

SITUAȚIA CETĂȚENILOR BRITANICI ÎN TIMPUL STATULUI NAȚIONAL-LEGIONAR DIN ROMÂNIA

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Relațiile româno-britanice au cunoscut o înrăutățire accentuată în timpul existenței statului-național legionar, între 14 septembrie 1940 și 23 ianuarie 1941¹. De această dată, schimbarea regimului politic din România a fost considerată la Londra ca reprezentând o aderare definitivă și fără rezerve la politica Axei². Răcirea relațiilor dintre cele două țări nu a fost ceva nou pentru acea vreme, ea făcând parte dintr-un proces continuu de deteriorare a raporturilor bilaterale, început ceva mai devreme. Politica externă românească era percepță ca fiind ostilă, datorită părăsirii atitudinii de neutralitate în cadrul conflictului mondial, această impresie fiind confirmată și de directorul politic al Foreign Office-ului, într-o discuție cu Radu Florescu, consilier al Legației României la Londra. Este interesant de remarcat faptul că atitudinea Ungariei, spre deosebire de cea a României, nu era considerată ca fiind răuvoitoare față de Marea Britanie³, deși englezii erau conștienți că și ungurii se aliniaseră politicii Axei⁴.

Pe plan intern, adoptarea primelor legi antisemite de către guvernul Goga-Cuza, instaurarea regimului monarchic autoritar al regelui Carol al II-lea, care s-a concretizat, printre altele, în diminuarea drepturilor cetățenești, desființarea partidelor politice și crearea partidului de masă, ascensiunea tot mai viguroasă a partidelor de extremă dreaptă, au dus, ca o consecință firească, la o anumită tensionare a relațiilor româno-britanice. Pe plan extern pot fi menționate mai multe momente care au marcat o anumită schimbare a politiciei românești. Totuși, de o cotitură clară se poate vorbi doar începând cu 1 iulie

¹ În mod oficial, denumirea de stat național-legionar a fost abrogată abia la 15 februarie 1941, prin decretul nr. 314.

² Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu, Ion Pătroiu, *Anglia și România între anii 1939-1947*, București, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică R.A., 1992, p. 92.

³ Termenul Marea Britanie va fi folosit pe tot cuprinsul studiului, deși, aşa cum se știe, nu este tocmai corect. Denumirea oficială a statului este Regatul Unit al Marii Britanii și Irlandei de Nord, o formulă prescurtată a acestei denumiri oficiale fiind aceea de Regatul Unit. Adesea se fac confuzii între termenii Anglia, Marea Britanie și Regatul Unit, cu toate că există diferențe semnificative. Anglia este doar una din țările regatului, Marea Britanie fiind compusă din Anglia, Scoția și Țara Galilor, în timp ce Regatul Unit cuprinde și Irlanda de Nord. Câteodată, numele Britania este folosit pentru a desemna Regatul Unit. Din punct de vedere geografic, sintagma „insulele britanice” se referă la Regatul Unit, precum și la Republica Irlanda. *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Micropaedia*, vol. 29, Chicago, Auckland, London etc., 1994, p. 1.

⁴ Arhivele Ministerului Afacerilor de Externe (în continuare: Arh. M.A.E.), fond *România*, vol. 131, f. 52. Telegramă trimisă de Radu Florescu către ministrul Afacerilor Străine ale României, la data de 5 septembrie 1940.

1940, zi în care România a renunțat printr-o manieră ofensatoare la garanțile franco-britanice, primite cu un an în urmă, la 13 aprilie 1939⁵. Abandonarea aliaților tradiționali ai României, Anglia și Franța, și apropierea tot mai clară de Germania era rezultatul unui proces ce începuse încă din 1936, anul demiterii lui Nicolae Titulescu din funcția de ministru al Afacerilor Străine.

Relațiile politice dintre Marea Britanie și România au fost dificile în toată perioada statului național-legionar. Precaritatea raporturilor bilaterale a fost determinată în mod categoric de două probleme: reținerea vaselor britanice de pe Dunăre de către autoritățile române, dar mai cu seamă de arestarea unor cetățeni britanici și ulterioara lor maltratare de către membri ai Mișcării Legionare.

Prinsă între o Uniune Sovietică ostilă și o Germanie triumfătoare în război, România a ales calea colaborării cu ultima dintre ele pentru a evita o eventuală ocupație militară germană. Această opinie a fost transmisă ca răspuns de către Radu Florescu directorului de la Foreign Office, ceea ce demonstrează că apropierea față de cel de-al III-lea Reich nu era sinceră, ci se datora unei conjuncturi internaționale concrete. Exprimarea diplomatului român nu lasă niciun dubiu asupra valabilității acestui raționament.

„Politica noastră, am adăugat, nu va mai păcătui ca în trecut de a voi să inducă lumea în eroare și, ca atare, conviști că guvernul britanic prețuiește atitudinile clare și cinstite, vom putea conta din partea politiciei britanice la un sprijin moral pe care Anglia îl datorește oricărei națiuni libere pe pământ. Nu văd ce avantaj ar avea Marea Britanie dacă prin crearea de complicații externe, țara noastră ar fi cotropită, decât acela că Londra ar vrea să ocrotească un guvern fictiv de pribegie”⁶.

Datorită investițiilor britanice făcute în extracția și prelucrarea petrolului din România, în țară se afla un număr însemnat de supuși britanici, ei fiind în cele mai multe cazuri ingineri la companiile petroliere. Alături de ei și familiile lor, mai pot fi menționăți cetățenii britanici care alcătuiau Legația Britanică de la București⁷. Încercarea stupidă a Marinei Britanice, eșuată în mod

⁵ Britanicii au aflat din presă că România a renunțat la garanții, fără ca ei să fie anunțați în prealabil, ceea ce i-a determinat să nu dea niciun răspuns acestui mod nepolitic de a proceda. Paul D. Quinlan, *Clash over Romania. British and American Policies toward Romania: 1938-1947*, Los Angeles, 1977, p. 63.

⁶ Arh. M.A.E., fond România, vol. 131, f. 244. Telegramă trimisă de Radu Florescu ministrului Afacerilor Străine ale României, la data de 8 septembrie 1940.

⁷ Legația Britanică era condusă de Sir Reginald Hoare, ministrul plenipotențiar al Marii Britanii la București. Printre alții, mai pot fi menționăți John Le Rougetel, consilierul legației, Alexander Adams, consilier comercial, Peter Augustus Buhagiar, consilier comercial adjunct, Wright, atașat de legație, Robert Maurice Hankey, prim-secretar, John Leigh Reed, al treilea secretar, Maximilian Carden Despard, atașat militar, Doran, șeful Serviciului Informativ Britanic, Norman Mayers, consul, lt.-col. Forbes, atașatul Aerului, Brasse, atașatul naval, Household, lt.-col. Geoffrey Alex Colin Macnab, Albert James Johnson, arhivist, Robert Dymock Watson,

lamentabil, de a distrugе Porțile de Fier, în primele zile ale lunii aprilie 1940, precum și afflarea planurilor de sabotaj ale britanicilor referitoare la distrugerea industriei și sondelor petroliere⁸, au făcut ca situația supușilor britanici aflați în România să se agraveze. Dacă în acea perioadă o acțiune generalizată împotriva lor nu a fost posibilă, ea a putut fi transpusă în practică ceva mai târziu, în timpul existenței statului-național legionar. Este important de precizat că acțiunile întreprinse împotriva cetățenilor britanici au fost făcute de către membri ai Mișcării Legionare.

În a doua jumătate a anului 1940 se poate observa cu ușurință o succesiune de momente extrem de tensionate în raporturile dintre cele două țări. Decizia Tezaurului Britanic, transmisă băncilor de pe tot cuprinsul Marii Britanii, de a bloca fondurile bănești deținute de români, precum și împiedicare transferului de aur în Elveția, reprezintă doar un aspect al acestei înrăutățiri⁹. Reținerea vaselor britanice de pe Dunăre de către autoritățile române a reprezentat o altă acțiune a aceleiași perioade tensionate¹⁰. În contrapondere, la Port Said, britanicii au reținut vasele „Bucegi”, „Oltenia” și „Steaua”, împiedicându-se astfel trimiterea în România a unor mărfuri comandate de Ministerul Înzestrării Armatei¹¹. Anularea de către autoritățile britanice din New York a tuturor licențelor de transport acordate pentru

atașat naval adjunct, Ambery, Andrew Pember, atașat de presă, Demetrios Gherassimos Inglessis, viceconsul, Jehnsen, Stanley Georg Green, James Gubson, Grand Foltig, funcționari. *Ibidem*, fond *Anglia*, vol. 41, f. 265.

⁸ S-a încercat de fapt o reeditare a operațiunilor din primul război mondial, când, aşa cum se știe, guvernul român a distruis un număr însemnat de sonde, rafinări și rezervoare, incendiind totodată și o cantitate impresionantă de derive din petrol. În contextul izbucnirii celui de-al doilea război mondial, anglo-francezii, pentru a priva Germania de produse petroliere, au reiterat cererea de distrugere a instalațiilor de pe Valea Prahovei. Au fost întocmite planuri minuțioase, cu acordul regelui, al guvernelor succedate în anii 1939-1940 și al Mareiui Stat Major Român, dar punerea lor în practică era luată în calcul doar în cazul unui atac direct al Germaniei, combinat cu o agresiune a Uniunii Sovietice și Ungariei. Politica de apropiere treptată a României față de Germania, din anii 1939-1940, a făcut ca aceste planuri să rămână doar pe hârtie, varianta aplicării lor devenind din ce în ce mai puțin probabilă odată cu trecerea timpului, ajungându-se chiar ca autoritățile române, în timp ce negociau cu anglo-francezii, să stabilească cu germanii măsuri de anihilare a eventualelor sabotaje. Gh. Buzatu, *O istorie a petrolului românesc*, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 1998, p. 323.

⁹ Arh. M.A.E., fond *Anglia*, vol. 14, f. 223. Telegramă nr. 65864, din 16 octombrie 1940, trimisă din Londra, semnată de către D.G. Danielopol.

¹⁰ Conform unei statistici din 1 august 1940, referitoare la diferențele ce existau în acele momente între Marea Britanie și România, se poate menționa reținerea pe Dunăre a 20 de vase britanice (5 remorchere, 11 řepuri, 2 tancuri, 1 elevator și 1 ponton), cu o valoare totală de 73 milioane lei. La Hârșova mai erau reținute câteva vase sub pavilion olandez și sub pavilion belgian (1 tan și 7 elevatoare olandeze; 2 tancuri și 2 elevatoare belgiene). *Ibidem*, vol. 41, f. 3-4. Telegramă trimisă de la Legația României din Londra către ministrul Afacerilor Străine, Mihail Manoilescu.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

mărfurile din Statele Unite în România, precum și imposibilitatea reluării curselor de vapoare de către Serviciul Maritim Român, pe ruta Constanța-Istanbul-Pireu, de teamă că ele vor fi sechestrare de marina britanică, nu au reprezentat altceva decât replici punitive ale Albionului.

Este interesant de menționat faptul că Legația Germaniei a jucat un rol important în acțiunea de blocare a vaselor britanice. Dacă în prima fază a diferendului, invocând principiul libertății navigației pe Dunăre, autoritățile române au rezistat cererilor formulate de Wilhelm Fabricius, ministrul plenipotențiar german la București, prin care acesta solicita interzicerea ieșirii de pe Dunăre a vaselor aflate sub pavilion britanic, în luna iulie a anului 1940, renunțarea la garanțiile franco-britanice de integritate teritorială și apropierea hotărâtă a României față de Germania au fost decisive. Guvernul progerman format la 4 iulie 1940, presidat de Ion Gigurtu și cu Mihail Manoilescu la conducerea Ministerului Afacerilor Straine, a fost mult mai receptiv față de cererile germane.

Această schimbare bruscă de atitudine nu poate fi explicată decât ca fiind o consecință a modificării raporturilor de forțe dintre Marile Puteri. Dacă în timpul guvernului presidat de Gheorghe Tătărescu, politica de echilibru între Marea Britanie și Germania era încă de actualitate, în scurt timp se va crede în România că Germania, și nu Anglia, va fi câștigătoarea competiției pentru dominarea spațiului sud-est european. Ca atare, atitudinea guvernului Gigurtu s-a dovedit a fi mult mai tranșantă față de englezi, dar bineînțeles obedientă față de germani în problema vaselor britanice de pe Dunăre.

Schimburile de mărfuri au fost și ele afectate, guvernul de la Londra plângându-se că nu putea aduce în țară 12.000 t de porumb, cumpărate înainte de 9 iunie, zi în care guvernul român interzise exportul acestui produs, precum și de faptul că i se cerea să plătească în dolari produsele petroliere exportate în Anglia, ceea ce contravenea acordului de plăți anglo-român încheiat la 6 iunie 1940¹².

Toate aceste diferențe apărute înaintea existenței statului național-legionar au fost extrem de grave, deteriorând în mod considerabil relațiile dintre Marea Britanie și România. Totuși, nicio problemă din cele relatate mai sus nu a afectat aşa de mult relațiile bilaterale dintre cele două țări, în modul în care a făcut-o arestarea și maltratarea unor cetățeni britanici, la sfârșitul lunii septembrie - începutul lunii octombrie. Cu toate că în primele zile ale lunii iulie au fost expulzați 27 de supuși britanici¹³, iar în ziua proclamării statului-național

¹² Ibidem, f. 6. Telegramă trimisă ministrului Mihail Manoilescu, de la Legația României din Londra.

¹³ Britanicii expulzați erau ingineri și funcționari în industria petrolieră. În data de 3 iulie 1940 s-a hotărât expulzarea lor, deoarece s-a considerat că aveau de gând să organizeze acțiuni de sabotare a industriei petroliere din România. Ibidem, f. 5.

legionar au mai plecat încă aproximativ 100¹⁴, în România mai rămăseseră destui cetățeni britanici.

După cum se va vedea din rândurile următoare, britanicii care au părăsit România au procedat corect, ei anticipând vremurile tulburi ce urmau să vină. Mai puțin inspirați se vor dovedi cei ce au decis să nu plece, rămânând pe loc în pofida nenumăratelor incidente ce semnificau o înrăutățire accentuată a relațiilor, ba chiar o iminentă rupere a raporturilor diplomatice. Așa a fost cazul cetățenilor britanici Percy R. Clark, Jock Anderson, Arthur Miller, Easter Ray Treacy, Herbert Falding Grant, J.T. Treacy și Charles Read Brasier. Cu toții își aveau reședința pe Valea Prahovei sau în București, ei îndeplinind diferite funcții de conducere la compania „Astra Română” sau în domeniul industriei. Se pare că, aşa cum însuși Horia Sima a consemnat într-o din cărțile sale, la originea acțiunii de arestare a acestor supuși britanici s-ar fi aflat Serviciul German de Securitate de pe Valea Prahovei, condus de către dr. Luptar¹⁵. Considerându-se că britanicii ce-și aveau reședință în jurul Ploieștiului nu sunt altceva decât sabotori sub acoperire, ei având misiunea să repete operațiunea din primul război mondial, dr. Luptar a luat legătura cu organizația legionară din județul Prahova, condusă de profesorul Mihai Tase, pentru a-i face cât mai repede inofensivi pe amintiții cetățeni britanici¹⁶. Această acțiune a reprezentat una dintre primele cheстиuni de politică externă cu care s-au confruntat legionarii în guvernarea lor, ea arătând totodată faptul că generalul Antonescu, conducătorul statului, nu împărtășea decât într-o mică măsură atitudinea legionarilor¹⁷.

Arestările cetățenilor britanici, sau mai bine-zis răpirile lor, au fost foarte asemănătoare între ele, dovedind că au fost planuite din timp și puse la cale de aceiași oameni. Deși aflată sub control legionar, poliția de stat nu a fost implicată cu nimic în toate aceste arestări, ele fiind realizate de membrii Mișcării, unii dintre ei fiind încadrați în poliția legionară.

Legionarii, având convingerea că trebuie să scape România de cei cu „sânge englezesc”, au aplicat un interrogatori de o brutalitate extremă, această atitudine fiind justificată, spuneau ei, de uciderea a peste două mii de gardiști în timpul regelui Carol al II-lea, printre care și Căpitanul, precum și de proastele

¹⁴ În seara zilei de 14 octombrie 1940, din Gara de Nord, cu destinația Istanbul, au părăsit România 35 de funcționari ai Legației Britanice, și încă alți 62 de cetățeni britanici. Bagajele le erau compuse din 56 de valize diplomatice, precum și din 90 de pachete de diferite mărimi. *Ibidem*, f. 8.

¹⁵ Horia Sima, *Era libertății. Statul național-legionar*, vol. 1, Timișoara, Editura Gordian, 1995, p. 127.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ *Stenogrammele Ședințelor Consiliului de Ministri. Guvernarea Ion Antonescu*, vol. I, București, Arhivele Naționale ale României, 1997, p. 112. Ședința Consiliului de Cabinet din 27 septembrie 1940.

relații dintre România și Germania¹⁸. În toate acestea, se consideră că amestecul britanic era de netăgăduit și, în consecință, nu s-au purtat deloc cu mănuși în cazul niciunui dintre britanici.

Considerându-se că sunt membri ai Intelligence Service-ului¹⁹, și că făceau parte dintr-o conspirație organizată pentru a distrugе industria petrolieră de pe Valea Prahovei, pentru a sabota trimiterea de produse derivate din petrol în Germania, toți cei arestați au fost maltratați. J.E. Treacy a fost supus mai multor serii de bătăi cu bâta peste tălpile goale, lovitură de pumn în față și lovitură de picior în coaste, fese și testicule. Ba mai mult, în timp ce era legat, a fost de mai multe ori aruncat de perete și lovit în mod repetat în cap cu țeava revolverului²⁰. Percy R. Clark a avut parte de același tratament, legionarii nefiind zgârciți nici în cazul lui cu loviturile de pumn, picior și ciomag. Alternanță întrebare-bătaie a fost aplicată și pentru Alex Miller și Jock Anderson. De fapt, aşa cum chiar Alex Miller a consegnat ulterior, procedura de interogare constă într-o primă fază în punerea de către legionari a unei întrebări, sau mai degrabă de formulare a unei sugestii de răspuns. Neprimind răspunsul dorit, anchetatorii aplicau o bătaie zdravănă interogatului, după care întrebarea era formulată din nou²¹. Au fost aplicate și torturi psihologice. Alex Miller a fost amenințat cu împușcarea, în cazul în care refuza să „mărturisească”, în timp ce lui Jock Anderson i s-a zis că dacă spune un singur

¹⁸ Arhivele Naționale ale României. Direcția Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale (în continuare: A.N.R.D.A.N.I.C.), colecția *Microfilme*, fond *Anglia*, r. 309, c. 233. Vezi anexa IV, p. 385.

¹⁹ Serviciile secrete de informații britanice au fost organizate pe principii moderne încă din timpul reginei Elisabeta I, iar experiența acumulată de britanici în acest domeniu a influențat structura organizatorică a celor mai multe servicii secrete din lume. De-a lungul întregii lor existențe, agenții secrete din Marea Britanie au dat publicitatea foarte puține informații despre structura lor organizatorică, precum și despre acțiunile lor. Cele două principale servicii secrete sunt: Secret Intelligence Service (SIS, cunoscut în timpul războiului sub denumirea de MI-6) și Security Service (în mod obișnuit numit MI-5). Aceste denumiri provin din faptul că Secret Intelligence Service a fost cândva „secția a șasea” a serviciilor secrete ale armatei, în timp ce Security Service, „secția a cincea”. În prezent, MI-6 este o organizație civilă cu funcții similare celor pe care le are CIA în Statele Unite, principala responsabilitate fiind aceea de a strânge informații din afara teritoriului Regatului Unit. Directorul SIS-ului poartă apelativul de „C”, identitatea sa nefiind cunoscută nici de către membrii guvernului. MI-5 este echivalentul FBI-ului din Statele Unite. Diferența față de organizația americană constă în mare parte în îndeplinirea anumitor funcții de contraspionaj extern. MI-5 are misiunea de a proteja informațiile secrete britanice față de spioni străini, precum și de a preveni sabotajele interne, subversiunile și furtul de secrete de stat. Security Service (MI-5) nu are dreptul de a face arestări directe, acestea fiind realizate prin intermediul așa-numitei Special Branch a Scotland Yard-ului. *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropaedia*, vol. 21, Chicago, Auckland, London etc., 1994, p. 786-787.

²⁰ A.N.R.D.A.N.I.C., colecția *Microfilme*, fond *Anglia*, r. 309, c. 231-232. Vezi anexa IV, p. 384.

²¹ *Ibidem*, c. 221. Vezi anexa III, p. 377.

lucru neadevărat, va fi dus acasă, iar acolo îi vor fi împușcați copiii, în fața sa, după care va fi împușcat și el²². Cu siguranță însă, prin cea mai grozavă tortură a trecut Percy R. Clark care a fost pus cu fața la perete, iar pe creștetul capului i-a fost pus un măr, după care legionarii au tras de la mică distanță în acesta cu revolverele. Atunci când mărul era nimerit de un glonț, un altul i se punea pe cap, iar acest „concurs de tir” a ținut cam o jumătate de oră²³. În aceste condiții nu este de mirare că unii dintre britanicii arestați au semnat declarații prin care au „recunoscut” învinuirile aduse, doar pentru a scăpa de tortură. Percy R. Clark, unul dintre arestații care și-a menținut declarația inițială, în ciuda torturilor ce i-au fost aplicate, a distins șase etape în metoda de interogare a legionarilor²⁴:

1. Cererea unei mărturisiri.
2. Maltratarea prizonierului.
3. Smulgerea unei declarații de vinovăție.
4. Aplicarea unei noi serii de tortură, deoarece declarația nu era niciodată aşa cum o voiau legionarii.
5. Cererea de schimbare a declarației anterioare.
6. Reluarea maltratării până când se obținea declarația dorită.

De adăugat faptul că cei arestați nu au primit apă și alimente pentru o perioadă lungă de timp, în unele cazuri aceasta fiind chiar de câteva zile, și nici nu au beneficiat de asistență medicală, cu toate că toți ar fi avut nevoie de îngrijirile unui medic, datorită rănilor și leziunilor cu care se aleseră în urma loviturilor primite.

Cu toate că legionarii au căutat să facă în aşa fel încât dispariția cetătenilor britanici să nu fie remarcată, acest lucru era greu de realizat. Știrile despre răpirea și maltratarea unor supuși britanici au ajuns la diplomații Legației Britanice de la București, prin intermediul consulului Norman Mayers²⁵ care a

²² *Ibidem*, c. 214. Vezi anexa II, p. 374.

²³ *Ibidem*, c. 205. Vezi anexa I, p. 366.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, c. 209. Vezi anexa I, p. 372.

²⁵ Norman Mayers s-a născut la 22 mai 1895. A studiat la King's College, Londra, precum și la Caius College, Cambridge. A fost înrolat în armata britanică între anii 1914 și 1919. În data de 23 octombrie 1922 a fost numit viceconsul stagiar în Serviciul Consular din Levant. A fost trimis la Beirut, unde a avut funcția de consul general interimar, între 10 octombrie 1925 și 24 martie 1926. Consul interimar la Jedda, din 15 septembrie 1926 până în 26 aprilie 1927. În același an a fost numit viceconsul în cadrul Serviciului Consular din Levant. I-a fost acordat rangul de al treilea secretar, la 9 septembrie 1927, iar la 2 septembrie 1930 a primit rangul de al doilea secretar în cadrul misiunii diplomatice de la Addis-Abeba. Consul și consul general interimar la Alexandria. La 17 decembrie 1938 și-a asumat responsabilitatea conducerii consulatului de la București, unde, la 1 ianuarie 1939, a fost numit consul. *The Foreign Office List and Diplomatic and Consular Year Book*, London, Harrison and Sons Ltd., 1940, p. 349.

cerut imediat detalii de la procurorul general al României²⁶. Prin adresa sa oficială, trimisă către procurorul general, consulul britanic cerea: să i se comunice dacă magistratul competent a fost înștiințat de aceste arestări ilegale, întrucât termenul de 48 de ore fusese depășit; să se întreprindă cercetări urgente pentru a se elucida condițiile în care au fost detinuți și cercetați; să i se comunice când poate vedea pe respectivele persoane arestate²⁷.

La o singură zi distanță de intervenția consulului Norman Mayers pe lângă autoritățile române, șeful Foreign Office-ului, lordul Halifax²⁸ i-a înmânat șefului misiunii diplomatice române din Londra o notă de protest în termeni foarte categorici împotriva felului în care au fost tratați cetățenii britanici²⁹. Prin textul notei erau formulate cereri precise, atrăgându-se atenția guvernului român că toată această afacere nu face altceva decât să deterioreze și mai mult relațiile României cu Marea Britanie. Au fost repetate cererile formulate

²⁶ Arh. M.A.E., fond *Anglia*, vol. 14, f. 320. Adresă trimisă de consulul britanic Norman Mayers către procurorul general al României, de la Curtea de Apel din București, în ziua de 28 septembrie 1940.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, fond *România*, vol. 131, f. 381-383.

²⁸ Marchizii, conții sau viconții de Halifax sunt titluri de noblețe acordate în mod special în familiile Savile, Montagu și Wood. Edward Frederick Lindley Wood, primul conte de Halifax, a mai purtat titulatura de baron Irwin, în perioada 1925-1934, și viconte de Halifax, între 1934 și 1944. S-a născut în ziua de 16 aprilie 1881, la Powderham Castle, Devonshire, și a murit la 23 decembrie 1959, la Garroby Hall, lângă York, Yorkshire. A studiat la Eton, precum și la Christ Church, Oxford. În ianuarie 1910 a devenit membru al Parlamentului Britanic, reprezentând Partidul Conservator. A luptat pe frontul de Vest pentru o anumită perioadă, în timpul primului război mondial, ulterior devenind secretar-asistent al ministrului de Război. După încheierea conflagrației mondiale a fost în mod succesiv subsecretar de stat pentru Colonii (1921-1922), ministru al Educației (1922-1924) și ministru al Agriculturii (1924-1925). A fost vicerege al Indiei, între 1925 și 1929, primind rang nobiliar cu titulatura de baron Irwin. După întoarcerea în Anglia a fost numit din nou ministru al Educației (1932-1935), Lord al Sigiliului Privat (1935-1937), lider al Camerei Lorzilor (1935-1938), iar la 25 februarie 1938 a devenit titularul Foreign Office-ului, în urma retragerii lui Anthony Eden din acest post. Perioada în care a fost șeful diplomației britanice a reprezentat fără îndoială cea mai controversată etapă din viața sa, deoarece a fost de acord cu politica de conciliere a premierului Neville Chamberlain față de Germania. Ca Lord al Sigiliului Privat, a purtat discuții cu Adolf Hitler și Hermann Göring, în 1937, pentru ca doi ani mai târziu să-l însoțească pe primul-ministru într-o vizită la Roma, unde a avut o întrevedere oficială cu Benito Mussolini. După numirea lui Winston Churchill ca prim-ministru, a continuat să fie titularul Foreign Office-ului, dar în decembrie 1940 a fost numit ambasador al Marii Britanii în Statele Unite ale Americii. În acest post a adus mari servicii cauzei Aliaților, în timpul celui de-al doilea război mondial, iar ca o recunoaștere a acestor merite a primit titlul de conte de Halifax, în 1944. A participat la Conferința de la San Francisco, din martie 1945, ca delegat al Marii Britanii, și a fost membru al primei sesiuni a Națiunilor Unite. La 1 mai 1946 s-a retras din funcția de ambasador. Și-a publicat memoriile, intitulate *Fulness of Days*, în 1957. *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *Micropanedia*, vol. 5, 1994, p. 636-637.

²⁹ Arh. M.A.E., fond *Anglia*, vol. 231, f. 284. Telegramă trimisă de la Legația din Londra către Ministerul Afacerilor Străine ale României, la data de 20 septembrie 1940.

anterior de către consulul Norman Mayers, la care s-a adăugat dorința de a întâlni pe un reprezentant al guvernului român, precum și cerința insistență ca supușii britanici arestați să fie cât mai grabnic judecați, iar în cazul în care li se va dovedi nevinovăția, să fie eliberați imediat³⁰.

Situuația devenise extrem de gravă, deoarece la cererile formulate de șeful Foreign Office-ului, Mihail Sturdza, ministrul Afacerilor Straine, a răspuns laconic, printr-o telegramă în care Radu Florescu era însărcinat să transmită la Londra că cetățenii britanici arestați erau urmăriți pentru acte de sabotaj îndreptate împotriva statului român³¹. Cum răspunsul dat nu corespundea deloc solicitărilor formulate de partea britanică, se ajunse la un stadiu foarte apropiat de ruperea legăturilor diplomatice, cum aprecia chiar diplomatul român de la Londra³².

În fața acestor proteste extrem de energice, generalul Antonescu, care era un anglofil în adâncul sufletului său³³, a devenit deosebit de îngrijorat de perspectiva ruperii relațiilor diplomatice, precum și de eventualele atacuri aeriene ale Royal Air Force³⁴ asupra Văii Prahovei sau Bucureștiului³⁵. Acest

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

³¹ *Ibidem*, vol. 14, f. 194. Telegramă trimisă ministrului plenipotențiar de la Londra, de către șeful diplomației române, la data de 9 octombrie 1940.

³² *Ibidem*, f. 202. Telegramă trimisă de Radu Florescu ministrului Afacerilor Straine ale României, la data de 11 octombrie 1940.

³³ Ion Antonescu a fost pentru o perioadă îndelungată de timp atașatul militar al Legației României din Londra și, în urma acestei șederi, avea o foarte mare admirăție pentru Marea Britanie. Exemplele care dovedesc acest lucru sunt numeroase. Într-o ședință a Consiliului de Miniștri din 1940, când relațiile cu Anglia erau deja destul de precare, Ion Antonescu recomanda ca presa românească să ia ca model presa insulară, unde nimeni nu avea voie să comenteze în ziare crimele și procesele senzaționale, deoarece se considera că ele nu fac altceva decât să excite sentimentele bestiale ale oamenilor, ci trebuie să se redea doar sentința judecătorească. *Stenogramele Ședințelor Consiliului de Miniștri*, vol. 1, p. 69. Consiliul de Miniștri din 21 septembrie 1940. Altă dată, Ion Antonescu nu s-a sfuit să admire eficacitatea justiției britanice, relatând un caz în care un hoț de buzunare din Londra, după ce a fost prins a fost dus la judecător și, pe baza martorilor, a fost condamnat imediat. *Ibidem*, p. 265. Consiliul de Miniștri din 16 octombrie 1940. Programul de lucru al funcționarilor britanici ar fi fost un alt model demn de urmat pentru angajații din România, Conducătorul statului afirmând din nou într-o ședință de cabinet că „ăș vrea să ajung în această privință, pentru că s-a ridicat problema acum, la situația pe care am găsit-o la englezii și care cred că este cea mai bună”. *Ibidem*, p. 281. Ședința Consiliului de Miniștri din 17 octombrie 1940. În altă situație dă ca exemplu Anglia unde, în anul 1925 a avut loc o grevă generală de 15 zile, și cu toate acestea „niciun articol nu s-a scumpit cu absolut nimic datorită organizării în stat”. *Ibidem*, p. 386. Consiliul de Miniștri din 3 octombrie 1940.

³⁴ Primele unități aeriene în armata Marii Britanii au fost formate la doar 8 ani de la efectuarea primului zbor cu motor, ce a avut loc în anul 1903. În aprilie 1911 a fost format un batalion de aviație, compus dintr-o companie de dirijabile și una de avioane. În decembrie 1911, Admiraliitatea Britanică a înființat prima școală de zbor în Eastchurch, Kent. În luna mai a anului 1912 s-a format Royal Flying Corps (RFC), aceasta cuprinzând unități de aviație ce aparțineau

conflict diplomatic a scos foarte bine în evidență dualitatea de putere ce exista în conducerea României între generalul Ion Antonescu, foarte atent la relațiile cu Marea Britanie, și Mișcarea Legionară, care avea o aversiune extremă față de puterea insulară. Datorită arestării cetățenilor englezi, Ion Antonescu, într-o ședință a Consiliului de Cabinet, nu s-a dat în lături de la admonestarea serioasă a lui Constantin Petrovicescu, ministrul de Interne, amenințându-l chiar că dacă aceste lucruri nu încetează, în scurt timp va fi demis³⁶. Drept urmare, britanicii arestați de legionari au fost preluati de autoritățile statului și au compărut în fața Tribunalului Militar din București, care a stabilit nevinovăția lor. În sfârșit, cei arestați erau liberi, ei părăsind imediat România, de frică să nu cadă din nou în mâinile legionarilor. Unii au plecat prin vama Giurgiu, dar alții au ieșit din țară pe la Constanța, deși vama de aici se afla sub control legionar. Cu toții au ajuns la Istanbul, la Spitalul American, unde, în unele cazuri, au primit îngrijiri medicale foarte îndelungate. Se încheia astfel un episod dureros care a generat o criză diplomatică profundă între cele două țări, ajungându-se, aşa cum a afirmat chiar personalul Legației României de la Londra, la un pas de ruperea relațiilor diplomatice.

Trebuie să remarcăm din nou intervenția promptă a generalului Antonescu, care chiar a prezentat scuzele sale în numele guvernului român pentru tratamentul inuman la care fuseseră supuși cetățenii britanici în perioada prealabilă preluării lor de către autoritățile statului. Însă, până să ajungă la autoritățile competente, care au avut un comportament ireproșabil, unii dintre arestați au stat chiar mai mult de o săptămână în mâinile legionarilor, timp în care, aşa cum s-a putut vedea din rândurile de mai sus, au fost torturați fizic și psihic, au fost privați de apă și alimente, precum și de îngrijire medicală, deși în urma torturilor ar fi avut nevoie de aşa ceva. Nu este deloc de neglijat faptul că

atât marinei, cât și armatei. Doi ani mai târziu, unitățile de aviație navală au format Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS), în timp ce titulatura de Royal Flying Corps a fost menținută pentru unitățile de aviație ale trupelor de uscat. La 1 aprilie 1918, RNAS și RFC s-au contopit, formându-se astfel Royal Air Force (RAF), creându-se astfel o nouă categorie a forțelor armate din Marea Britanie, alături de marina și trupele terestre. Din același an 1918, trupele de aviație au avut propriul ministru, subordonat unui secretar de stat al Aerului. RAF dispunea de 291.000 de persoane și 22.647 aparate de zbor la sfârșitul primului război mondial. La sfârșitul celei de-a doua conflagrații mondale, Aviația Regală Britanică dispunea de 963.000 de persoane, numărul acestora fiind redus în perioada postbelică la aproximativ 150.000. În anul 1964, RAF împreună cu Admiralițatea și cu War Office au devenit subordonate Ministerului Apărării. *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Micropaedia*, vol. 10, 1994, p. 217.

³⁵ Stenogrammele Ședințelor Consiliului de Miniștri, vol. 1, p. 112. Ședința Consiliului de Cabinet din 26 septembrie 1940.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 111. Ședința Consiliului de Cabinet din 27 septembrie 1940.

legionarii au confiscat un mare număr de bunuri, cele mai multe nefiind restituite³⁷.

Deteriorarea relațiilor diplomatice ale României cu Marea Britanie a provocat o situație tensionată în cadrul Legației din Londra. Cel mai elocvent exemplu este cazul lui D. Dimăncescu, consilierul pentru presă al legației. Aceasta, considerând că guvernul de la București nu reprezenta interesele reale ale țării, și-a mutat biroul de la legație, luând cu sine cîfrul, mașina de scris, precum și alte articole, încât Radu Florescu nu mai avea niciun control asupra activității lui. „Nu își aduce aminte de legațune decât atunci când îmi trimite creditorii lui pentru cheltuielile angajate de dânsul în numele legațunii”, afirma cu năduf diplomatul român³⁸. Conform aprecierilor lui Radu Florescu, Mircea Eliade³⁹, care se afla în Anglia la acea vreme, și care era „în legături strânse cu conducerea Mișcării Legionare” a trimis și el o telegramă destinată vicepreședintelui Consiliului de Miniștri, Horia Sima, dar și subsecretarului de stat din Ministerul Propagandei Naționale, Alexandru Constant, prin care recomanda demiterea și rechemarea în țară a lui D. Dimăncescu, „cunoscut carlist și antilegionar, care sabotează noul regim”⁴⁰. După demisia sa de la legație, D. Dimăncescu a continuat să atace guvernul de la București, înființând, așa cum Radu Florescu susținea într-o telegramă trimisă în capitala

³⁷ Percy R. Clark a reclamat luarea de către legionari a sumei de 25.000 lei, precum și a întregii cantități găsite la el acasă din următoarele bunuri: vinuri și lichioruri, cereale, medicamente, biciclete (5), țesături din in și lenjerie de pat. Lui Alex Miller i-au fost luate ceasul și lanțul din aur, în timp ce J.E. Treacy a fost depozitat de mașină, banii găsiți în casă, bijuteriile soției, mari cantități de haine și alimente. A.N.R.D.A.N.I.C., colecția Microfilme, fond *Anglia*, r. 309, c. 208, 225, 234. Vezi anexele I, III și IV, p. 368, 380, 386.

³⁸ Arh. M.A.E., fond *Anglia*, vol. 41, f. 196. Telegramă trimisă de Radu Florescu ministrului Afacerilor Străine ale României, la 9 octombrie 1940.

³⁹ Mircea Eliade a fost intelectualul cel mai apropiat de Nae Ionescu, mentorul spiritual al Mișcării Legionare, iar acest lucru nu a rămas fără urmări. Deși Eliade a negat ulterior orice afinitate sau simpatie față de legionari, afirmând că rolul său a fost unul exclusiv cultural, cu certitudine putem spune astăzi că el a sperat și a crezut în triumful Mișcării Legionare, lucru dovedit, printre altele, de un articol publicat de el în *Buna Vestire*, la sfârșitul anului 1937, și intitulat extrem de sugestiv *De ce cred în biruința Mișcării Legionare?* Constantin Petculescu, *Intelectualitatea și mișcarea fascistă din România. Atitudini. Controverse, în Ideea care ucide*, București, Editura Noua Alternativă, 1994, p. 145-146. D.G. Danielopol, în memoriile sale, consemnează faptul că la puțin timp după cooptarea legionarilor la putere, Eliade, care se afla la Londra în acea vreme, și-a demonstrat adeziunea sa față de cauza legionară: „[...], Eliade a luat cuvântul. El ne-a făcut un expozeu extrem de documentat al „ororilor” comise de poliția fostului regim contra Gărzii de Fier, spunându-ne pe șleau că el era una din luminile conduceătoare ale acestei mișcări, și că a avut de suferit din această cauză rigorile lagărului de concentrare”. D.G. Danielopol, *Jurnal londonez*, Iași, Institutul European, 1995, p. 134.

⁴⁰ Arh. M.A.E., fond *Anglia*, vol. 14, f. 187. Telegramă trimisă de Radu Florescu ministrului Afacerilor Străine ale României.

României, un post de radio clandestin care emitea pe unde scurte, în limba română⁴¹.

În final, se pot emite câteva concluzii. Resentimentele față de modul în care au fost tratați cetățenii britanici au continuat să existe mult timp, Sir Reginald Hoare⁴² cerând cu insistență obținerea unei „satisfacții” pentru incidentele produse în octombrie 1940⁴³. Criza generată de arestarea ilegală a cetățenilor britanici a reprezentat prima mare problemă de politică externă a guvernării legionare. Ea a făcut parte dintr-un lung șir de excese, ceea ce demonstrează faptul că Legiunea atinsese un stadiu în care cu greu mai putea fi controlată. Legionarii, veniți la putere după o lungă perioadă de persecuție, s-au consolat prin jafuri și răzbunări locale, iar Horia Sima a trebuit să tolereze aceste izbucniri pentru a mai avea totuși o brumă de autoritate asupra „cămășilor verzi”⁴⁴. Mai trebuie să ținem cont de faptul că, în timpul regimului carlist, au fost unele zone în care clasa conducătoare gardistă fusese exterminată în totalitate, de pildă județul Prahova, unde organizația teritorială a căzut în mâna extremiștilor și a noilor veniți⁴⁵. O altă explicație ar mai putea fi faptul că arestările și problemele create au fost înfăptuite de aripa de stânga a Mișcării⁴⁶, care nu vedea cu ochi buni alianța cu generalul Antonescu, făcută de elementele de dreapta, în frunte cu Horia Sima.

⁴¹ Ibidem.

⁴² Sir Reginald Hervey Hoare. S-a născut la 19 iulie 1882. A fost numit atașat de ambasadă în data de 7 decembrie 1905. A fost repartizat la Constantinopol (Istanbul), în 27 august 1906, dar a lucrat la Atene pentru o scurtă perioadă de timp. În anul următor i s-a acordat un certificat de cunoașterea limbii turce. A obținut rangul de al treilea secretar de misiune diplomatică, la 23 martie 1908. A fost transferat la Roma, în 1909, unde a fost promovat al doilea secretar. Ulterior a fost transferat la Pekin, în iunie 1914, iar trei ani mai târziu la Petrograd. Membru al delegației conduse de Mr. Lindsey, la Arhangelsk, unde a fost chargé d'affaires, până în 31 august 1919. A fost transferat în cadrul Foreign Office-ului, iar mai târziu la Varșovia. A devenit consilier în cadrul ambasadei din Pekin. În anii 1925, 1926 și 1927 a îndeplinit funcția de însărcinat cu afaceri la Constantinopol. Ministru plenipotențiar la Cairo și Teheran. La 1 februarie 1935 a fost transferat la București. A fost decorat cu Medalia Jubileului de Argint. *The Foreign Office List*, p. 286-287.

⁴³ Arh. M.A.E., fond *Anglia*, vol. 14, f. 497. Telegramă trimisă de Alexandru Cretzianu, secretar general al M.A.E., către ministrul Justiției, Mihai Antonescu, la data de 11 ianuarie 1941.

⁴⁴ Nicolas M. Nagy-Tálavera, *Fascismul în Ungaria și România*, București, Editura Hasefer, 1996, p. 424.

⁴⁵ Michele Rallo, *România în perioada revoluțiilor naționale din Europa 1919-1945*, București, Editura Sempre, 1999, p. 97.

⁴⁶ Conform opiniei colonelului Teodorescu, factiunea de stânga avea și comuniști în rândurile sale, ei fiind recrutați în perioada în care Mișcarea Legionară a fost scoasă în afara legii. A.N.R.D.A.N.I.C., colecția *Microfilme*, fond *Anglia*, r. 309, c. 86.

Situarea cetățenilor britanici în timpul statului național-legionar

ANEXE

I.

Declarația lui Percy R. Clark, adresată ministrului plenipotențiar al Marii Britanii de la București, prin care relatează experiențele sale trăite în România. A.N.R.D.A.N.I.C., colecția *Microfilme*, fond *Anglia*, r. 309, c. 202-211.

No. 23 (5/3) 40

HIS Majesty's Consul General at Istanbul presents his compliments to His Majesty's Ambassador at Ankara and has the honour to transmit to him the under-mentioned documents.

British Consulate-
General
Istanbul

27th November, 1940

Reference to the previous correspondence:

Consular Printed Letter of the 22nd November No. 22 (5/3)40

Description of Enclosure.

Name and Date
Letter from:-
Mr. P.R. Clark
of the 20th November 1940
To:- H.M. Minister,
Bucharest.

Subject
Mr. Percy R. Clark.
His experiences in Roumania.

Letter from:-
Mr. Jock Anderson
Of the 27th November, 1940
To:-H.B.M. Minister,
Bucharest.
PERCY R. CLARK

Mr. Jock Anderson.
His experiences in Roumania.

ANGLIA HOUSE
PLOIEȘTI
ROUMANIA
Temporarily:
The American Hospital,
Istanbul.
20th November, 1940.

To
H.B.M. Minister,
Bucharest.

Your Excellency,

In accordance with your request I beg to give you hereunder a report on my recent experiences in Roumania.

You will remember that, after being expelled at the commencement of July last, I succeeded in re-establishing my normal right of domicile in Roumania. However this success (?) was all too transitory. As each day passed it became more and more evident that the Germans intended to complete their stranglehold on Roumania.

One of the German controlled papers, to wit: "Porunca Vremii" commenced a consistent attack on me, whilst the Radio Dunarea (German broadcast in Roumania from Vienna) seemed to consider me a favourite topic of conversation; their 7.15 p.m. broadcast

might start off with something like the following: "The big industrialist and big scoundrel Percy Clark, etc, etc." By a certain manoeuvre with the paper "Porunca Vremii" I managed to silence their campaign against me and it was interesting to note that the Radio Dunarea immediately stopped their scurrilous campaign also.

It was not that I particularly minded the offensive epithets that the German radio hurled at my head; obviously it spoke well of me as a Britisher that the Germans should fume at me; on the contrary it would probably have looked suspicious had they spoken well of me; but I did not want the Roumanian officials to be to much impressed with the Germans' desire to get me out of Roumania.

However, all this only helped for a short time.

In any case I did not return to Ploiești, but established myself in the Athénée Palace Hotel at Bucharest.

On the afternoon of the 3rd October, I was in my bedroom when the chambermaid came to say there were three "gentlemen" waiting to see me in the outer room. Well, I had people calling to see me all day long, and naturally I quite unsuspectingly went out to receive them.

I had three revolvers pointed at me. I asked my visitors for their documents of identity, on which one of them showed a police identity card. Apparently therefore there was nothing for me to do but to "toe the line".

They warned me not to show any sign or make any sound on my way downstairs. This request of theirs for silence aroused my suspicions somewhat – seemed to suggest that after all it was not a legal arrest. I was taken to a car which was waiting outside and there surrounded by Iron-guards I was driven along the Calea Victoriei in the direction of the Post Office, but on the way they turned down a side street to the left and came out on the Boulevard Brătianu. From there they headed for Ploiești. My suspicions were once more roused: "Why should they need to disguise their route, if they were genuine police agents authorised to arrest me?"

I got into conversation with them as far as I could, and was informed that I was being taken to the "Siguranță" in Ploiești. That raised my spirits somewhat, for the reason that there I was well known and have always had friendly relations. They however did not take me to the "Siguranță", but after a stop or two in the town of Ploiești, they took me in the direction of Bacău (Moldova), and after a long drive turned to the left, where a signpost said "Tașanu". The car coming to a stop eventually, I was unloaded into a peasant cottage. I found it was a typical but large cottage; it had four rooms. Of course it was a miserable hole. I was searched, and everything I had was taken away from me. I was then put into a room with a bed that had a few rags on it, and told that I could rest meantime if I liked to. Later supper was brought in, consisting of bits of bread, sausage and an apple.

Later the "court" arrived, it consisted of a few young "roughs". After a while the court arranged itself in a room, with the president seated at a rough plank table. He announced to me that he had absolute proof that I was a member of the British Intelligence Service and had also taken a hand in the sabotage against the delivery of oil products to Germany, and added that any denial on my part would have serious results for me.

Another interesting charge brought against me was that a few years ago after a voyage I had made to Germany I wrote a report to the British Government on the state of affairs existing there. This was another proof, if one should be necessary, that the whole affair was run by Germans.

After this a number of them set upon me, beating me savagely with fists and sticks. Then they ordered me to give evidence again. They asked me if I knew a man named Miller. (Miller was a manager of the Astra-Română, in Bucharest, and he had been kidnapped a day or two before from the Astra club in Snagov). I answered that to the best of my knowledge I had seen him three times in my life and that the last time was in July. They retorted that I had met

him in the month of September. This I denied. Miller was brought in then. Asked when he had seen me last, he said it was in September at a Consular reception, but added that I had not spoken to him then. Then the “court” produced Miller’s written evidence that a certain Watts had handed me some phial of some liquid. I told them that I did not know anyone by the name of Watts. Miller was brought in again, and said that he had heard about this from the other people.

I then began to understand that he, in order to escape the tortures inflicted on him, made confessions of things he had not done and of acts that had never taken place. Miller’s evidence was again produced and I was confronted with the accusation that I had had a “discussion” in Snagov with a man by the name of Henderson. I replied that I didn’t know who the man was. Miller explained that he was a chemist I had met at the beginning of July. At last I managed to visualise the man faintly. The circumstances were that Mr. and Mrs. Forster (Astra people), before leaving in July, invited me one night to have dinner with them at the Astra-Română club in Snagov. We joined the communal table. After dinner we played an American game of dice. It appeared that the loser was to pay for the drinks. As I didn’t know the game I of course lost. There was an uproar when it was realised that the only visitor present (myself) was to pay. Somebody suggested “double or quits” and Henderson, knowing the game, took the dice and threw in my place. He won and so the matter was settled to the satisfaction of all present. That was the only discussion I ever had with Henderson.

I mention these trifles to give you an idea of what was taking place. This riff-raff of the legionnaire party, who had been granted certain rights to seek out saboteurs, had arrested us Britishers and tortured us in order to obtain evidence – not because of any proved guilt. To escape this torture some of the victims signed confessions containing entirely untrue statements. I do not wish to throw any blame on the unfortunate prisoners. I have learned how hard it is to stick to one’s declaration, however true it be, when tortured and threatened with further and worse torture.

They then dealt with the charge against me of belonging to the British Intelligence Service. The depositions of another tortured man Jock Anderson, (he by the way is in hospital with me now) were produced. It appears they found amongst Anderson’s papers a note to the effect that he had received about 200,000 lei from me. This was for sterling ceded to me in England. Of course, a “Black market” transaction – a penal offence under the laws of Roumania. Presumably, terrified at the prospect of being charged with this, he confessed in his confusion to a more serious offence – espionage, and stated he had received this money for information given. Thus, without any basis, he involved me in an espionage charge.

I may here mention that Anderson is a not very sophisticated Scot, who in his youth received some preparation as an electrical engineer. He had had a position with the Dacia Romano Company, and, possessing an exaggerated dose of Scottish frugality (so I am told by his former manager) lived on next to nothing, remitting best part of his salary to England. While with that Company he married a Roumanian peasant girl. Later on he lost his job, returned to Britain but was soon back in Roumania. He then settled with his wife and children in a village called Magurele.

Now, let us presume that I had received funds (which I had not) from the British Government to buy information, what information worth, not 200,000 lei, but 200 lei could a quasi-peasant living in Magurele give me? That his neighbour’s cow died over night, or something like that?

Inter alia, during the proceedings above narrated, I learned from my “judges” and “executioners” that someone had denounced to them the fact that I had walled in a cellar at Anglia House, and that at that moment legionaries were breaking through the cellar wall.

I have related these minor incidents to underline the ignorance, the tragi-comic ludicrousness and wayward savagery in the conduct of “penal enquiries” by the lower elements of the legionnaire party - who moreover have so much power for evil at the present moment.

After this I was subjected to two “psychological tortures”, which to one of my particular mental make-up fell quite flat.

First, I was placed face to the wall, an apple was put on my head, and then the “court” potted at the apple with their revolvers.

When one apple was shot away, another (or perhaps the same one) was banged on my head till it fitted in the manner of Columbus’s egg. This “torture” was timed to last half-an-hour, but I just say it did nothing but bore me, beyond the fact that at times I was vaguely hoping that one of the marksmen might shoot low.

The following “psychological torture” was organised:

The gang stated they were all going away, and would not be back for some time. They left one of their number behind to keep watch over me. This latter, on the quiet, proposed to let me go and to explain to me how to get to Bacău station. For this I was to pay him (I think it was) 15,000 lei down and to give him a written [unintelligible] for another 30,000 lei. A drowning man clutches at any straw. I took the risk, but, as it turned out, it was, as mentioned above, just another “psychological torture”. When I got to the bottom of the steps leading from the cottage I discerned a darkened car waiting. Immediately afterwards a volley of shots belched forth. I turned and walked back the way I had come. I do not suppose they were shooting to kill, for not one of the bullets hit me. When I got back there ensued a big row, and finally I was put into a car and told that I was being taken to Ploiești. On my left sat one of my legionnaire guards – one who professed a desire to be friendly and helpful. At first I could not realize who the man on my right side was. Then I discovered it was Miller. He was obviously very distressed. I patted his knee in a reassuring manner, but he anxiously pushed my hand away. So I did nothing more, not wishing to distress him further.

When we got to Ploiești we were taken down a back street, and then up three stories in a ramshackle house. On the top floor there were a couple of rooms – one evidently a “court” and torture room, the other contained a number of bedsteads with rough mattresses I was allotted one of these “beds” to rest on if I liked. Very soon the court opened again. It was a repetition of the merciless beating, and the demands that I should disclose the names of people belonging to the British Intelligence Service. The names not being forthcoming, they started a new series of tortures. My arms were tied above the elbows with an instrument with running strings. My arms were then drawn tight behind my back, and I was thus held while being cross-examined. Later I discovered that this procedure had done me considerable harm, and, as I found out subsequently might have finished me off. After this I was put on one of the beds and told that if I didn’t disclose the names they wanted I would be “flayed till my flesh hung in stripes from my bones”, and the instrument designed for this operation was brought into the room.

To sum up the following charges were brought against me:

1. *That I was in the British Intelligence Service.* This was based on an entirely untrue statement presumably made by Anderson to explain away a “black-market” transaction.

2. *That I had taken part in a plot of sabotage organized to hamper the delivery of oil to Germany.* This was based on two incorrect statements made by Miller, the untruth of which was established when we were confronted.

3. *That after a trip through Germany a few years ago, I made a report on the state of affairs there to the British Government.* This of course should not be a matter of concern for the Roumanian Government. As a matter of fact my “judges” did not press this point.

Am content in the thought that I did not disclose a single name nor piece of information which could be useful to them or detrimental to us.

While this was going on, things were happening in the outside world. My secretary, Mrs. Kish, who was working in the office of my rooms at the Athénée Palace Hotel, had informed Vasilescu-Duca of my being kidnapped.

He immediately took steps to get in touch with the leading Secret Service and Legionnaire authorities, and then got hold of the British Consul in Bucharest, Norman Mayers, and took him round to the principal legionnaire offices, the heads, of the Secret Service, and played [unintelligible] with them. Anyhow as a result a search was started for me by telephone and I was finally run to earth in Ploesti. Instructions were immediately issued for me to be delivered home to Anglia House. By this time my face and head were double their normal size; my hands (with fingers hunched together) were twisted round in circles towards my body, naturally they were quite useless.

Towards dusk I was taken across to Anglia House.

I may here mention that in the hope of preserving some of my property, I had placed the same in a lower (intended bomb-proof) cellar, which I had had walled in.

However, as already mentioned, somebody "denounced" this to the legionnaires, and when I arrived at Anglia House, I found they were digging up the pathway (looking for the cellar) and when I gotindoors I found the house full of legionnaires and stuff that had been taken out of the walled up cellar. So for a time I was not allowed into my bedroom, but had to lie on the divan in the sitting-room.

Later on the legionnaire prefect arrived. He proved to be a very decent fellow. Some of the people at the top of this movement are.

Vasilescu-Duca and the Secretary of the British Legation, Mr. Reed, arrived at Anglia House later on, Vasilescu-Duca upbraided the legionnaires furiously. In fact the local prefect of the legionnaires was called in to establish order.

Mr. Reed, secretary of the Legation, took information from me to prepare a report, but the legionnaire prefect stated "cordially, but firmly", as he put it, that in half an hour's time everybody must be out of the house.

He further announced to the legionnaires present in a loud voice, that I was a free man and there was to be no more rough behaviour. He stated that I should be further judged in a legal manner (it was rather late to say that) and then left.

Of the 25,000 Lei that had been taken away from me during my "arrest" 14,000 was then returned to me. As I was unable to hold it I had it placed on a little table by my bed. One of my former "judges" then came into my bedroom to cut the telephone wires by my bedside. After he had left the 14,000 were also missing.

The house continued to be surrounded by legionnaire youths for several days, whilst "judicial court" was being held in the office.

Next day Sir Reginald Hoare came to see me, with Mr. Reed, and checked up points of the report. After two or three days the "siege" of Anglia House was raised. I went on lying in bed, but apparently things were taking a suspicious turn with me.

One evening two men appeared in my bedroom with a stretcher. It was placed by my bed and I was rolled into it. The stretcher was then pushed into a motor ambulance, waiting at the door, and accompanied by Vasilescu-Duca and my faithful old housekeeper, I was driven off to Bucharest and interned in the Elisabeta Sanatorium. All I can remember on my stretcher being placed on the floor of the Sanatorium reception room, is a crowd of people peering at me.

Next morning a friend of mine Dr. Vasilescu (Vasilescu-Duca' son-in-law) came to see me at the Sanatorium, bringing with him a nurse sent by Professor Ionescu-Sisești. The latter recommended her as the best nurse in Bucharest. She was placed entirely at my disposal.

A day or two later I was reported "dead", but the report proved to be somewhat premature.

About the 15th October my temperature fell, and ultra-short waves were turned on me. The agony I had been suffering then soon began to disappear. On the morning of the 18th October I awoke to see the room normally for the first time.

Very shortly however there was something like a panic amongst my "entourage". It was reported that a legionnaire youth had appeared at the Sanatorium enquiring about me, and it was considered there was a plot on foot to kidnap me again. It was therefore wise to get me out of the country as soon as possible through Giurgiu (the Constantsa custom house being in the hands of the Legionnaires).

I was met by great kindness on the part of the British authorities, receiving offers of refuge for the night, whilst Mr. Reed kindly offered to remain on guard with me.

The Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Le Rougetel, called on the evening of that day and arranged for a legation car to take me to Giurgiu on the 21st October in order to travel to Istanbul via Sofia, the Constantsa route being deemed unsafe for me.

On the 21st October we duly left the Legation in Mr. Mayers' car, accompanied by the Rev. Bell, a friendly officer in uniform and a friendly senior commissar from the "Siguranța". We spent the night in Sofia and then went on to Istanbul. At Istanbul station we were met by the Bishop, Lord Buxton. The Bishop whisked me off in his car to the American Hospital, where a pleasant corner room was waiting for me. I was put immediately to bed and am still there.

At the very commencement the Head doctor, Dr. Sheppard, said that mine was a case he could not handle. However after some discussion it was decided to invite Dr. Ahmet Sükrü Emet, a nerve specialist, for a consultation. He diagnosed that the leading nerve of my left arm (the radial nerve), was paralyzed, and that it would need somewhat elaborate treatment. I have a course of treatment at the Hospital, which lasts the nearly all the morning, and on most afternoons I am sent across to Dr. Ahmet Sükrü.

Am pleased to say that now, some seven weeks after the incident, there are signs of my left arm revivifying.

In order to make my report as informative as possible, I have deemed it incumbent on me to give certain names. I would beg you to treat this information in confidence.

Of course I have no objection to Mr. Vasilescu-Duca's name being repeated; as a matter of fact I owe my life to him.

In conclusion I would take this opportunity to thank Sir Reginald Hoare, Mr. Le Rougetel, Mr. Reed and Mr. Norman Mayers for the valuable help and sympathy they have given me. At the same time I would beg to express my thanks to Lady Hoare for her kind sympathy.

I beg to remain,
Yours obediently,
Percy R. Clark

P.S. I might mention that the Legionnaires took from my cellar my complete stock of the following:-

Wines and other liquors,
Cereals
Medical supplies

Bicycles (5)
House and bed linen

ANGLIA HOUSE
PLOIEȘTI
Temporarily:
American Hospital,
Istanbul,
23rd November, 1940

Dear Sir Reginald,

In accordance with your request, am sending herein a report on the kidnapping incident of October last.

I have omitted to mention therein about my further (legal) examination in regard to the charges brought against me. This was conducted in Anglia House at my bedside by a senior commissar of the Siguranța Generală (I think on Monday, 7th October), my two former “judges” being compelled to sit in attendance.

This enquiry quickly established that I was entirely innocent of any of the charges brought against me.

However, as mentioned in my report, one of my former “judges” got his own back on me by appropriating 14,000 lei which were lying on my bedside table.

At the risk of boring you with repetition, I would again refer to some incidents which go to accentuate the utterly ignorant and savage fatuity of the first legionnaire “court of enquiry”.

I was lying on a mattress after being put through the test which proved to be my last one, I overhead a conversation between two members of the “court” standing near by. I think they presumed me to be insensible. One of them was saying with evident satisfaction: -

“We have made them all *change* their depositions - all except the mad elderly one” (this obviously referred to me – mad no doubt because I stuck to my declaration), but, he added “emphatically and significantly, we will soon make him change “also”.

In other words their only way of conducting the enquiry was the following:-

1. To demand from the prisoner an immediate confession of the charge brought against him,

2. Then to maltreat the wretched prisoner,

3. Then to take his evidence,

4. Then if not entirely in accord with their wishes (and it probably never could be), to torture him,

5. Then to demand that the prisoner “change” his evidence (in other words, if he has already spoken the truth, he must now speak untruths).

6. If this change in the evidence is not forthcoming, to torture again, and so on until they get the “confession” *they* want.

The natural result is that at some point along this scale the wretched prisoner tries to think out what confessions might please his “judges” and confesses accordingly.

It was after point 5 that I was rescued. Had I not been rescued then there would obviously have been nothing left to rescue.

I would once more beg to express my sincerest thanks to you and your staff for the sympathy and help extended to me, and would beg you to be so kind as to communicate to Lady Hoare how deeply I appreciated her kind sympathy.

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

Percy R. Clark

Please excuse this untidy letter; am still unable to write a whole letter, and my typing is very poor.

P.R.C.

II.

Declarația lui Jock Anderson, adresată ministrului plenipotențiar al Marii Britanii de la București, prin care relatează experiențele sale trăite în România. A.N.R.D.A.N.I.C., colecția *Microfilme*, fond *Anglia*, r. 309, c. 212-216.

To
H.B.M. Minister,
Bucharest.

Temporarily:
The American Hospital,
Istanbul.
27th November, 1940

Your Excellency,

I beg to give hereunder an impression of my recent experiences in Roumania.

On the 24th September 1940 I went to Ploiești in the morning and spoke to Mr. Tracey, returning home at noon. After dinner we left by the 4.25 train to Ploiești. I was accompanied by the kindergarten school teacher from the station to Ploiești and hence on foot almost to the centre of the town. I noticed on coming out of the station a man, Costica Cernat, and it was evident that he wanted to speak to me. On taking my departure from the school mistress I engaged myself in conversation with Cernat and I told him that I had a parcel for him and would like to deliver it to him so we proceeded to a wine shop on the Strada Romana, near the Hanul Calagur. I passed to him the parcel and during our conversation I observed an individual enter this wine shop and seem to have all his attention on us. After a while he left the shop and returned with five more men, all brandishing revolvers. I was taken and put into a car which was waiting outside and driven to a house somewhere in Ploiești, being accompanied by four of these men. I think I could locate this house, although it was in a part of the town in which I had not previously been. On being taken into this house my examiner asked me what kind of business I was doing with Gheorgița Zafinescu. Up to that moment I thought I was a victim of an ordinary kidnapping incident. In the room in this house to which I was taken I noticed a book entitled "Mișcare Legionare". Immediately they set about to examine everything in my possession and that being finished I was bound with my arms behind my back, made to sit on a chair with a large mirror placed on a table in front of me.

Realising that something of a serious nature was happening I attempted to concoct a story which would fit in with what I was doing with Gheorgița Zafinescu because it seemed clear that he had either been caught or had played traitor. My effort was of little avail and these people seemed to think that they were on the tracks of discovering a vast political organisation which was working against their interests.

In this room there was no fixed number of men, some came and some went, but I think there were never less than four playing questions from time to time and inflicting injury. This was a hot night and my thirst became almost unbearable but water was denied.

After a time I was told that by 7.45 if I could not tell more then I would be taken to the cellar and it was indicated that there were some nice rats there who liked to eat the ears of people who were left over night. At 8.30, the time is certain because they had a clock on the table, it was decided to take me to the cellar and I was led out by four men. This cellar was outside of the actual yard and was in another yard about twenty yards further down the street. During the time I was being led to this cellar I was told that I would soon go for a ride in a cab to the Crângul lui Bott (this Crangul lui Bott is a wood a few kilometres out of Ploiești). The idea was to be taken there and shot.

On arrival at the cellar I was forced down the steps a[nd] rebound hands and legs in a recumbent position. In this cellar there were planks arranged around it at a short distance from the ground t[o] form a kind of seat. From this position I was lifted up by two men and held, then thumped down on to these planks. I was left alone with two men for a period of about two hours suffering during this time great pain. Suddenly two men appeared and asked of the others if I had discussed anything more and on receiving what appeared to be a negative reply

they informed me it was time to go. I was taken out of the cellar, marched through the court yard, put into a cab and accompanied by four individuals.

Driving through the town of Ploiești to what appeared to be a headquarters of the Legionares situated just behind the Administrator Financiare, Ploiești. I was taken in and found myself in a room in which there were many young men. They had in their possession a document which appeared to give the names and probably other particulars of the people they were looking for. From this document I was questioned about many British people who were or had been resident in Ploiești. I should think I saw at this house a number approaching thirty. I demanded that my arms should be freed and that I should be given water to drink. One individual who appeared to take the responsibility of questioning agreed to free me of my bonds which was done, but after a very short space of time, not being able to extract the information desired, they proceeded to rebind. This time there were at least three men who pulled on the rope to make it completely tight. The hour at this time would be between 11 and 12 p.m. I was taken out, put into a car and driven to the Chestura in Ploiești. On arrival at this place I was taken out of the car and ordered to stand beside the car on the far side from the building and to look into a corner of the court yard, revolvers of course being brandished all the time. A signal was given and with that they finished and I was taken upstairs to a small room and on my arrival saw on the desk many papers and documents which had been taken from my house.

This building is across the court yard from the main building which houses the Chestura and I think is used as a kind of Court House. I was questioned about all the documents found in my house, even to the length of questions regarding family photographs. Very shortly this small room became filled with men to the number of about ten. Each one had questions to ask, each one had blows to deliver. This treatment lasted about an hour in which I had received many severe blows by the fist on the upper parts of the body, face and head. Eventually I was left in this room with two men who continued to apply blows with the fist and with a stick. They informed me that they were not in any hurry and their questioning continued for a long time.

The pain was so severe that it became impossible to sit on the chair provided and every time I attempted to rise on my feet in order to alleviate suffering for a short while, fresh blows were delivered in order to bring me back to the sitting position. There was an open window in this room which was on the second floor and I was invited on two occasions if I should like to jump out.

Finally and probably about 4 in the morning I was conducted to one of the cells attached to the Chestura, being still bound and almost dying of thirst. I was put into a cell which was only about 80 cm. to 1 m. square and contained no seat. About six in the morning I was disturbed and spoken to by one of my examiners (reported later to be Avocat Janacescu of Ploiești). He said that he had discovered a great organisation for getting gold out of the country and told me, or asked me how Mr. Tracey was engaged in business. He also asked me about several of the Americans who [were] working for the Romana Americana but I only knew these gentlemen name. At this time I was released of my bonds and given water to drink. About this time I heard Mrs. Tracey's voice in a neighbour cell, the guards insulting her severely. Very shortly afterwards a man appeared at the cell and conducted me across the court yard back to the room I had previously come from. Here I saw Mr. Tracey in a sitting position on the floor tied up by the legs and showing all signs of having had a terrible beating. I was asked who this man was and I replied he was Mr. Tracey. I was then taken back to the cell very nearly exhausted. I slipped down on to the floor and by arranging myself in a diagonal position managed to obtain a little rest. About one o'clock, now the 25th, the cell door was opened and I found myself in the court yard. Here I saw Mr. Parsons, Mr. Freeman from the Romana Americana, Mr. Iovițoiu, who was working for Mr. Tracey, Charles Young and Charles Brazier from the Romana Americana and Mr. and Mrs. Tracey. We were told we were going to

Bucharest. After some arrangements with the cars we were all put into a motor bus, the property of the Municipality, Ploësti, driven into the centre of the town and at one place, opposite the Banca Romaneasca, we halted for a long period of about 20 minutes during this time we were under the full observation of those on the streets.

On arrival at Bucharest we were taken to apartments which were indicated as being the new apartments for the staff of the Royal Palace. We were arranged in one room, given chairs to sit on and allowed to purchase food.

I was exhausted so I lay down on the floor. We were examined in turn by a group of Legionares. The chief examiner told me that if I told a lie he would take me home, bring my children out, shoot them before my eyes and then shoot me afterwards. During this examination revolvers were in evidence. During the questioning fairly severe treatment was applied. Finally and by this time it was dark, we were marshalled, apart from Mr. Parsons and Mr. Iovițoiu who were free, into a waiting car and driven to the Siguranța on the Bul. Pache. A remark made by one of the men who accompanied us to his companions was "If you haven't enough ammunition I can give you some." Arriving at the Siguranța we were searched and all our belongings taken from us. We were led upstairs and put into separate rooms.

A little later I was introduced into the Director's room, in which I found sitting the Director, (a man with a bald head) and another gentleman who seemed to be an inspector of Police. The chief examiner, Prof. Grigorescu, and another man who wore a green shirt and who was known at one time to be a clerk in the Primaria at Ploësti. I was told to recount all I knew and finally told that I had to make a statement. As I could not write a Comisar was brought for me and he took my statement. After this was finished it was about 3.30 on the morning of the 26th.

I protested on many occasions that I was a hospital case and should be treated as such, no attention was given.

I was thrown into a cell which had only a number of boards built into the wall large enough, but with a horrible smell. I asked the sergeant of the gendarmes if he could bring me a brick to use as a pillow and the reply was he did not have any bricks.

On the evening of the 26th I, along with Mr. Tracey, was being questioned by Comisar Smarandoiu when we were told to come downstairs. On entering the reception room I saw Mr. Mayers, our Consul, and Mr. Inglessis. He spoke a few words to me, showed me a piece of paper on which were written some questions which he said the Minister wanted to ask. At that moment we were separated and I did not see Mr. Mayers again until the night he came to see us in the Military Tribunal.

On the morning of the 28th a gentleman introduced himself into my cell as being Col. Riosanu to give instructions that I was to be treated as at home and everything to be done to make myself comfortable. He ordered the doctor to visit me three times a day. I asked him to give me a room upstairs which he said would be arranged. I was taken out of the cell, led upstairs and given a couch to lie on. At this time I received from Mrs. Brazier a pillow, two sheets and a blanket. However, the couch which I was given to lie on contained bugs so thus went another night without sleep. On the Monday morning the Colonel again arrived and on complaint about the condition of the couch ordered that a new one should be immediately purchased.

On the Tuesday, 1st October, in the early afternoon we were told we were to leave the Siguranța and proceed to the Comandant Militar at Cotroceni. We packed up, given all our papers and possessions and driven in two cars to the Military Tribunal. On arrival we were shown into the Guard Room and received by the Corporal of the Guard who invited us to give up all our possessions, which we did. At that moment a gentleman in civilian dress came into the Guard Room, recommended himself as a Minister of Justice. He addressed himself to the Corporal of the Guard and asked for the Captain and it was explained that the Captain did not come till later in the evening. He sent word that the Captain should come immediately. At that

moment a military officer at the given rank of Major came into the room. This officer we afterwards found out to be a doctor. He asked to see our wounds to which we complied. After a short period the Colonel of the Tribunal arrived accompanied by the Captain and engaged in conversation with the Minister of Justice (Mihail A. Antonescu). I understood the Minister to tell the Colonel that that day Gen. Antonescu had sent a decree passing all power to the Military Courts into the hands of the Ministry of Justice. The Minister of Justice took the file which contained our statements and proceeded to question me on several points. I explained to him about the treatment I had received at the hands of the Legionaries and he also saw the condition of Mr. Tracey. He asked me with what political mission I came to the country to which I replied "None". I told him I had been in the country since 1925 working as an honest person.

On reading the statement he appeared to think that I was trying to mislead him regarding the political aspect of my presence in the country. It is possible that I misunderstood his first words but my intention was to convey that I did not come to the country on a political mission, which is correct. He then addressed all of us and told us that he had been sent by Gen. Antonescu to investigate our case and that he wished to apologise in the name of the Roumanian Government for the inhuman treatment which had been inflicted on us. At the same time he said that there must be a Judicial enquiry and that the Law must take its course. He then left the Guard Room. Shortly afterwards a Lieutenant came into the Guard Room and asked us if we maintained our statements or not but giving no indication as to whether we could change our statements or not or the consequences of any change of statement. My reply to this was that my statement was true but extracted from me under threats of death.

Later that same evening we were taken to a room upstairs to wait and at a certain moment there appeared Mr. Mayers accompanied by two members of the staff of the Consulate, the Minister of Justice and the Colonel. The Colonel asked me to make a statement, if from the time we arrived at the State Authorities we had been maltreated. [We] all agreed that we had been decently treated from the time we [arr]ived under the jurisdiction of the competent authorities. That t[unintelligible] a statement was taken from me by the Colonel [unintelligible] which was a condensed statement of the previous one made at the Siguranta.

From that date until the moment of my release I was examined by the examining magistrate, Capt. Rasnoveanu, on many occasions. On one occasion we were taken before the Court so they could confirm the application to retain us under arrest. The public prosecutor in his address to the Court indicated that of the Roumanians, through qualms of conscience, had made a statement denouncing us to the Siguranta. This man must have been Gheorgița Zafinescu who played the part of traitor. Up to the moment of our release from the Military Tribunal (myself and Mr. Tracey) we were informed by the Colonel that we would be tried by the Court and probably condemned to a certain punishment. During the time spent in the Military Tribunal we were treated with great respect and sympathy by all those connected with the Tribunal. During the period in the Military Tribunal the medical officer visited us regularly and gave us all possible medical assistance.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
Jock Anderson.

III.

Declarația lui Alexander Miller, prin care relatează experiențele sale trăite în România, adresată ministrului plenipotențiar al Marii Britanii de la București. A.N.R.D.A.N.I.C., colecția *Microfilme*, fond *Anglia*, r. 309, c. 217-227.

No. 22 (5/3)40

HIS Majesty's Consul-General at Istanbul presents his compliments to His Majesty's Ambassador at Ankara, and has the honour to transmit to him the under-mentioned documents.

*British Consulate-
General
Istanbul*

22nd November, 1940

*Reference to previous correspondence:
Description of Enclosure.*

Name and Date.	Subject
Despatch to:	<i>Mr. Alexander Miller.</i>
Sir R.H. Hoare, K.C.M.G.,	<i>His experiences in Roumania.</i>
etc., etc., etc.,	
Bucharest	
of the 21st November, 1940 with	
enclosures.	

A. MILLER
H.B.M.'s Consul-General,
ISTANBUL.

Sir,

In response to your request, I have the honour to submit three copies of a note which I have written regarding the happenings which recently befell me in Roumania. I have written this report in some detail, because it seemed to me that only in this way could I depict the situation accurately in all its aspects.

My report has also been written with the utmost frankness and without reserve, in order that it may be of the maximum value for official purposes. This leads me to request that no public use should be made of it without careful editing, as there are portions which would go far to endanger the situations – and perhaps even the lives – of certain people in Roumania who were of assistance to me. For the same reason, if it is considered desirable that a copy should be sent to H.M.'s Minister at Bucharest, I trust that steps will be taken to ensure that at no time should it fall into the wrong hands.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
Alex. Miller

For a full understanding of my situation in the events which I relate, it is necessary to remember that the arrests of the other Englishmen in the preceding week had been much talked of, and that all sorts of rumours had been in circulation for several days. It was generally reported that they were arrested by Legionaries because of their participation in acts of sabotage against shipments of oil products to Germany. It was also stated that they had been compelled by torture to make certain confessions of guilt. No one knew how far these stories had any foundation, but they were being retailed with a good deal of detail on all sides.

I should also add that my position as one of the leading officials of Astra Romana, the largest oil company in Roumania, probably marked me out for a greater measure of suspicion than was perhaps justified by facts. Although no one could be sure where the next

blow would fall, I personally thought that the danger was confined to those working within the oil zone, especially at Ploiesti.

Although my place of occupation and residence was Bucharest, it was no secret that during the summer months I spent most of my evenings and also slept – at the Sports Club of Astra Romana at Snagov, some 25 miles from Bucharest, where I had a room. Even during September, when the Club was closed to visitors, I continued go there several times during the week.

Tuesday, 1st October.

On the night of 1st October, the only other persons in the Club were the caterer (Radulescu) with his wife and two daughters, and we were joined after dinner by the Administrator (Dollischek) and his wife, all of these lived permanently on the Club premises. On this particular evening I stayed up somewhat later than usual.

It must have been nearly 11 o'clock when the Administrator was summoned by telephone to go to the Rest House, because 4 men had called to see him. About 15 minutes later a second call came asking me to go across. (Although the first announcement was in itself sufficient to arouse my suspicions, and would have given me time to clear out, albeit with some difficulty as I had no car available, I made no attempt to do so. Why I cannot explain, I suppose I had a feeling of fatalism that this was something that could not be evaded and had to be gone through.)

When I got to the Rest House – about 100 yards from the Restaurant – I found the 4 men standing in a close group just inside the porch, with Dollischek beyond them. (2 of them have subsequently been identified as Enachescu and Carciunaru). Enachescu was the spokesman, and said that they wished me to go to the police to give certain information. I asked for his authority, and he produced a paper which seemed to indicate that he was in the service of the Police. At any rate, criticism was by then useless, as was surrounded by the crowd and hustled out.

Instead of leaving the Club by the main entrance, I was taken by a wicket-gate in the fence behind the Rest House, leading to the neighbouring maize field, proving that the lay-out of the Club had been carefully studied beforehand in daylight. At the end of the field, just off the roadway, an unlighted car was hidden, and I was put into it – an open two-seater car, with only an open box in the back where I had to crouch alongside Carciunaru. When we reached the main road I was not altogether surprised to find that we turned towards Ploiesti and not Bucharest. At the control barrier outside Ploiesti the car was stopped but was allowed to proceed when someone explained that they were regional (it may have been Legionary) police, my papers were not even asked for.

In Ploiesti we turned down a side street running parallel to the main boulevard and stopped outside a private house. I was kept outside until another larger car appeared – which I subsequently learnt was Treacy's. I was put into this car along with Enachescu, Carciunaru and a young man called Toma, as well as the chauffeur. In the centre of Ploiesti we turned off on the road leading to Boldesti. On and on we went up to and through Valeni, which was the last place I was able to recognise. Beyond Valeni we turned off to the left, stopped at a wayside station for benzine, and on again until we entered a village, where the chauffeur was told to dim his lights. After a while we stopped, and all the car lights were extinguished. Enachescu got out and disappeared into the darkness, and a little later I saw lights flickering in what seemed to be a house. He returned and I was led into this house, which I found to be furnished but unoccupied. By this time it was after 2 a.m.

It was not clear to me whether the leader of the gang was Carciunaru or Enachescu – it seemed to be the former, although it was the latter who dealt mostly with me. Carciunaru busied himself with the study of what seemed to be a list of names, while Enachescu searched me and removed all my papers.

Enachescu then proceeded to tell me that the game was up because they had been told all about me by Radulescu; this I was convinced was untrue. If I made a clean breast of my doings they would free me without handing me over to the police. Otherwise – well, they had their own means of making me see reason! It became clear that they connected me with those who had been arrested at Ploiesti in the previous week, and no notice was taken of my protestations that I had no knowledge whatsoever of those persons or of their doings, they seemed to know nothing more about me.

Beyond the display of a hefty truncheon, nothing more was done that night, as apparently Enachescu and Carciu maru had to hurry back to Ploiesti. From what I subsequently learnt, I gathered that they wished to fake an alibi, by pretending to have slept at Ploiesti, thus making the official police think that they had nothing to do with my disappearance. I was left in charge of Toma, armed with a revolver, who lay on one bed while I lay on the one alongside. He was a ruffian-looking fellow of about 22.

Wednesday, 2nd October.

When morning came, I got up and I had look round. The house was indeed empty, except for the two of us. It was a good-sized house, well built, a good deal above peasant standard. I found later that it was Enachescu's house, and that he was somehow related to the village priest. There was no food of any sort in the house, and my guard and I lived on nuts which we were able to pick up, until a neighbour spotted us and, on learning our plight, sent us bread and milk.

Enachescu was expected back at 10 a.m., but the hours went past, and my guard began to worry. I eventually persuaded him he should try to telephone to Ploiesti from the station, to which he agreed in the afternoon. This meant walking the whole length of the village – at least a kilometer, I imagine – which I found to be Teişani, and from which I saw little chance of escape. The reply from Ploiesti was to the effect that we should wait.

About 6 p.m. Enachescu returned with two fresh youngsters to relieve Toma, and immediately proceeded to cross-question me. By this time I had realised that my only chance of getting out of their hands, at least into the hands of the police, was to make a statement of some sort, with the hope that in the circumstances it could afterwards be disclaimed completely as having been extracted under duress. I was at a drawback in knowing nothing of my supposed accomplices or their doings except what had been rumoured, but Enachescu supplied me with many hints regarding the role which I was supposed to have played in the Ploiesti case, and I felt it advisable to live up to his expectations on that score. Had I truthfully disclaimed all knowledge of it, I was faced with the certainty of torture, which might have led to the disclosure of other facts of which they had no knowledge. I therefore acted on the assumption that no "disclosure" of mine could worsen the situation of those who had already been arrested, I hoped that my admissions would be so lacking in foundation as to permit their subsequent refutation, and I could thus avoid implicating other persons who were under no suspicion.

I first tried to foist off on them a story of a "plan" for the destruction of the refineries, in which I "involved" quite a number of people who had already left the country. (Needless to say, this story was also a connection as far as I was concerned.) Although the story appealed to them as further proof of the perfidy of previous Roumanian Governments, they obviously suspected it for the reason that it implicated only absenteers. I was then compelled to "confess" that I had been the intermediary for passing on to the Treacy and company various articles for their sabotage in Ploiesti. Although the main lines of the scheme were hinted at by Enachescu, supplemented by the rumours I had heard, I had to rely largely on my imagination as to the nature of the articles in question and as to their purpose. Physical pressure on this occasion was slight, as I pretended to succumb out of sheer fright, and this seemed to go down. At any rate, we finished about midnight because Enachescu wanted to leave by the early morning train for Ploiesti.

After insistence on an admission that I had deposited certain secret papers with Radulescu at Snagov, I was asked to write a letter to Radulescu asking him to hand them out to the bearer. The letter dictated to me said that I was in no danger, but that I had retired to stay with an acquaintance at a place which I could not divulge. Although it was obvious that this would call my bluff, I let the letter go in the hope that it would help to disclose my whereabouts, it would be obvious to the recipient that it had not been written voluntarily.

Tuesday, 3rd October.

I subsequently learnt how the bearers of the letter appeared at Snagov and were bluffed into disclosing their identity to Mr. Berthoud – Commercial Secretary of the British Legation, who had gone to Snagov to investigate the mystery of my disappearance – after an exciting car chase in which he overtook the others in their car on the Bucharest road and compelled them to stop. In the end, it was found that the only paper I had left with Radulescu was my will!

All that day I was in the charge of another two young Legionaries, but I was not in a state to do anything more than lie and await the storm which was bound to break in the evening. I could not bring myself to eat, sleep was impossible, and the mental strain was almost unbearable.

Late that night the whole party returned by car – between 10 and 11 o'clock, and the "fun" began. I was cross-questioned by Enachescu in great detail on the vague statements I had previously made regarding my complicity with those arrested at Ploiesti. The procedure was for a question – or rather a suggestion – to be put to me, for me to deny all knowledge of it, followed by a beating in one for, or another, which compelled me to "confess" my statements were written down by Enachescu. I was knocked on the head frequently with a revolver butt; beaten on the body, hands and feet with sticks and straps, bound and then thrown against the wall in the corner, trussed with my head between my knees and beaten in that position, and all the while my guard of the previous day took delight in getting at me wherever he could with his mountain boots. Enachescu was the leader throughout, but there were always several present – including one whom I subsequently learnt to be Ghembeșeanu, a police official. The whole crowd took a sadistic joy in the beating, and seemed pleased at the confession which they extracted. All the time Enachescu kept giving instructions to his gang regarding other imaginary captives – to shoot those who refused to talk and to throw their bodies in a lake, Col. Macnab was amongst those treated in this fashion! To give colour to these stories, shots were fired outside from time to time. I was threatened with the same fate, and I got to a stage where I was ready to let them shoot me and put an end to my misery, had I not realised that it was only a bluff and would not have eased my position in any way.

In the middle of all this, I was taken – with my arms trussed behind me – into another room, where I found Mr. Percy Clark with Carcișomaru. We asked if we recognised each other, he was asked where he had last met me, while my years were held: I was then asked the same question. I doubt whether our answer corresponded, because we had hardly known each other, and our previous meeting had been a very casual one. After this confrontation I was asked whether I knew that Clark was the head of the British Secret Service in Roumania, and I was beaten until I agreed. In view of what I learned had happened subsequently I deeply regret that I gave way on this point, but at the time I could no resist further and the statement seemed too fantastic to be given any credence.

Apart from those whom I knew to be already in arrest, the only other person implicated by my confession was Mr. Watts of the British Legation. He seemed to be very well-known to the inquisitors, and it was impossible for me to avoid bringing him into my story.

After they had extracted all that seemed to be wanted, I was made to write it all down in a second declaration – and in which I was asked to add that I had been under no duress!

My declaration contained the following statements:

- a) I had received from Watts and passed on to Treacy at Snagov, at fortnightly intervals, 4 boxes containing 30 ampoules each. One of these was to be dropped into a tanker of benzine, when the gelatine casing dissolved, the contents dispersing in the benzine and causing it to explode in aeroplane engines;
- b) I had also passed on in same way some 10 half-litre bottles containing a mixture of benzine and vitriol, which I said were for damaging the axles of tankers;
- c) I had received from Grant certain papers containing instructions regarding the use of the foregoing and about the introduction of sand into the axle-boxes of tankers; I had burnt these papers when I heard of the arrival of 4 men at Snagov on Tuesday night.

I am still unaware whether any of these things bore any resemblance to anything which may have existed in fact, but they seemed to answer to what was in the mind of Enachescu.

Friday, 4th October.

About 3 a.m. on Friday we left by car for Ploiesti – including Clark – where we were taken to the Green House. Those of the gang who were tired went to sleep, and I was again cross-examined by a fresh crowd. By this time I was beginning to contradict myself, and only the arrival of daylight – and the pre-arranged hour of departure – saved me from renewal of the beating.

At 6.30 a.m. I left by car for Bucharest, with Carciunaru and another – Ghembaşianu, I think. (Clark was left behind in Ploiesti). After a delay of a puncture, when the chauffeur had to awake my sleeping escort (1), we reached the office of the police – the Sigurantza – at about 8 o'clock. My feelings can be imagined when my eyes caught sight of the placards of that day's newspapers – Death Punishment for Sabotage! By luck a passing Astra employee recognised me and immediately passed on the news of my arrival to the proper quarters.

It was a little while before I could be handed over to the Officer on duty. Before the formalities had been completed, Mr. Le Rougetel and Mr. Berthoud managed to find their way to the reception office, but I was hustled out before they could talk to me.

I was put into a small upstairs room, with nothing but a narrow iron bed, but my feeling of relief at being “safe” in the hands of the police was so great as almost to outweigh any other discomfort. Also shortly after my arrival I received a packet of food and other evidences of the existence of friends in the background.

Towards evening I was summoned to the police official who was to handle my case – Smarandoiu by name. He had my declarations, as well as the notes of the cross-examination, in front of him, and enquired whether they were true. I explained how the declarations had been extracted, told him that they were completely false, and asked for his assurance that I could now speak without fear, which he gave. He then began to question me on my relations with Treacy, Grant, etc., and to all his questions I had to reply that I knew nothing. He then seemed to think that I intended to trade on his assurance of safety, because he threatened that, if I refused to talk, he would hand me back to the Legionaries, as they had apparently been more successful. This was just the last straw, to which I answered that I had nothing to add to the declarations, by which I stood. When he again questioned me, I repeated all that I had written, to his apparent consternation, because he passed a note to his colleague with an expression of amazement. The next thing I knew was the presence of a doctor, who had apparently been summoned. The doctor left my bruises to heal by the passing of time, but wrote a prescription to put my nerves in order, and before long I felt much better. Smarandoiu then talked of other matters, apparently to put me at my ease, and I then gathered that he was worried by the problem how to throw over the case which the Legionaries had been at such pains to establish, as he was afraid of their revenging themselves on him. He then admitted that my stories were

too ridiculous to be true and in no way corresponded with what he knew (as he said) of the other prisoners.

He proceeded to question me as to my activity with Astra, and asked in particular whether I had been an "informer". I explained what my position was, and said that in a sense I had kept my chief in London (Mr. Kessler) "informed" of happenings in Roumania, but only in relation to the interests of the Royal Dutch/Shell Group.

I should perhaps here explain that, from the end of July when a Commissar was first appointed to Astra Romana, I had been the channel for letters and telegrams to and from Mr. Kessler on matters in which it was considered impolitic to involve Astra Romana officially. All these communications had been in my own name, and many of them of a more confidential nature had been sent through the British Legation.

Smarandoiu seemed disinclined to believe that communication with London was possible through normal channels, but I was able to assure him – and offered to produce proof – that letters could reach London quickly through Lisbon. (I felt it desirable to avoid reference to letters being sent through the Legation, and I was also anxious not to implicate the General Manager of Astra Romana Mr. Gartner, who – as a Roumanian – was in a more delicate position than myself.)

In reply to a question, I admitted that I had a file of copies of letters sent by me to London, because I did not know what might be found in my office, and it would have seemed untenable to deny the existence of copies when subsequent investigations might show frequent references to earlier letters.

After some time on these lines, the discussions came to an end, and Smarandoiu went out of his way to see that I was made comfortable for the night.

Saturday, 5th October.

Early next morning Smarandoiu called me and said that he wished to examine my office, which caused me some anxiety as to what he might – or might not – find there. During the night I had realised that some copies of correspondence would implicate others beside myself, whereas the absence (probably) of papers would also be difficult to explain away.

When we reached the office, Smarandoiu called for a leading Legionary employee to take part in the investigation, so that he would be covered. His first request was for the file of letters copies to which I had referred. It was no longer there, but after a search I was able to produce something which answered to the description – a collection of translations of various Astra letters to Ministries of which I had in fact sent copies to London. This was accepted without question. Smarandoiu then searched through the rest of my papers and set aside for later examination a good many which at first sight seemed to be incriminating. He made no comment on the fact that a lock had obviously been forced open. Also, although he found an envelope containing some money, as well as some notes regarding expenditure, he put it back casually and dealt at length with other less dangerous subjects. From this moment it was obvious that, for reasons unknown to me, he had no desire to make the position more difficult than it need be. An examination regarding the expenditure would not have been very dangerous, but it would have involved explanations which I was glad that I need not give. Moreover, the incident gave me a valuable hint as to my line of action in subsequent discussions.

In the afternoon Smarandoiu carefully examined my diary, in which I had somewhat conscientiously noted details of all my expenditure on telegrams to London. When these entries were explained, he sent a request to the Telegraph Office for copies of those in the preceding two weeks; he made no attempt to check whether the numbers were consecutive, which might have revealed that some had been sent by another route.

Until these copies were available, the rest of Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning was spent in my explaining the various papers that had been taken from the office, and in my informing him in more detail of my position with Astra Romana and of my relations with Mr.

Kessler. I explained that I had been sent by Mr. Kessler to Roumania as his personal representative, and that it was my duty to keep him informed of all matters which might affect the Group's interests – for instance, the German claim, as occupants in Holland, to be the shareholders in Astra Romana. I explained that all this was done on my own personal responsibility as an employee of the Group, quite outside my activity as a member of Astra's staff.

Sunday, 6th October.

To account for my relations with the British Legation, in particular with Mr. Berthoud, I explained how it was necessary for Astra Romana, as a British company, to obtain official British approval of their sales to Germany, further, in view of what might later come to light, I said that it had sometime been necessary to send wires through the Legation on that subject, but this did not appear at any time in writing.

After the telegrams had been received and translated, we spent the afternoon of Sunday explaining them. The majority of them were quite innocuous, and Smarandoiu was ready to accept general interpretations of their contents. He even let himself be persuaded to pass over one message which was clearly in a conventional code, and which asked London to give instructions for the withdrawal of a British employee – somewhat suspicious on the face of it.

When we had finished, he asked me to write a fresh declaration of which he suggested the outline. This described my position with Astra, my relations with Mr. Kessler, and what my activity had been. It then gave the lie to the previous declarations, explaining how they had been extorted, and gave a specific denial of all the various points with which they dealt.

Monday, 7th October.

On Monday, Smarandoiu was apparently occupied in making a report to his superiors, and I was not called upon all day. At 11 o'clock that night I was called to the Director-General, Mr. Ghika – a Legionary recently appointed to the post. He commenced the interview with profuse enquiries whether I was being treated satisfactorily to which I replied that except for my bruises I was as well looked after as I could expect. He then enquired in some detail regarding the shareholders of Astra Romana – enquiries of such an elementary nature, and on points of such general knowledge, that I am convinced they were intended only as an excuse for calling me into his presence. When the interview was over, he again carefully instructed the officer on duty that I was to have everything that I wanted – except my liberty! (I can only surmise that the energetic interventions of H.M.'s Minister had led him to make amends to some extend in this indirect manner).

Here I should mention that, although no British official was permitted to see me at any time, I was able to see a personal Roumanian friend on various occasions, and I was allowed to receive food, clothing and reading matter from outside the prison. I certainly could not complain of the treatment I received after I got out of the hands of the Legionaries.

Tuesday, 8th October.

On Tuesday, in the midday interval, Enachescu suddenly appeared in view, and caused me a few uneasy minutes. A little later I was summoned by Smarandoiu and confronted with Enachescu, who enquired regarding the declarations I had made to him. Nothing was left to me but to disclose my bluff and to deny them completely. Smarandoiu tried to convince Enachescu that his methods had been wrong, and that he (Smarandoiu) had been able to get the whole truth from me – he did not say what the truth was. Enachescu divulged that he had been warned by the Director-General to use milder methods in future, and I surmise that this was the reason for his visit. (Incidentally, he said that someone had suggested the advantages of castor oil.) Enachescu seemed to take his defeat in good part, and gave no outward sign of animosity when we parted. He even promised to return my gold watch and chain which had gone "astray", I have not yet heard anything more of it.

Situatia cetătenilor britanici în timpul statului național-legionar

Wednesday, 9th October.

On Wednesday, Ghembeșianu also appeared at the Sigurantza, but I was not confronted with him, nor can I do more than surmise that he was also summoned for a reprimand.

Later in the evening I was suddenly told that I was being handed over to the Military Court, and I was transported by car to the barracks where that Court operates. After the necessary formalities of handing-over has been completed, I was given accommodation in an office room on the second floor – far away from the other British prisoners – and a bed was provided. I have no knowledge of the contents of the police report which presumably accompanied me and all the papers concerning my case.

Thursday, 10th October.

On Friday, I was again cross-examined by a Colonel-Magistrate, who asked for explanations regarding several telegrams of which he could not understand the translations – and which were largely unintelligible because of their removal from their context. He later asked me to write out an explanation of each of them – and in which I was able to skate lightly over some rather thin ice.

Saturday, 12th October.

Late on Saturday evening I was called by the Procurator-General, a Colonel-Magistrate, who informed me that he had carefully studied the whole dossier and that he could find no offence of which I was guilty. I would therefore be freed immediately. On my remark that the whole matter must be due to some mistake, he commented: "These mistakes will happen."

Monday, 14th October.

Fearing possible reprisals by the Legionaries if my release became known, I left Roumania unobtrusively at the first opportunity on Monday afternoon.

Unpleasant and painful as the whole business was, I hope – and feel – that it may have served a useful purpose. The circumstances surrounding my "arrest" and subsequent treatment were such as to put not only the Legionaries but also the State authorities entirely in the wrong. I cannot be certain that the readiness of Smarandoiu to shut his eyes to possible complications – which in no case were criminal or related to sabotage – was inspired from above, but there is much that point in that direction.

I think it will be clear from my account that the Legionaries who arrested me were nothing more than irresponsible and ignorant hooligans who thought themselves very clever as detectives. This was fortunate for me, as I was able to palm off on them a story which they swallowed whole but which was on the mere face of it so ridiculous that it was at once put aside by the police.

It is still a mystery to me why I was picked on as being connected with the Ploiești case. It is true that my position with Astra Romana gave me some prominence in Roumania, and there were doubtless many people in Bucharest who suspected me of activities other than my normal duties. Had the inspiration come from someone with even the faintest knowledge of my activities or even of my movements, however, the inquisition would certainly have taken quite a different line. If the visit of the Legionaries had taken place 24 hours earlier, I could have been caught red-handed with an incriminating document. As it was, I was suspected of nothing but complicity with those from Ploiești, none of whom I even knew.

I can only surmise that the Legionaries were not satisfied with the case they had established against the others and thought that a corroboratory statement by someone else, even if unsupported by any other proofs, would be sufficiently damning and enquiries by them in Ploiești may have elicited my name and nothing more.

During my captivity in the hands of the Legionaries I was able to form certain general impressions of them which are probably representative of the general mass of the movement. They seemed sincere in their mission to clean up the administration of the country, and were

especially violent against those who had been responsible for the suppression of their movement. All those I met had been in prison, some had suffered tortures worse than anything they themselves administered, and they told me that 8,000 of their people had been killed. They were convinced that it was the British who had financed the Roumanians to suppress the Iron Guard, and they considered it more than significant that their leader Codreanu had been murdered just when King Carol returned from his visit to England. They were convinced that the defeat of England was inevitable, and I was repeatedly vilified for taking part in sabotage which might have brought their country into difficulties with Germany.

The Police and military officials with whom I came into contact seemed to have little sympathy with the Legionary movement, although they dared not express this openly. From the moment I came into the hands of the police I was treated with the utmost consideration, and my transfer to the Military Court was probably done for the reason that the police – whose head is a Legionary – did not wish to assume the onus of dismissing the case.

Probably the greatest influence in determining the attitude of the authorities was the very strong pressure which was exerted by Sir Reginald Hoare, and I wish to take this opportunity of expressing my great gratitude to him and to all others who assisted me in any way.

Alex. Miller

Istanbul, 2nd November, 1940

IV.

Declarația lui J.E. Treacy, adresată ministrului plenipotențiar al Marii Britanii de la București, prin care relatează experiențele sale trăite în România. A.N.R.D.A.N.I.C., colecția *Microfilme*, fond *Anglia*, r. 309, c. 229-234.

No. 21

HIS Majesty's Consul-General at Istanbul presents his compliments to His Majesty's Ambassador at Ankara and has the honour to transmit to him the under-mentioned documents.

British Consulate
General
Istanbul

16th November, 1940

*Reference to previous correspondence:
Description of Enclosure.*

Name and Date.

Subject

Despatch to:

Mr. J.E. Treacy.

Sir R.H. Hoare, K.C.M.G.,

His experiences in Roumania.

etc., etc., etc.,

Bucharest

of the 16th November, 1940 with
enclosure.

British Consulate-General
Istanbul,
16th November, 1940

Sir,

With reference to your telegram No. 43 of the 22nd October I have the honour to transmit to you herewith copy of a statement which I have received from Mr. J.E. Treacy regarding his experiences in Roumania. Mr. Treacy has been under medical treatment at the American Hospital Istanbul since his arrival a fortnight ago.

Situuația cetățenilor britanici în timpul statului național-legionar

2. As reported in my telegram of the 13th November, the other arrested persons, Messrs. Miller, Anderson, Clark, Brazier and Young, have so far declined to make any statement on the plea that the document might fall into the hands of the Roumanian authorities and endanger the safety of their friends in Roumania.

3. I am sending a copy of this despatch and its enclosure to His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and His Majesty's Ambassador at Ankara.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

G.P. P[unintelligible]

Sir R.H. Hoare, K.C.M.G.,

etc., etc., etc.,

Bucharest

Report.

Statement submitted to H.M. Consul General

Istanbul

Capt. J.E. Treacy.

On Wednesday September 25th '40 at 12.30 a.m. 6 men, three of them armed with large automatic Mauser type pistols and the other three with small Browning automatic 760 calibre pistols forced their way into my house at No. 36 Strada Regina Maria, Ploëști Roumania, woke up the cook and, marching her ahead of them through the house, entered my bedroom and woke up my wife and myself by switching on the lights. They then pointed their arms at us and told us to put our hands up.

I asked them who they were and what was their authority for entering my house. They refused to answer, telling us to shut up and to keep still. Three or four other armed men then entered the room. Four of them began searching the wardrobe and cupboards, throwing everything on the floor, while the others questioned us, alleging that material intended for sabotage was to be found in my house.

My wife at this point attempted to conceal an automatic which she had picked up from the night table on the entry of the intruders. This movement was detected, my wife was swung round violently, forced to hand over the revolver, severely hit many times on the face and shoulders, accused of having attempted to shoot them. Her arms were then bound with rope. (N.B. three weeks earlier unknown persons had thrown an incendiary bomb into our house and had fired two revolver shots through the window, at 1.30 a.m. in view of which incidents I had brought two revolvers from my office in Ploëști.)

After an hour's search one of the intruders, whose name I subsequently learnt was Enachescu, told us that they were legionaries. They ordered us to put some clothes over our night-dress and we were both taken out of the house with our arms bound.

Enachescu and another man took me to my office in Ploëști, my wife being taken elsewhere. There three other men were awaiting us and all five began searching the desks, files and the safe. They then made a telephone call and within a few minutes two other men arrived and began searching the correspondence.

My arms were kept bound all the time and so tightly as to stop all blood circulation below the elbows, causing unbearable pain. I begged Enachescu to slacken the ropes but he told me to shut up or he would bind them even tighter. They then questioned me about the money in the safe but I pretended that owing to the pain I could not answer, whereupon they released my arms and tied me loosely around the wrists with the hands in front.

At about 3.30 a.m. Enachescu and two others took me to the Sureté at Ploëști and put us in a small annexe building, the H.Q. of the local legionaries.

I was cross-examined again on allegations of sabotage but replied that I had no information to give them. My coat was then taken off and I was forced to sit on the floor with my hands tied and stretched over my doubled knees. A stout stick was then thrust (inserted) under my knees and above my arms. My boots were then taken off. My feet were tied together

at the ankles and raised a yard above the floor and held in this position with a rope thus forcing me on my back and shoulders. Enachescu and one other then began beating the soles of my feet, my buttocks and the lower part of my back with heavy sticks three or four feet long and two inches thick. The beating continued for probably ten minutes the blows becoming increasingly heavy as I failed, contrary at their expectations, to yell. My feet were then dropped and as I sat on the floor they began again to question me. I laughed. This drew from the legionaries the exclamation that I was a cold blooded Englishman. I was then subjected to a second round of beating, more severe than the first, after which the cross-examination restarted. I was then given a third beating during which the nail from one of my big toes was torn out, I was also severely kicked in the buttocks and testicles and in the short ribs on the left side. After a few minutes, during which I was allowed to rest on my back, I was lifted bodily into the air a height of some three feet by two men who dropped me four times consecutively on the floor. All this time I was kept bound up. After a few minutes rest and as I was still lying on the floor, Enachescu, who must weigh 14 to 15 stone, trod slowly over my chest twice and then again on my short ribs after which he stood on my chest over the heart. I told him that if they wanted to kill me they might as well shoot me at once. He laughed at this but I was unbound and allowed to sit on a chair. I was after another cross-examination I was struck by two of them who used their fists on my head face and jaws while one of them held a revolver against my chest. This I recognised as my own revolver.

One of the legionaries then read out a list of names which appeared to be a list of all British and Americans residing in the petroleum zone.

I was asked to describe my connections with them and had to admit that I was acquainted with nearly all.

At about 6.45 a.m. Jock Anderson (see separate statement) was brought in to prove that he too had been arrested, likewise my wife who entered from an adjoining room. They were then taken out and I saw them go down stairs.

All the legionaries except Enachescu and one other left the room. Enachescu took me aside and told me in a whisper that he was not a very loyal legionary, suggesting that the matter could be settled for a consideration. He asked me how much I was prepared to pay. I laughed at his suggestion that he was bluffing to compromise me further. This he denied categorically affirming that he could arrange things with Insp. Nițescu of the Ploești Sureté whom Enachescu knew was acquainted with me. I suggested the sum of fifty thousand lei knowing it to be a ridiculously small figure. This proved to be insufficient and I offered 100,000 lei. While Enachescu went out of the room, the other legionary told me that he was a legionary only by force and asked me where he stood if the transaction was carried through. I said I would look after him handsomely for which he thanked me. On Enachescu's return he enquired how the money would be obtained. I suggested a note to my manager Binder. I wrote this out, asking him (Binder) to come to the Sureté and to be prepared to pay out 100,000 Lei. Enachescu took the note away and returned 25 minutes later with Binder. As soon as they returned, I was taken down to a cell, about 80 to 100 centimetres square in which it was possible to sit down only diagonally, and had no opportunity, contrary to my expectation, to talk to Binder. This took place about 7.30 a.m.

About three hours' later Enachescu came to my cell telling me hurriedly that he thought everything was all right and that the business would be arranged as discussed. He left before I could say anything to him. Just before Enachescu took my note to Binder I demanded the right to telephone to the British Consul in Bucharest. This request was refused but Enachescu suggested that it might be done through a third person. I suggested the name of a friend.

At about 1.30 p.m. the cells in which my wife, Anderson and I had been confined were opened and we were marched out into a yard where was found five or six of the legionaries who had broken into our house.

Enachescu took this opportunity to tell me in a whisper that the whole affair had been reported to Bucharest by the Legionaries and that the deal had therefore fallen through.

In the yard were also five other arrested persons: R. Young, C.R. Brazier, Freeman (American), Iovițoiu (Roumanian), W. Parsons (Dutch). The eight of us were then taken to Bucharest in a Ploiești Municipal bus accompanied by some half a dozen legionaries who warned us that we were not to talk to each other. On our way to Bucharest, at the request of Mr. Iovițoiu we were allowed to buy milk and sandwiches, the first food we had since being arrested fifteen hours previously.

We arrived in Bucharest at the Legionary H.Q. at approximately 4 p.m. (at Cotroceni). Here we were joined by Georgescu or Grigorescu who appeared to be the head of the Ploiești Legionaries. We were cross-examined until about 8 p.m. the leading questions being put to me by Grigorescu who acted as chief. I was called in four times for questioning during three of which I had further beatings from Enachescu and two others using their fists and a revolver. During one of the questionings Comrade Grigorescu told me it was their intention to rid Roumania of all English blood even if it were necessary to kill as the English were responsible 1... for the killing of the two thousand legionaries and 2... for the bad relations between Roumania and Germany.

From the legionary headquarters we were transferred to the Sureté Générale in Boulevard Carol arriving there at about 9 p.m. on Wed. Sept. 25th in the same group as before with the exception of Parsons and Iovițoiu who were released. During this trip Young and I were hit continuously with a revolver barrel. Here we were interviewed by an Inspector General. Before this we were warned by Grigorescu that we had better give all information we had as otherwise we would be further beaten up and in a way which would make the previous beating look like child's play.

Disregarding Grigorescu's warning, I made the same declarations to this inspector as I had made to the legionaries in Ploiești. I was asked to make a written statement which I did. I was then transferred to a small room on the second floor where I was able to rest and was supplied with water by a guard.

Thursday Sept. 26th. I was not disturbed.

Friday Sept. 27th. I was called to see Inspector Smărăndoi in the afternoon for a preliminary questioning.

In the evening I was again cross-examined by Smărăndoi and Enachescu. The latter left first and Smărăndoi confirmed his identity to me.

On Saturday morning Col. Rioșanu called saying he had been sent by General Antonescu who regretted the bad treatment to which I had been subjected, giving instructions that I was to be supplied with food and clothes.

I omitted to mention earlier on that morning of Thursday Sept. 26th, a man, calling himself a doctor came and dressed my foot with alcohol and bandages. The following day, 27th, we were all photographed and had our finger prints taken.

On Wednesday, Oct. 2nd after having been cross-examined daily for five days, I was transferred at 3.30 p.m. to the Military Court, CMC Strada Plevnei 135. On arrival here we were visited in the guard room by Mihai Antonescu, Minister of Justice and Col. Rioșanu on behalf of Gen. Antonescu, and the C.C. Military Court, Col. Gelef, the "Prim Procuror". Mihai Antonescu apologised on behalf of Gen. Antonescu for the treatment we had received but said that the law would have to run its course.

We were asked to show our injuries which we did, after which Mihai Antonescu gave instructions that we should have medical treatment. We were allowed to buy food from outside and to bring clothes from our homes, and were put together in one large cell. We were asked to confirm our written declarations by Col. Gelef.

On Friday Oct. 11th our files were completed and we appeared before the military court who ordered that we be held for trial.

On Monday Oct. 21st Capt. Râşnovanu told me at 4 p.m. that the Sureté Générale had sent a request to Col. Gelef that their agents be allowed to question me regarding matters outside the declarations already made. I agreed at Gen. Gelef's request. Four agents than came in, three of whom I recognised from the Sureté. They were followed by a fifth who later proved to be a German.

On Tuesday Oct. 29th I was asked to sign an application for the release of Anderson and myself.

We left the military court on Wednesday Oct. 30th at 6 p.m. accompanied by two police agents and went to the Sureté where we met Mr. Le Rougetel and Mr. Berthoud who arranged police visas for our passports and permis de séjour. We arrived at the British Legation at 7.30 p.m. slept there and left for Constanța on the 7 a.m. train. On arrival at Constanța with our police escort we proceeded to the Consulate where we spent that day and night. We left Constanța Friday November 1st on the s.s. "Basarabia" for Istanbul, where we arrived on Saturday Nov. 2nd.

I would like to record that during our stay at the Military Court, we were treated with every consideration by Col. Gelef and his staff.

I was in the hands of the legionaries from 12.30 a.m. Wednesday Sept. 25 until 10 p.m. that night.

My first contact with the regular police was made on arrival at the Siguranța (Sureté) between 9 and 10 p.m. Wednesday 25th.

Our bad treatment came to an end after our arrival at the Sureté.

The men who subjected us to bad treatment declared themselves to be legionaries. This was also confirmed by Inspector Smărăndoi.

The note which I had written to Binder regarding the payment of Lei 100,000 found its way in to the dossier at the Sureté to be used as evidence against me but was not used to my knowledge.

Binder was not allowed to communicate with anyone which will explain why he did not inform the Consulate of our arrest. This applies also to Iovițoiu.

Although I was under arrest for five weeks I had not recovered from the injuries to my feet, body (ribs) and private parts and am now under treatment from the American Hospital in Istanbul.

While I was under arrest the legionaries occupied my house in Ploiești, consumed all food stuffs which they found there, and removed considerable quantities of clothing belonging to me and to my wife. They also took my wife's jewellery, cash and removed my car which they used and to my knowledge still have in their possession. I am preparing a list of articles removed from my house and office and from my person.

Signed by me in Istanbul on
Sunday November 10th 1940.

J.E. Treacy.

THE STATUS OF BRITISH CITIZENS DURING THE NATIONAL-
LEGIONARY STATE IN ROMANIA
Summary

Political relations between Great Britain and Romania were strained during all the period of the national-legionary state (September 1940-January 1941). Precarious bi-lateral relationships was definitely determined by two issues: the detention of British vessels on the Danube by Romanian authorities, but especially because of the arrest of some British citizens and their subsequent maltreatment by the Legionary Movement. Because of British investments made in oil extraction and processing here existed a significant number of British subjects, together with their families, being in most cases engineers for the oil companies. Considering that these subjects are nothing more than saboteurs under cover, having the mission to repeat the operations of blowing up of oil installations from Valea Prahovei as it happened in WWI, the members of the Legionary Movement kidnapped some of them and subsequently maltreated them at the end of September and beginning of October 1940.

Nurturing the conviction that Romania needs to get rid of those with “British blood” in their veins, the inquest of the legionaries was extremely brutal, this attitude being justified, as they said, by the killing of more than 2 thousand legionaries under King Charles II, among whom Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, as well as by the poor relationships between Germany and Romania. In these, it was considered that the British involvement was undeniable, and consequently, they did not behave nicely in none of the cases of the British people. The inquest procedure consisted in, firstly, asking a question, or rather suggesting a course of answer. Not getting the desired answer, the investigators used to beat the investigated person quite badly, after which the question was asked again, until they got the desired answer. It is also worthwhile to say that psychological tortures were applied.

Because of the forceful interventions made with Romanian authorities by the British plenipotentiary minister at Bucharest, Sir Reginald Hoare, as well as by the Consul Norman Mayers, the British citizens kidnapped by the legionaries were returned to the competent authorities, who established their complete innocence. They were all released and left the Romanian territory, for fear they should fall again prey to the legionaries. They arrived at the American Hospital in Istanbul, where they needed long medical care.

The general crisis created by the illegal arrest of the British citizens represented the first serious problem of the legionary government's foreign affairs, which led to the creation of huge resentment both in public opinion in Great Britain, and among the diplomats, which will fully contribute, a few months later, to the break-up of diplomatic relations between the two countries.