of only 94 days, in favourable meteorological conditions and in a space with hilly terrain and mountainous environment, a general characteristic of the geographical region being associated to that from Bukovina.

The military operations took place mainly at a strategic level, the units being composed on detachments in relationship to the operative needs and opportunities. They acted in space with a population composed of Poles, Germans, and Ruthenians, who did not display an obvious hostility, most of the dangers coming from the



actions of the roadstead from the space beyond the Nistru river.

The loss of our troops was insignificant in relationship with the spatial complexity and scope of the actions (7 people dead, 4 in battle and 3 following accidents and 7 people injured).

All the activities highlighted the capacity of the Romanian commandments in dealing with successive crisis situations on a space outside the national territory and after the evacuation of Pocutia, most of the units, though still in war, undertook activities characteristic to the state of peace. After the end of the missions, the division's Journal of operations presents, up to March 1920, troop training activities, redistributions of subunits, especially of officers, involvement in settling local conflicts and in the gradual transition to a state of peace (PREDA et al., 1994).

Border conflicts as well as the tensions produced at the population level were immediately and highly professionally disseminated.

The operations took place outside the Romanian space and had a temporary and unitary character, mainly of imposing and then of preserving the peace. On the whole, the actions did not present purposes of annexation and they were executed only at the request of the Polish legitimate government, the main purpose being to restore social order for all inhabitants, regardless of their nationality.

After securing peace, control of the population and of the territory in the area, the Protocol for the handing in Pocutia to the Polish troops ended in the city of Stanislav on August 17, 1919.

General Zadik, the commander of the Romanian Army in Pocutia, issued at that time a proclamation which was very well received by locals, where he thanked the authorities and the population for the order and peace preserved during the occupation.

The objective, fair, and well-addressed message to the people from the operation area achieved its goal. The credibility and firmness of the actions allowed to preserve a real climate of peace and stability in which the advertising information poster and/or of authority (intimidation) achieved its purpose since they were in a successive and extremely well-developed dialectic and led by the prominent General Iacob Zadik.

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