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Faculty of History and Philosophy
Doctoral School "History. Civilization. Culture."**

PHD Thesis

**The Great Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920):
its antecedents and traces on the map of European history**

Abstract

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Abstract
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**The Great Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920):
its antecedents and traces on the map of European history**

Key words: Great War, Great Powers, diplomacy, Peace Conference (1919-1920), Paris, interwar period, Kingdom of Romania, peace treaties, revisionism, revanchism.

My doctoral research is entitled "The Great Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920) its antecedents and traces on the map of European history" and I want a large and documented contribution to the reconstruction, with the means of historical science, of this event, with deep meanings and great consequences for European and universal history. On January 18, 1919, the Peace Conference opened in Paris, which brought together the victorious countries of the First World War to prepare the peace treaties that would settle the world after the first world conflict. The Supreme Council was replaced by the Conference of Ambassadors, tasked with continuing the negotiations and supporting the implementation of the provisions of the peace treaties, until its dissolution in 1931. Archives produced from January 1919 to 1931 demonstrate the continuity of diplomatic and political activities, related to peacekeeping throughout the 1920s and 1930s.¹

In the title of the doctoral research, I use the title of the Great Paris Conference for several reasons, related to its duration, scope and consequences in European and Romanian terms. The program of this Conference was the largest ever known. Unlike the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the Conference had everything to rebuild with the fall of the great empires, German, Russian, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman. European borders had to be redrawn, economic and commercial circuits had to be recreated. The food situation and the political instability resulting from the Bolshevik revolution were also constant concerns of the peacemakers, as well as their concern to perpetuate their constructions thanks to a collective security organization: the League or League of Nations.² My research sought to demonstrate that peacemaking was a arduous and difficult endeavor in an era emerging from total and devastating war, in which the lack of democratic consensus was acutely felt. The lack of consensus on democracy prevented the search for stability, which the Paris negotiations between 1919-1920 were looking for.

According to some historians, the theme of the Conference created so many opposing points of view that it became a real sensitive point on the historiographical map of the last century.³ Neglected in some aspects or insufficiently analyzed as a whole, even after 2000, the scope and legacy of the Peace Conference remains a very important topic for historical research, but also for interdisciplinary collaborations.⁴ The marking in 2019 and 2020 of a century since the Peace

¹¹ *Les archives de la Conférence de la paix*, Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangères, Archives diplomatique. <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/archives-diplomatiques/a-propos-des-archives-diplomatiques/conserver-pour-demain/article/les-archives-de-la-conference-de-la-paix>, accesat în 12 mai 2019.

² Vincent Laniol, „La conférence de la Paix de 1919. Pour en finir avec la Première Guerre mondiale”, *Encyclopédie d'histoire*, <https://ehne.fr/fr/encyclopedie/th%C3%A9matiques/reactions-internationales/pratiques-diplomatiques-contemporaines/la-conf%C3%A9rence-de-la-paix-de-1919>, accesat în 12 iunie 2019.

³ Mihai Teodor Nicoară, „Națiunile în așteptarea păcii (1918–1919). «ieșire din război» sau «războiul de după război»?”, *Caiete de antropologie istorică*, anul XXI, nr. 2 (41), Iulie–Decembrie 2022, pp. 110. <https://www.caieteantropologieistorica.ro/docs/R3/41cai8.pdf> accesat în 12 ianuarie 2023.

⁴ Ionela-Felicia Moscovici, *La France et Le Banat entre 1916-1919. Les convulsions de la guerre et de la paix*, thèse dirigé par. Jean-Noël Grandhomme, Résumé de la thèse, Cluj-Napoca, 2013, pp. 6-7.

Conference and the Paris Treaties has put this topic back on the back burner in Romanian and universal historiography. Here, the Centenary of the Great War and the Great Union generated a series of polemics, not only academic, but also intellectual. In 2018, the centenary of the "foundation of Great Romania" was celebrated through public celebrations, inaugurations of monuments, various scientific and academic events and through media channels and publications.⁵ While some analyzes or comments emphasized the importance of the moment for Romania, others avoided the so-called nationalist tone, which emphasizes the unifying effort of the Great War generation and the sacrifices of the Romanian Army on the battlefield in the first conflagration of the 20th century.⁶

In this Abstract we provided a review of: the motivations for choosing the subject and its importance for historiography; an assessment of sources and methods; a presentation of the architecture of the thesis. I cannot miss the clarifications about the interdisciplinary perspective, because the research had in mind a series of conceptual, theoretical and methodological acquisitions from fields such as: international relations, geostrategy, diplomacy, foreign policy, political science, international law, sociology, ethnography, cultural history, history ideas, historical anthropology and historical memory research. Interest in the Paris Peace Conference after the Great War is alive today, both for historians and for diplomats and political scientists, who can find in that past event serious reasons for the turbulent political and ideological times of the interwar period and even of the second half of the 20th century.

A history of the Peace Conference since the Great War cannot be studied only in descriptive terms of chronological development. To understand the real mechanisms behind her decisions. That's why we opted for some registers for deeper analysis of the event. Using the methodology of cultural history I followed the state of mind that preceded the conclusion of the Paris Peace. A peace that ended a devastating war, but one that all sides believed would end quickly. That is why, since the Great War, we have a surprising number of ideas, visions, projects, perspectives on how the conflict could end. Indisputably, the debates surrounding peace, coming from the political, diplomatic, but also public environment, were capitalized at the Peace Conference of 1919-1920.

Another important aspect of studying the Conference, which I took into account, was related to his new visions of diplomacy, negotiation, treaties, which he openly acclaimed: the transition from secret diplomacy to the scientific, open, democratic. One based on numerous and diverse arguments. Paradoxically, it was not the diplomats who played the most important role in the Conference, but the experts, i.e. specialists in various fields, such as history, geography, ethnography, linguistics, sociology, political science of time. Teachers, scholars and even journalists had a meaningful say in shaping some measures, rules, decisions of the Peace Conference. The big decision-makers, for example, always wanted to stay in the good graces of journalists, in order not to lose their popularity and even their political position in their country.

Another aspect, which seemed to me important to investigate, referred to the state of uneasiness and tension which haunted the whole atmosphere of the Peace Conference. The warring camps in the Great War had concluded an Armistice on November 11, 1918, but not the war. The contempt and hatred between the combatants translated, in fact, a collective state of mind, one

⁵ Vezi, Bogdan Bucur, *Cartea de Aur a Centenarului Marii Uniri*, București: Editura RAO, 2017; Anton Moraru, Ion Negrei, *Anul 1918. Ora astrală a neamului românesc*, Iași: Tipo Moldova, 2017; Lucian Boia, *În jurul Marii Uniri de la 1918. Națiuni, frontiere, minorități*, București: Editura Humanitas, 2018.

⁶ Mihai Teodor Nicoară, „Națiunile în așteptarea păcii (1918–1919). «Ieșire din război» sau «războiul de după război»? ”, *Caiete de antropologie istorică*, anul XXI, nr. 2 (41), Iulie–Decembrie 2022, pp. 113-117.

inherited even before the outbreak of the conflict in 1914. The unfolding of the violence of the war created, in both camps, contradictory states of euphoria and fear, which justified the legitimacy of the behavior (at any cost!) of the war, until the total and brutal defeat of the enemy. An enemy whose image was becoming, in both camps, increasingly dark, increasingly full of resentment! The belligerents of the Great War had behaviors that oscillated between humanity and inhumanity, against the background of the escalation of the militaristic and revengeful spirit! Wartime public opinion saw the nations' leaders as heroes and the rival nations as particularly dangerous enemies who deserved to be taught a harsh lesson. The European continent was — after 1914 — the scene of a sinister and disturbing spectacle, in which societies armed themselves to the teeth, ready to throw themselves upon each other in a conflict which even contemporaries designated as equally terrible like the *old barbarian invasions*.⁷ The press, for example, became a screen of public opinion, which signaled the slowness of the negotiations. The mood of restlessness, especially in Europe, contrasted somewhat with the grandeur of the opening and conduct of the Conference, to which thousands of delegates, mostly Europeans, had been invited.

The European nations that faced each other in the Great War developed such a great contempt for each other that the hatred did not die out, even during the Peace Conference. "The Great War was a conflict full of successive deadlocks on the various fronts, intersections of several conflicts, not only military, but also ideological, such as the one with Soviet Bolshevism in 1917. Against the background of the great conflict, a diplomatic crisis broke out, accompanied by the crisis of mutual distrust, which made war acceptable, in relation to the threat of loss of national and state prestige, following a possible defeat. This diplomatic crisis sat in the background of the Conference, from one end to the other, despite the principle of diplomatic openness! ".⁸ The First World War undoubtedly remains, in its multiple effects, the most important event of the 20th century, at least on a European scale. Even if its accidental dimension is real, as many historians have asserted, it was born out of the interaction of many major social, political and economic processes: the demographic rise of Europe, national building movements, administrative as well as political and cultural development, industrial inequality and scientific development by country, the rise of nationalism, the movement of nationalities, colonial or imperial rivalries and others. The list is long and complicated. In 1914 no one was prepared with a coherent military strategy and a long-term objective. The Germans kept silent about their war aims to dominate the whole Europe. On the other hand, Russia had no real coordination or joint planning with the Western powers. Also, there was no consensus among the Entente Allies on all matters related to the objectives of the war. As early as 1915, David Lloyd George prophetically warned that the war would have the power of a cataclysm, a flood, cyclone or earthquake that would shake the world from its foundations. The war had two possible consequences: it either spurred a step forward, or it could collapse civilization by several centuries. The result was ambiguous!⁹

Historians have noticed from a variety of sources that most of the contemporaries of the event in the French capital brought criticism to this event. The main reason, which is fully revealed by the sources of the time (official reports, political speeches, memos, correspondence, etc.) shows that the decisions of the Peace Conference were forms of compromise, which proposed partial

⁷ Mihai Teodor Nicoară, „Moartea și supraviețuirea animalelor de luptă în Marele Război”, *Caiete de antropologie istorică*, anul XXI, nr. 1 (40), Ianuarie–Iunie 2022, p. 84.

⁸ Idem, „Națiunile în așteptarea păcii (1918–1919). «Ieșire din război» sau «războiul de după război»?”, pp. 113–117.

⁹ Eric J. Hobsbawm, *L'âge des extrêmes. Histoire du court xx^e siècle*, Paris: Éd. Complexe, 1999 (1^{re} éd. 1994).

solutions, but also generated problems, which caused immense disturbance the peace of nations and the relations between them: the question of national minorities. The resettlement of the map of Europe did not put an end to the states' territorial disputes. On the contrary, they opened Pandora's Box by imposing measures after 1920 - by the League of Nations - that affected national sovereignty. Many reproaches were coming, both from the vanquished and the victors. I mentioned here some aspects, which I proposed to address in my research, also relying on the diversity of sources that the Peace Conference offers: official documents, speeches, memoirs, but also press articles.

The choice of my doctoral topic is related to the realization of a broad synthesis, on the complex register of the cultural history of this event that led to a *fragile peace*, a peace that failed to stop the political and economic decline of a Europe that suffered the most from after the Great War. Many specialists do not hesitate to say that after the First World War European civilization lost its central role in the international context and became "provincialized", strongly asserting the role of the United States. In other words, Europe lost its status as a *political epicenter*, and the second great world conflagration (1939-1945) accentuated the political, demographic, economic, maritime and civilizational decline of the Old Continent. Europe's dominance was linked to its naval power, its industries, its investment capacity and its colonial expansion. Europe was never as powerful as in the late 19th or early 20th century. The perception of Europe's problems was constantly changing in the early 20th century. Political scientists, sociologists, geographers, whose positions reflect and shape public opinion, the idea of the decline of Europe, appeared already around 1900, against the background of the Russian, American and Japanese rise, but it became a major topic of reflection at the end of the First World War. It ruined all the political and economic advantages that Europe had gained until 1914, and human losses from conflict and epidemics caused a long-term continental disaster. After the Great War, Europe no longer found the dynamism of reconstruction, nor the hegemonic political, economic and cultural spirit.¹⁰

The structure of the work consists of eleven chapters, each with sub-chapters, to which I have given suggestive titles, which adequately express their content. A content of ideas, about which I will point in the following. As I mentioned, the temporal area of the thesis is, first of all, the period of the Conference (1919-1920), but in order to demonstrate the complexity and difficulty of concluding peace after the Great War, I considered it necessary to capture some peace preliminaries.¹¹

The first chapters of the thesis deal with these peace attempts, and the following with all the organizational aspects and the activities of the Conference.¹² In the very first chapters of the

¹⁰ Geograful francez Albert Demangeon a vorbit despre „schimbările de putere” dn plan mondial după 1920. Analiza sa se bazează, în mare măsură, pe observarea declinului economic, cultural și social al Europei. Albert Demangeon, *Le déclin du l' Europe*, Paris: Éditions Payot, 1920, pp.11- 17; André Siegfried, *La crise de l'Europe*, Paris: Éditions Calmann-Lévy, 1935, pp. 1-6; Paul Claval,, „Le déclin de l'Europe. Un problème et sa perception par les géographes", *Bulletin de la Société Géographique de Liège*, 62, 1, 2014, <https://popups.uliege.be/0770-7576/index.php?id=269>, accesat în 2 mai 2019; Glenda Sluga, *Nation, Psychology, and International Politics, 1870-1919*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, pp. 8-35.

¹¹ Alexandre Sumpf, „L'historiographie russe (et soviétique) de la Grande Guerre”, *Histoire@Politique*, 1, n° 22, 2014, pp. 152 - 174. <https://www.cairn.info/revue-histoire-politique-2014-1-page-152.htm>, accesat la 3 mai 2019.

¹² Viorica Moisuc, *România și Conferința de Pace de la Paris*, Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1983, pp. 278-280, Ion Agrigoroaiei, Gheorghe Calcan, *România și Conferința de Pace de la Paris, 1919-1920*, Ploiești: Editura Prahova, 2001, p. 3; Corina Ionela Tudose, *Relațiile româno-americane la Conferința de pace de la Paris*, Slatina,: Editura Didactic Press, 2006, pp.5-6.

thesis I will address issues such as the escalation of rivalries and the creation of hostile camps, about the irreconcilable contradictions between pacifism and militarism at the beginning of the 20th century, about the voices of peace before the Great War! The Hague International Conventions of 1899 and 1907, which regulated the rules of war and the peaceful settlement of international disputes. Along with disarmament and compulsory arbitration, both conferences included negotiations on the laws of war and war crimes. At the 1907 Conference it was agreed that no state could commence hostilities without the express prevention of the other. But, this principle was partially respected and behind hidden incitements and pretexts, which created catastrophic precedents.¹³ The *shocks* resulting from the Great War, which weakened the post-war peace, were: demographic and sanitary shock, rural and urban destruction, environmental damage, population movements, monetary and financial crises, instability of public finances, reduction of trade, Bolshevik revolution (1917). The fragmentation of Europe is a direct result of the war; its financial weakening contributes to the questioning of its colonial influence on the world and, to a lesser extent, to the overall decline of its economic weight (even if the influence of its relative demographics undoubtedly remains predominant in these respects). By the number of its victims, by its massive destruction, by the transformation of the production and circulation of goods, by the innovations it gave birth to, the Great War disrupted European economic activity in all its dimensions. Many of these transformations themselves led to long-term social, economic, cultural, political, ideological changes that probably would not have happened without this war.¹⁴

A series of thesis chapters (V-VIII) deal with the slow but frustrating and strained winding down of the Great War, the transition from war diplomacy to conference diplomacy, the opening of the Paris Peace Conference in January 1919, at the organization of the negotiation framework, at the conclusion of the Treaty of Versailles, at the signing of the Pact of the League of Nations and, of course, at the suite of treaties between the victors and the vanquished: Saint-Germain-en-Laye (September 10, 1919), Neuilly – sur – Seine (November 27, 1919)), Trianon (June 4, 1920), Sèvres (August 10, 1920).

An important aspect in the economics of the thesis (chapters IX-X) refers to the aspects related to Romania's participation in the Paris Peace Conference of 1919-1920. These chapters deal with Romania's diplomatic efforts to obtain the status of an ally, the presence, attitudes and problems of the Romanian delegation at the Conference, Romanian propaganda and the favorable role of some friends of Romania such as Emmanuel de Martonne, during the Conference. I dedicated a large chapter to the Romanian claims in the Peace Parliament, which appeared in the official documents of the Conference in the form of issues: the Banat Question, the Bessarabia Question,

https://www.academia.edu/24772545/Romania_si_Conferinta_de_Pace_de_la_Paris_1919_1920, accesat la 4 mai 2019.

¹³ Stephen. Barcroft, „The Hague Peace Conference of 1899”, in *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, Vol. 3 Issue 1, 1989, pp 55–68; David J. Bettez, „Unfulfilled Initiative: Disarmament Negotiations and the Hague Peace Conferences of 1899 and 1907”, *RUSI Journal: Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies*, June 1988, Vol. 133 Issue 3, pp. 57–62.

¹⁴ Pierre-Cyrille Hautcœur, Patrick Fridenson, „Retour vers le futur de la Grande Guerre : pourquoi ?”, în Pierre Cyrille Hautcœur ș.a. (dir.), *La rupture? La Grande Guerre, L Europe et le XX-e siècle*, Paris: Institut de la gestion publique et du développement économique, 2021, pp. 1-10.

<https://books.openedition.org/igpde/15145?lang=en> accesat în 3 mai 2020; Pierre-Cyrille Hautcœur, „La longue traîne macroéconomique de la Grande Guerre”, *loc cit.*, pp.13-60; Gerd Hardach, *The First World War, 1914-1918*, Londres: Allen Lane-Penguin Books, 1977; François Caron, Jean Bouvier, „Guerre, crise, guerre”, în Fernand Braudel, Ernest Labrousse (dir.), *Histoire économique et sociale de la France*, Paris: Presse Universitaire de France, t. 4, vol. 2, 1980, pp. 631-691.

the Bucovina Question, the Dobrogea Question, the Transylvania Question, respectively the Treaty of Saint Germain en Laye with Austria, Minorities Treaty (September 10, 1919) and Trianon Treaty (June 4, 1920). I dedicated a sub-chapter to the Hungarian propaganda for the revision of the Treaty of Trianon, propaganda that explains the tense situation in the Romanian delegation and the diplomatic difficulties of the Romanian state regarding the international recognition of Greater Romania.

The last chapter of the XI thesis looks at the consequences of the Peace Conference, at the unresolved or re-discussed issues in a series of conferences (Rapallo, Locarno, etc.) that generated future tensions. We have analyzed several other aspects, among the most important ones since the end of the Conference, namely the "provincialization" of Europe, the profile of the rather unstable post-war New Order, the difficulties of post-war reconciliation and reconstruction, the difficult "cultural demobilization" after 1920. Of course the analysis of the activities of the League of Nations, an institution of Wilsonian inspiration, a promising one, but poorly organized and bureaucratic, could not be missing. The member states were called to act in favor of the defense of the international community against aggression, for the defense of the territorial integrity of each member state and, very importantly, disarmament. The functioning of the League showed, once again, the differences of opinion between the Great Powers, in particular, France and the United Kingdom. Created by the Treaty of Versailles, in June 1919, the League of Nations was devoid of practical means of intervention, it had an ineffective strategy, which could not avoid the emergence of a new world conflagration. The League did not accept the use of military force for the implementation of arbitrations and sanctions, but, most importantly, the very country where the idea of the organization was born (the USA) refused to join it. The fragility of the League of Nations has been demonstrated, as I will demonstrate in the aforementioned chapter, by the inconsistency of the delays in implementing its basic principles. The Covenant of the League of Nations actually came into force on January 10, 1920, but a number of its articles were amended in 1924. I have considered several important interwar moments that showed that the decisions of the Peace Conference no longer stood. Chapter XIX also deals with aspects related to the Geneva Protocol (October 2, 1924), about Locarno, the second Peace Conference (1925), refers generally to the Locarnian Policy of European reconciliation, to the terms of U.S. neutrality. and to Germany's distrust of the League of Nations. The path of the analysis follows the effects of the conciliarism of the former allies, especially towards Germany and the galloping affirmation of revisionisms, revanchisms and the preparation of the second war.

As an expression of originality, the doctoral thesis proposes a complex analysis (political, military, ideological, spiritual, cultural and mental) of the Peace Conference, the metamorphoses or constants of these areas mentioned over a period of four to five decades. The paper shows that the traces of the Conference were felt very strongly due to the ambiguities in the peace treaties and the conciliatory spirit of the Great Powers, until 1939. The analyzes in the thesis reveal the fact that that conciliatoryism of the Great Powers translated, rather, the conflicts of interests between the former Allies, than the tolerance towards the violation, more or less explicit, of the peace treaties. Also, my research reveals that break between the period before the Peace Conference, but especially that by neglecting to keep the peace treaties as the letter of the law, it meant a failure of the European democracies, increasingly undermined since 1933 by totalitarianism. I analyzed the period after 1920 because it is clear what was the international turning point (1924-1925), generally identified by historians with the bisector of the interwar period and the entry of Europe into a phase of real decline. The adoption of the Dawes Plan

(intended to arrange the payment of reparations owed by Germany), the withdrawal of Franco-Belgian troops from the Ruhr (which they had occupied since January 1923), the conclusion of the Locarno Agreements (through which Germany, in particular, recognized its borders of West, to integrate after the League of Nations) all these and others that I will point out, indicate a change of atmosphere in Western Europe. This change meant the escalation of some totalitarian ideologies, which did not hesitate (through their propagandists) to gradually reach the rest of our continent. The conclusion of the Locarno Accords (1925) was a dividing line between the Peace of Paris and the future peace of 1946-1947. On the other hand, the main political and economic pillars of the antebellum system—the balance of power, the non-interventionist state, the free market economy—were almost in ruins and, in any case, reflected a utopian belief in the natural play of political and economic forces.

My PhD thesis is intended as a contribution to the history of the 20th century, which was shaped by the changing relations of the world's Great Powers. This approach benefited from the observations and suggestions of my doctoral supervisor, university lecturer Dr. Mihai Teodor Nicoară, specialist in the sources of contemporary history, in the history of Central and Eastern Europe, in cultural history, and historical anthropology. His Lordship guided me through many of the readings necessary to understand and build the architecture of the work and gave me suggestions regarding the naming of chapters and sub-chapters. I think a culturalist approach to the subject of the thesis is welcome in the conditions of different treatments, influenced by past and recent ideological waves.¹⁵ From the point of view of cultural history, a first requirement is the use of sources contemporary to the studied events.

The sources of the research were numerous, but dispersed, both in Romanian and international archives and national libraries. As part of the commemoration of the centenary of the First World War and the celebration of the Peace Conference (1919-1920), a vast operation was underway to classify and restore the archives of the Peace Conference, of which France is the depository. For the Great War, not only for France, of great importance are the Archives de la Grande Guerre Guide des sources conservées par le Service historique de la Défense relative à la Première Guerre mondiale, under the direction of Agnès Chablat-Beylot, Chief Curator of Heritage.¹⁶ For the period of the Great War, an important reference is the Inventory of the War Archives, made by Jean-Claude Devos, Jean Nicot, Philippe Schillinger and Pierre Waksman. This inventory also contains a number of funds, notably the "Clemenceau fund", and the Archives of Generals Joffre and Foch.¹⁷ Over the decades La Bibliothèque-Musée de la Guerre which recently became La Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine (Library of Contemporary

¹⁵ Traian Sandu, „La Roumanie, une victoire à la Pyrrhus”, *Les cahiers Irice*, 1, n° 13, 2015, pp.155 - 170. <https://www.cairn.info/revue-les-cahiers-irice-2015-1-page-155.htm> accesat în 23 iunie 2019.

¹⁶ *Archives de la Grande Guerre, Service historique de la Défense, Guide des sources conservées par le Service historique de la Défense relatives à la Première Guerre mondiale*, sous la direction de Agnès Chablat-Beylot Conservateur en chef du patrimoine Amable Sablon du Corail Conservateur en chef du patrimoine Préface de Antoine Prost Professeur émérite de l'Université Paris I Président du conseil scientifique de la Mission du Centenaire, 2014, <https://www.servicehistorique.sga.defense.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/2020-04/Archives-Grande-Guerre.pdf>, accesat în 23 iunie 2019.

¹⁷ *Inventaire sommaire des archives de la guerre*, Jean-Claude Devos, Jean Nicot, Philippe Schillinger, Pierre Waksman, conservateurs au Service historique de l'Armée, Imprimerie La Renaissance - Troyes 1974. https://www.servicehistorique.sga.defense.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/notices_files/SHDGR_INV_1N_14N_1872_19.pdf, accesat în 28 ianuarie 2019.

International Documentation) has held rare and precious documents of primary interest to specialists in the history of war and peace.¹⁸

A series of papers, press, memoirs, photographs, maps, etc. dedicated to the Paris Peace Conference I accessed them from the Gallica site of the BNF (Bibliothèque Nationale de France). The National Portal of the Archives of the French Republic, provided me with the most documents, acts, notes, ratifications, clauses, treaties, conventions, resolutions, meetings, commissions, committees, repertoires and inventories about the Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920). In addition to the official documents of the time, written in Romanian, French and English, we investigated document collections and volumes, such as the famous *Actes et Documents. La Question Roumaine*, Imprimeria Paul Dupont, Paris, 1918 and a series of contributions from Romanian and foreign historiography related to the studied event.¹⁹ An online source about the Geneva League of Nations is provided by the very archive of this League. A number of sub-funds look at reports related to Romania.²⁰

Of great importance for the research of the Peace Conference are the documents edited in volumes by French historians, the most accessible being the *Application des traités de paix. Archives de la délégation française à la Commission interalliée des réparations (1919-1931) Répertoire détaillé (AJ/5/1 à AJ/5/636)*, coordinated by Georges Bourgin (1926), E. Guillemot (1942) Roseline Salmon (2009) -2018) and Michèle Conchon (2019). Many edited documents are directly related to international events, the history of peace negotiations and conditions, armistices and treaties of the Peace Conference. The Englishman John Maynard Keynes had a critical opinion towards the Conference and the Treaty of Versailles,²¹ who in 1919 published the book "Economic Consequences of the Peace", where he emphasized the disastrous consequences that the Treaty of Versailles would have, not not only for Germany, but also for the future of Europe.

The analysis of the Conference cannot miss André Tardieu's book, entitled *La paix*, published in Paris, at Éditions Payot, in 1921. Moreover, André Tardieu, along with Georges Clemenceau, was a key witness of the Paris Peace Conference. Tardieu understood that a real war of negotiations was needed, to end the actual war and to establish some reasonable lines of world peace.

A book, entitled *Les Conséquences politiques de la paix*, (The Political Consequences of Peace) was published by Jacques Bainville in 1920. It complements Keynes, but contradicts him on certain points. Pierre Renouvin wrote, for his part, about the backstage of the Treaty of Versailles.

²²In London, a year after the end of the Conference, a famous book appeared: *A History of the*

¹⁸ Carl Bouchard, Jean-Michel Guieu, „Introduction. Les peuples font la paix (1918-1925)”, *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*” 3-4, no. 129-130, 2018, pp. 2-9. <https://www.cairn.info/revue-materiaux-pour-l-histoire-de-notre-temps-2018-3-page-2.htm>, accesat în 28 ianuarie 2019.

¹⁹ André La Meauffe, „Versailles (1919–1939) : l'échec du dernier grand traité de paix”, *Questions internationales*, no. 99-100, septembre-décembre 2019, pp. 43–44.

²⁰ *Fonds-League of Nations Secretariat*, United Nations, Library&Archives, Geneva, <https://archives.ungeneva.org/league-of-nations-secretari>, accesat în 28 ianuarie 2019.

²¹ *Traité de paix entre les puissances alliées et associées et l'Allemagne et protocole signé à Versailles le 28 juin 1919*”, publication du Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Imprimerie nationale, 1919.

²² Pierre Renouvin, *Histoire des relations internationales*, t. VII : *Les Crises du XXe siècle* , I : *De 1914 à 1929* , Hachette, 1963; Idem., *L'Armistice de Rethondes* , Paris:Éditions Gallimard, *Trente journées qui ont fait la France* , 1968; Idem, *Le traité de Versailles*, Paris: Éditions Flammarion, 1969.

Peace Conference of Paris, (1921), which expressed the British conception of the event.²³ From the very rich bibliography dedicated to the Paris Peace Conference, we also mention Robert Lansing, *The Peace Negotiations. A personal narrative*, London, 1921; Colonel House, Charles Seymour, *Ce qui se passa realmente a Paris en 1918-1919. Histoire de la Conference de la paix par les délégués américains*, traduction française par Louis-Paul Alaux, Paris, 1923.²⁴ An interesting reference about Romania at the Peace Conference is Charles J. Vopicka's book, *Secrets of the Balkan seven years of a diplomat's life in the storm center of Europe*, (1921), which analyzes the complexity of Romanian diplomatic efforts, in a European context in which all the states contradicted each other in political and military opinions and actions.²⁵

The large amount of publications (books, studies, articles) that accompanied the Centenary of the Great War and the Peace Conference (1919-1920) testifies to the fact that the memory of these events still impresses and interests, especially historians. Recent historiography today tends to detach of the Keynesian vision of the Conference and consider the innovative elements developed by the peace makers of 1919-1920.²⁶ One of the historiographical references is that of Arnold J Toynbee, *The World after the Peace Conference, being an Epilogue, to the 'History of the Peace, Conference of Paris' and a Prologue to the 'Survey of International Affairs, 1920-1923'*,²⁷ Daniel Gorman, with his work *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s*, offers an enlightening study of the evolution of international society in the years '20, with a particular focus on how new international norms reshaped the British Empire and how Anglo-American nations and organizations promoted numerous internationalist initiatives during this period.

Among the works devoted to the backstage of the Peace Conference is *Peacemakers: The Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and Its Attempt to End War*, from 2001, reissued in the following years 2002 and 2003, a historical narrative of the events of the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, written by Canadian historian Margaret MacMillan. The book focuses on the "Big Three". *Peacemakers* was adapted as a 2009 film titled *Paris 1919* by Paul Cowan at the National Film Board of Canada. Margaret MacMillan also published in 2006 *Les Artisans de la paix, Comment Lloyd George, Clemenceau et Wilson ont redessiné la carte du monde*, 660 pp. which is an important source for the mood of the Conference. Also in the vicinity of Margaret MacMillan is the extensive 2015 study by the French Vincent Laniol, entitled *Faire la paix sans l'ennemi? L'exemple de la Conférence de la Paix de 1919*, where he specifies that among the numerous criticisms addressed to the Treaties of Paris, and, in particular, the Treaty of Versailles, the assertion that peace was imposed on a defeated enemy, without the possibility of to negotiate with the winners. Among the names most frequented in relation to the analyzes of the Peace Conference, in addition to the brother Georges-Henri Soutou, a number of other French, German,

²³ Lord Hankey, *The Supreme Control at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919*, Londres: Georges Allen, 1963. Pentru cea americană vezi, *Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking. Containment and Counter-Revolution at Versailles (1918-1919)*, New York, Knopf, 1967.

²⁴ Anastasie Iordache, „Ion I. C. Brătianu la Conferința Păcii de la Paris din 1919”, p. 842, http://iini.ro/Revista%20Istorica/RI_complet/1993/Revista_istorica_an04_1993_09_10_nr09_10.pdf accesat în 20 mai 2020.

²⁵ Charles J. Vopicka, *Secrets of the Balkan seven years of a diplomatists life in the storm centre of Europe* by United States envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to Romania, Serbia and Bulgaria, 1913-1920, Chicago Rand McNally & Company 1921.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

British and American authors such as Jean-Baptiste Duroselle,²⁸ Jean-Michel Guieu,²⁹ Paul Mantoux,³⁰ Pierre Miquel,³¹ Jean -Jacques Becker,³² Arno J. Mayer,³³ Manfred Boemeke, Hans Fenske, Gerd Krumeich, Gerald Feldman, Elisabeth Glaser, Eckart Conze, Michael Dockrill, John Fisher, Winfried Baumgart,³⁴ Margaret MacMillan,³⁵ David A. Andelman,³⁶ Serge Berstein,³⁷ Leonard V. Smith, Sergio Romano, Giovanni Orsina,³⁸ Toshio Takemoto, R. B. Henig,³⁹ Alan Sharp,⁴⁰ Gavin Bowd,⁴¹ Jacques-Alain de Sédouy,⁴² Francis Latour,⁴³ Michael S Neiber,⁴⁴ Kemal Yildirim,⁴⁵ Robert Gerwarth, Erez Manela,⁴⁶ Jörn Leonhard,⁴⁷ Sherman David Spector,⁴⁸ Gaston Jèze, Julliot de la Morandiere, Emile Sergent, Henri Capitant⁴⁹ et al.

²⁸ Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *Clemenceau*, Paris: Éditions Fayard, 1988; Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *De Wilson à Roosevelt. Politique extérieure des États-Unis (1913-1945)*, Paris: Éditions Armand Colin, 1960.

²⁹ Paul Mantoux. *Les Délibérations du Conseil des Quatre*, 2 t., Éditions du CNRS, 1955.

³⁰ Pierre Miquel, *La Paix de Versailles et l'opinion publique française*, Paris: Éditions Flammarion, 1972.

³¹ Jean-Jacques Becker, *Clemenceau, l'intraitable*, Paris: Éditions Liana Levi, 1998. Jean-Jacques Becker, *Versailles, antichambre de la prochaine catastrophe*, in *14-18, la Très Grande Guerre*, Paris: Le Monde Éditions, 1994.

³² Arno J. Mayer, *Political Origins of the New Diplomacy (1917-1918)*, Yale University Press, 1959.

³³ Gerd Krumeich (dir.), *Versailles 1919, Ziele-Wirkung-Wahrnehmung*, Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2001.

³⁴ Winfried Baumgart: *Vom europäischen Konzert zum Völkerbund. Friedensschlüsse und Friedenssicherung von Wien bis Versailles* (= *Erträge der Forschung*. Band 25). Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1974;

³⁵ Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919. Six Months that Changed the World*, New York: Random House, 2003.

³⁶ David A. Andelman *A Shattered Peace: Versailles 1919 and the Price We Pay Today*, 2014.

³⁷ Serge Berstein (dir.), *Ils ont fait la paix. Le traité de Versailles vu de France et d'ailleurs*, 2018. Jean-Jacques Becker, Serge Berstein, *Victoires et frustrations (1914-1929). Nouvelle histoire de la France contemporaine*, t. XII, Seuil, 1990.

³⁸ Giovanni Orsina (dir.), *La Grande Guerra e la Pace di Versailles ottant'anni dopo*, *Ricerche di Storia Politica*, no 3, 1999.

³⁹ R. B. Henig, *The League of Nations*, London, 1973.

⁴⁰ Alan Sharp, *Britain and the Protection of Minorities at the Paris Peace conference, 1919*, in vol. *Minorities in History*, ed. by A. C. Hepburn, London, 1978 ; Idem., *The Versailles Settlement, Peacemaking in Paris, 1919*, London, 1991.

⁴¹ Gavin Bowd, „Un géographe français et la Roumanie. Emmanuel de Martonne (1873–1955)” (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2012; Gavin Bowd, „Between France and Romania, between Science and Propaganda. Emmanuel de Martonne in 1919”, *Romania and the Paris Peace Conference 1919. Actors, Scenarios, Circulation of Knowledge Journal of Romanian Studies*, Special issue ed. by Svetlana Suveica, vol. 1, No. 2 2019, pp. 135-152.

⁴² Jacques-Alain de Sédouy, *Ils ont refait le monde : 1919–1920. Le traité de Versailles*, Paris: Editions Tallandier, 2017.

⁴³ Francis Latour, *La papauté et les problèmes de la paix pendant la Première guerre mondiale*, Paris Montréal: L'Harmattan, coll. „Chemins de la mémoire”, 1996, 350 p.

⁴⁴ Michael S. Neiber, *The Treaty of Versailles: A Concise History* Illustrated Edición, 2017.

⁴⁵ Kemal Yildirim, *Die Pariser Friedenskonferenz - Die Zukunft gestalten: Pariser Friedenskonferenz (1919-1920*, Edición en Alemán 2020; Manfred Boemeke, Gerald Feldman, Elisabeth Glaser (dir.), *Versailles, a Reassessment after 75 years*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998 ; Eckart Conze, *Die große Illusion, Versailles 1919 und die Neuordnung der Welt*, München, Siedler, 2018 ; Michael Dockrill, John Fisher (dir.), *The Paris Peace Conference 1919 : Peace without Victory ?*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2001.

⁴⁶ Robert Gerwarth, Erez Manela, eds., *Empire at War 1911–1923*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

⁴⁷ Jörn Leonhard, *Die Büchse der Pandora: Geschichte des Ersten Weltkriegs*, Munich: C.H. Beck, 2014.

⁴⁸ Sherman David Spector, *Rumania at the Paris Peace Conference: a Study of the Diplomacy of Ioan I.C. Bratianu*, New York, Bookman Associates, 1962. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/slavic-review/article/abs/sherman-david-spector-rumania-at-the-paris-peace-conference-a-study-of-the-diplomacy-of-ioan-i-c-bratianu-new-york-bookman-associates-1962-368-pp-500/78A2B70D015060D438A434BFCE83C7D5>, accesat în 23 iunie 2019; „Romania and the Paris Peace Conference (1919).” *Actors, Scenarios, Circulation of Knowledge* Edited by Svetlana

One of the most important references on the Vatican's peace attempts is Nathalie Renoton-Beine's book, *La colombe et les tranchées. Benoît XV et les tentatives de paix durant la Grande Guerre*, from 2004.

For the theme of Romania at the Peace Conference, an important landmark is represented by Gheorghe I. Brătianu, with his book *Political and Military Action of Romania in 1919*, published in 1940. The book, very well documented, was written, as the author says, in Introduction, to show in detail the action of the great politician Ion I. C. Brătianu with whom the fate of Romania was closely linked in 1919.⁵⁰ The book of the Romanian diplomat Viorel-Virgil Tilea, *Acțiunea diplomatică a României*, (Nov. 1919-March 1920), Sibiu: Tipografia To the people, 1925, it also has exceptional data about the scenes of the great event for peace. Tilea's book draws attention to the major role in the peace issue of 1919-1920 of Ion I.C. Brătianu and Alexandru Vaida Voevod.

Important for the topic of the thesis are works, such as Sherman David Spector's, with his *Romania at the Paris Peace Conference: a Study of the Diplomacy of Ioan I.C. Brătianu* (1962), *Aspects of Russian-Romanian relations. Retrospectives et orientations*, Paris, 1967 and Ion Stanciu, *Allies without alliance. Romania and the U.S.A., 1914-1920*, Bucharest, 1992, to which are added interesting studies as an approach, such as Emilian Bold, *Aspects regarding the position of the great powers towards Romania at the Peace Conference (1919-1920)*, in the *Scientific Annals of the Al University. I. Cuza*", new series, section III, 1970.⁵¹ To this is added a series of restitutions that focus on the details of the events, but also on subtle analyses, written by authors such as Viorica Moisuc,⁵² Ion Agrigoroaiei, Gheorghe Calcan,⁵³ Lucian Leuștean,⁵⁴ Mihai Iacobescu,⁵⁵ Traian Sandu,⁵⁶ Svetlana Suveică,⁵⁷ Mihai Teodor Nicoară,⁵⁸ Florian Kührer-Wielac,⁵⁹ Gábor Egry,⁶⁰ Corina Ionela Tudose, etc.

Suveica, *Journal of Romanian Studies* Vol. 1, No. 2 (2019), <https://society4romanianstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Vol-1-No-2-2019.pdf>, accesat în 23 mai 2020;

⁴⁹ Gaston Jêze, Julliot de la Morandiere, Émile Sergent, Henri Capitant, *Patru conferințe despre România*, Iași: Institutul European, 2011.

⁵⁰ Gh. Brătianu, *Acțiunea politică și militară a României în 1919. În lumina corespondenței diplomatice a lui Ion I. C. Brătianu*, ediție și Cuvânt înainte de Toader Nicoară, Cluj-Napoca: Editura Accent, 2018; Gheorghe Duzenchievici, Gheorghe Brătianu, *Acțiunea politică și militară a României în 1919 în lumina corespondenței diplomatice a lui Ion I. C. Brătianu* (recenzie), *Gând Românesc*, an VIII, nr.1-4, aprilie 1940, pp. 75-86.

⁵¹ Interesante ca moduri de abordare sunt: studiul lui Constantin Botoran, *România în sistemul tratatelor de pace de la Paris (1919-1920)*, *Revista de Istorie*, nr. 11/ 1980; Ion M. Oprea, *Apărarea suveranității naționale la Conferința Păcii de la Paris (1918-1920)*, *Revista de Istorie*, nr. 11/1981,

⁵² Viorica Moisuc (coord.), *România și Conferința de pace de la Paris*, Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1983.

⁵³ Ion Agrigoroaiei, Gheorghe Calcan, *România și Conferința de pace de la Paris 1(1919-1920)*, Ploiești: Editura Pahova, 2001.

⁵⁴ Lucian Leuștean, „Conferința de pace de la Paris (191-1920). Liga Națiunilor și problema Minorităților”, *Xenopoliana*, V,1 – 4, 1997, pp. 181-195. http://adxenopol.academiaromana-is.ro/xenopolitana/xeno_97/xeno_97_20.pdf, accesat în 14 iunie 2023; Idem, „Romania, the Paris Peace Conference and the Protection System of Race, Language and Religion Minorities - A Reassessment, Romania and the Paris Peace Conference 1919. Actors, Scenarios”, *Knowledge Journal of Romanian Studies*, Special issue ed. by Svetlana Suveica, vol. 1, No. 2 2019, pp. 27-46.

⁵⁵ Mihai Iacobescu, *România și Societatea Națiunilor. 1919-1929*, București: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1988.

⁵⁶ Traian Sandu, „La Roumanie, une victoire à la Pyrrhus”, *Les cahiers Irice*, 1, n° 13, 2015,, pp.155-170. <https://www.caim.info/revue-les-cahiers-irice-2015-1-page-155>, accesat în 6 februarie 2020.

⁵⁷ Svetlana Suveică, Doina Anca Crețu, *Introduction: Romania and the Paris Peace Conference 1919. Actors, Scenarios*, Circulation of Knowledge Journal of Romanian Studies, Special issue ed. by Svetlana Suveica, vol. 1, No. 2 2019, pp. 9-26; S. Suveica, *Against the “Imposition of the Foreign Yoke”: The Bessarabians Write to Wilson (1919)*, loc. cit., pp. 89-112.

However, the sources of my doctoral project are diverse: in addition to archival documents, I used press articles, correspondence, propaganda brochures, memoirs, memories, maps, statistics, iconographic representations, especially photographs. These sources are mentioned in the general bibliography of the thesis and in the footnotes.

My research gave a special place to the pre-war, war and post-war situation of Romania. The Kingdom of Romania had a difficult, even dramatic situation, being included since the last decades of the 19th century in the Central Powers, the hostile ally of the Entente. The Romanian political world has gone through unprecedented political dilemmas. After a tense neutrality, it entered the Great War on the side of the Entente in 1916, with the hope that it would benefit from the fruits of an Allied victory, in order to legitimize its territorial interests. The Paris conference unanimously recognized the ally status of the Kingdom of Romania, which re-entered the war immediately after the Armistice of November 11, 1918. Romania, relying also on the articles of the Convention of August 4, 1916, claimed equal treatment in the negotiations between Romania and the Big Four. But, great political and diplomatic efforts were necessary to recognize the status of an ally and to accept the territorial claims, for which the Kingdom of Romania had entered the Great War. There were obvious differences between the position of the Big Four of the American president and the British, French and Italian prime ministers, on the one hand, and the Romanian prime minister, Ion I. C. Brătianu, on the other. Brătianu, relying more on the principled position of President W. Wilson, insisted on equal treatment between the victorious states in the Conference negotiations.

Historians are always hesitant to draw lessons from the history of the Conference because its meanings were interpreted differently by the losers and the winners. Since the interwar period, the decisions of the Peace Conference have often been distorted to justify revisionist policies. The Peace Conference of 1919 must be well known in all its political and diplomatic details, because it unquestionably opened a Pandora's Box, it left a number of issues partially resolved. The great deficit of the Conference was the ambiguity of creating the international framework for the rigorous implementation of the Peace Treaties. Conciliationism after 1920 set dangerous precedents, resolved again on the battlefields of World War II, and then in the long Cold War after 1949.

My research was an attempt to capture the most significant behind-the-scenes aspects of the Peace Conference, which was inspired by pre-1919 pacifist conceptions and intended to reorganize Europe and the world with ineffective institutional means. Through the spectrum of cultural history I tried to unite various political, ideological, social, economic, spiritual aspects,

⁵⁸ Mihai Teodor Nicoară, „Națiunile în așteptarea păcii (1918–1919). «Leșire din război» sau «războiul de după război»?”, *Caiete de antropologie istorică*, anul XXI, nr. 2 (41), Iulie–Decembrie 2022, pp. 110-134. <https://www.caieteantropologieistorica.ro/docs/R3/41cai8.pdf>, accesat în 14 iunie 2023; Idem, „Emmanuel de Martonne et les frontières de la Grande Roumanie. Science et diplomatie”(I), *Caiete de antropologie istorică*, anul XIX, nr. 2 (37), Iulie–Decembrie 2020, pp. 147-165; <https://www.caieteantropologieistorica.ro/docs/R3/37CAI09.pdf>, accesat în 14 iunie 2023; Idem, „Emmanuel de Martonne et les frontières de la Grande Roumanie. Diplomatie et politique”(II), *Revista de istorie a Moldovei*, Chișinău, nr. 1-2 (121-122), ianuarie-iunie 2020, pp. 64-79; „Idealul păcii în legătură cu Societatea Națiunilor, de Cornelia Emilian”, *Caiete de antropologie istorică*, anul XV, nr. 2(31), Iulie–Decembrie 2017, pp. 109-113. <https://www.caieteantropologieistorica.ro/docs/R3/31cai13.pdf>, accesat în 14 iunie 2023.

⁵⁹ Florian Kührer-Wielac, „«A Fertile and Flourishing Garden.» A Political Assessment Ten Years after Versailles”, *Romania and the Paris Peace Conference 1919. Actors, Scenarios, Circulation of Knowledge Journal of Romanian Studies*, Special issue ed. by Svetlana Suveica, vol. 1, No. 2 2019, pp. 135-152.

⁶⁰ Gábor Egyri, „Made in Paris Contested Regions and Political Regionalism during and after Peacemaking: Székelyföld And Banat in a Comparative Perspective”, *Romania and the Paris Peace Conference 1919. Actors, Scenarios*, *Circulation of Knowledge Journal of Romanian Studies*, Special issue ed. by Svetlana Suveica, vol. 1, No. 2 2019, pp. 135-152.

to show the unprecedented complexity of the great event of 1919-1920, which wanted to establish a lasting peace. The subsequent course of events shows that the solidity of the principles of the Conference was not sufficient, since no effective means were found to enforce the letter of the treaties. The subsequent conferences in Paris clearly showed the difference in interests between the Great Powers, which entered into a dangerous game that led to the series of dramatic events in the second half of the 20th century.

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