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Yugoslavia and Britain's clandestine actions in Romania during the Second World War

In the years preceding the Second World War, the Balkans, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea were a disputed perimeter for Germany, Britain and the Soviet Union alike. In 1939, on the eve of the war outbreak, Britain employed diplomatic means in its attempt to secure its Mediterranean interests, relying on alliances with Greece and Turkey and hoping for Italian neutrality. Military intervention in the area was hardly seen as a solution that could succeed. By offering guarantees and securing alliances with Poland, Romania, Greece, Turkey, and with a neutral Italy, London believed it could oppose Nazi Germany¹. The desire expressed by the Soviets ever since 1941, to have their territorial acquisitions of 1939-1940 and a certain influence in Eastern Europe recognized led the British to pay more attention to the Balkans². The complicated situation in this part of Europe, the growing stakes raised by Turkey, the dilemmas over the attitude towards Italy, the oscillation between military and economic action, are some of the reasons for which Britain's strategy for South-Eastern Europe and the Balkans is regarded as being marked by contradictions³. The British policy in South-Eastern Europe has been described by some authors as "a story of last-minute improvisations". London's actions in this part of Europe have always been marked by a sense of fear: fear of annoying Mussolini, fear of provoking Hitler, fear of irritating Stalin⁴.

After Romania joined the Tripartite Pact on the 23rd of November 1940, Great Britain, which until then had been willing to accept the neutrality of Yugoslavia, could not allow Belgrade to follow the same line as Bucharest. Moreover, the British even wanted Yugoslavia to take an engagement in the war,

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¹ Lynn H. Curtright, *Great Britain, the Balkans, and Turkey in the Autumn of 1939*, in „The International History Review”, vol. 10 (1988), no. 3, p. 439-440.

² Mioara Anton, *The Coming Storm: the Great Powers and the Clash over the Balkans and the Black Sea (1944-1946)*, in „Valahian Journal of Historical Studies”, vol. 16 (2011), p. 108.

³ Lynn H. Curtright, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

⁴ Elisabeth Barker, *British Policy in South-East Europe in the Second World War*, London, Macmillan Press, 1976, p. 5.

even without being attacked by Germany, in case Hitler decided to invade Greece through Bulgaria. London's policy towards Yugoslavia depended directly on its position towards Greece. When it became obvious that Yugoslavia would sign the Tripartite Act, Britain made consistent efforts, both diplomatic and subversive⁵, to prevent this from happening. These developments in military action in this part of Europe forced Britain to constantly reconsider its priorities.

With the outbreak of war, Britain's capacity for action in the Balkans greatly diminished. The only remaining options were the encouragement of guerrilla troops and acts of sabotage. Yet many obstacles were still ahead. In Romania, Maniu conditioned the involvement in sabotage with allied attacks on oil areas⁶. The Greeks opposed the Albanians organizing a resistance force on their territory and kept speaking of their own struggle to liberate the Balkan nations⁷.

Yugoslavia was one of the most important fields of action for the British Intelligence, the missions in support of guerrilla warfare in the Balkans being overshadowed only by espionage actions on the French liberation front. The Yugoslav resistance became in no time a significant component of the British war strategy on the periphery of Europe⁸. Yugoslavia played thus an important part in the Romanian-British relationship, either by some diplomats from Bucharest going to Belgrade, or by joint actions taken to sabotage the German war machine, or as a ground for launching British agents in Romania. This study attempts to emphasize this specific topic and to present a series of events and characters that played a part in this complicated context.

British historians believe that the war caught the British government unprepared in the field of espionage and subversive action. In 1939, there were at least three different structures for organising subversive action: EH, named after the Electra House, part of the Foreign Office and dealing specifically with propaganda analysis; MI R, a branch of military espionage within the War Office; Section D of MI 6, set up in 1938 after the Anschluss. German victories in Western Europe determined political leaders in London to consider organizing a structure that would operate effectively in this area of subversive action. The founding document of the SOE was signed on the 19th of July by Nevill Chamberlaine. The new structure was to be independent of Parliamentary scrutiny and its work was to remain secret in relation to other government departments. The decision to set up the SOE was frowned upon by the Secret Intelligence Service, as there was real rivalry between the two entities. The new structure was supposed to use a wide

⁵ David A. T. Stafford, *SOE and British Involvement in the Belgrade Coup d'État of March 1941*, in „Slavic Review”, vol. 36 (1977), no. 3, p. 401.

⁶ Elisabeth Barker, *op. cit.*, p. 41-43.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 49-50.

⁸ Jay Jakub, *Spies and Saboteurs Anglo-American Collaboration and Rivalry in Human Intelligence Collection and Special Operations, 1940-45*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1999, p. 111.

range of means of action, from propaganda, sabotage, bombings, strikes and coups, all aimed at weakening the Nazis' ability to act⁹.

Belgrade was the centre of activities for Section D of MI 6 and subsequently for the Special Operations Executive, activities carried out to sabotage German actions in the Balkans. Initially, special operations were coordinated by Julius Hanau, a British arms dealer, assisted by an engineer, S. William (Bill) Bailey, who was later parachuted in mission besides Draja Mikhailovich. Hanau and Bailey had a special mission to block German ships on the Danube, particularly in the Iron Gates area, by dynamiting the banks. They sought to establish relations with various representatives of the anti-German opposition in the Balkan states and set up a new press agency in Belgrade, Britanova, whose mission was to disseminate pro-British propaganda¹⁰.

Julius Hanau was regarded as one of the most efficient British agents in the Balkans. Born in South Africa, in World War I he served in the British Army on the Thessaloniki front, and after retiring from the army he continued to function as an SIS agent. From 1920 he lived in Belgrade where he was a representative of several British companies, including Vickers Engineering. In parallel he continued his work as an SIS agent, without the knowledge of the British Legation in Belgrade. In March 1939 he joined Section D of the SIS, beginning a series of acts of sabotage against the Nazis. He knew Yugoslavia very well and had strong connections in the political and economic circles. However, the Foreign Office wanted him out of the Balkans, as he was accused of becoming too involved in domestic political games. He left Yugoslavia in July 1940 and was subsequently involved in several missions in South Africa and Madagascar¹¹.

Although William Bailey's biography was less spectacular biography, the part he played in Britain's actions was no less important. A mine engineer in Kosovo, he served from late 1939 to July 1940 as Hanau's deputy in Yugoslavia. He was later transferred to Istanbul, where he coordinated the Balkans sub-section of SOE. After being sent to the United States in an attempt to recruit Croatian workers to fight alongside Tito's partisans, in December 1942 he was parachuted back to Yugoslavia as head of the British Mission alongside General Mihailović. He remained active in the region even after the war as a member of the British

⁹ „We have got to organize movements in enemy-occupied territory comparable to the Sinn Fein movement in Ireland, to the Chinese Guerillas now operating against Japan, to the Spanish Irregulars who played a notable part in Wellington's campaign or – one might as well admit it – to the organizations which the Nazis themselves have developed so remarkably in almost every country in the world. This 'democratic international' must use many different methods, including industrial and military sabotage, labour agitation and strikes, continuous propaganda, terrorist acts against traitors and German leaders, boycotts and riots". Michael R. D. Foot, *Was SOE Any Good?*, in „Journal of Contemporary History", vol. 16 (1981), no. 1, p. 167-171.

¹⁰ David A. T. Stafford, *op. cit.*

¹¹ Malcolm Atkin, *Section D for Destruction Forerunner of SOE Appendix 2: Officers, Agents and Contacts of Section D of the Secret Intelligence Service*, Pen & Sword Military, 2017, p. 35.

Mission within the Allied Control Commission in Bulgaria¹². In December 1940, when he was in Istanbul, he sent to London a plan of action regarding Romania. At the beginning of the year 1941, the document was discussed with the British Minister in Bucharest, Reginald Hoare. It envisaged the creation of a resistance organization, made up of members of The National Peasants Party, the Iron Guard and other pro-Alliance representatives, which, in the event of German attacks being launched in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, would ensure a strong opposition and would initiate sabotage actions. Anti-German opposition groups were to be coordinated and financially supported. According to Bailey's report, the model for action was to be the one used in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, where such groups were already active¹³.

After the surrender of France and Western Europe, the Balkans remained the only area in Europe where the SOE network was intact and active. But even here things were about to change in the autumn of 1940, once Italy attacked Greece. In November 1940, the SOE activity in Belgrade was taken over by Tom Masterson, a British businessman with interests in the Romanian oil industry. His appointment was intended to revive the work of the British Legation in Belgrade, seriously shaken by a series of actions conducted by Hanau. Masterson's appointment to Belgrade also coincided with the increased interest of the British General Staff in blocking German supplies of oil and grain. In November and December 1940, the British General Staff announced the SOE that the main mission was to strike the Romanian oil shipments supplying Germany. From this perspective the SOE was under great pressure, as in January 1941 the British government expressed dissatisfaction with its achievements in the Balkans¹⁴.

Section D of the Secret Intelligence Service, transformed in 1940 into the Special Operations Executive, was recruiting agents from among people who had previously worked in the mining industry, banks or universities, who had links with the Balkans, either academics or journalists who used their old profession as a cover¹⁵, as was the case of Archibald Gibson or Patrick Maitland, correspondents in the Balkans for "*The Times*"¹⁶. A very important figure in this context, significantly involved in Britain's espionage activities in the region, was Harold Gibson, Archibald Gibson's brother, and the man who co-opted the latter into the British government service. Harold Gibson was the head of MI 6 in Romania between 1922 and 1931. He was subsequently transferred to Riga and Prague. He left the capital of Czechoslovakia in 1939 and two years later, in 1941, he was transferred to Istanbul as station chief of the city. From there he coordinated

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 8.

¹³ Dennis Deletant, *Activități britanice clandestine în România în timpul celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial*, București, Humanitas, 2019, p. 135-137.

¹⁴ David A. T. Stafford, *op. cit.*, p. 409-410.

¹⁵ Malcolm Atkin, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

¹⁶ Dennis Deletant, *Researching MI6 and Romania, 1940-49*, in „The Slavonic and East European Review”, vol. 89 (2011), no. 4, p. 663-664.

espionage activities not only in Turkey, but also in Athens, Belgrade, Sofia, Bucharest and Budapest. Harold Gibson remained in Istanbul until 1944, when he joined the British Military Mission in Bulgaria, from where he was expelled at the request of the Soviets¹⁷.

British cultural centres also served as a source of agents for SOE networks in the Balkans. The co-opting of Julian Amery as a secret agent was not well-received by the British Legation in Belgrade¹⁸. At the end of 1940, he was sent from Belgrade to Sofia¹⁹. Amery was also well known in Bucharest. Educated at Eton College, he worked as a war correspondent in Spain, from where he came to Bucharest as an English teacher, and in August 1939 was appointed director of the English school of the Romanian-English Society in Bucharest. The school was run under the auspices of the British Council, but he was soon transferred to Belgrade as Assistant Press Attaché within the Legation. From this position he was recruited by the SOE and sent to Sofia to organize the network in Bulgaria. He was later to become liaison officer with the partisan movements in Albania, where he was even considered a specialist. However, his impulsive nature and some of his actions forced the British to finally withdraw him to Istanbul²⁰.

A moment when Yugoslavia played an important role in the actions Britain undertook in Romania was represented by the attempts to blockade German ships carrying Romanian oil on the Danube. The Danube also played an important role in the British strategy in the Balkans, either in terms of military action or in terms of supplies²¹. In January 1940, there was serious discussion in Section D of MI 6 about sabotage actions that could hamper the supply of Romanian oil to Germany. One of the scenarios involved the detonation of sections of the shore in the area of the Danube's Depressions. The plan for these actions to detonate the banks in the Iron Gates area was devised by Julius Hanau, a MI6 Section D representative in Belgrade²². The action could not be carried out without the consent and assistance of the Yugoslav General Staff, who agreed that this should happen, however, only as a preventive measure against a German attack, and that detonation should take place only if Germany invaded Yugoslavia²³. At the same time, action was taken to corrupt ship pilots in the Iron Gates area, and some were sent on leave in order to sabotage German shipping. The British personnel of the Danube fleet were equipped with weapons and explosives²⁴. Eventually the plan had to be abandoned in April 1940, after the Romanian authorities seized, in Giurgiu harbour, the arms

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 665.

¹⁸ Malcolm Atkin, *op. cit.*

¹⁹ Spyridon Ploumidis, *S.O.E. Operations and P.W.E. Propaganda to World War II Bulgaria (1941-1944)*, in *EB*, nr 1/2001, p. 26.

²⁰ Malcolm Atkin, *op. cit.*, p. 6-7.

²¹ Maria Georgescu, Mihai Retegan, *SSI-SOE Jurnal politic 1941-1946*, București, Editura Rao, 2007, p. 209.

²² Dennis Deletant, *Activități britanice clandestine în România...*, p. 126.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 138.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 126-127.

and explosives from the British ship *Termonde*, which was supposed to take specialists and equipment to the Iron Gates area. Although part of the Romanian political elite, such as Foreign Minister Grigore Gafencu, attempted to cover up the British actions in Romania, the secret services already had a fruitful collaboration with the German ones²⁵.

In 1939, the British set up the Goeland Transport and Trading Company, which was in charge of river traffic on the Danube, and tried to control water transport in order to block German access. In 1940, the Special Intelligence Service in Bucharest suspected that the British intended to hand the company over to the Soviets, who were planning to set up a central shipping agency in Serbia and several other agencies in the main towns on the Danube²⁶.

In this context, under pressure from the Germans, the Romanians asked a significant number of British citizens who were involved in the oil industry or had connections with the British Legation, to leave Romania. Some of these people left for Belgrade. One of them was William Harris-Burland, who ran the Goeland Transport and Trading company. He left in February 1941 for Belgrade, where he was employed in the SOE office. Here he was captured by Italian forces together with other agents connected to Romania: Thomas Masterson, George Taylor and Hugh Seton Watson²⁷.

Thomas Masterson was First Secretary of the British Legation in Belgrade and head of the SOE operations in Yugoslavia. Captured by the Italians he was later released in a prisoner exchange. He was subsequently sent by London on several missions to Cairo to coordinate subversive actions. Starting from January 1943 he broadcast 50 programmes addressed to Romanians on the BBC, campaigning for a break with Nazi Germany. In February he was sent back to Cairo, with the rank of colonel, attached to the SOE mission, to advise on armistice negotiations with the Romanians. He returned to London in April 1944 and died 5 months later, on the 4th of August²⁸.

George Taylor, born in 1902 in Melbourne, Australia, initially worked as a journalist and then joined Shell in Australia. He arrived in London in the mid-1930's, where he intended to write a book on British foreign policy. In July 1939 he joined MI6 Section D, and in early 1940 was appointed head of the Balkan Section. As he was considered a remarkable strategist, he was called back to London and was involved in the transfer of work from Section D to the SOE. In January 1941 he returned to the Balkans to organize the sabotage of German communications and supply routes, was captured by the Italians and was released two months later as he was travelling on a diplomatic passport²⁹.

²⁵ Ivor Porter, *Operation Autonomus*, București, Humanitas, 1991, p. 60-61.

²⁶ Sorin Aparaschivei, *Serviciul britanic de informații în România (1916-1950)*, București, Editura Militară, 2020, p. 161.

²⁷ Dennis Deletant, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 18-19.

²⁹ Malcolm Atkin, *op. cit.*

Hugh Seton-Watson, son of historian Robert Seton-Watson, started travelling throughout the Balkans in 1938. There he met several friends of his father, including Iuliu Maniu. He later joined the Foreign Office, working in the Press Office at the British Legations in Bucharest and then Belgrade. In the Yugoslav capital he cooperated with Section D of the SIS but was not officially recruited. However, at the end of 1940 he was integrated into the SOE network. He was captured by the Italians at the time of the occupation of Yugoslavia, but was released due to his diplomatic status. On arrival in London he rejoined SOE, being sent to Istanbul and then to Cairo, where he worked as an intelligence analyst and adviser on Balkan affairs³⁰.

In 1940, Special Operations 2 claimed to have agents among the citizens of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia that were ready to act, and if necessary, larger actions could be organized from these countries, and eventually Romania could also be included³¹. Belgrade was also a place to observe political life in Romania and also to coordinate the activities of British agents. Furthermore, starting with 1942, the British hoped that Maniu would succeed in organizing a resistance movement similar to that organized by Mihailovich or Tito in Yugoslavia. However, Maniu's hesitations caused things to fail³², a fact which would seriously influence the British attitude towards the Peasants' Party leader after 1944.

In the context of the period 1940-1941, the British intelligence services tried to maintain their network and operate on several lines for collecting information. One of these lines was the Yugoslav one. The Special Intelligence Service in Bucharest reported that the connection between the British and the Yugoslavs was mainly ensured by Robert Haukey, Secretary of the British Legation, and Sofronie Pavlovitch, Secretary of the Yugoslav Legation in Bucharest. The Romanians suspected that the list of British agents also included Minister Al. Avakumovich, the adviser Charles Kulmer, the secretary Simovich Borivoye, Friederich Ilaas, Milos Mitrovich, and Colonel France Stopnick (Military Attaché). From 1942, the British espionage also started to operate through a special division organized under the protection of the Swiss Legation. Within this framework, the British-Yugoslav intelligence collaboration in Romania was led by Novak Popovici. He was assisted by Anton Ristici, Alexandru Gavrilovici, president of the Serbian colony in Romania, and Edi Berger. The SSI also reported that a group of Serb partisans, led by Zinija Ostoicvici, a communist, had proposed to Draja Mihailovici to organise sabotage in the Romanian Banat area, assisted by the British and the Soviets. Moreover, the Romanians allegedly had learned that English officers were training Serbian partisans on the island of Ada Kaleh to carry out sabotage in Romania, on the navigable channel and in the neighbouring areas³³.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 65.

³¹ Dennis Deletant, *op. cit.*, p. 136-138.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 159.

³³ Sorin Aparaschivei, *op. cit.*, p. 185-186.

However, the most important British espionage network in Romania during the Second World War was the one coordinated by MI 6 and led by Alexander Eck. The head of the network has a rich international biography. Born in Poland to a Swedish-Polish family, he studied and later briefly taught Slavic philology. After a short experience in the Bolshevik Party, he emigrated from Russia to France, where he joined the French army during the First World War, serving as an intelligence officer on the Thessaloniki front. After teaching Byzantine and Slavic studies in the interwar period, he rejoined the French army in 1939. He arrived in Romania at the invitation of Nicolae Iorga to give a series of lectures on Byzantium. The French capitulation led him to collaborate with MI 6 and gather information about German troop movements in Romania. His cover was as a collaborator of the Institute of Universal History and the French Institute of Byzantine Studies. He led an extensive network, which included Dan Brătianu and George Tomaziu, among others. They collected and radioed information about German troops between 1940 and 1944 and were arrested in June 1944³⁴.

Starting from 1943, Britain was forced to reconsider its strategy of supporting partisan or resistance movements in the Balkans. In London it was initially hoped that these groups could be brought under British control, and they were usually labelled as 'patriots', rather than 'partisans'. However, a number of elements forced London to change its course of action. Most of these groups had been active since before the British arrived in the area, were involved in clashes with rival groups, in conflicts that often turned into civil wars and were led by Communist leaders. In their struggle to liberate countries from Nazi occupation, these partisan groups eliminated their opponents and created the conditions for communist regimes, aspects that created many complications for Great Britain³⁵.

The British strategy in the Balkans was initially to support Mikhailovich's Chetnik troops. This was the initial objective of the first SOE mission that landed in Montenegro in September 1941. However, beginning with 1943, plans changed. The British began to search for a possibility to collaborate with Tito. By February 1944, London was supporting both sides of the Yugoslav struggle against the Germans. Later, they decided to cooperate only with the communist leader and his partisan troops, who were considered more effective in the anti-Nazi struggle. The decision to eventually give all the support to Tito seems to have been influenced by good number of the SOE headquarters in Cairo and some of those serving in Yugoslavia, including James Klugman³⁶, who was a member of the British Communist Party in the pre-war years and a Cambridge graduate.

³⁴ Dennis Deletant, *Researching MI6 and Romania...*, p. 672-679; George Tomaziu, *Jurnalul unui figurant*, București, Casa Editorială Univers, 1995, p. 36-99.

³⁵ William Deakin, *Resistance in Occupied Central and Southeastern Europe*, in William Deakin, Elisabeth Barker, Jonathan Chadwick, *British Political and Military Strategy in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe in 1944*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1988, p. 78-79.

³⁶ Roderick Bailey, *Communist in SOE: Explaining James Klugmann's Recruitment and Retention*, in „Intelligence and National Security”, vol. 20 (2005), nr. 1, p. 72-74.

Yugoslavia was also the training ground for many British officers who were later involved in special missions in the Balkans and in Romania. One of these was Thomas Charles Russel, born in Vărciorova in 1915. He was educated in Britain, where he specialised in agriculture. Early in the war he joined the Scots Guard Training Battalion³⁷. On the night of 15-16 June 1943, Russel was parachuted into Romania together with a Romanian radio operator, Nicolae Turcanu. He was originally from Bessarabia and was a maritime radio-telegrapher by profession, with previous links to the Romanian intelligence service. The war had caught him in Great Britain, where he joined the British army³⁸.

Russel and Turcanu were met by a committee that included members of the British mission related to Mihailovich's formations. The Serbs offered to provide security for the two, including on the Romanian shore, saying that Romanian peasants were likely to attack and loot them. Russel and Turcanu crossed the Romanian border on the 2nd of August, accompanied by a Romanian-speaking Serb. In mid-August they took shelter in a forest near Vărciorova, from where they managed to transmit the first radio telegrams to Cairo. On the 4th of September, in circumstances that have remained a mystery, Tomas Russel was killed. Nicolae Turcanu, who at the time of the crime was in the village at the house of a peasant leader, from where he was trying to contact Iuliu Maniu, stated that on his return he found Russel dead and the hut where they were hiding devastated. The suspects were both a forest ranger from the village and the Serb who had accompanied the two and had disappeared. He later returned to Bucharest and presented his version of the facts, according to which they were attacked at night by some strangers and that he managed to save himself by getting out of the hut before Russel. SOE conducted a series of investigations, but failed to identify the perpetrator³⁹.

Romania followed the British movements in the Balkans with interest and analysed their actions in Yugoslavia, especially as the SSI had been ordered to assess possible scenarios regarding Romania and the military situation in the surrounding countries was important. This is why Yugoslavia and the British relations with the Yugoslav resistance were the focus of the Romanian services. For instance, in 1942, the SSI had a fairly clear picture of the Yugoslav army's disposition, but also of its relations with the USSR, all obtained through contacts with the British intelligence in Istanbul. The Romanians were actually trying to find out whether the Anglo-Americans had the capacity to launch a second front⁴⁰. The Romanians hoped that an Allied landing in the Balkans would allow Bucharest to withdraw from the alliance with Germany and avoid occupation by the USSR at the same time. This aspect was also conveyed to the Anglo-Americans through Romanian diplomats in Turkey⁴¹.

³⁷ Dennis Deletant, *Activități britanice clandestine în România...*, p. 21.

³⁸ Sorin Aparaschivei, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

³⁹ Dennis Deletant, *op. cit.*, p. 167-170.

⁴⁰ Sorin Aparaschivei, *op. cit.*, p. 202-205.

⁴¹ Maria Georgescu, Mihai Retegan, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

Percentage agreements left more room for manoeuvre for the British in Yugoslavia than in Romania, where London had large economic interests, but ceded the political upper hand. According to General Greer, Britain, having gained a certain influence in Yugoslavia, was waiting to regain its positions in Romania, and many hopes were pinned on the Peace Treaty, which would have brought things in their natural place for London⁴². In the spring of 1944 Britain hoped that the USSR would allow it to act in Romania as they had allowed the Soviets to act in Yugoslavia⁴³. Actually, the Autonomus mission scandal caused the British to withdraw the SOE missions from the Balkans for fear that the Soviets, in response, would infiltrate guerrilla troops through Yugoslavia into Greece⁴⁴. In this context, the border area between Romania and Yugoslavia was of uttermost importance for the British espionage. After 1944, Orşova and Drobeta Turnu Severin were two locations where British agents were active, according to the Romanian Special Intelligence Service⁴⁵.

A fact worth mentioning here, while presenting some brief data about this tripartite wartime connection, is that related to the personality of the Romanian journalist Liviu Nasta, correspondent in Bucharest for several foreign newspapers, including the New York Times. In 1939, the Romanian intelligence services report that he had been recruited by John Reed, a British espionage agent. It turns out that John Reed was actually the conspiratorial name of Colonel William Deakin. He was the fiancé of Livia Nasta, the journalist's daughter, whom he would marry in 1943, when she worked as an announcer at an Allied radio station in Cairo. In the period 1943-1944 Deakin worked in Yugoslavia, alongside Draja Mihailovich, as a representative of the SOE⁴⁶. Liviu Nasta was arrested and sentenced in 1950 for spying for the Americans and the British, and later died in a Romanian Communist prison, despite the fact that Winston Churchill himself, for whom William Deakin worked as a literary adviser during the period when the former British Prime Minister was writing his memoirs, intervened for his release.

This aimed at discussing some of the characters and facts that emphasize the role played by Yugoslavia in the Romanian-British relation during the Second World War. During the troubled years of the war, a large number of businessmen, diplomats, men of culture and officers from Romania, Yugoslavia and other Balkan countries offered their services to the Allies. They knew the region very well, travelled frequently from one country to another or relocated to organize espionage and diversion operations. The events and characters we have briefly presented in this study create the picture of a common front in the Balkans, where the British

⁴² Sorin Aparaschivei, *op. cit.*, p. 164-165.

⁴³ Marian Zidaru, *The Autonomus Scandal: The USSR Marks Its Territory in Romania*, in „The Danube and the Black Sea in the Eurasian Space. History, Political Relations and Diplomacy”, vol. IX (2021), no. 3, p. 244.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 249.

⁴⁵ Sorin Aparaschivei, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 261.

secret services used the same agents to organize various anti-Nazi operations. Research into British actions in Romania during the years of the Second World War cannot be complete without a thorough analysis of the part played by neighbouring countries in this equation. In our case, it turns out that Yugoslavia was an important field of action for Britain in operations related to Romania.

Yugoslavia and Britain's clandestine actions in Romania during the Second World War

Abstract

The Balkan Peninsula was one of the regions in which Britain placed great emphasis on organising clandestine actions during the Second World War. On the one hand, London was keen on securing its strategic interests in the Eastern Mediterranean and, on the other, to prevent Nazi Germany to get food and oil products from the Balkan countries. In this context, Yugoslavia represented an important field of action for Britain in organising clandestine operations in Romania. Many of the British secret agents who arrived in Romania during this period came via Yugoslavia, and some of those who had to withdraw from Bucharest after 1940 did so via Belgrade. The blockade of German oil tankers on the Danube was also organised with the help of Yugoslavia. Our study attempts to shed light on these connections between the two countries, which, although holding a different status during the war years, were often perceived by British intelligence as a united front.

Keywords: Yugoslavia; WWII; Romania; Partisan Warfare; Clandestine actions.

ABREVIERI

<i>AARMSI</i>	= Analele Academiei Române, Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice
<i>AARMSL</i>	= Analele Academiei Române, Memoriile Secțiunii Literare
<i>AARPAD</i>	= „Analele Academiei Române”, seria II, București, 1879-1916
<i>AA.SS.</i>	= <i>Acta Sanctorum</i> , ed. Bollandisti, III ^a ediție, Parigi 1863-1870
<i>AB</i>	= Arhivele Basarabiei
<i>ACNSAS</i>	= Arhivele Consiliului Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității
<i>AE</i>	= L'Année Epigraphique, Paris
<i>AIR</i>	= Arhiva Istorică a României
<i>AIAC</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Cluj
<i>AIIC</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie „A. D. Xenopol”, Iași
<i>AIIC</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Cluj
<i>AIINC</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională, Cluj
<i>AIIX</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie „A. D. Xenopol”, Iași
<i>ALIL</i>	= Anuarul de Lingvistică și Istorie Literară, Iași
<i>ALMA</i>	= <i>Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi</i> . Genève.
<i>AM</i>	= Arheologia Moldovei, Iași
<i>AMAE</i>	= Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe
<i>AmAnthr</i>	= American Anthropologist, New Series, Published by Wiley on behalf of the American Anthropological Association
<i>AMM</i>	= Acta Moldaviae Meridionalis, Vaslui
<i>AMMB</i>	= Arhiva Mitropoliei Moldovei și Bucovinei, Iași
<i>AMN</i>	= Acta Musei Napocensis
<i>AMR</i>	= Arhivele Militare Române
<i>AMS</i>	= Anuarul Muzeului din Suceava
<i>ANB</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, București
<i>ANC</i>	= Arhivele Naționale. Serviciul Județean Cluj
<i>ANDBM</i>	= Arhivele Naționale. Direcția Municipiului București
<i>ANG</i>	= Arhivele Naționale. Serviciul Județean Galați
<i>ANI</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, Iași
<i>ANIC</i>	= Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale
<i>ANR-Cluj</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, Cluj-Napoca
<i>ANR-Sibiu</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, Sibiu
<i>ANRM</i>	= Arhivele Naționale ale Republicii Moldova, Chișinău
<i>ANRW</i>	= Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, Berlin-New York
<i>ANSMB</i>	= Arhivele Naționale. Serviciul Municipiului București
<i>ANV</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, Vaslui
<i>AO</i>	= Arhivele Olteniei
<i>AP</i>	= Analele Putnei
<i>APH</i>	= Acta Poloniae Historica, Varșovia
<i>AqLeg</i>	= <i>Aquila Legionis. Cuadernos de Estudios sobre el Ejército Romano</i> , Salamanca
<i>AR</i>	= Arhiva Românească
<i>ArchM</i>	= Archiva Moldaviae, Iași
<i>ArhGen</i>	= Arhiva Genealogică
„Arhiva”	= „Arhiva”. Organul Societății Științifice și Literare, Iași
<i>ArhMold</i>	= Arheologia Moldovei
<i>ASRR</i>	= Arhiva Societății Române de Radiodifuziune
<i>AȘUI</i>	= Analele Științifice ale Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iași

ATS	= Ancient Textile Series, Oxbow Books, Oxford și Oakville
AUAIC	= Arhiva Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași
AUB	= Analele Universității „București”
BA	= <i>Biblioteca Ambrosiana</i> , Roma, Città Nuova Editrice
BAR	= Biblioteca Academiei Române
BArchB	= Bundesarchiv Berlin
BAR int. ser.	= British Archaeological Reports, International Series
BBRF	= Buletinul Bibliotecii Române din Freiburg
BCIR	= Buletinul Comisiei Istorice a României
BCMI	= Buletinul Comisiei Monumentelor Istorice
BCU-Iași	= Biblioteca Centrală Universitară, Iași
BE	= Bulletin Epigraphique
BF	= Byzantinische Forschungen, Amsterdam
BJ	= Bonner Jahrbücher, Bonn
BMI	= Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice
BMIM	= București. Materiale de istorie și muzeografie
BNB	= Biblioteca Națională București
BNJ	= Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher
BOR	= Biserica Ortodoxă Română
BS	= Balkan Studies
BSNR	= Buletinul Societății Numismatice Române
ByzSlav	= Byzantinoslavica
CA	= Cercetări arheologice
CAI	= Caiete de Antropologie Istorică
CartNova	= <i>La ciudad de Carthago Nova 3: La documentación epigráfica</i> , Murcia
CB	= Cahiers balkaniques
CC	= Codrul Cosminului, Suceava (ambele serii)
CCAR	= Cronica cercetărilor arheologice din România, CIMEC, București
CCh	= <i>Corpus Christianorum</i> , Turnhout
CChSG	= <i>Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca</i>
CCSL	= <i>Corpus Christianorum Series Latina</i> , Turnhout, Brepols
CDM	= <i>Catalogul documentelor moldovenești din Arhivele Centrale de Stat</i> , București, vol. I-V; supl. I.
CDȚR	= <i>Catalogul documentelor Țării Românești din Arhivele Statului</i> , București, vol. II-VIII, 1974-2006
Chiron	= Chiron: Mitteilungen der Kommission für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, 1971
CI	= Cercetări istorice (ambele serii)
CIL	= <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> , Berlin
CL	= Cercetări literare
CLRE	= <i>Consuls of the Later Roman Empire</i> , eds. R. S. Bagnall, A. Cameron, S. R. Schwartz, K. A. Worp, Atlanta, 1987
CN	= Cercetări Numismatice
CNA	= Cronica Numismatică și Arheologică, București
CSCO	= <i>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium</i> , Louvain
CSEA	= <i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiae Aquileiensis</i> , Roma, Città Nuova Editrice
CSEL	= <i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> , Wien, De Gruyter
CSPAMI	= Centrul de Studii și Păstrare a Arhivelor Militare Centrale, Pitești
CT	= Columna lui Traian, București
CTh	= <i>Codex Theodosianus</i> . Theodosiani, Libri XVI cum constitutionibus Sirmondianis, I, edidit adsumpto apparatu P. Kruegeri, Th. Mommsen, Hildesheim, 1970-1971
Cv.L	= Convorbiri literare (ambele serii)

„Dacia”, N.S.	= Dacia. Nouvelle Série, Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne, București
DANIC	= Direcția Arhivelor Naționale Istoric Centrale
DGAS	= Direcția Generală a Arhivelor Statului
DI	= Diplomatarium Italicum
DIR	= <i>Documente privind istoria României</i>
DIRRI	= <i>Documente privind Istoria României. Războiul pentru Independență</i>
DOP	= Dumbarton Oaks Papers
DTN	= <i>Din trecutul nostru</i> , Chișinău
DRH	= <i>Documenta Romaniae Historica</i>
EB	= Études Balkaniques
EBPB	= Études byzantines et post-byzantines
EDCS	= <i>Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss-Slaby</i> (http://www.manfredclaus.de/)
EDR	= <i>Epigraphic Database Roma</i> (http://www.edr-edr.it/default/index.php)
EpigrAnat	= Epigraphica Anatolica, Münster
ER Asturias	= F. Diego Santos, <i>Epigrafia Romana de Asturias</i> , Oviedo, 1959.
Gerión	= Gerión. Revista de Historia Antigua, Madrid
GB	= Glasul Bisericii
GCS	= <i>Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller</i> , Leipzig, Hinrichs, 1897-1969
GLK	= <i>Grammatici Latini Keil</i>
HEp	= <i>Hispania Epigraphica</i> , Madrid
„Hierasus”	= <i>Hierasus</i> . Anuarul Muzeului Județean Botoșani, Botoșani
HM	= Heraldica Moldaviae, Chișinău
HU	= Historia Urbana, Sibiu
HUI	= Historia Universitatis Iassensis, Iași
IDR	= <i>Inscripțiile din Dacia romană</i> , București-Paris
IDRE	= <i>Inscriptions de la Dacie romaine. Inscriptions externes concernant l'histoire de la Dacie</i> , I-II, Bucarest, 1996, 2000
IGLN	= <i>Inscriptions grecques et latines de Novae</i> , Bordeaux
IGLR	= <i>Inscripțiile grecești și latine din secolele IV-XIII descoperite în România</i> , București, 1976
IILPecs	= <i>Instrumenta Inscripta Latina. Das römische Leben im Spiegel der Kleininschriften</i> , Pecs, 1991
ILAlg	= <i>Inscriptions latines d'Algérie</i> , Paris
ILB	= <i>Inscriptiones Latinae in Bulgaria repertae. Inscriptiones inter Oescum et Iatrum repertae</i> , Sofia, 1989
ILD	= <i>Inscripții latine din Dacia</i> , București
ILN	= <i>Inscriptions latines de Novae</i> , Poznań
ILLPRON	= <i>Inscriptionum Lapidarium Latinarum Provinciae Norici usque ad annum MCMLXXXIV repertarum indices</i> , Berlin, 1986
ILS	= <i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> , 1892
IMS	= <i>Inscriptiones Moesiae Superioris</i> , Belgrad
IN	= „Ioan Neculce”. Buletinul Muzeului Municipal Iași
ISM	= <i>Inscripțiile din Scythia Minor grecești și latine</i> , București, vol. I-III, 1983-1999
JGO	= <i>Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas</i>
JL	= Junimea literară
JRS	= The Journal of Roman studies, London
LR	= Limba română
MA	= Memoria Antiquitatis, Piatra Neamț
MCA	= Materiale și cercetări arheologice
MEF	= <i>Moldova în epoca feudalismului</i> , vol. I-XII, 1961-2012, Chișinău
MEFRA	= <i>Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Antiquité</i> , Roma

MGH	= <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica inde ab anno Christi quingentesimo usque ad annum millesimum et quingentesimum auspiciis societatis aperiendis fontibus rerum Germanicarum medii aevi</i> , Berlin 1877-
MI	= Magazin istoric, București
MIM	= Materiale de istorie și muzeografie
MM	= Mitropolia Moldovei
MMS	= Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei
MN	= Muzeul Național, București
MO	= Mitropolia Olteniei
MOF	= Monitorul Oficial al României
Navarro	= M. Navarro Caballero, <i>Perfectissima femina. Femmes de l'élite dans l'Hispanie romaine</i> , Bordeaux, 2017.
NBA	= <i>Nuova Biblioteca Agostiniana</i> , Roma, Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum
NDPAC	= <i>Nuovo Dizionario Patristico e di Antichità Cristiane</i> , I, A-E, 2e edizione, Marietti, 2006; III, P-Z, 2e edizione, Marietti, 2008
NEH	= Nouvelles études d'histoire
OI	= Opțiuni istoriografice, Iași
OPEL	= <i>Onomasticon provinciarum Europae latinarum</i> , vol. I-IV, Budapesta-Viena, 1994-2002
PG	= <i>Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Graeca</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris, 1886-1912
PIR	= <i>Prosopographia Imperii Romani. Saec. I.II.III</i> , editio altera, Berlin.
PLRE	= <i>Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , 3 vol., eds. A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, and J. Morris, Cambridge, 1971-1992
RA	= Revista arhivelor
RBAR	= Revista Bibliotecii Academiei Române, București
RC	= Revista catolică
RdI	= Revista de istorie
REByz	= Revue des Études Byzantines
RER	= Revue des études roumaines
RESEE	= Revue des études Sud-Est européennes
RHP	= <i>Die römischen Hilfstruppen in Pannonien während der Prinzipatszeit. I: Die Inschriften</i> , Viena
RHSEE	= Revue historique de Sud-Est européen
RI	= Revista istorică (ambele serii)
RIAF	= Revista pentru istorie, arheologie și filologie
RIB	= <i>Roman Inscriptions of Britain</i> , Londra
RIM	= Revista de Istorie a Moldovei, Chișinău
RIR	= Revista istorică română, București
RIS	= Revista de istorie socială, Iași
RITL	= Revista de istorie și teorie literară
RIU	= <i>Die römischen Inschriften Ungarns</i> , Budapesta
RJMH	= The Romanian Journal of Modern History, Iași
RM	= Revista muzeelor
RMD	= <i>Roman Military Diplomas</i> , Londra
RMM	= <i>Römische Militärdiplome und Entlassungsurkunden in der Sammlung des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums</i> , Mainz
RMM-MIA	= Revista muzeelor și monumentelor, seria Monumente istorice și de artă
RMR	= Revista Medicală Română
RRH	= Revue roumaine d'histoire
RRHA	= Revue roumaine de l'histoire de l'art
RRHA-BA	= Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art. Série Beaux Arts
RSIAB	= Revista Societății istorice și arheologice bisericești, Chișinău
Rsl	= Romanoslavica

<i>SAHIR</i>	= Studia et Acta Historiae Iudaeorum Romaniae, București
<i>SAI</i>	= Studii și Articole de Istorie
<i>SCB</i>	= Studii și cercetări de bibliologie
<i>Sch</i>	= <i>Sources Chrétiennes</i> , Paris
<i>SCIA</i>	= Studii și cercetări de istoria artei
<i>SCIM</i>	= Studii și cercetări de istorie medie
<i>SCIV/SCIVA</i>	= Studii și cercetări de istorie veche (și arheologie)
<i>SCN</i>	= Studii și Cercetări Numismatice, București
<i>SCȘI</i>	= Studii și cercetări științifice, Istorie
<i>SEER</i>	= The Slavonic and East European Review
<i>SHA</i>	= <i>Scriptores Historiae Augustae</i>
<i>SJAN</i>	= Serviciul Județean al Arhivelor Naționale
<i>SMIC</i>	= Studii și materiale de istorie contemporană, București
<i>SMIM</i>	= Studii și materiale de istorie medie, București
<i>SMIMod</i>	= Studii și materiale de istorie modernă, București
<i>SOF</i>	= Südost-Forschungen, München
<i>ST</i>	= Studii Teologice, București
<i>StAntArh</i>	= <i>Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica</i> , Iași
<i>T&MBYZ</i>	= <i>Travaux et Mémoires du Centre de recherches d'histoire et de civilisation byzantines</i>
<i>ThD</i>	= Thraco-Dacica, București
<i>TR</i>	= Transylvanian Review, Cluj-Napoca
<i>TV</i>	= Teologie și viața, Iași
<i>ZPE</i>	= Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik
<i>ZSL</i>	= Zeitschrift für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde