

# PEACE AND ITS CHANGING NATURE DURING WWII. ROMANIAN DISCURSIVE INSIGHTS ON A NEW PROJECT FOR EUROPE

VALENTINA PRICOPIE \*  
CRISTINA DÂMBOEANU \*\*

## ABSTRACT

Public discourse both in Western European countries and in the emergent states of Central and Eastern Europe is built around the repertoire of peace. This paper aims at investigating the changing vs. unchanging nature of the discursive repertoire of peace as central point of a new project for Europe, starting from Romanian corpora confronting two opposite discursive conjunctures: Operation Barbarossa (22 June 1941), when Germany (seconded by Romania and the other Axis powers) attacked the Soviet Union and the moment when Romania switched sides to join the Allies (23 August 1944). Methodologically, the paper uses both content and discourse analysis applied to the total number of opinion pieces published by two newspapers in the periods between June and July 1941 and respectively, August and September 1944: *Timpul* and *Universul*. The main conclusion is that while the discourse about peace remains fundamental for the European construction until today, its changing evolution is grounded on the repertoire born during WWII. Moreover, the two selected newspapers, which were forbidden by the communist regime soon after the Peace Conference in Paris, mirror the Romanian vision of the era on the place and role of Eastern Europe within the post-war new project for Europe.

**Keywords:** *Europe, Romania, World War II, Peace, daily newspapers.*

## INTRODUCTION

September 1939 marks the beginning of the Second World War, against which Romania initially declared its neutrality. Nevertheless, as a direct consequence of the secret protocol of the Non-Aggression Pact signed on

---

\* Senior researcher 1<sup>st</sup> degree, Social Europe Research Laboratory, Institute of Sociology, Romania. E-mail: [valpricopie@gmail.com](mailto:valpricopie@gmail.com).

\*\* Senior researcher 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, Social Europe Research Laboratory, Institute of Sociology, Romania. E-mail: [cdamboeanu@gmail.com](mailto:cdamboeanu@gmail.com).



23 August 1939 between Germany and the USSR, Romania loses Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, in June 1940. Then, without a causal link, but as a result of an unfavorable context, it loses Transylvania and later, Southern Dobrogea. Under the military leadership of General Ion Antonescu, Romania enters the war on 22 June 1941, supporting Germany during the Barbarossa Operation against the USSR. The operation fails in December 1941, but the war continues with the USSR counter-offensive. On 23 August 1944, Romania switches sides and joins the Allied Powers.

During the complex military and diplomatic operations of the Second World War, peace continues to consolidate its central role within the paradigm “Europe as a project” (Hewitson and D’Auria 2012, 4). Both in Western European countries and in the emergent states of Central and Eastern Europe, public discourse is built around the repertoire of peace. However, it is precisely during the Second World War when this supreme European value suffers major discursive mutations due to the accelerated changes of alliances (Morin 2002). In various discursive contexts, as observed in the Romanian daily newspapers, for instance, between 1939 and 1945, peace is an ideal, the guaranty of national sovereignty, the main argument of war and, above all, a *sine qua non* condition for the preservation and the evolution of the “European civilisation”. Nevertheless, the national policy of changing alliances allows us to deepen and better examine the extent of the Romanian public discourse transformation in given historical conjunctures that could induce either structural change of discourses i.e. normal transformation or paradigmatic change i.e. discursive metamorphosis (see Brin *et al.* 2004). The current paper is thus focusing on the transformation of the discourse about peace in two particular contexts in which Romania had a crucial role. These contexts reveal specific discursive frameworks of war *vs.* peace and their changing nature: Operation Barbarossa (22 June 1941), when Germany (seconded by Romania and the other Axis powers) attacks the Soviet Union and the moment when Romania switches sides to join the Allies (23 August 1944).

The main challenge concerning the journalistic discourse transformation in this specific empirical approach is to explore the premises of a “paradigmatic crisis” as an “effect of accumulation and acceleration of change” (Brin *et al.* 2004, 19). Moreover, the aim is to investigate the changing *vs.* unchanging nature of the discursive repertoire of peace as central point of a new project for Europe. The specific objective is to identify and compare the discursive registers, meanings, and particular dimensions of peace in these two contexts mentioned before. Moreover, the different attributes of war are identified, in semantic opposition to peace, as well as the evolution of the image of Europe in the discourse of the Romanian press of the era.

Methodologically, the paper uses both content and discourse analysis applied to the total number of opinion pieces published by two daily newspapers in the periods between June and July 1941 and respectively, August and September 1944: *Timpul* (Centre-Left orientation) and *Universul* (traditionally Centre-Right

orientation, and openly pro-Antonescu during his rule<sup>1</sup>). The final corpora cover the periods between 22–31 June 1941 (with a total number of 74 opinion pieces in *Timpul* and 54 in *Universul*) and 23 August – 24 September 1944 (with a total number of 50 opinion pieces in *Timpul* and 55 in *Universul*). With regard to the article type, the most representative were the editorials, comments, other opinion columns, reportages and feature, and less the portraits and interviews. In terms of discourse orientation, the selected corpus of 1941 covers the “the holy war” along with Germany and against Bolshevism to liberate Bessarabia and Bukovina, while in 1944, it covers the “historical war” along with the USSR and against Nazism to liberate Transylvania. The main conclusion is that while the discourse about peace remains fundamental for the European construction until today, its changing evolution is grounded on the repertoire born during WWII. Moreover, the two selected newspapers, which were forbidden by the communist regime soon after the Peace Conference in Paris, mirror the Romanian vision of the era on the place and role of Eastern Europe within the post-war new project for Europe.

The historical temporal landmarks of the two reported events (1941 vs. 1944) are also supported by the mostly nominal anaphoric headlines (with the presence of the definite article), which “give the newspaper a specific temporality” (Mouillaud and Tétu 2003, 128), and inscribe the editorials into a “collection” assumed by the editorial team<sup>2</sup>. The fact that the temporality of the title – as a “newspaper statement” is different from the time of the reported event, see *ibidem*, 131), thus ensuring a “presence” of current events in almost every issue of *Timpul* with an anaphoric nominal editorial, so how the presence of the war topicality is ensured in specific opinion columns of *Timpul* such as “The course of the war” and “The international situation” respectively – headlines constructed of nominal anaphoric groups with implicit informative intention, but not discursively marked by the presence of the verb. In the case of the editorials, with few exceptions when unitary headlines are used by *Timpul*<sup>3</sup>, both newspapers adopt elaborated headlines<sup>4</sup>. In

<sup>1</sup> Due to personal belief of Stelian Popescu, the newspaper owner, as revealed in his memoirs (Popescu 2000; 1994), Popescu and his newspaper have supported Antonescu’s rule until the legionnaire government is established.

<sup>2</sup> From a structural point of view, the title of a newspaper article has a dual function of articulation, as a unit for cutting the layer and as a unit for cutting the column (see *ibidem*, 123–124). According to the wording, the titles of the editorials are for the most part a reference here, as they refer to the whole of the subsequent article and not just to a temporal (topical) element of the article.

<sup>3</sup> *Timpul*: “Răniții” (18.07), “Dezrobirea” (28.07), “Ofițerul” (30.07.1941).

<sup>4</sup> *Timpul*: “Armata germană la hotarele răsăritene ale Europei” (26.06), “Lupta țărănimii românești” (28.06), “Latinitatea pe frontul din Răsărit” (30.06), “Tăria dinlăuntru” (02.07), “Cruciada veacurilor noastre” (06.07), “Destinul Europei” (13.07.1941). *Universul*: “Să fim la înălțimea celor de pe front” (28.06), “Pentru vitejii căzuți” (30.06), “Spre biruința totală” (01.06), “Armata noastră” (03.06), “Sprititul de jertfă” (06.07.1941).

1944, *Timpul* prefers unitary nominal headlines<sup>5</sup>, while *Universul* chooses the strategy of the elaborated nominal headlines<sup>6</sup>, with anaphoric effect, alike. Of these, most are descriptive, and some others are introduced by nominal forms derived from the long infinitive (breaking, blocking, restoring...), which, although grammatically unpredictable, unequivocally call for concrete actions. Unlike the unitary nominal anaphoric titles, preferred by the editorial staff of *Timpul*, but sequentially used in *Universul*<sup>7</sup>, the headlines introduced by naming the action inscribe the temporality of the newspaper into the immediate actuality – the factuality of the war.

## 1. REPRESENTATIONS OF EUROPE DURING THE WAR

### 1.1. "EUROPE" IN 1941

There are two mechanisms on the basis of which the discourse about Europe is built in the two Romanian daily newspapers of the time. On the one hand, the image of Europe is constructed in opposition to the image of the "Orient", geopolitically, ideologically, and culturally represented by the USSR. On the other hand, Europe is presented in an ideational way through a series of positive values and attributes, similar to those that formed the basis for structuring the image of Europe in the media discourse of the interwar period (see Pricopie, 2014). Thus, Europe is portrayed as an area of civilization, Christianity, justice and progress. Thus, the formulas the most commonly used to describe Europe are: „Civilized and Traditionalist Europe”<sup>8</sup>; “Healthy and lawful Europe”<sup>9</sup>; Europe of national order, in which “justice and faith in God prevail”<sup>10</sup>, in contrast to the “extra-continental”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Timpul*: “Barbarii” (28.08), “Presă...” (03.09), “Ungaria” (08.09), “Rasismul” (09.09), “Austria...” (10.09), “Sașii...” (11.09), “Ungurii!” (12.09), “Adevărul!” (13.09), “Eroii” (16.09), “23 August” (24.09.1944).

<sup>6</sup> *Universul*: “România stăpână pe soarta ei” (25.08), “Voința poporului întreg” (27.08), “Politica intereselor permanente ale României” (30.08), “Ruperea relațiilor româno-maghiare” (01.09), “Restaurarea constituțională” (06.09), “Poziția Bulgariei” (08.09), “Războiul cu Ungaria” (10.09), “Conferința dela Quebec” (14.09), “Încheierea armistițiului” (15.09), “Blocarea bunurilor inamice” (16.09), “Semnificația armistițiului” (17.09), “Munca, producția și impunerile” (19.09), “Mareșalul desrobitor” (20.09.1944).

<sup>7</sup> *Universul*: “Laval” (03.09), “Regele” (07.09), “Propaganda” (09.09), “Realitatea” (18.09.1944), of which the first is unauthored, while the last ones are signed by I. Lugoșianu.

<sup>8</sup> Comment “Europa civilizată împotriva barbariei bolșevice”, unauthored, *Universul*, 26.06.1941, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Article “Cauzele războiului împotriva Rusiei Sovietice. Importanța istorică a proclamației”, unauthored, *Universul*, 24.06.1941, pp. 1–2

<sup>10</sup> Article “Noul aspect al războiului (II)”, unauthored, *Universul*, 01.07.1941, pp. 1–2.

<sup>11</sup> Editorial “Destinul Europei”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 13.07.1941, pp. 1–2.

“anarchic and destructive forces”<sup>12</sup> of URSS, “the enemy that attacks its ethical foundations and social balance”<sup>13</sup>.

Consequently, the desideratum of a “unified” and “peaceful” Europe<sup>14</sup>, “based on the sincere and honest cooperation of the peoples of Europe within the national states”<sup>15</sup> is considered impossible to achieve “with the maintenance in Europe of a persistently threatening Russia, of an anarchized Russia, which – as it turned out – it was waiting for the right moment to attack, finally, a Russia that by its economic organization was excluded from any attempt of European cooperation”<sup>16</sup>.

In this context, the war becomes the main European mission, a mission in which Romania plays an essential role: the “defense of the European community”<sup>17</sup>; “defense of the West against the dissolving ferments of the East”<sup>18</sup>. It is an assumed role, part of the country’s European destiny, a role that the Romanian people have always been aware of, and that was dictated by the “geographical location and historical evolution”<sup>19</sup> of the country.

## 1.2. “EUROPE” IN 1944

The European perspective of the Romanian media discourse is radically changing in August 1944. The geopolitical and geostrategic dimensions in the region, as well as Romania’s role in the future “new world” of Europe, become central and a discursive priority. The “Balkan region” is once again of interest and is being exploited discursively from the same perspectives. However, the relationship with Europe is no longer just a strictly ideological and distant one, but focused on the new concrete realities that can be seen after the Act of 23 August 1944, which “obliges” national political leaders to responsible governance: “Only after the armistice is signed and after the precise framing of Romania in the great European realities, it will be possible to talk about a categorical differentiation, based on government programs, between our democratic parties ...”<sup>20</sup>.

Europe and the expected Peace form a common body within the discourse of opinion after 23 August 1944: “We will have acquired through our Act the merit of having served the true cause of Europe and peace”<sup>21</sup>; “We are on the right track now. At the end of it, we see the possibility of living together in a prosperous peace

<sup>12</sup> Article “Cauzele războiului împotriva Rusiei Sovietice. Importanța istorică a proclamației”, unauthored, *Universul*, 24.06.1941, pp. 1–2.

<sup>13</sup> Editorial “Destinul Europei”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 13.07.1941, pp. 1–2.

<sup>14</sup> Article “Noul aspect al războiului (II)”, unauthored, *Universul*, 01.07.1941, pp. 1–2.

<sup>15</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>16</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>17</sup> Manifest-article “Războiul sfintei noastre dreptăți”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 24.06.1941, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Article “Misiune Europeană”, unauthored, *Universul*, 26.06.1941, p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>20</sup> Comment “Tineret și acțiune politică”, by Vasile Netea, *Universul*, 19.09.1944, pp. 1–2.

<sup>21</sup> Editorial “România stăpână pe soarta ei”, by I Lugoșianu, *Universul*, 25.08.1944, p. 1.

in which the Romanian people can capitalize on all their virtues and give a precious continuity of social and economic reconstruction of Europe.”<sup>22</sup>

The evaluation of the Act of 23 August 1944 is from the very beginning discursively positioned; it is geopolitically and geostrategically analysed in the light of the implications it might bring in this European region: “with a manly determination, he [King Michael of Romania] finally entered the battle personally on the evening of 23 August, when his successful initiative changed – in the 12th hour of our political and military crisis – the direction of the country, and at the same time brought a valuable contribution to the Allied cause by overthrowing the entire strategic and diplomatic situation in south-eastern Europe.”<sup>23</sup>

In this new European perspective, the discourse about the “European continent” (as identity territory) is redefined in some discursive variants, mostly framed in a regional perspective. In between “this region of Europe” and “the Balkan region”, we are witnessing transition formulas such as: (a) this region of the continent: “We do not yet know, as we write these lines, what the political and military conditions of the future armistice convention will be, as a means of concretizing the ways to end hostilities and our subsequent collaboration with the Soviet armed forces to expel German troops *from this region of the continent* and for the liberation of Transylvania.”<sup>24</sup>; (b) this region of Europe: “The precipitation of military events in the Balkan region and the consequences they will have on the end of the war once again highlight *the political and strategic importance of this European region*.”<sup>25</sup>; (c) this European sector: “The statements of the Soviet Commissariat of Foreign Affairs provide valuable insight into the newly created situation *in this European sector*.”<sup>26</sup>; (d) the womb of Europe: “I don't know who said about Southeast Europe that it is the womb of Europe. In any case, for four years, Bulgaria and Romania, nourished by grain, oil, ores, vegetables and other vitamins necessary for the conduct of the war, the German military body, they were undoubtedly the womb of the Reich and Europe, insofar as the Reich confuses its frontiers with those of the continent.”<sup>27</sup>; (e) the modern formulas “Southeast Europe”, “South-Eastern Europe”: “The Romanian people know that this tearing of Romania's borders is due to Germany, which, in its desire to rule *Southeast Europe*, devised the plan to tear the cohesive countries by virtue of the principles of self-determination of the nation.” [...]. The Vienna Arbitrary Award, committed against Romania, is a natural consequence of Germany's policy of aggression

<sup>22</sup> Editorial “Cinci ani de război”, by Corneliu Albu, *Timpul*, 02.09.1944, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Editorial “Regele”, by I. Lugoșianu, *Universul*, 07.09.1944, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Editorial “Politica intereselor permanente ale României”, by I. Lugoșianu, *Universul*, 30.08.1944.

<sup>25</sup> Comment “Imperativul unității balcanice”, unauthored, *Universul*, 15.09.1944, pp. 1-2.

<sup>26</sup> Editorial “Politica intereselor permanente ale României”, by I. Lugoșianu, *Universul*, 30.08.1944, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Comment. “Situția internațională. Pântecul fortăreții europene cade”, by Caton, *Timpul*, 12.09.1944, pp. 1-6.

against the states of Central and *South-Eastern Europe*. It is an integral part of Hitler's political plan of dismembering nations and states to create insatiable Germany for the so-called living space. [...]. The fall of Germany, through the victory of the United Nations, with which Romania stands today, will mean for our country, as for the other *Southeastern peoples*, with a past so linked to our people, the end of ordeal and the triumph of the principles of justice and national freedom."<sup>28</sup>; (f) the revitalization of the traditional formula "(the) Balkan region" in relation to the idea of European reconstruction and the future of the Romanian state within Europe based on the "imperative of Balkan unity".

Finally, the European affiliation of Russia is, in August 1944, a new *lieu du discours*, given the new role of the USSR as a protagonist of Peace along with the Allies. This perspective favours the reconsideration of the tradition traced by Nicolae Titulescu of good relations with the USSR, given that "the Soviet Union is a too great power, its political realism is too vigorous, and its prestige is too solid for it to need proselytes by force and satellites in chains. We therefore consider that, as a small nation, which can only be saved through honest work, seriousness and probity in its international relations – we must engage – in the future direction of the world – in a policy of realistic and honest understanding of universal evolution and our own interests."<sup>29</sup>

And perhaps the most elaborate analysis of the situation is the one taken over by *Timpul* after an interview given by the founding president of the daily newspaper, the exiled diplomat Grigore Gafencu, to a Swiss publication. It clarifies the discursive uses that Europe and the European continent had during the war, still in progress, as well as the deconstruction of the tense relationship of the main European protagonists of the war – Germany and the USSR – with Europe. Gafencu captures the "forgetting" of Europe – in the context of the threatening war that occupied all the spirits of the time – in relation to the first real threats against Germany, during the campaign in USSR. Emphasizing the profound incompatibility between the European identity space and the "race theory" or the "(German) spirit of domination", for example, G. Gafencu affirms Germany's "limitations" as "European power" "within a small continent", that only the expected peace will make obvious. In this context, Gafencu foresees an "inevitable and indispensable return of Russia to Europe", where Romania must assume the role of "balancing factor" in the East<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> Comment "Aniversarea dictatului arbitrar dela Viena", unauthored, *Universul*, 01.09.1944, p. 4 "Viața politică".

<sup>29</sup> Editorial "Politica intereselor permanente ale României", by I. Lugosianu, *Universul*, 30.08.1944, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> See the Comment "D. Grigore Gafencu despre Uniunea Sovietică și viitorul Europei", *Timpul*, 04.09.1944, pp. 1–2–3.

## 2. THE WAR AND ITS DISCURSIVE DIMENSIONS: 1941 VS. 1944

Both in 1941 and 1944, the discourse about war is built on two levels: the general one i.e. the war of the great powers, and the particular one i.e. “our” war, the Romania war. In 1941, the discourse borrows almost all the dimensions of the discourse about peace. First, it is conceived as a *historical* war given its scale: “the greatest front of all times”<sup>31</sup>; “the biggest crusade of our times”<sup>32</sup>. At the same time, it embraces a *spiritual* dimension, the war being described as the fight against “the anarchic and destructive forces”<sup>33</sup>; the battle “of the soldiers of light against darkness”<sup>34</sup>.

Furthermore, the war is considered as having *noble purposes*: it aims to bring civilization, justice and rights, freedom and liberties to all European nations. The temporal element of this *axiological* dimension is prominent, marking discursively the beginning (in 1941) vs. the end of war (in 1944) one the on hand, and on the other hand, by insisting on the (European) ideals, values and principles (in 1941) vs. their concrete forms of expression and realities (in 1944). Thus, the war in 1941 is understood as a battle for “civilization based on the respect of human dignity, faith in God, family and the right to property”<sup>35</sup> as much as for “saving the European civilization and the right of nations to live in freedom and within their ethnic space”<sup>36</sup>. In 1944, the war constitutes “the end of the ordeal and the triumph of the principles of justice and national freedom”<sup>37</sup>.

Consequently, the war is perceived as consolidating the European identity. Thus, in 1941, it is described as “the great European action”<sup>38</sup>; “a real crusade of the spiritual and material forces of healthy and lawful Europe”<sup>39</sup>; “the battle of civilized and traditionalist Europe”<sup>40</sup>. In 1944, the de-construction of the Nazi ideology represents a discursive pretext for reaffirming the European identity, which was seen as incompatible with the idea of domination: “Between Europe and the theory of races, an unbreakable wall is erected. The space of control does not lead to a Europe. But Europe can overcome the spirit of control”<sup>41</sup>. In this context,

<sup>31</sup> Manifest-article “Războiul sfintei noastre dreptăți”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 24.06.1941, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Editorial “Cruciada veacurilor noastre”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 06.07.1941, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Article “Cauzele războiului împotriva Rusiei Sovietice. Importanța istorică a proclamației”, unauthored, *Universul*, 24.06.1941, pp. 1–2.

<sup>34</sup> Article “Umăr la umăr”, unauthored, *Universul*, 06.07.1941, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> Article “Pentru apărarea civilizației creștine”, by C. Șoldan, *Universul*, 28.06.1941, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Article “Cauzele războiului împotriva Rusiei Sovietice. Importanța istorică a proclamației”, unauthored, *Universul*, 24.06.1941, pp. 1–2.

<sup>37</sup> Comment “Aniversarea dictatului arbitrar dela Viena”, unauthored, *Universul*, 01.09.1944, p. 4 „Viața politică”.

<sup>38</sup> Editorial “Italienii pe frontul de răsărit”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 24.07.1941, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> Article “Article “Cauzele războiului împotriva Rusiei Sovietice. Importanța istorică a proclamației”, unauthored, *Universul*, 24.06.1941, pp. 1–2.

<sup>40</sup> Comment “Europa civilizată împotriva barbariei bolșevice”, *Universul*, 26.06.1941, p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> Comment “D. Grigore Gafencu despre Uniunea Sovietică și viitorul Europei”, *Timpul*, 04.09.1944, pp. 1–2–3



Romania has to assume a significant geostrategic role for the future of Europe and to become “active part to the leading of the European continent”<sup>42</sup>.

Last but not least, as expected, the discourse about war has a pronounced *ideological* dimension. As such, in 1941, the war represents the fight against “cruel, greedy and bloody Bolshevism”<sup>43</sup>; “the war against the communist anarchy”<sup>44</sup>. On the contrary, in 1944, after Romania switched sides, the war is presented as the “twilight of Nazism”<sup>45</sup>.

### 3. “OUR WAR” AND ITS DISCURSIVE DIMENSIONS: 1941 vs. 1944

For Romania of 1941, which has ceded Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina the year previous, the war is not only *expected*, but “demanded by people with hope, from their heart, with their mute voice and the depth of their hearts”<sup>46</sup>. And this because the war is conceived as aiming to achieve the ideal of *national reunification*: the restoration of Romanian borders by regaining the conceded territories of Bessarabia (in 1941) and Transylvania (in 1944). Concurrently, the war is further described as intending to bring *freedom* for the Romanians living in these territories: “the liberation from a foreign yoke of the ancestral lands”<sup>47</sup>. However, in 1944, the discourse about war dissociates from that of the leaders “unfamiliar with the interest of this nation, which has always fought for peace and freedom, spiritual assets without which it is impossible to imagine prosperity”<sup>48</sup>. The war is therefore additionally presented in 1941 as an act of *national justice*<sup>49</sup>, an act of *honour*: the “the moral rehabilitation of that painful humiliation that we had to endure [...]”<sup>50</sup>, and a “...sacred duty towards three and a half million of Romanians, who were waiting for us to restore their abducted freedom, stolen rights, stolen property, individual and national existence daily in danger.”<sup>51</sup>. In 1944, although these dimensions are found to a lesser extent in the discourse about war, they continue to display a high resonance: “The Romanian army, distinguished only now with its true glory”<sup>52</sup>; “Our battle for Northern Transylvania is the battle

<sup>42</sup> Comment “Uniunea Sovietică și Ardealul”, by Sorana Gurian, *Universul*, 14.09.1944, pp. 1-2.

<sup>43</sup> Article “Umăr la umăr”, unauthored, *Universul*, 06.07.1941, p. 1.

<sup>44</sup> Article “Pentru apărarea civilizației creștine”, by C. Șoldan, *Universul*, 28.06.1941, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> Comment “Situația internațională. Toate drumurile duc la capitularea Germaniei”, by Caton, *Timpul*, 07.09.1944, pp. 1-8.

<sup>46</sup> Editorial “Lupta țărănimii românești”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 28.06.1941, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> Article “Frăția de arme germano-română”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 23.06.1941, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> Editorial “Calomnia...”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 05.09.1944, p. 1.

<sup>49</sup> Article “Frăția de arme germano-română”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 23.06.1941, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> Comment “O onoare pentru țară. Generalul Ion Antonescu comandant de căpetenie al trupelor germane și române”, unauthored, *Universul*, 24.06.1941, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup> Editorial “Războiul pentru ordine și dreptate”, by Universul, *Universul*, 24.06.1941, p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> Editorial “23 August”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 24.09.1944, p. 1.

of the Romanian people for life, together with our great allies of the United Nations”<sup>53</sup>.

Both in 1941 and 1944, the war is furthermore assumed as reaffirming the *national unity and solidarity*: “A war that proved the solidarity of the nation, the unanimity of thoughts and feelings in times when the destinies of this nation are decided”<sup>54</sup> vs. “... today the Romanian nation rose as a single man and, tightly united around the endless glorious traditions, together with the great allies near whose struggle we have laid the foundation of Greater Romania in the other war...”<sup>55</sup>. Still, in 1944, the discourse is also focused on strengthening the solidarity of European nations: “the same ideal of freedom and the same burning desire to lay a solid foundation for a better world, protected in the future against the ferocity of the people who live only for them”<sup>56</sup>.

Last but not least, the *historical* and *spiritual* dimensions are as well presented in the discourse about “our” war. As such, in 1941, the war is depicted as “the historical time of a new destiny for our country”<sup>57</sup>; the “holy war”<sup>58</sup>; “a redemption”<sup>59</sup>. In 1944, however, the discourse receives new nuances. First, the historical dimension is attributed to the day of 23 August, successively labelled as “a historical day”<sup>60</sup>, “a historical act”<sup>61</sup>, “a historical date”<sup>62</sup>. Second it is presented comparatively as “Five years of world war actually means four years of Romanian bleeding and suffering”<sup>63</sup>. In addition, the sacred dimension of the war loses its prominence, being replaced by a new discursive framework: the “true/ real” war: “Romania, from the historical date of August 23, has entered her true war. It will fight for her only in the camp where the voice of blood takes her steps”<sup>64</sup>.

The metaphor of the European path, presented in 1941, is discursively reactivated and even augmented in 1944. It is the European path of national destinies of the new states created after the Great War, in 1918. “Since yesterday we have returned to the road from which the circumstances and the dictatorial regime have diverted us [...]. It is the road that leads us to true victory and to a

<sup>53</sup> Comment “Lupta noastră pentru Ardealul de Nord”, unauthored, *Universul*, 19.09.1944, p. 3.

<sup>54</sup> Editorial “Manifestații de patriotism și îndemnuri la muncă”, unauthored, *Universul*, 02.07.1941, p. 1.

<sup>55</sup> Comment “Ardeal!...”, unauthored, *Universul*, 03.09.1944, p. 2.

<sup>56</sup> Comment “Mersul războiului. Situația internațională”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 04.09.1944, pp. 1–6.

<sup>57</sup> Editorial “Războiul pentru ordine și dreptate”, by *Universul*, *Universul*, 24.06.1941, p. 1.

<sup>58</sup> Manifest-article “Războiul sfintei noastre dreptăți”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 24.06.1941, p. 1; Article “Ofensiva liberărei și a ordinii”, unauthored, *Universul*, 06.07.1941, p. 1.

<sup>59</sup> Manifest-article “Războiul sfintei noastre dreptăți”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 24.06.1941, p. 1.

<sup>60</sup> Note “O zi istorică”, by T., *Timpul*, 25.08.1944, p. 1.

<sup>61</sup> Editorial “România stăpână pe soarta ei”, by I Lugoșianu, *Universul*, 25.08.1944, p. 1.

<sup>62</sup> Comment “Ardeal!...”, unauthored, *Universul*, 03.09.1944, p. 2.

<sup>63</sup> Editorial “Cinci ani de război”, by Corneliu Albu, *Timpul*, 02.09.1944, p. 1.

<sup>64</sup> Comment “Ardeal!...”, unauthored, *Universul*, 03.09.1944, p. 2.

better future”<sup>65</sup>; “The road we took on 23 August (...) cannot go astray”<sup>66</sup>; “the way of resuming normal life”<sup>67</sup>.

Finally, unlike 1941, when the war was expected, wanted and even craved for, an ideal-type of national accomplishment and reunification, in 1944, the war is the expression of disillusion; it proves to be a “disastrous adventure”<sup>68</sup>, which brought “all the suffering, all the life and property destructions, all the horrors of these five black years of frightening war”<sup>69</sup>. Defined as “a tragedy as it was the one that humanity has lived and experienced”<sup>70</sup>, marked by “the shaking power of destruction of the modern warfare weapons”, it is in the end qualified as the great disillusion: „The war really became a disillusion”<sup>71</sup>.

#### 4. PEACE AND ITS CHANGING NATURE DURING THE WAR

##### 4.1 PEACE IN 1941

In 1941, in the whirlwind of the beginning of the war for Romania, peace became a far-fetched ideal, which is why it is almost missing from the discourse of the two publications of the time. The few references to the idea of peace are made in isolation and in specific circumstances, in order to emphasize the interest in peace of the states that, paradoxically, initiated the war. This reinforces the idea of war as the last resort they have to “remedy” the injustices committed by Soviet Russia:

“In the interest of peace in this part of Europe, Germany has considered that it will be able to find an effective guarantee of peace by concluding the agreement with Russia. Although by that agreement Germany had set the limits of its interests to the east, and after the victorious end of the Polish campaign, there was a limitation of its claims, which was not logically related to the sacrifices and achievements of the German army, the Soviet government in Moscow began to make absolutely unjustified claims against Finland and the other Baltic states and then, against Romania, in the case of Bessarabia and Bukovina”<sup>72</sup>.

<sup>65</sup> Note “O zi istorică”, by T., *Timpul*, 25. 08.1944, p. 1.

<sup>66</sup> Editorial “Tratativele de la Moscova”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 07.09.1944, p. 1.

<sup>67</sup> Comment “Pentru normalizare”, unauthored, *Universul*, 10.09.1944, p. 1

<sup>68</sup> Comment “Elementele esențiale ale politicii externe române”, unauthored, *Universul*, 6.09.1944, pp. 1-2.

<sup>69</sup> Comment “Se naște o lume nouă”, unauthored, *Universul*, 07.09.1944, p. 1.

<sup>70</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>71</sup> Comment “Situția internațională. Frontiera germană a fost ciuruită de pătrunderile aliate”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 21.09.1944, p. 1.

<sup>72</sup> Comment “Cauzele războiului împotriva Rusiei Sovietice. Importanța istorică a proclamației Fuehrerului”, unauthored, *Universul*, 24.06.1941.

## 4.2. PEACE IN 1944

In 1944, peace is the European mission; it is expected and discursively enhanced, as was the war in 1941. In fact, in 1944, discourse about peace and discourse about Europe are most often correlated and inextricably linked. Under these conditions, peace becomes a *sine qua non* argument for building the new European project, in a war-torn Europe, which resumes its interwar reflections and deep doubts:

“We hope that once the weapons are out of hand, people will have a look behind, tremble at the sown disasters and then, enlightened, pass over the ruins, stepping into the gold of the light of good understanding and full harmony. Then peace will be what it should be: true peace!”<sup>73</sup>

The first editorial positions dedicated to the Act of 23 August 1944 take the form of discursive evaluations of its expected consequences both for Romania and Europe. Therefore, the metaphor of the right (European) path of Romania – very popular in interwar Romanian intellectual discourse – rebecomes a discursive common place: “*It is the road that leads us to true victory and a better future.*”<sup>74</sup>, because “*Now we are on the right track*”<sup>75</sup>. It is, at the same time, an argument for the “*true cause of Europe and peace*”<sup>76</sup>, as well as for the reconstruction of the national project in direct relation to the new European project:

“We have joined, therefore, since yesterday, the great democratic powers that are fighting for the establishment, in the world, of a lasting peace and of all freedoms, so that together with them, we can achieve the victory of these goals. Since yesterday, we have returned to the path from which circumstances and the dictatorial regime diverted us”<sup>77</sup>.

The horizon opened by the “good” road is that of Peace and Europe. The discursive repertoire of peace expands considerably in the new context opened by Romania’s action of 23 August 1944. First of all, peace is presented as: (a) *the solution for European continuity*: “Now we are on the right track. At the end of it, we see the possibility of living together in a prosperous peace in which the Romanian people can capitalize on all their virtues and give a precious continuity

---

<sup>73</sup> Comment “În fiecare zi. Pacea de mâine”, by Ion Bălțeanu, *Universul*, 20.08.1944, p. 3.

<sup>74</sup> Editorial “O zi istorică” (by T.), *Timpul*, 25.08.1944, p. 1.

<sup>75</sup> Editorial “Cinci ani de război”, by Corneliu Albu, *Timpul*, 02.09.1944, p. 1.

<sup>76</sup> Editorial “România stăpână pe soarta ei”, by I Lugoșianu, *Universul* 25.08.1944, p. 1.

<sup>77</sup> Editorial “O zi istorică” (by T.), *Timpul*, 25.08.1944, p. 1.

of social and economic reconstruction of Europe.”<sup>78</sup>; (b) *the only possible solution for the “smaller” and “newer” states within the continent*: “Small nations must always seek in peace, not in war, the path of their destinies.”<sup>79</sup>; (c) *The chance to rebuild a “new world”/a “new life”*: “*The clock of history now shows a great and decisive new era for the human race. A new world is being born!*”, said the Pope in his speech broadcast by the Vatican radio station.”<sup>80</sup> or “And if all this were not enough to convince the skeptics that victory is near, go read carefully the speech delivered on Thursday by the Sovereign Pontiff. Through this speech retained by the diplomat Pope, a clear conviction that we can finally speak of peace and that peace will be organized by the United Nations in the same ideal of freedom and in the same ardent desire to lay a solid foundation for a better world, protected in the future against the ferocity of the peoples who live only for them.”<sup>81</sup> or “In a psychological moment like today, when the struggle of the great world powers and of the medium and small countries for a new formula of life is coming to an end...”<sup>82</sup>.

At the same time, however, the road opened by the act of 23 August 1944 discursively marks the confirmation of Romania’s return to the “international society”: “The road we took on 23 August (...) cannot go to perdition. The international society we entered to through this act excludes any idea of disloyalty or abuse of power in international relations. We wait quietly and we are convinced that the dignity of our attitude will be fully rewarded. We must not forget that (...) in the Russian capital we will not only deal with the Kremlin, but also with Great Britain and America”<sup>83</sup> or “By supporting the higher authorities on the path to the resumption of normal life, we support the whole country, because we must not forget that the war is not over and that national defense has many and urgent demands”<sup>84</sup> or “...In the interest of lasting peace, the Allies are striving today not to leave the German road untouched as far as they are going to Berlin, being delighted when they encounter resistance so that it can be defeated. All roads, large and small, paved or muddy, straight or winding, want to cross them and reach Berlin, to finish with “Nach Paris”, “Nach Moskau” and so many other “nachs”.”<sup>85</sup> or “Another great historical and political act committed during this month is the signing of the Moscow Armistice Convention, by which Romania joins the United Powers in the fight for democracy, thus regaining its prestige and dignity among

<sup>78</sup> Editorial “Cinci ani de război”, by Corneliu Albu, *Timpul*, 02.09.1944, p. 1.

<sup>79</sup> Editorial “Armistițiul finlandez”, by I. Lugosianu, *Universul*, 23.09.1944, p. 1.

<sup>80</sup> Comment “Se naște o lume nouă”, unauthored, *Universul*, 07.09.1944, p. 1.

<sup>81</sup> Comment “Mersul războiului. Situația internațională”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 04.09.1944, pp. 1–6.

<sup>82</sup> Editorial “Războiul cu Ungaria”, by I. Lugosianu, *Universul*, 10.09.1944, p. 1.

<sup>83</sup> Editorial “Tratativele dela Moscova”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 07.09.1944, p. 1.

<sup>84</sup> Comment “Pentru normalizare”, unauthored, *Universul*, 10.09.1944, p. 1.

<sup>85</sup> Comment “*Situația internațională. Pe toate drumurile spre Berlin*”, by Caton, *Timpul*, 16.09.1944, p. 1.

the civilized and progressive states of the modern world. Moving on to the execution of the armistice convention, the government of the National Democratic bloc (...) will continue until the complete establishment of the democratic regime that will prepare a victorious peace. But this peace must be won. That is why the fight did not stop. The fascist enemy still fights on the military fronts, he still exists on the internal front. Victory can only come on the day when he will be completely defeated. Then will begin the construction of the great world peace, in which Romania joined its efforts on the evening of 23 August.”<sup>86</sup>

Legitimate affiliation with the international society of the Allies is a discursive occasion for both: (1) *emphasizing the responsibility and future implications of national reconstruction after the war*: “Obviously, rebuilding the new country is not an easy task. But regardless of the difficulties that will stand in the way, the civil liberties must be ensured, the Romanian democracy must be accomplished in a form that will reach perfection. Those who oppose such an evolution of our social and political life prove to be utter strangers in the interests of this nation which has always fought for peace and freedom, spiritual goods without which no prosperity can be imagined, but which they refuse precisely the moment the fruit is ripe and we can fully harvest it.”<sup>87</sup>, and (2) *the accusation of Germany and its leader*: “Hitler’s dementia and his cruelty are boundless. When the beast collapses and the trumpets of peace sound again, in the surviving Germany, his name will be uttered with horror, and future generations will find that between the genius of evil and Hitler is the most perfect identity.”<sup>88</sup> or ““This war that we are waging against mechanized barbarians, barbarians with the souls of slaves and who are only good at carrying the curse or wherever they go,” said Winston Churchill when he was left alone on the barricades, “will be long and hard. But I assure you that its end will reward all our efforts, will heal all disappointments, will repair all the sufferings of those who will be faithfully served the cause of the freedom of Europe and the freedom of the world. D. Churchill and the “gentleman.” He entrusted us with one thing, he wants to keep his word.”<sup>89</sup>

There are many passages of deep reflection on the new meanings of peace in a national, European and international context. The editorialists thus deconstruct the meanings of peace in the context of the war that they were living: “... peace can only be founded on an equitable basis. Peace – lasting peace must be built on the principle of equality and freedom”<sup>90</sup> or “The leaders of the world, over the bloody wounds of this war, if they really want to lead the world to the flourishing shore of a long peace, all countries must review their directions of educating the youth. [...].

<sup>86</sup> Editorial “23 August”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 24.09.1944, p. 1.

<sup>87</sup> Editorial “Calomnia...”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 05.09.1944, p. 1.

<sup>88</sup> Editorial “Înainte de prăbuşire”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 20.09.1944, p. 1.

<sup>89</sup> Editorial “Călătorul fără astâmpăr”, unauthored, *Timpul*, 28.09.1944, pp. 1–3.

<sup>90</sup> Comentariu “Uniunea Sovietică și Ardealul”, by Sorana Gurian, *Universul*, 14.09.1944, pp. 1–2.

Without a radical change in the background of children's education, nothing can be done to hope for the peaceful development and settlement of mankind"<sup>91</sup>.

Thus, peace is Europe's "true", genuine mission, which will lead it to its "true victory and a better future" (*Timpul*, August 1944) and to a "normal life" (*Universul*, September 1944). The "road to peace" also leads to a "new life" (*Universul*, August 1944), to a "great and decisive new age" (*Universul*, September 1944) or to the "formula of a new life" (*Timpul*, August 1944).

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

In both daily newspapers, the attributes of the new European life expected after the war are: freedom, equality, dignity, honor, rights and freedoms, democracy, equity, mutual trust, good foreign policy, solidarity, wisdom, order, courage, humanity and mutual understanding, solidarity, unity and peace, well-being.

In this context, the attributes of peace are: true (*Universul*), prosperous, victorious and global (*Timpul*), long and lasting (*Universul* and *Timpul*), while The United Nations are presented as the protagonist of the future peace.

The discursive frames identified via the comparative analysis applied to the opinion columns proposed by the two daily newspapers in the two historical moments selected for this analysis reveal the interchangeability of the terms from the war vs. peace dichotomy, so that, in the mirror, the attributes and arguments of the war of 1941, in a national context, become, in 1944, the attributes and arguments of peace.

1941	1944
War as argument	Peace as argument
War as expectation	Peace as expectation
Peace as European ideal <i>War = condition</i>	A new project for Europe as European ideal <i>Peace = condition</i>

Europe's thematic topoi oscillate between the rediscovery of the "European ideal" in 1941 and the cruel realization of the drama of the war and the new European crisis in 1944. Thus, in 1944, the geopolitical and geostrategic reconsideration of the discursive formula "continent of Europe" or, more often, "the European continent" replaces the East – in fact, the "Balkan Region" or the

<sup>91</sup> Editorial "La cuptor", by Demostene Botez, *Timpul*, Joi, 21.09.1944, p. 1.

“Region of the Balkans” – in this new European perspective where the “international society” is fighting for peace. However, the Balkan Region pays its own role – more and more discursively underlined – in the preparation of the European Continent for the Peace to come.

The repertoire of peace evolves progressively from the foreign/external war to “our war” in 1941, for the recovery of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina and, in the mirror, in 1944, from “our war” for the recovery of Northern Transylvania, to the world/European war for universal/European peace. In addition, the dissociation of the notions abstract *vs.* concrete marks the separation of the two events. Therefore the transition from the ideal of peace in 1941 to its realities in 1944 is made by discursive framing in concrete – building a new project for Europe, building a new national project within the “international society of the United Nations”, strengthening the role of the Balkan Region and of Romania as a “balancing factor” in the East, in the context of the expected peace. This is, in our opinion, the expression of paradigmatic crisis consisting in accumulation and acceleration of change (see *infra*) in the specific context of changing alliances during the war, where media discourse follows the metamorphoses of historical realities, which is paradigmatic change.

#### REFERENCES

- BRIN, C. CHARRON, J. DE BONVILLE, J. (2004). *Nature et transformations du journalisme. Théorie et recherches empiriques*. Laval: Editions Les Presses de l'Université de Laval.
- HEWITSON, M. D'AURIA, M. (eds.). (2012). *Europe in Crisis. Intellectuals and the European Idea, 1917-1957*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- MORIN, E. (2002 [1990]) *Gândind Europa [Penser l'Europe]*. Bucharest: Trei.
- MOUILLAUD, M. TETU, J.-F. (2003[1989]). *Presa cotidiană [Le Journal quotidien]*. Bucharest: Tritonic.
- POPESCU, S. (2000). *Amintiri*. Editing, Preface and Notes by Ioan Opris. Bucharest: Albatros.
- POPESCU, S. (1994). *Memorii*. Biographical Study and Notes by Ioan Spătan. Bucharest: “Majadahonda”.
- PRICOPIE, V. (2014). “Identity Building and Discourse about Europe in Interwar Romania”, in Research Report *Symbolic Universes of the European Construction (2014–2016)*. Institute of Sociology, Social Europe Research Laboratory, *unpublished*.