

THE EMPORIA STATE

RESEARCH STUDIES



The Graduate Publication of the Emporia State University

WHEN TREASON WAS A CRIME

The Case of Colonel Alexandru Sturdza of Romania

by

Glenn E. Torrey





The Graduate Publication of the Emporia State University

WHEN TREASON WAS A CRIME

The Case of Colonel Alexandru

Sturdza of Romania

by

Glenn E. Torrey

Vol. XXXIX

Fall 1992

Number 1

THE EMPORIA STATE RESEARCH STUDIES is published by The Graduate School
of Emporia State University, 1200 Commercial St., Emporia, Kansas, 66801-5087.

ISSN: 0424-9399

EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY
EMPORIA, KANSAS

ROBERT E. GLENNEN
President of the University



THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

FAYE VOWELL, *Dean*

"Statement required by the Act of October, 1962; Section 4369, Title 39, United States Code, showing Ownership, Management and Circulation." **The Emporia State Research Studies** is published twice a year. Editorial Office and Publication Office at 1200 Commercial Street, Emporia, Kansas (66801-5087). The **Research Studies** is edited and published by the Emporia State University, Emporia, Kansas.

With this issue, subscribers will see a change in content and timing of this journal. There will be no Volume XXXVIII, No. 4. The Journal will be published twice in each academic year beginning with this Volume XXXIX, fall 1992, No. 1 issue. A complete list of all publications of *The Emporia State Research Studies* is published in the second number of each volume.

Papers published in this journal are authored by faculty members of Emporia State University as well as faculty from other colleges and universities. All publications are subject to peer review. Those interested in submitting papers for consideration should contact the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, Campus Box 4003, Emporia State University, Emporia, KS 66801-5087.

Preface

During the Second World War ideological issues complicated the definition and evaluation of treason. "Matters of conscience" were frequently evoked to justify domestic opposition, including assassination, on the one hand, or actively cooperating with the enemy on the other. The first category of "traitors" is represented by General Ludwig Beck, one of the plotters against Hitler. He has been sympathetically treated by Nicholas Reynolds in his biography *Treason Was No Crime*.¹ Robert Littlejohn, in his study of collaboration during the Second World War,² deals with the second category, calling them "patriotic traitors." But for the most part, "traitors" of either kind, even those clearly motivated by "matters of conscience," have failed to receive a sympathetic understanding, especially in their homelands. There has been little sympathy, for example, for Vidkun Quisling's role in aiding the Nazi takeover of Norway or Pierre Laval's cooperation with the German occupation of France. Others like General Andrei Vlasov, who formed a Russian "Army of Liberation" under German auspices, and even the conspirators against Hitler, praised in world opinion, are still considered "traitors" by a significant number of their countrymen.

In earlier wars, there was even less understanding for "patriotic traitors," and invariably treason was a crime even in cases which clearly involved "matters of conscience." This was the experience of Colonel Alexandru Sturdza of Romania who deserted to the Central Powers in 1917, and sought to induce the Romanian army to follow his example. Little remembered today outside his homeland, Sturdza's action was then a *cause célèbre* not only among his countrymen but in the halls of power in London, Paris, Petrograd, Berlin, and Vienna. Although Sturdza insisted that he acted for reasons of conscience, love of country and fear of Russia, he has been presented simplistically as a devotee of the Germans or even a spy in their pay. In fact, as the years passed the charges against him have tended to become more exaggerated.³ Only one account, very limited in scope, has attempted to understand him.⁴ Since its publication in 1925 much new material has become available, including the opening of the diplomatic and military archives not only of Romania but also of Russia, England, France, Italy, Germany, and Austria. Most importantly, the unpublished diary and correspondence of Colonel Sturdza himself has turned up. These sources, all of which have been used in this study, allow the story of his "treason"

to be told more completely than ever before. They also provide an opportunity for understanding the concerns which led to his treason, concerns shared by many other Romanians. These are the primary aims of the present account. In the research for this study I also discovered facets of Colonel Sturdza's life known only to his intimate family and friends; he was a caring father and husband, a highly cultured and sensitive intellectual, and, later, a dedicated teacher in a prestigious German school during the years of Weimar and Hitler. Sturdza's correspondence from his last years gives valuable insights into the way National Socialism impacted teachers and students as well as how the rise of Nazism was perceived by an intelligent observer. This part of his story deserves to be told as well.

In addition to librarians and archivists in Romania, Austria, Germany, the USSR, England, and France, I would like to express appreciation to Dr. Sandu Sturdza, the Colonel's eldest son, for providing documents and answering questions; to HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, for his personal reminiscences about the Salem school during Sturdza's teaching tenure there; and to those connected with the Kurt Hahn Archives of Schule Schloss Salem. I am also grateful for financial support of the travel and research underlying this study from the International Research and Exchanges Board and a sabbatical leave from Emporia State University.

Glenn Torrey
November, 1992

Footnotes

¹London, 1976.

²*The Patriotic Traitors: The History of Collaboration in German-Occupied Europe, 1940-1945* (New York, 1972).

³C. Neagu, *et. al.*, *Fapte din umbra*, vol. II (Bucharest, 1977), pp. 89-97.

⁴Valeriu Kapri, *Cazul fostului Colonel Alexandru Sturdza* (Oradea, 1925).

CONTENTS

Preface	5
Chapter I	"The Crime and the Man" 9
Chapter II	"Disillusionment" 15
Chapter III	"Decision to Act" 26
Chapter IV	"Behind Enemy Lines" 33
Chapter V	"Reaction in the Romanian Camp" 44
Chapter VI	"The Last Hope" 52
Chapter VII	"Exile and Salem" 60
Chapter VIII	"Conclusions" 72
Annex, maps, photographs	76

The Crime and the Man

On February 6, 1917, a heavy mantle of snow blanketed the eastern Carpathians where the Romanian army faced its Austro-German enemy across a ribbon of trenches and outposts cutting through the rugged terrain of the densely forested Vrancea region.¹ Bitterly cold weather had brought military operations to a standstill. Shortly before noon, Colonel Alexandru Sturdza, until recently commander of the 7th Mixed Brigade and nominated as commander of the 15th infantry division, returned to the sector of his former command. For almost four hours, he closeted himself in a private meeting with Lieutenant Colonel Alexandru Crăiniceanu, commander of the 2nd Guards Regiment. Then, together with his personal adjutant, Lt. Wachmann, and his orderly, Corporal Marin Nastase, Sturdza mounted a sleigh escorted by two other officers. Within 300 yards of the front line, Sturdza dismissed the sleigh and the local escort, explaining that he wished to make his final *adieux* to several units and return via a different route.

As Sturdza and his two companions struggled on foot through deep drifts toward the most advanced line of sentinels, they became targets of flanking fire, were separated, and then disappeared. When they failed to return, Romanian authorities assumed Sturdza had been killed or captured. A thorough search of the area proved otherwise. The body of his orderly was found and with it a valise containing a large sum of money and the colonel's personal journal.² Its pages revealed a man deeply disturbed by Romania's entry into a disastrous war against Germany, by fear of Russia's increasing domination of the Romanian front, and by a bitter alienation from Romania's top political and military leaders. Other documents in the valise revealed that he had considered for sometime desertion to the enemy. Five days later a manifesto, lanced from the enemy lines and signed by Colonel Sturdza called upon the Romanian army to follow his example. One of Romania's most prominent officers had become a traitor!

Who was this man whose act shook Romania's political and military establishments to their foundations, alarmed its allies, and elicited interest among the top leadership of its enemies? Alexandru Dimitrie Sturdza traced his roots through several of Romania's most distinguished families, including the ruling Sturdza princes of Moldavia. His father, Dimitrie A. Sturdza, was the veteran Liberal Party leader who had helped establish the Hohenzollern dynasty in Romania and who had served many

times as Romanian prime minister, most recently 1907-1908. His mother, Zoe, came from the equally distinguished Cantacuzino family which produced several important Romanian politicians and savants. The younger Sturdza's stature and importance was further enhanced by his marriage to Elizabeth Carp, daughter of the Conservative Party leader, Petre Carp, himself an oft-time cabinet member and prime minister. Like his father and father-in-law who had both experienced Russian imperialism first hand,³ Colonel Sturdza was ardently patriotic and fiercely Russophobic.

From the family of his mother, with whom he was unusually close, he was exposed to the influence of French culture. The Cantacuzinos, like the majority of the Romanian upper class, received a French education and habitually used the French language in their social and intellectual circles. Sturdza himself generally wrote to his mother in French.⁴ He read French periodicals regularly even when in the field. George Sand was one of his favorites but above all he immersed himself in the works of Rabelais, whose collected writings lay beside his manual of military tactics.⁵ Sturdza's three years as Romanian military attache in Paris (1907-1910) climaxed his experience of French culture.

But Sturdza's exposure to German culture was even greater. His father had attended secondary school and university in Germany, a choice for Romanian young men second only to France. Alexandru followed in the footsteps of his father attending gymnasium in Jena and university in Breslau.⁶ After a brief sojourn back in Romania to begin a military career in the Romanian army in 1889, he returned to Germany to attend military school. He graduated a second lieutenant and served as a Romanian in the German army 1890-1902 under a special agreement between Kaiser Wilhelm and King Carol. He was groomed to function as a liaison officer in the event that the Central Powers, with whom Romania had been allied since 1883, became involved in a war with Russia.⁷ Like his father before him he came to admire reverently Prussian social and civil models.⁸ Although he remained multi-cultural, Sturdza's ethos was obviously shaped by his German experience to a greater degree than by his French. After the war broke out, he recounted in his journal the German influences in his life: "the humanism of Jena and Weimar, through Wagner, Schopenhauer and the knightly spirit of Berlin-Hanover."⁹ His *Weltanschauung* was imbued with German idealistic philosophy. Sturdza imbibed the German spirit so completely, that it was alleged that he spoke Romanian with a German accent.¹⁰

As a true intellectual, Sturdza had even wider cultural interests. His interest in England was sparked by an English classmate at Jena and he traveled there as a young man. He had contact with Henry Wickham Steed and R.W. Seton Watson, leading critics of Austro-Hungarian nationalities

policy. His latter acquaintances included the Archbishop of Canterbury.¹¹ His journal and letters are peppered with English phrases. Sturdza was also an accomplished musician, able to render Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, and Handel, among others, at the piano. He especially enjoyed the operas of Wagner, visiting Bayreuth several times.¹² Sturdza also relished the challenge of mountain climbing and was a recognized swordsman.¹³ He was sort of a modern Renaissance man. His marriage to Elizabeth Carp in 1898 produced three sons, Alexandru, Dumitru, and Ion. Sturdza's entire life testifies to his deep commitment to his family.

Sturdza returned to the Romanian army full time in 1902. Despite his prestigious training and family connections in high places, Sturdza's promotion appears to have been rather normal: first lieutenant in 1895 and captain in 1900. Throughout his military career Sturdza was noted as an idealist, a reformer, and a patriot, but somewhat self-righteous, a failing of his father as well. He was not always well-liked-- "plagued by megalomania," some critics charged.¹⁴

These characteristics were well illustrated in his notorious duel with another army officer in 1908.¹⁵ While on leave in Romania from his post in Paris, Sturdza published several newspaper articles which alleged serious corruption in army regiments. He accused commanders of territorial units of siphoning off a portion of the pay and rations allowance of soldiers serving under them. One officer in this category, a Captain Cătuneanu, sent Sturdza a letter of protest, demanding that he be specific and name names. When Sturdza refused to receive this letter, Cătuneanu published it in the press. This touched off a furious controversy within the army and among the public, with many officers siding with Cătuneanu. To silence the latter, the army leadership had him arrested on the charge that he had violated military regulations by publishing his letter without permission. Cătuneanu was then sentenced to 66 days of confinement, an unusually severe punishment. Sturdza, on the other hand, received his promotion to major in the midst of this controversy.

But this was not the end of the affair. Having taken personal affront at Cătuneanu's letter, Sturdza (his father then being prime minister) secured from the Ministry of War a suspension of his critic's sentence and promptly challenged him to a duel. The confrontation with sabers took place at the racetrack in Craiova on June 9, 1908. Although the duel was inconclusive, with only one minor wound resulting, public opinion sided with Cătuneanu, as the underdog weakened by confinement, against the "bully" Sturdza who was considered to be one of Romania's most skilled swordsmen.

Sturdza later added to his critics during his tenure as a teacher in Romanian military schools. He served as professor of tactics, staff work,

and history at the Romanian War Academy and also as commandant of the *Scoala Militară*, the army's officer candidate school.¹⁶ Political opponents charged that at the latter he permitted "Adventist and anti-military propaganda" under the guise of liberty of conscience. Sturdza, who considered himself "religious but without confession," answered: "In our moral confusion, Adventism is preferable to atheism or indifference."¹⁷ These charges against Sturdza seem petty in light of the pedagogical success Sturdza apparently enjoyed. He was the author of more than a dozen manuals and pamphlets for instructional use, including one which glorified military sacrifice and patriotism. He was popular among the cadets and later had great influence among them as younger officers in the army. Ion Antonescu, chief of the operations section of the Romanian general staff (1916-1919) later marshal and chief of state (1940-1944) was among his students.¹⁸ Sturdza's only real war experience came commanding a regiment in Romania's virtually bloodless participation in the Second Balkan War (1913).

The outbreak of the world war in 1914 created a dilemma for Sturdza as well as for Romania. The nation's foreign policy had long been based on an alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary which offered Romania protection against her traditional enemy, Russia. Almost to a man the older generation of Romanian politicians, including Sturdza's father and father-in-law, still exhibited a strong Russophobia and wanted Romania to enter the war against Russia, or, at the very least, maintain neutrality. A younger generation of politicians, including Ion I.C. Brătianu, who had succeeded Sturdza's father as head of the Liberal Party and was now prime minister, were firmly opposed to aiding the Germans and the Austro-Hungarians because the latter were the oppressors of more than three million ethnic Romanians in Transylvania. Brătianu and a majority of politically literate Romanians were willing to risk an alliance with Russia and attack Austria-Hungary with the hope of annexing Transylvania. Thus, during 1914-1916, Brătianu skillfully guided Romania through neutrality until the right moment came to enter the war in August 1916.¹⁹

Sturdza, quite understandably, opposed this policy during Romania's neutrality and made no secret of his admiration and sympathy for the German cause. He accepted an invitation to visit the German battle front in the east and he had frequent contact with the German and Austrian legations, especially in the summer of 1916 when Brătianu was in the process of deciding for war. Sturdza had no privileged information to divulge as Brătianu kept even his closest advisors in the dark about his intentions. In fact, on July 15, Sturdza, completely misled himself, told Colonel Hammarstein, the German military attache, that he saw no signs of Romania's imminent intervention and he expressed confidence that King

Ferdinand would withstand any Russian attempt to force Romania into the war. However, only two weeks later as Brătianu's secret negotiations with the Entente neared completion, Sturdza realized that the situation had changed. He told Hammarstein that all leading circles in the army were openly in favor of joining Russia and only a defeat for the latter could cause Romania to draw back.²⁰ He made similar comments to Major Maximilian Randa, the Austro-Hungarian attache and remarked that he was seeking an audience to warn the King.²¹ While Sturdza's contact with foreign officers while on active duty may seem questionable, one needs to be reminded that Brătianu still maintained the fiction that Romania was the loyal ally of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Furthermore, many other Romanian officers were in far more compromising and intimate contact with Entente officials and were openly spreading their propaganda and, in some cases, accepting their corrupting *baksheesh*.²²

It is interesting to note in that in the summer of 1916 Sturdza, now 47 years old, was mentioned as a possible future minister of war in a proposed cabinet headed by Conservative elder statesman and fellow Germanophile Titu Maiorescu. Maiorescu was hoping to persuade the King to dismiss Brătianu and bring in a Conservative cabinet committed to neutrality.²³ What a reversal of fortune six months would bring for Colonel Alexandru Sturdza!

Footnotes

¹For an introduction to Romania's role in the First World War see Emil Turdeanu, *Modern Romania: The Achievement of National Unity 1914-1920* (Los Angeles, 1988). Also see map, annex #2.

²Three notebooks of this journal are preserved in Arhivele Statului (Bucharest), Fond Sturdza, D.22 [hereinafter cited as Sturdza, "Jurnal"].

³Especially the Russian annexation of Southern Bessarabia from Romania in 1878, which had a bitter and lasting impact on all Romanians. See Barbara Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation of the Romanian National State, 1821-1878* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 259-300.

⁴This correspondence is preserved in Biblioteca Academiei (Bucharest), Secție de manuscrise, Fond D.A. Sturdza, S.6 [hereinafter B.A. Fond Sturdza].

⁵Alexandru (Sturdza) to "Dud" (wife Elizabeth) 13 November 1916, letter in possession of their son, Dr. Sandu Sturdza.

⁶One of his classmates has left a brief memoir. Paul Bräunlich, *Rumänische Stimmungsbilder* (Munich 1920), pp. 75-78.

⁷Alexandru Sturdza, "Mein Lebenslauf...." 6 June 1935. Kurt Hahn Archiv, Schule Schloss Salem, Salem (Baden) Germany. Romania was a secret member of the Triple Alliance.

⁸His father, while reviewing Alexandru's military unit in Berlin, rejoiced in the "Prussian spirit" and expressed pride that his son was a participant in it. D.A. Sturdza to Ioan Bianu, 29 December 1896, in *Scrisori către Ioan Bianu*, ed. Marieta and Petre Croicu, vol. V (Bucharest, 1980), p. 57.

⁹Sturdza, "Jurnal," 15/28 October 1916.

¹⁰Lt. Chauveau to Commandant Albiat 29/11 February 1917, Archives de la Guerre [hereinafter A.G.], (Vincennes), fond 17 N 541.

¹¹Bräunlich, p. 76; George Moroianu to Ioan Bianu 2/15 May 1908, *Scrisori către Ioan Bianu* vol. II (Bucharest, 1975), pp. 338-339. Sturdza to Elizabeth 25/8 December 1938, B.A. Sturdza.

¹²Interview with Dr. Sandu Sturdza, Sinaia, Romania, 24 March 1990; D.A. Sturdza to Ioan Bianu, 21 July 1908, 3 March 1910, 9 August 1911, *Scrisori către Ioan Bianu* V, pp. 140-141, 156.

¹³D.A. Sturdza to Ioan Bianu, 6 August 1906, 3 September 1906, 30 July 1912, *Scrisori către Ioan Bianu* V, pp. 108-109, 112, 171-172.

¹⁴I.G. Duca, *Amintiri politice*, vol. II (Munich, 1981), pp. 130-131; Moroianu to Bianu, 2/15 May 1908, *Scrisori către Ioan Bianu* II, pp. 338-339.

¹⁵The following account is based on Nicolae Brădișteanu, "Chemarea a răsunat în pustiu," *Magazin istoric*, vol. VI (1972), nr. 10, pp. 56-58.

¹⁶Sturdza, "Mein Lebenslauf...."

¹⁷Duca, II, p. 131; Sturdza "Jurnal," 19/2 December 1916.

¹⁸This popularity and wide acquaintance was one reason Sturdza's desertion created such apprehension among Romania's leaders. See chapter five.

¹⁹On Romania 1914-1916 see Glenn Torrey, "Rumania and the Belligerents 1914-1916," *Journal of Contemporary History* vol. I (1966), pp. 171-191 and V.N. Vinogradov, "Romania in the First World War: The Years of Neutrality, 1914-1916," *International History Review*, vol. XIV (1992), pp. 452-461.

²⁰Grünau (O.H.L.) to Auswärtiges Amt, 12 July 1916, Bussche (Bucharest) to A.A., 16 July 1916; Auswärtiges Amt. (Bonn) Politisches Archiv, [hereinafter A.A. (Bonn)], Deutschland 128, nr. 2.

²¹Czernin (Bucharest) to Aussen Ministerium, 19 July 1916, Haus-Hof-und Staatsarchiv [hereinafter H.H. St. A.] (Vienna), Politisches Archiv, Rot. 520.

²²Torrey, "Rumania and the Belligerents," pp. 180-182.

²³Biblioteca Centrală de Stat (Bucharest), Secție de manuscrise, "Jurnal Titu Maiorescu," vol. 40, 2/15 August 1916.

Disillusionment

Sturdza received the news of Romania's decision for war on August 14, 1916 with a "pained heart." It brought into sharp conflict loyalties which lay at the center of his being. On the one hand, he firmly believed Germany "represents social and moral progress"; but on the other he recognized that "this decision also coincides, unfortunately, with our national ideal."¹ Over the next few months this conflict would escalate. Initially, however, Sturdza gave no evidence that he would do anything but fight against Germany and her allies to the best of his ability. In fact, he seemed to prefer being posted to the northern theater of operations where he would face the Germans "a noble and worthy enemy" rather than to the south where he would face mere Bulgarians and Turks.² "I have no qualms vis-a-vis my former masters and teachers," he wrote to his mother on September 1, "... and I will shoot at my old friends with *sangfroid*"³

At the same time Sturdza was deeply apprehensive about the Russian alliance. "What will be born of our collaboration with Russia? We have surrendered ourselves to pressure from abroad which can be dangerous."⁴ Clearly present in his mind was the passionate warning his father-in-law, Petre Carp, had issued at the crown council which had decided on war. Convinced that the Russian alliance would lead inevitably to Russian domination, Carp promised to give his sons to fight but said he prayed for Romania's defeat because he fervently believed a victory in alliance with Russia would cost Romania her king, dynasty, and independence. Sturdza included a summary of Carp's prophecy in his personal journal.⁵

Sturdza drew as his initial assignment the command of an infantry regiment attached to the First Army on the extreme western flank of the Romanian front. His unit, with a defensive mission, dug in late in August in the face of strong enemy resistance, suffering more than 100 casualties. Comparing this experience unfavorably with that of the Balkan War of 1913, Sturdza wrote to his mother:

Then I knew my troops. All had been prepared under my direction. I am looking forward to when we can become one family and a unit which merits the title, a historic unit perhaps.⁶

But Sturdza led this regiment in battle less than 10 days. While the initial Romanian advance northward into Transylvania was progressing, an unexpected German-led Bulgarian attack in the south on September 6 overran the Romanian Danube fortress of Turtucaia sending shock waves

of panic through the Romanian military and populace alike.⁷ As part of its response to this new situation, the Romanian High Command (Marele Cartier General or M.C.G.) transferred Sturdza to the rear to organize a new "Mixed Brigade No. 7."⁸ Sturdza's reassignment, evidently part of an attempt to create reinforcements, must be considered an advancement and evidence of the trust Sturdza enjoyed with King Ferdinand and M.C.G.

Sturdza's initial professional optimism about the war, already tempered by a deep-seated apprehension toward Russia, was shattered by a mounting series of Romanian military misfortunes. His mood, as reflected in his journal, turned decidedly negative. He dwells on the "sad spectacles of war," such as the frightened children which reminded him of the possible danger for his own children.⁹ Above all Sturdza's distrust of Romania's political and military leadership grew. Turning to Rabelais, his constant intellectual and spiritual guide, he found apt analogies for the folly of King Ferdinand and Premier Ion Brătianu in taking Romania into the war against sound advice.¹⁰

Thus, within a few days of the opening of hostilities, Sturdza was already wrestling with feelings that would eventually lead him to rationalize an act of treason as an act of patriotism: a deep-seated fear of Russia, an emotional concern for the future of his family, his people, and himself, and a growing alienation from Romania's leaders. For solace and guidance during his inner struggle, Sturdza constantly immersed himself in his favorite literary companions, especially Martin Buber and Rabelais. He turned to the former repeatedly "to control my soul," while he treated Rabelais virtually as scripture, reading and rereading his novels *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* and quoting them extensively in his journal and letters.¹¹

The roots of Sturdza's growing pessimism were exacerbated during late September and early October as military defeats multiplied. In Dobrogea, the Russo-Romanian army progressively surrendered the littoral, amid mutual recrimination; a bold but flawed offensive south across the Danube failed; the initially successful Romanian advance into Transylvania, halted unwisely, gave time for the German General Erich von Falkenhayn to gather forces to invade Romania from the north.¹² Totaling up Romanian initial losses, Sturdza pondered pessimistically in his journal:

Can we support a campaign until spring? If not what will be the outcome? A separate peace or Russian occupation? ... If Russia occupies us she will [dominate] us politically and morally. Then the entire direction of our civic lives would change even in the realm of the education of our children Would it not be better then to liquidate everything here and emigrate to the west? Because there the children can build a new civic and social ideal while under Russian domination this is excluded.¹³

In his pessimism, Sturdza increasingly interpreted Romania's future in stark terms: "Russian occupation or German occupation? Or even more: a disaster as in Serbia and the dispersing of the Romanian army in France and in Volhynia 'for the holy cause.'"¹⁴ His slightly more optimistic scenario was that the Germans would push the Romanians back into Moldavia, or farther. Then, since they had won access to Romanian oil and communications routes in the Balkans, they would allow the Romanians to stay in Moldavia, badly supplied by the Russians.¹⁵ This prediction was remarkably close to what actually came to pass.

Later in October, Sturdza was further disturbed emotionally by news of the death in battle of his brother-in-law, "our dear Petru" [Carp] who "was to me as a brother."¹⁶ Verbalizing his growing despair, mentioning suicide, and already hinting of treason, Sturdza cried out in his journal just after sending a message to his family:

When will I see them again? When will I see my children? I am convinced: never! Because with such leaders of operations and of our troops it [national survival] is no longer certain as under other conditions. But this is not my worry because against weakness it is useless to try. Duty is to fight and die with honor ... which will preserve fame and reputation. For this cause I seek the occasion to pass to the offensive. Through a well-prepared offensive in the Horia sector in the direction of the enemy entering into Oituz, I would be able to have a brilliant local effect and an honorable death because prolonging this state of affairs can do nothing but give an occasion for dishonor.¹⁷

A few days later, Sturdza lapsed into another spell of introspection: "My life was happy but it was a succession of continual expectations. Will the moment ever come for reaching the expected?"¹⁸ Inspecting a battlefield after a successful Romanian attack, he was emotionally moved by the sight of so many dead.¹⁹ Upon receipt of the news that the important Romanian port city of Constanța had fallen to the enemy, Sturdza wrote a letter to his mother which eloquently reveals his inner struggle to avoid complete despair.

I live from day to day not knowing what will happen tomorrow. My last word may not be goodbye but 'til we meet again. This tyranny appears to me horrible but with the fear that I would throw anyone into despair, I, in contrast, have hope and courage. I have remained an incurable optimist and an unflinching believer in the natural logic of interdependent causes, therefore, in final justice and in the triumph of truth. This optimism remains intact, certainly, through intimate contact with my officers and my troops. Our soldiers are idealistic; it is a tragic fate, especially as they are condemned to the role of mercenaries for a foreign cause The greatest danger is not the external enemy; we have conquered him ... the other enemy however is of the devil. It

endangers the nation and our personal and collective honor The battle does not frighten us. I have observed it myself in all kinds of situations and know now exactly how it is, but the causes ... frighten me, a battle lost, many dead, wounded, prisoners ... what has been done "stinks to high heaven."²⁰

Sturdza's alienation from Romania's leadership was exacerbated as he proceeded to organize, train, and outfit his newly-formed brigade. Finding serious deficiencies in both men and equipment available, he lamented: "The recklessness with which the M.C.G has decided is childish and may be explained only through the fact that we are led by vain and dilettante men"²¹ About October 9, after receiving orders to deploy his new unit to the front, Sturdza decided to go to M.C.G. to confront the King directly. After laying out the deficiencies of his unit and predicting that it faced certain disaster, Sturdza launched into a blunt criticism of the entire M.C.G. itself. Ferdinand, who was timid by nature, seems to have been especially intimidated by Sturdza's vehemence and acceded to his criticisms by approving his specific requests for the brigade. But then when Sturdza tried to continue the interview, "the King gave me his hand and I left with the conviction that all was in vain."²²

Sturdza's hostility was also now directed at Crown Prince Carol. He believed allegations that the latter's entourage had slandered him personally as a "non-entity who does not know how to command either a battalion or a regiment" and had argued that it was "incomprehensible that he was entrusted with a brigade."²³ Paranoia thus exacerbated the alienation Sturdza already felt toward those he served. During the course of the next few weeks, this alienation would lead Sturdza to the brink of direct disobedience.

At the end of October, Sturdza's unit was permanently relocated farther to the northeast into the Vrancea subchain of the eastern Carpathians. In some ways it was a fortunate assignment. Compared with the chaos of defeat and retreat on the other Romanian fronts this was a quiet, defensive region. Sturdza's sector centered on the Caşin valley and was bounded by the towns of Oituz and Soveja. His headquarters was at Panciu, a larger town quite some distance to the rear. It was served by one narrow gauge railway and one regular gauge with three fast trains a day each way. Sturdza himself had a locomotive and a salon car assigned for his personal use.²⁴

While Sturdza had regretted leaving the jurisdiction of the Second Army because of his respect for its commander, General Alexandru Averescu, he found his new command structure in the Army of the North congenial; he served first under General Constantin Prezan, whose chief of operations Captain Ion Antonescu, had been one of Sturdza's students, and then under the even more empathetic General Constantin Christescu,

Prezan's replacement. Furthermore he felt a special kinship with General Erimea Grigorescu, who commanded the neighboring 15th Infantry Division. Grigorescu, like Christescu, shared Sturdza's skepticism of M.C.G.²⁵ and unwittingly the two would exacerbate his disaffection and contribute to his unfortunate misapprehension that if he acted it would not be alone.

Sturdza also found it satisfying to be back in his Moldavian homeland, where, by coincidence, he found many peasants bearing the name "Sturdza." The relative quiet of this sector of the front gave him time to travel the nearby estates of people with whom he was well acquainted. These visits allowed him to catch up on news and enjoy relief from the primitive conditions at the front. More than once he mentions in his journal the joys of a hot bath and a good meal. Sometimes the "young ladies" of these noble families would send cakes and wine for his staff. Sturdza also had time to devote attention to improving the living conditions of his troops, about whom he was very concerned. In a letter to his mother on November 3, he described in glowing terms his hospital which was equipped with a pharmacy, pharmacist, and even a dentist. As casualties in his unit were low, the hospital primarily served those wounded in the Dobrugean campaign.²⁶

But Sturdza's relative inactivity also gave him time to indulge his penchant for introspection, which had serious consequences for his emotional stability and sense of judgment. Amid the reports of Romanian defeats in the west, which continued with depressing regularity, Sturdza's pessimism, apprehension, and alienation continued to grow. On October 27, he noted in his journal that two months had passed since that "tragic Sunday" when Romania had declared war. He enumerated Romania's many ills. Russia was now making Romania a base of operations aimed at Bulgaria and Constantinople. Romania would become a battlefield like Belgium and Serbia. Yet, without the arrival of a powerful Russian army "the game is lost." Romania was suffering from the "bankruptcy" of Brătianu's policy.²⁷

The next day he continued his internal soliloquy on a wider philosophical plain. He regretted the past antipathy in Romanian intellectual life toward Germany and that now

We help the collapse of a race with a bearing so noble and ideal. It is certain that if the world is divided into *Handler und Helden*, the idealist chooses rather categorically the heroic. But my concern falls before the power of events. So, it happened; the thing is definitive. One wants to say, the whole reduces itself to this slogan: duty and discipline. Later it will become clear, yes later.²⁸

As the Romanian armies in the west retreated eastward, Russian reinforcements began to appear in Moldavia. But Sturdza was not pleased with this aid believing that the Russians in pretending to defend all of Moldavia,

would find it natural, in order to extend the imperial frontier toward Constantinople, to push from the Prut toward the Carpathians, and to occupy the Danube Delta with Galați and Brăila Romania, partitioned at the conference of peace, would be an object of compensation. In these days my destiny must be decided Russians in Moldavia, Germans and Austrians in Muntenia; will that be our fate?²⁹

Although his official contacts with Russian officers were polite, Sturdza was filled with inner resentment. "Yes," he wrote his mother on November 15:

the Russians are certainly spreading all over; my dear Moldavia is occupied to the degree that our front is made to retreat. They rule as masters. Their attitude toward us makes it necessary at every contact to stifle all legitimate feelings of *amour propre*. The empire of the Tsar cannot stop here; it must extend its limits all along the Danube. The empire can only succeed if it makes the country a base of operations. One cannot deny, from the Russian point of view, that this would be the better plan. Will they accomplish it? Yes or no, our situation appears precarious, because our country seems predestined to become a theater of operations, the sole and unique thing that the government must prevent.³⁰

At the same time, Sturdza's personal resentment toward King Ferdinand continued to fester and border more and more on the treasonous:

But how do I stand vis-a-vis the king or he vis-a-vis me? ... I, who have sworn fidelity, I have done my duty but without respect for him with his flaws, his weakness of speech and infirmity of will. He, who believes that I am incapable of the infidelity of which he was capable, ... he must disdain all my opinions, all my abilities, and all that I have learned There are great differences between us and we will never be able to collaborate ... because I do not see how he can be rehabilitated in my eyes and how I can again have good faith in him after he has treated me as he has.³¹

Sturdza's inner conflict, especially his alienation from Romania's leaders almost turned into direct disobedience in late November. As the Romanian First and Second Armies retreated eastward across Wallachia, orders for supporting offensive operations by his Army of the North appeared imminent. Sturdza was convinced that his unit was seriously unprepared for such action.³² He was encouraged in his determination to

resist such orders in conferences with Grigorescu and Christescu at Bacău on November 26: "the views of the generals coincide with mine." They agreed that the Romanian forces were too weak to take the offensive without "serious" Russian aid which they deemed unlikely. At the conclusion of the conference, Christescu said that if it came to an order to take the offensive, he was obligated to execute it; nevertheless he would put his views in writing and forward them to M.C.G. "I believe that MCG has lost its head completely," Sturdza's journal entry concluded.³³

Because he mistakenly thought his colleagues would succeed in getting the offensive postponed, Sturdza was surprised and angered when, on 28 November, he "... received orders from Division 15 for an attack. It puts me in an impossible situation: to attack with insufficient force without preparation of artillery. I consulted with Major Vasilescu of the guards [regiment] and he said that it cannot be done. I wrote a dispatch in cipher to Division 15 to show the situation"³⁴ Sturdza's objections were overruled and for the next 48 hours he was deep in pessimism. As he explained in a letter to his mother, he returned as always to Rabelais "a profound philosopher ... I need diversion in order not to reflect too much on that which disturbs me."³⁵

As he waited, deep in turmoil, for the impending attack, the news reached him that the occupation of Bucharest by the enemy was imminent. "O Pirochole, Pirochole" he cried out in his journal, recalling Rabelais's foolish King Pirochole who, like Ferdinand, driven by ambition and Machiavellian advisors, embarks on an aggressive war against superior adversaries that ends in ignominious defeat. "It is a most unbearable, intimate suffering, this dissonance between military necessity and the obvious abyss where he leads Romania. Oh my anxious soul!"³⁶ Just hours before the attack, Sturdza agonized over this conflict between duty and conscience. He decided to delay carrying out his orders. As he explained later in a letter to his mother "it would have been carnage; I vigorously worked to avoid it."³⁷

Sturdza found a way out because the local commanders had been given the option to wait until their individual preparations were complete before joining in the attack. The attack, initiated by the neighboring 15th division, stalled in the face of strong enemy resistance and Sturdza's unit did not join in. In the meantime, orders came canceling the attack. Relief swept over him, "I have the feeling that the lives of 3000 good Romanians and the last intact regiment in the Romanian army was saved. For the moment! What will happen later?"³⁸

His letter to his mother dwelt on his struggle with obeying the order to attack and again hinted at trouble in the future:

The interior battle over which I am for the moment victorious, has been laborious. I was obligated profoundly to winnow and examine my conscience in order to find the path corresponding to honor, to duty and which does not jeopardize that which one calls reputation. My good men, who look at me with their eyes as faithful dogs, do not suspect what has happened—and for me what will happen.

With the fall of Bucharest impending, he continued: "this is perhaps the last occasion available to me to send you news of me because "from now on I will be in Russia, and you in Germany." He gave instructions for putting his financial affairs in order and his closing words were tender, as if saying goodbye for a long time if not forever. He sent final greetings to family and friends, including a quotation from Rabelais for "faithful" [Ion] Bianu. He concluded: "How fortunate that papa is not alive."³⁹

Deep in depression, Sturdza lashed out in his journal at Brătianu as the source of all his ills. His mind, now becoming clouded with paranoia, reached back a decade to accuse Brătianu of having "organized my assassination," at Craiova. And, behind the scenes of Romania's present disaster, he again saw Brătianu's sinister influence. "I believe that the game of this man with our Merovingian king may be called diabolical." It was easy, he concluded, for Brătianu to dominate such "a weak and henpecked man."⁴⁰

The other focus of his paranoia, the Russians, came increasingly to dominate his mind. Bucharest fell to the enemy on December 6 and the debris of the Romanian army retreated eastward into Moldavia, where large scale Russian reinforcements were now gathering. On December 8, in a conference with Grigorescu, Sturdza discussed the need for them "to draw together" so that "at least one corner of Moldavia" would be free of Russian occupation. Sturdza, recalling Christescu's questioning of the order from M.C.G. to attack earlier, associated him with the support he imagined from Grigorescu. How fortunate it was, he mused, to have "true superiors with whom exists mutual trust."⁴¹ Later that evening, while dining with a Russian general and four officers at Panciu, Sturdza was alarmed to learn that the Russians were talking among themselves about an evacuation of the Romanian army eastward across the Prut into Russia. "It would be a disaster," he told himself.⁴² During this period, his only relief seemed to be to plunge into Rabelais again "in the midst of the emotion and despair of seeing my dear country overrun by foreigners."⁴³

The last week of Sturdza's journal is filled with a depressing recitation of the drama of Romania's military disaster and his growing apprehension about the Russians, "with their pretensions of ruling as conquerors or invaders."⁴⁴ December 11, near Panciu, where the remnants of the Romanian army were gathering, he could identify only two Romanian

divisions and a total of 70,000-80,000 men. "Where are divisions 2, 4, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20? ... Only 5000 men are in the hospitals. The rest of the 12 divisions shall have been lost."⁴⁵ Going to the road and rail junction of Focșani to view the retreat personally, he witnessed the tragedy of thousands of refugees: "It is sad. Three or four streams of traffic going toward Moldavia; automobiles and carriages full of refugees with much baggage and children. Women ... with frightened eyes and heads covered ... from time to time a horse, dead on the road, completely covered with mud, its feet angled into the air"⁴⁶

Despair alternated with sarcasm. On December 12, he remarked that the chaos would continue "until the end of us;" December 13, "with the Russians in Galați and the Germans in Brăila we now have two liberators; one has only to choose."⁴⁷ The single positive development he saw was that the Oituz-Vrancea sector, manned by Division 15 and his own 7th Mixed Brigade, would be the only region free of Russian troops. He seemed pleased that these units would be the nucleus of the single, remaining Romanian army (Second) commanded by Averescu, whom he respected.⁴⁸ He had nothing but contempt for the way the Romanian army had been led for the past 110 days, contrasting the leadership of "the great captain King Carol" with that of Ferdinand, "a Merovingian criminal."⁴⁹

The last entry in Sturdza's journal, dated December 17, 1916, records his attempt to bolster the morale of his troops: "I went from one unit to another and repeated to each simple and popular ideas expressing ... discipline, rewards, and punishment"⁵⁰ In so doing Sturdza might well have been speaking to himself as well. He was already close to embracing an action at which he had only hinted in writing but which clearly had been much on his mind in the weeks of struggle he had just gone through.

Footnotes

¹Sturdza, "Jurnal," 18/31 August 1916.

²*Ibid.* The enemy had reciprocal respect for Sturdza. An Austrian "Inventory of Higher Romanian Officers," described him as a "very excellent, distinguished officer ... [with] integrity of character." *Kriegsarchiv* [Hereinafter K.A.] (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz. 33, 24 October 1916.

³B.A. Fond Sturdza.

⁴Sturdza, "Jurnal," 18/31 August 1916.

⁵"Consiliul de Coroana 15 VIII 1916," *Arhiva de Stat* (Bucharest), Fond Sturdza; Constantin Gane, *P.P. Carp*, vol. II (Bucharest, 1936), pp. 541-542.

⁶Ministerul Apărării Naționale, Marele Stat-Major, serviciul istoric, *România în războiul mondial 1916-1919*, vol. I (Bucharest, 1934), pp. 236-237, 300, 332-335; Sturdza to Zoe Sturdza, 19/1 September 1916, B.A. Fond Sturdza. (All subsequent correspondence with Zoe is from this source.)

⁷See Glenn Torrey, "The Entente and the Romanian Campaign of 1916," *Rumanian Studies*, vol. IV (1976-79), (London, 1979), pp. 178ff.

⁸It was to be composed of three infantry regiments and one artillery unit. Ministerul Apărării Naționale, Marele Stat Major, microfilm FII 12441/354, Rășcanu to Armata I, 25/7 September 1916.

⁹Sturdza, "Jurnal," 30/12, 4/17 September 1916.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 30/12 September 1916.

¹¹See, for example, Sturdza, "Jurnal," 31/13 September 1916.

¹²Torrey, "The Entente and the Romanian Campaign of 1916," pp. 185-187.

¹³Sturdza, "Jurnal," 4/17 September - 21/4 October 1916 (a composite entry).

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 25/6 October 1916, "Volhynia" meant western Russia.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 26/7 October 1916.

¹⁶Sturdza to Zoe, 4/17 October 1916.

¹⁷Sturdza, "Jurnal," 7/20 October 1916.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 9/22 October 1916.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 10/23 October 1916.

²⁰Sturdza to Zoe, 13/26 October. The last phrase is in English in the original.

²¹Sturdza, "Jurnal," 4/17 September - 21/4 October.

²²Sturdza, "Jurnal," 22/9 October.

²³*Ibid.*, 4/17 September - 27/4 October 1916.

²⁴Sturdza to Zoe, 19/2 November.

²⁵Sturdza, "Jurnal," 1/14 September, 22/4 October, 23/5 October, 25/7 October, 13/26 October.

²⁶Sturdza to Zoe, 19/2, 20/3 November, 2/15 November; Sturdza, "Jurnal," 25/7 October.

²⁷Sturdza, "Jurnal," 14/27 October.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 15/28 October.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 22/4 November.

³⁰Sturdza to Zoe, 2/15 November.

³¹Sturdza, "Jurnal," 8/21 November

³²German debriefing of Romanian prisoners from Sturdza's unit confirm its poor preparation. Kriegsarchiv (Munich), Alpen Korps 1* (Band 36), 28 November 1916.

³³Sturdza, "Jurnal," 13/26 November.

³⁴Sturdza, "Jurnal," 15/28 November.

³⁵Sturdza to Zoe, 12/25 November.

³⁶Sturdza, "Jurnal," 16/29 November. This last phrase is in German in the original.

³⁷Sturdza to Zoe, 12/25 November.

³⁸Sturdza, "Jurnal," 17/30 November, 20/3 December.

³⁹Sturdza to Zoe, 19/2 December.

⁴⁰Sturdza, "Jurnal," 19/2 December.

⁴¹Sturdza, "Jurnal," 25/8 December.

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³Sturdza, "Jurnal," 18/1 December.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 28/11 December.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*

⁴⁶Sturdza, "Jurnal," 30/13 December.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 29/12, 30/13 December.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 2/15 December.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 3/16 December.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 4/17 December.

"The sorrowful winter of 1916-1917" as it has gone down in Romanian history brought to a tragic conclusion the inner struggle of Colonel Alexandru Sturdza over his obligations as a soldier and what he believed were the best interests of his country. In the weeks that remained before he crossed over into the enemy camp on February 6, all of the continuing causes of his disaffection came to a head. First, the defeat of the Romanian army seemed complete; barely 70,000 men remained in the battle line, covering a mere 30 kilometers of the front. The remaining 450 kilometers were manned by 500,000 Russian combat troops plus almost as many more support troops crowding the rear areas. Secondly, because Moldavia, swollen with refugees, was hard put to supply these "guests" as well as its own civilian and military population, the Russian high command was pressing for the evacuation into Russia for reorganization of some 250,000 Romanian troops. Sturdza's worst fears of Russification seemed about to be realized. Finally, Sturdza's alienation from his superiors became complete as he began to manifest erratic leadership behavior during these last weeks. This caused General Averescu, one of the Romanian leaders Sturdza still respected, to rebuke him and ask for his removal from his command. Since this incident has evoked much controversy and served as the immediate catalyst for Sturdza's defection, it is to this we turn.¹

Sturdza's brigade was engaged in heavy fighting between December 22, 1916-January 12, 1917. The Russo-Romanian armies were struggling to stabilize the front on the western ramparts of Moldavia while the enemy was attacking in order to knock Romania out of the war or at least advance to the Siret-Trotuș rivers before the winter lull. Sturdza commanded a key sector in the Vrancea mountain heights where the Cașin valley led to the Trotuș.² To his south were Russian forces under the command of General Gustav Mannerheim;³ to the north was the 15th Romanian division under General Eremia Grigorescu. The Austro-Hungarian forces of General Eugen Ruiz de Roxas, supplemented by the famed Bavarian Alpine Corps, launched an offensive on December 24th in the Cașin valley aimed at capturing the key Romanian position at Soveja defended by Sturdza's brigade. The Russo-Romanian forces at first fell back in a retreat sanctioned by M.C.G. The standard Romanian history of the war credits Sturdza's unit with strong resistance, retreating only "little by little" under the pressure of superior enemy forces.⁴ A few days later, a new attack against Mixed Brigade No. 7 did not succeed. Sturdza resisted, repulsing the enemy and regrouping his troops for the projected counter-offensive.

Although Sturdza counterattacked successfully on December 30, capturing an entire German company, he was not able to exploit this initial success because Russo-Romanian units on his left flank retreated.

Up to this point Sturdza's behavior appears above reproach.⁵ But thereafter Sturdza's conduct became increasingly controversial.⁶ When ordered by Averescu on December 31 to resume the counterattack or at least to hold his ground, Sturdza thought this dangerous and asked for and received permission from Mannerheim to retreat. This opened the door for the enemy advance toward Soveja. Ordered by Averescu to attack with a view to preventing the enemy from reaching Soveja, Sturdza complied but little was gained (January 1-4). On January 5, the Russians alongside Sturdza gave ground and after reporting heavy German attacks, Sturdza ordered a new retreat from Soveja. Averescu, angered, then ordered Sturdza to reoccupy this key town. Sturdza claimed it was already in enemy hands, which Averescu later had reason to believe incorrect. Averescu then asked Sturdza for an explanation of his "precipitate" and "inexplicable" retreat. When Sturdza strongly protested this characterization, Averescu wanted to suspend him, but General Grigorescu, who recently had become commander of the 4th Army Corps intermediary in command between the two, asked that Sturdza be left in place until the crisis on the battlefield was over. Averescu agreed, but sent an observer to keep an eye on Sturdza and demanded that M.C.G. transfer Sturdza out of his army. Sturdza protested Averescu's action directly to M.C.G. and now demanded satisfaction or relief from his command. Meanwhile, a new order of battle, drawn up earlier in December, promoted Sturdza to the command of Division 15, which Grigorescu had just vacated to become the corps commander. Naturally, Averescu was furious.

In evaluating Sturdza's conduct during the Cașin battles one must take into account the bias that existed against him after his defection. All Romanian interwar accounts are critical of his performance. Interestingly enough, the most detailed Romanian accounts written since World War II make no mention of Sturdza's failings, but stress the bitter struggle and the enemy superiority in numbers and artillery as the primary reason for the Romanian retreat.⁷ The German and Austrian official histories of these engagements also stress the heavy fighting.⁸ The chief of staff of the German group commander, General Gerok, remarked that Sturdza's unit "gave us much trouble and fought very well."⁹ The archival records of Gerok's units support this view, speaking about the battle over Soveja in terms of "strong counterattack," "the enemy supplied overall very strong resistance," "enemy resistance which was very strong," and of a "strong Romanian attack in Cașin valley."¹⁰ Sources based on the personal

testimony of General Mannerheim, with whom Sturdza fought, praise his collaboration and characterize their joint action as "tough and good."¹¹

On the other hand, a Romanian general whose division adjoined Mannerheim's, maintained, after the war, that Mannerheim had complained to him about Sturdza's troops not standing and resisting but retreating without battle.¹² Although there were no French officers directly attached to Sturdza's units that could have provided a neutral evaluation, a British military observer reported, just before the defection, that in December and January Sturdza's brigade fought well throughout.¹³

While no deliberate dereliction of duty can be proved, one must conclude, even after allowing for after-the-fact bias, that Sturdza's heart was not in the fighting and that he sought to avoid heavy casualties. Certainly this assessment is consistent with his attitude during the earlier months of the campaign and especially his reluctance to attack in November. In his pessimism, he believed continuation of the war useless.

Sturdza's retreat at Soveja was only one example of his erratic behavior on the eve of his defection. There were others. Just three days after his reprimand by Averescu (January 8) Sturdza was called to the vicinity of hill number 625 by a captain in a detachment of the 7th Mixed Brigade. Told that a local defeat and retreat by the unit could be blamed upon two of its officers who had been derelict in their command, Sturdza gathered the troops together and ordered the two officers from the ranks. Then, according to witnesses, he opened fire on them with a carbine. One, Lieutenant Ciulei fled, the other, Captain Mărculescu, fell wounded. The official complaint Sturdza forwarded to the nearest judicial officer gave a different version of events, alleging that Ciulei and the other officer had fled when ordered to attack and close a gap in the lines. Ciulei was arrested, convicted by a court martial headed by a close friend of Sturdza's and sentenced to death. Ironically he was executed two days after Sturdza's defection.¹⁴

Again, like the Cașin battle, this episode from Sturdza's last days in the Romanian army is difficult to evaluate. The details of the account that have come down to us are very much out of character with Sturdza's earlier treatment of men who served under him. In a case in November, when a soldier from outside Sturdza's command got drunk and fired more than 60 rounds at night which caused a panic, Sturdza was relieved to be able to send him back to his own unit for punishment because

I did not have the courage to condemn someone to death; I am convinced that I have a weakness which is regrettable for a commander; it may be that I lack the necessary energy in similar cases, when discipline must be maintained at any price, if the cause for which we fight would be ours; but we fight for a foreign cause. My conscience

would be tortured by remorse until I died if I should have condemned the traitor to being shot.¹⁵

Still, Sturdza seems to admit that draconian measures are sometimes necessary to maintain discipline. His journal mentions several summary executions. One was of a corporal who, suddenly confronted with the enemy, fled his post shouting in a loud voice "Run, the Hungarians are coming!", and was executed immediately.¹⁶ He also recited in detail the example of General Ion Dragalina who, at the battle of Tîrgu Jiu, calmed a panic among Romanian troops by executing six young officers on the spot.¹⁷ The fact that he himself was under censure for ordering the earlier retreat may have induced Sturdza to follow these examples in shooting at the two officers. Also there may have been extenuating circumstances not contained in the accounts that have come down to us. However, Sturdza's uncharacteristically violent reaction in this incident provides additional evidence that he was under severe emotional stress just before he defected.

Sturdza's inner turmoil was further exacerbated by his reassignment at the end of January and the beginning of February. In two separate meetings, at which Averescu was present, Sturdza seems to have expected some sort of reconciliation or resolution of their conflict. Averescu, however, ignored the issue.¹⁸ At this time also, Sturdza must have become aware that in response to Averescu's complaint, his command of Division 15 (now redesignated 8) had been changed and that he was to be given command of Division 10, which was being withdrawn from the front for reorganization in the northeast corner of Moldavia.¹⁹ On February 2, Sturdza met the King and Queen at the Cașin Monastery where they were visiting the wounded and passing out decorations. After visiting on military matters, the King invited Sturdza into his railway salon car at a nearby station and awarded him a decoration for "distinguished military service." Quite possibly this ceremony was designed to prepare the way for Sturdza's transfer, which was made known to him then or shortly thereafter.

The King's solicitude did not mollify Sturdza. To his tortured mind this transfer meant eventual transport into Russia. Indignant, he wrote to General Christescu, apparently indicating that he might disobey these orders. Christescu later said that he wrote back trying to dissuade Sturdza from such a "grievous course of action."²⁰ Sturdza placed great emphasis on this transfer in explaining his actions to the Germans later. He attributed this move, in part, to Russian machinations (including a spy at his headquarters) to send him and the Romanian army beyond the Prut into Russia: "What the Russians intend beyond the Prut, this you can only imagine."²¹

Sturdza's fears were shared by many if not most Romanian soldiers. As a matter of fact, the Russians (and for a time the Allies) were

putting heavy pressure on Romania to send most of its army into Russia. This proposal became the subject of heated negotiations. The French military mission, led by General Berthelot, insisted quite correctly that to allow this would lead to widespread defection, especially among the officer corps. What Sturdza did not realize was that, by the time of his defection, the French had virtually succeeded in blocking the Russian proposal.²² Sturdza later insisted that the prospect of evacuation into Russia precipitated his action. "Seeing the intention of the Russians, I decided to put my plan into action immediately ...," he told the Germans.²³ In addition to being upset over the prospect of the Romanian army, and indeed he himself, falling under Russian control, Sturdza must have been angered and humiliated by the rebuke and transfer.

But on a deeper level Sturdza's action was more than just a precipitate reaction to an immediate crisis. It was the result of months of internal discussion and debate, influenced not only by events but by reading and meditation. As Sturdza, himself, pointed out: "The idea of my work was suggested to me in a book ... *Daniel: Dialogues on Realization* by Martin Buber." This book had been given to him by a friend, Hermann Bahr of Vienna, with the admonition "You must read this book five times in order to understand it." "The man was right," Sturdza later told his Austro-German hosts, "and in the difficult moments I read this book, which gave me the hope of saving my country."²⁴

Sturdza, having constantly immersed himself in *Daniel* over the past months, undoubtedly identified with Buber's themes of the alienation, insecurity, and chaos of human experience on the one hand and, on the other, the need for a creative, directed soul who risks everything for self-realization. Danger is the door to reality, Buber argued, and reality is the prize of life. Conviction must lead to action.²⁵ On the day before his defection, Sturdza discussed Romania's plight with General Grigorescu and hinted broadly at his forthcoming action. "General, there must be found an able and energetic man who will take everything in hand and transform the entire situation before we collapse." Grigorescu responded: "Whoever would think of something like this could only be a fool." "After this conversation I, (the fool), left,"²⁶ Sturdza commented.

The next day, Sturdza packed his bag, including his journal and 13,000 lei of his own money, and together with his adjutant and orderly headed for the front lines. We now return to where we began: Sturdza's fateful crossing to the enemy on the afternoon of February 6.

Footnotes

¹As Sturda's journal and available correspondence ends in mid-December, official documents, both Romanian and foreign, plus personal recollections provide the chief sources for this section. Determination of Sturdza's thinking and motivation becomes necessarily less precise.

²The most recent survey of these operations from the Romanian point of view is Ilie Ceaușescu, ed., *România în anii primului război mondial* [hereinafter RAPRM], Vol. I (Bucharest, 1987), pp. 539-551. The enemy perspective can be found in *Österreich-Ungarns Letzter Krieg*, vol. V (Vienna, 1934), pp. 607-620.

³Mannerheim, a former adjutant of the Tsar, would go on to lead Finland to independence.

⁴Constantin Kirilșescu, *Istoria războiului pentru întregirea României 1916-1919*, vol. II (Bucharest n.d.), p. 276.

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 277-78.

⁶The paragraph that follows is based on Kirilșescu II, pp. 281-285. Ceaușescu, RAPRM I, pp. 548-50; Gheorge A. Dabija, *Armata română în războiul mondial, 1916-1918*, vol. III (Bucharest n.d.), pp. 606-608; Alexandru Averescu, *Notițe zilnice din războiul, 1916-1918* (Bucharest, 1937), pp. 117-119, 384-386; Averescu to King Ferdinand, 9/22 February 1917, B.A. Fond Kirileanu.

⁷Ceaușescu, RAPRM I, pp. 539-551.

⁸*Österreich-Ungarns Letzter Krieg* V, pp. 612-615.

⁹Kapri, p. 17.

¹⁰K.A. (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo Fasz. 88.

¹¹Heikki Kekoni, ed. *C.G. Mannerheim* (Helsinki, 1937), p. 101; Mannerheim continued to praise Sturdza even when informed of his defection. C.G. Mannerheim, *The Memoirs of Marshal Mannerheim* (New York, 1954), p. 108.

¹²Ioan Anastasiu, *Războiul pentru întregirea neamului* (Bucharest, 1936), pp. 445-46.

¹³Report of Major Thornhill (Buchanan to F.O.), 1 February 1917, Great Britain, Public Record Office, Foreign Office [hereinafter PRO/FO] 371/2883.

¹⁴Eugen D. Neculau, "Pe urmele unei erou judiciare: Cazul sublocotenentului Ciulei," *Magazin Istoric*, VII (1974), pp. 84-88.

¹⁵Sturdza, "Jurnal," 20/3 November.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 19/2 November.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 20/3 November.

¹⁸Averescu, p. 122.

¹⁹See Sturdza's conversation with Lt. Colonel von Waldau, chief of staff of the Armee Groupe Gerok, "Bericht," 9 February 1917, Kriegsarchiv (Stuttgart), Nachlass General von Gerok. Kirişescu, II, p. 429.

²⁰Christescu to Prezan, 30/12 April 1917, Arhivele Statalui (Bucharest), Fond Casa Regala 74/1917.

²¹"Bericht," 9 February 1917, Nachlass Geork; Kapri, pp. 8, 9, 14.

²²See the discussion in Glenn Torrey, "Russia, Romania and France: The Reorganization of the Romanian Front 1916-1917," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, XXXI (1992), pp. 60-63.

²³Kapri, p. 9; Gerok to Archduke Joseph, February 7, 1917; Nachlass Gerok.

²⁴Kapri, p. 14.

²⁵See the introduction by Martin Friedman, especially p. 27, in Martin Buber, *Daniel: Dialogues on Realization* (trans. Martin Friedman) (New York, 1964).

²⁶Kapri, pp. 14-15.

Behind Enemy Lines

After coming under fire as they approached the enemy positions, Sturdza and Wachmann had taken cover and then made their way separately through the Austro-German lines. Encountering a German soldier, Sturdza asked to be taken to his commander, which the soldier did after applying a blindfold. Arriving at Soveja, the headquarters of General von Genter, commander of the 218th Germany Infantry division, Sturdza then asked to be taken to the headquarters of the Austrian First Cavalry division commanded by General Eugen Ruiz de Roxas at Putna where he promised to make an official statement.¹ Here he and Wachmann were assigned to a Romanian-speaking officer, Major Valeriu Kapri, who became their constant escort while Sturdza's "plan" was being explained and executed. Kapri's detailed and perceptive eyewitness account, enhanced by documents and photos, is the best source for Sturdza's activity during this period.

Almost as soon as he met Kapri, Sturdza launched into an emotional, exaggerated defense of his action: he was not a deserter or a traitor to his country but a patriot seeking to save his country from the brutal conduct and intentions of the Russians.

They are not allies but true enemies. They plunder the country, rape women and girls, kill children They treat our officers very badly and use our resources as their own. My adjutant told of a kick he had received from a Russian officer on a train. Recently a Romanian officer was shot at Caşin Monastery by a Russian officer over some misunderstandings in the distribution of sugar.

To make it worse they intended to evacuate the rest of the Romanian units from the front into Russia, making them virtual prisoners.² Sturdza's story made a great impression on his hosts, Kapri relates

We received Sturdza with great compassion when he told us with tears in his eyes the suffering of his country. I was impressed by the mystical and melancholic seriousness of his visage, when he declared to me his love of country and his personal sacrifice for this ideal.³

But at first neither General Ruiz nor his chief of staff Count Mirbach would agree to see Sturdza. Not only were they hesitant to act before receiving authorization from their superiors, but they considered him, if not a traitor, at least "a perjurer who had transgressed the soldier's

oath sworn before God and his sovereign." In their view, a soldier had no right to meddle in political issues.⁴

After giving orders that the Romanians should be sent on the next day to General Friedrich Gerok, the German army corp commander, Ruiz relented and received Sturdza and Wachmann at his table in the officers mess that evening. There, amid strains of music played by a small orchestra, Sturdza laid out the details of his plan: he would induce mass desertions from the Romanian army, then, using these men, together with Romanian soldiers in German and Austrian prison camps, form a volunteer corps under his command. Cooperating with the armies of the Central Powers, this Romanian force would drive the Russian army out of Moldavia and "save his country."

Herr General, my career, my good name, and all that I hold dear in life, namely honor, I sacrifice for this one purpose. If my projected action is successful and is favored by fate, all will be well; in a contrary case, nothing remains to me than the bullets of a revolver.⁵

Always serious and with a sad visage, Sturdza spoke quietly, thinking of each word before he pronounced it, in correct and harmonious German. However, when a staff officer presented a map asking Sturdza to verify locations of Russian and Romanian units, Sturdza sidestepped the question.⁶

As he accompanied the two Romanians from one level of command to another, Kapri had much time to observe them. He describes Sturdza as a man 45 years old, small of stature with a black, short beard, dressed in field uniform, carry a mapcase over his shoulder and a hunting stool in his hand. Rarely was Sturdza seen smiling and more rarely laughing. In conversations he looked straight into the eyes of the one with whom he spoke, not moving his eyes until he had terminated the last word. His responses, which were short, not a word more than was necessary, very concise and with easy diction, had the gift of interesting his auditor. When questions were put to him not of his liking, he would respond only with an ironic smile.⁷

Sturdza's companion, Lieutenant Wachmann, made a less favorable impression on Kapri. Thirty-five years old, tall and well built, he was the son of the former director of the music conservatory in Bucharest and at the outbreak of war had been the director of a bank in Salonika. Interned by the French in 1916 as a suspicious foreigner, he was detained for three months before returning to Romania. He met Sturdza as a result of their frequent visits to the home of German minister Baron Hilmar von dem Bussche. Mobilized as a lieutenant in the reserve, he fought in Dobrogea briefly and then in September 1916 was selected by Sturdza as adjutant for his new (7th) mixed brigade. According to Kapri, Wachmann had a great

respect and affection for Sturdza and followed him implicitly. But in contrast to his chief, Wachmann appeared loud and frivolous in his speech and struck his hosts as egotistical and lacking the patriotic commitment and depth of Sturdza. On the other hand, Sturdza projected an image of sincerity and dedication, provoking sympathy if not approbation from the Austro-Germans.⁸

Like the other Austrian frontline commanders, Ruiz was not anxious to get involved with Sturdza, and was eager to send him on to General Gerok, the army commander.⁹ At the headquarters of General Gerok, Sturdza outlined the situation, as he saw it, to the chief of staff Colonel Waldau. The Russians intended to totally displace the Romanian army from the front. The latter, it had already been decided, would be "taken over the Prut into Russian slavery." Russia would never give up its occupation of Moldavia. Romanian corps commanders and even Averescu "have been shoved aside and are no longer consulted on military affairs. Our government and King are under Russian surveillance, they no longer have any freedom of decision."¹⁰ This assessment was partly false, partly a gross exaggeration of existing conditions, and partly a product of Sturdza's overactive imagination. But as already pointed out, fear of evacuation was widespread¹¹ and obviously had become an obsession with Sturdza. After giving this background, Sturdza repeated his plan.

Waldau had two questions. One, surprisingly, was what impact U.S. entry into the war might have on Romania; the Germans were concerned that it might encourage Romania to fight on. "None," Sturdza answered. The other line of questioning related to whether the volunteer corps proposed by Sturdza would fight against its Romanian brethren and/or its Russian allies. Sturdza ruled out any confrontation of Romanian units but assured Waldau that they would fight the Russians.¹² Later he met alone with General Gerok. No details of this conversation are available but afterward Gerok commented freely to Captain Kapri,

This man is a great idealist, one may say a sick idealist. However when a soldier does what he has done, putting everything dear in life on a single card, he must have his revolver in his other hand Personally I do not expect much from his action.¹³

Gerok telegraphed his superiors asking permission to cooperate with Sturdza in seeking to induce more desertions, but deferred taking a position on Sturdza's proposal for a Romanian legion.¹⁴

Higher authorities of the Central Powers showed greater initial interest in Sturdza and his action. Telegraphic inquiries arrived from Austrian *Armee Oberkommando* in Baden (A.O.K.), from Archduke Joseph (commander of the Russo-Romanian front), from Hindenburg and

Ludendorff at German Supreme Headquarters (O.H.L.), and from Habsburg Foreign Minister Ottokar Czernin. The A.O.K., calling Sturdza "a friend of the Central Powers," and ordered that "he must be treated well, not as a prisoner." This Sturdza was, although there remained the bureaucratic problem of how to carry him in the daily report: "as prisoner, deserter, or volunteer?"¹⁵ A.O.K. immediately granted permission on the desertion action, but a decision on the issue of a Romanian *Freikorps* was held in abeyance.¹⁶

Meanwhile Sturdza was editing a written appeal calling for the Romanian army to join him in the enemy camp. Kapri, on overhearing the dialogue between Sturdza and Wachmann during the drafting, concluded that they were simply refining a version written before Sturdza's defection. Sturdza appeared extremely nervous. General Gerok approved the basic text except for a reference to the release of the Romanian prisoners for Sturdza's proposed *Freikorps* since this permission had not yet been granted from higher authorities. Wachmann took the responsibility of having 15,000 copies printed for distribution across the Romanian lines.¹⁷

On the afternoon of February 9, Sturdza and Wachmann were escorted to the prisoner of war camp at Soveja to select Romanian messengers to deliver these manifestoes to the Romanian lines. Both Romanian and Austro-German eyewitnesses agree it was an emotional scene. Sturdza, "moved and weeping," spoke along the lines of the manifesto. Some of the Romanian P.O.W.s kissed his hand and wept also. Of approximately 130 prisoners, thirty volunteered to take part in the distribution.¹⁸

Meanwhile, the Germans, seeking additional confirmation of Sturdza's identity before any overt action was undertaken, had sent for Colonel Maximilian Randa, who as Austro-Hungarian military attaché in Bucharest had known Sturdza personally.¹⁹ Serving in a command position not too far away, Randa arrived the same afternoon. It was a difficult meeting for Sturdza. He was embarrassed to see his old friend under these conditions: "I don't want you to have a bad idea of me." Randa seemed most interested in learning from Sturdza something about the intentions of the Romanian government and people in Moldavia while Sturdza wanted to know what was going on in Bucharest.²⁰ Sturdza, however, was very reserved before the other Austro-German officers present, so he and Randa went for a walk in the village. No separate account of this part of the conversation exists but there seems to be some basis to the allegation that Sturdza revealed to him the Russo-Romanian order of battle. The Romanian and French leaders later assumed as much. At an earlier, documented attempt to elicit this information, however, Sturdza had refused to supply it.²¹

On February 10, Sturdza kept a previously agreed upon rendezvous in no-man's-land with Lieutenant Colonel Crăiniceanu who was still in command of an infantry regiment occupying the front line. Crăiniceanu was not only the son of General Grigore C. Crăiniceanu, a onetime pre-war chief of staff and minister of war and, in 1916, briefly commander of the Second Romanian army; he was also the nephew of the present Romanian chief of staff, General Prezan. During the early months of Romanian neutrality, Crăiniceanu, like his father, had been a fervent advocate of the Entente cause. But a tour of duty in 1916 as military attaché in Athens had transformed him into a "enthusiastic" Germanophile. His loss of zeal for the Entente cause seems to have been linked to the poor impression created by the Allied Army of the East at Salonika. Crăiniceanu sent back reports which correctly contradicted Entente claims regarding its size and which warned his superiors not to rely on it to aid Romania. Crăiniceanu was recalled because of his activity in Greece but his reporting was later validated when the Army of the East failed to cover Romania against Bulgarian attack in August 1916.²² As a regimental commander during the campaign of 1916, his superiors had considered him "an officer of valor," and his contribution was considered "distinguished." The unit he commanded fought extremely well, attacking even during Sturdza's alleged retreats.²³

As pointed out earlier, Sturdza had visited Crăiniceanu's command post just prior to crossing to the Austro-German lines. Upon entering the latter's office, he had asked the adjutant to leave. In a four hour conversation, Sturdza, who had apparently talked previously with Crăiniceanu, outlined his final plans. A meeting in no-man's-land was arranged four days hence, February 10, between 10:00 and 11:00 A.M., at which time Sturdza would tell Crăiniceanu whether or not the Germans had accepted his plan. According to Sturdza, they also discussed in detail at the first meeting the steps Crăiniceanu would take upon Sturdza's initiation of the plan, including distribution of the manifesto, destruction of telephone connections with the rear areas, arrest of foreign [French] officers attached to Crăiniceanu's unit, and then the immediate passing to the Germans of his entire regiment of 2000 men.²⁴

On February 10, as scheduled, Crăiniceanu left for the front lines ostensibly to make an "inspection." He aroused suspicion because he travelled outside the sector of his command and because he had to approach the enemy lines several times in attempting to make contact with Sturdza. Meanwhile, another Romanian officer happened by and gave him an invitation to lunch, which Crăiniceanu bluntly refused. He then advanced again to the line of sentinels, where he heard the call, "Crăiniceanu, Crăiniceanu, it is I, Sturdza. Come to me quickly." Ordering the sergeant

accompanying him to wait, Crăiniceanu advanced to meet Sturdza. He was then led to the enemy positions. During their conversation Crăiniceanu showed a lack of enthusiasm about carrying out the plan discussed earlier, confessing that he was afraid to go back because the Russians had him under surveillance. Sturdza responded that he must by all means return and then pass to the Germans with his troops beginning this movement that very night. After spending about a quarter of an hour with Sturdza, during which time he accepted a packet of manifestoes, Crăiniceanu returned to the Romanian lines at about 1:30 P.M.²⁵

Crăiniceanu's prolonged presence at the front lines and his going and coming in the direction of the enemy had aroused the suspicion of the sentinels, who reported his behavior to their superiors. The latter arrested the sergeant first and then when Crăiniceanu returned asked him to go to the command post of the sector commander. At first Crăiniceanu maintained an attitude of hurt indignation. His initial answer was that he was carrying out a mission for the commander of the 4th Army Corps, General Grigorescu. He aroused increased suspicion, however, when he spontaneously defended Colonel Sturdza as "a great patriot" and compared him to Tudor Vladimirescu, a 19th century Romanian hero. The sector commander then called in Colonel Scărisorianu, C.O. of the 5th Brigade of Cavalry, to assist in the interrogation. When his arrest was ordered, Crăiniceanu broke down, trembling and weeping, protesting that he was not a traitor. He admitted having met Colonel Sturdza but denied prior collusion or even knowledge of the contents of the packet of the manifestoes which he carried. He continued to insist that he was under orders of General Grigorescu. Crăiniceanu was next sent to 7th Division headquarters under guard where a more detailed search turned up a letter from Sturdza which related details of the latter's treason.²⁶ General Averescu himself subsequently interrogated Crăiniceanu on February 13. Crăiniceanu pathetically sought to soften the general's attitude saying that he had committed a childish, thoughtless act, and asking Averescu to forgive him with no consequences.²⁷

Meanwhile, behind the German lines the drama was reaching a climax. On the evening of February 10, Sturdza waited anxiously for the appearance of Crăiniceanu and his troops. But no one came. Ironically, February 10 was the only day in recent weeks when no Romanians deserted on that front. Sturdza was very troubled.²⁸ Nevertheless, the planned mass distribution of manifestoes was initiated the next day. A special order of the day alerted the Austro-German forces for the passage of Romanian troops and plans were made to house and feed them. They were to be received cordially and their officers saluted. Nevertheless, this message warned that they must remain skeptical as Sturdza could be insincere and

a decoy (Trojan horse) for a Romanian attack. Infantry were alerted, reserves drawn up, and artillery properly instructed. However, there were no plans to exploit the defection with an attack on the Romanian lines.²⁹

The results on February 11 of Sturdza's "action" were equally disappointing as those of the preceding day.³⁰ Organized by the Germans in groups of two, the 30 volunteer prisoners headed for the Romanian lines at 6:00 AM bearing their cargo. But, of the 30, only 22 followed through with their commitment to carry the manifestoes into the Romanian lines. The performance of the remainder was disappointing. Two "messengers" simply approached the Romanian lines, threw their manifestoes and ran. Two others were frightened off by Romanian fire. One carrier returned with glowing reports of how enthusiastically he had been received among the Romanians, but it was later determined that he was lying. The majority of the messengers, however, simply passed into the Romanian lines where they were received in a friendly fashion and rewarded if they turned their packets over to officers. This was confirmed by the testimony of a Romanian soldier who deserted on February 11.³¹

Although Romanian sources emphasize the surrender of the manifestoes before they were read by the troops,³² both Austrian and German observers noted them being read in the trenches, despite a flurry of Romanian officers seeking to gather them up.³³ At the very least, Sturdza's action became the subject of comment and rumor among the officers and in higher political and military circles although probably not throughout the rank and file of the army. A deserter on February 19, when questioned, knew nothing about Sturdza or the manifestoes.³⁴

Meanwhile, Sturdza's hosts back at Putna, awaiting results of his appeal, were dominated by a "nervous curiosity." Only General Ruiz joked and laughed.³⁵ As the morning wore on, they were interrupted by telephone calls which told them that others all along the chain of command from General Gerok at Corps Headquarters to A.O.K. at Baden shared the suspense. These were followed by a personal call from the Emperor Charles asking if the Romanian army had crossed over yet.³⁶ Telephone reports from various sectors of the front conveyed the same message: inactivity and silence. At 1:00 P.M., Romanian artillery opened up "burying the hopes of the Central Powers."³⁷ Gerok's report of the failure was passed all up the line.³⁸

For Alexandru Sturdza, February 11 was an emotional time; he was forced to come to terms with a "crude deception." His plan had failed; not a single soldier had responded to his appeal. Troubled, he attributed the failure solely to the Russians, concluding that they had discovered everything and arrested Crăiniceanu.³⁹ Returning to General Ruiz's headquarters at Putna from the German front line positions at Soveja,

Sturdza bravely announced "We have returned with the action a failure, but I have not lost all hope and will initiate a second plan," that of organizing a volunteer corps from among Romanian prisoners found in the camps of the Central Powers. At the dinner table that evening, General Ruiz attempted to console him, though ironically: "Now, Colonel Sturdza, you will win a high post in Bucharest alongside General Mackensen." Sturdza replied indignantly that he had acted, not out of desire to better his position, but to save his country. Observers wondered what was going on in his mind as he sat at the table quietly, speaking little, "His bridges burned behind him and before him a great unknown."⁴⁰

Footnotes

¹K.A. (Vienna), Heeresfrontkmdo Erzherzog Joseph, Fasz. 77, Kriegstagebücher I II bis 31 III 1917, entry 6 February 1917; Kapri, p. 7.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

³*Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 12. "Bericht," 9 February 1917, Nachlass Gerok.

⁸Kapri, pp. 12-13.

⁹K.A. (Vienna), Heeresfrontkmdo Joseph, Lagemeldungen, Fasz. 35, Morgenmeldung Gruppe Ruiz, 6 February; Kapri p. 14.

¹⁰"Bericht," 9 February 1917, Nachlass Gerok.

¹¹See the prisoner debriefings in K.A. (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz. 117/23, 1st Armeekmdo to A.O.K., 10 January 1917, 3 March 1917.

¹²Kapri, pp. 18-19.

¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴Gruppe Gerok to A.O.K. and O.H.L., 7 February 1917, K.A. (Vienna), Heeresfrontkmdo Joseph, Operationen, Fasz. 66; Kriegstagebücher I I bis 31 II 1917, *ibid.*; "Bericht," 9 February 1917, Nachlass Gerok.

¹⁵Kapri, p. 19, 45.

¹⁶A.O.K. to Joseph, 7, 9 February 1917, K.A. (Vienna), Heeresfrontkmdo Joseph Fasz. 66.

¹⁷Kapri, 19. Distribution by airplane was also considered but does not appear to have been carried out. A.O.K. to Joseph, 10 February 1917, K.A., Heeresfrontkmdo Joseph, Fasz. 66; Kapri, pp. 20-23.

¹⁸Kapri, p. 26. Kapri's account is supported in great detail by Romanian debriefing of these volunteers after their mission had been completed. Chauveau to Albiat, 29/11 February, A.G. (Vincennes), 17 N 541; Pétin to Guerre, Rapport Nr. 9, 2/15 February, *ibid.*, 16 N 2994.

¹⁹Randa was then chief of the operations bureau of the 1st Austro-Hungarian army. A landowner in Bukovina, Randa became a Romanian citizen after the war.

²⁰See the evaluation by Randa in K.A. (Vienna) Heeresfrontkmdo Joseph, Fasz. 77, Kriegstagebücher I II bis. 31 III, 1917, 9 February 1917.

²¹Neagu, *Fapte din umbra*, p. 97; Legros to Marchal, 29/11 February, A.G., 17 N 541; Kapri, pp. 22-23. Sturdza earlier had given detailed information about Romanian-Russian troop depositions and intentions. How valuable this was is questionable as Sturdza repeated hearsay information from Russian officers about an attack planned for February 13. General Gerok instituted special intelligence inquiries and requested reinforcements but no attack materialized. K.A. (Vienna) Heeresfrontkmdo Joseph, Fasz. 77, Kriegstagebücher, 8/9 February 1917.

²²On Crăiniceanu's reporting from Salonika see Glenn Torrey, "Romania and the Belligerents 1914-1918: Some Observations on the Sarrail Offensive Salonika, August, 1916," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, vol. 14 (1975), Nr. 1, p. 63. See also Duca, II, p. 132.

²³According to depositions presented at his trial. A.G., 17 N 541, "Proces Sturdza-Crăiniceanu," Dabija, *Armata română în războiul mondial 1916-1918*, vol. III, p. 596.

²⁴Neagu, *Fapte din umbra*, p. 91; K.A. (Vienna) Heeresfrontkmdo Joseph, Fasz. 66, Operationen I II bis 15 II 1917; Kapri, p. 23. Crăiniceanu denied at his trial that he had any such discussions with Sturdza but had only agreed to meet him on February 10. A.S. (Bucharest) Fond Sturdza.

²⁵This account is based not only on Kapri (pp. 26-27), but on information that came out as a result of Crăiniceanu's arrest and trial. A.S. (Bucharest), Fond Sturdza.

²⁶R. Scărișorianu, *Fragmente din războiul 1916-1918* (Bucharest 1932), pp. 196-202.

²⁷Averescu, p. 130.

²⁸Kapri, p. 26.

²⁹Gruppe Gerok to Heeresfrontkmdo, 9 February 1917, Nachlass Gerok; Order of the Day, 11 February 1917, 7th Austro-Hungarian Cavalry Brigade (reproduced in Kapri, pp. 32-33).

³⁰The following paragraph is based on: Report of 218th German Infantry Division, 16 February 1917 (reproduced in Kapri, pp. 32-34); Lt. Chauveau to Albiat, 29/11 February 1917; Legros to Marchal, 19/11 February 1917; Landrot to Berthelot, 1/14 February 1917, A.G. (Vincennes) 17 N 541.

³¹K.A. (Vienna), 1st Kavalrie Division, Fasz. 60, 1917 Ops., 12 February 1917.

³²Scărișorionu, *Fragmente*, p. 205; Landrot to Berthelot, 1/14 February 1917, A.G. (Vincennes) 17 N 541.

³³Report of 218th Germany Infantry Division (Kapri, pp. 32-34).

³⁴K.A. (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo, Fasz. 123, 19 February 1917.

³⁵Kapri, p. 27.

³⁶*Ibid.*

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 28.

³⁸Gruppe Gerok, Abendmeldung, 11 February, K.A. (Vienna) Heeresfrontkmdo Joseph, Lagemeldungen, Fasz. 35.

³⁹Kapri, p. 17.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

APPEAL!

I, Colonel Alexandru D. Sturdza, with whom you have fought side by side, send to you the following message:

At the head of you, I wish to make a new army, well equipped with war machines and well led by brave leaders. With it, I wish to save what has been lost, to chase from the country the Russian plunderers, and to make more rapid a return to our homes. We will be aided in this by 200,000 Romanian prisoners which will be released to me.

You must decide quickly, because this is really how things now stand:

Our country and army has lost its way under the incapable leadership of some weak persons; two-thirds of her territory has been lost. The other one-third is being looted by the Russians; they ridicule our officers, soldiers and unfortunate citizens. They violate our innocent women; they steal the last cattle we have; and they prevent us from working the soil. The wealth of the country is wasted and embezzled. If we do not act now we will die of hunger along with our children and relatives. Exile is prepared for us in a wicked foreign land: it is said that our army is to cross the Prut, as the government flees disgracefully to Cherson in Russia, while the rich are helped to be placed in separate Russian cities, enslaved by oppressive laws.

You were deceived by the powerful, through delusive words about a national ideal; you have seen how this ideal has fallen because of their recklessness and knavery. Awake and no longer believe the lies which they tell you! The victory of the Russians will not save us because it will not happen. Scorn those who persist in tying your fate to a foreign army, which nowhere succeeds in being victorious. Better for us to go with the few who are worthy, honest and strong.

Abandon these who have lied to you cruelly! You have sworn fidelity to the Romanian lands, but not to some villains who lead you to ruin.

If you have faith in your arms, in reason, and my advice, come at once to me. I await you in the Vrancea mountains. You will receive a sign from me. Our prisoners will be liberated. All is prepared. With them we will form a new army and, with the help of God, we will bravely retake what was lost. Also we will reintegrate what was destroyed and we will drive out forever the villains who have brought us to today's state of affairs.

Pass to me without delay, with [your] guns along with everyone else.

We will save Romania. God will bless our action.

Colonel Alexandru D. Sturdza

*Kapri, p. 21.

Reaction in the Romanian Camp

Meanwhile, in the Romanian camp turmoil reigned. Initial reports that Sturdza had deserted were met with universal disbelief. Even a bitter political enemy could say: "That he should betray his country, he, a man who his entire life has personified honesty and moral scrupulousness ... this is not possible, not possible, it is a mistake"¹ In an emotional cabinet meeting, several ministers dismissed these "rumors" as "infamy." One, to whom Sturdza was related, became enraged, taking it as a personal attack on his family.² King Ferdinand was visibly shaken and Queen Marie simply refused to accept it.³ General Mannerheim, in Petrograd for reassignment, expressed disbelief when informed by the Tsarina.⁴ A number of Romanian officers at first refused to believe the person in question was Sturdza, suggesting that a German was impersonating him.⁵ But irrefutable evidence was in the hands of the military investigators: Sturdza's journal and other contents of his valise found on his orderly's body.⁶

The military authorities, after learning of Crăiniceanu's meeting with Sturdza in no-mans-land, decided to try to entrap the latter through another rendezvous. On February 20, they sent a note to the German lines, ostensibly from a Captain Balauta of the 65th Romanian Infantry who wrote that Sturdza's manifesto had "awakened the spirit of reality in the souls of those who have understood you There are many, very many, here who adhere to the same ideas." Alleging there were some officers who were undecided or had questions, Balauta suggested a personal meeting with Sturdza at a specific time and place on February 28.⁷ Sturdza, however, had already left the front and was enroute to Vienna and Frankfurt to meet with the leaders of the Central Powers. While the contents of this letter were being forwarded to Sturdza, A.O.K. Baden ordered an unmarked, unsigned note sent to the Romanian lines telling of Sturdza's absence but affirming that he would be informed.⁸

Sturdza hurried back from Germany even though he had little faith that Balauta's letter was sincere. He kept the appointment at the designated place at 10:00 A.M., February 28, accompanied by a minimum number of German and Austrian officers. He had changed from his Romanian *căciula* to an Austrian hat so he could not be singled out by Romanian sharpshooters. For over two hours he carried on a further exchange of notes with Balauta, who persisted in his attempt to lure Sturdza into the Romanian positions with verbal blandishments: "Since your letter, great progress has been made"; "I have prepared everything"; "The officers of this sector are with me; We must have a conversation with you"; "We must decide on all details"; "There are many of us, but few idealists such as I";

decide on all details"; "There are many of us, but few idealists such as I"; "Some must be bought with money because such is the Romanian." Balauta promised that if Sturdza would come, his plan would rapidly unfold and the whole front from Oituz to Focșani would be affected. A postscript stated that some Romanian officers did not really believe that Sturdza was present and asked for immediate confirmation.⁹

Sturdza, angered at the reference to money in Balauta's letter, termed it "shameful" to speak of money when a great national action was in question. Seeing three Romanian officers in the Romanian positions about 150 yards away, Sturdza climbed onto the parapet of the German trenches so they could identify him, especially as he wore a Romanian uniform. Recognizing one of the officers as the one who had written the letter, he cried out with a loud voice, "Captain Balauta, I am here, I, Colonel Sturdza." The Romanian officers did not respond and instead they retreated.

Sturdza now sent a written invitation for Balauta to join him. Balauta countered with a plea that Sturdza join him--and other officers--among whom were Sturdza's former students who "await details over your action." Sturdza replied, again asking them to come to him as he was forbidden to leave the German lines. After another letter from Balauta who expressed fear of what would happen if he left the Romanian lines, Sturdza wrote a sharply worded reply which chided Balauta for mentioning money ("I was shamed before foreign officers who read the letter"), and exhorted him to act courageously if, in fact, he believed in Sturdza's action. "Either come to me or terminate this correspondence." No further answer came and a shower of Romanian artillery shells ended the exchange.¹⁰

Although Sturdza's action failed to induce desertions from the Romanian army, it did cause widespread apprehension in the military and political leadership in Romania because of his prominence in Romanian society, his popularity with the troops, and their dissatisfaction with the poor conditions under which they lived and fought. These were, by unanimous agreement of Romanian and non-Romanian sources, very bad. Food was in short supply as a million Russian troops and almost as many civilian refugees competed with the Romanian army and local citizens for the meager resources of Moldavia. Clothing was inadequate. Cold temperatures down to -17°C, snow up to one meter deep, rain and fog, compounded by alternate freezing and thawing made living conditions miserable. Typhus and other diseases were rampant.¹¹

Interrogation of Romanian prisoners confirmed this picture.¹² "Black misery" was the way General Berthelot described it; "Deplorable," General Averescu agreed.¹³ Also, many men shared Colonel Sturdza's hatred of the Russians, especially their "plundering and destruction."¹⁴ A

few had sympathy for him personally. One deserter later told Austrian interrogators that Sturdza was "no ordinary deserter, but that he had despaired and wanted to save the country Part of the men condemn Colonel Sturdza, part say he did right."¹⁵ Even a loyal captain, writing in his diary on 15/28 March 1917 reveals that despite official efforts to discourage it there was much discussion about Sturdza's action. The captain felt Sturdza was sincere in believing he was serving his country but disapproved of his negotiations with the enemy.¹⁶ There was much discontent among civilians as well and some were seeking ways to flee the country. Even before news of Sturdza's action spread, the Italian minister reported the internal situation grave, one in which "many Romanians from leading families ... have deserted."¹⁷

On the other hand, there appears to have been little danger of widespread disaffection in the ranks of the Romanian army. Most Romanian soldiers were committed to holding the front and defending their homeland. "With all this [suffering]," one wrote on March 16, "nothing will impede us to do our duty in any conditions and at any price."¹⁸ The Romanian soldier's willingness to endure evoked admiration: as one commander has put it, "their loyalty under these conditions was 'truly' amazing." Reports from French liaison officers were in agreement that wholesale desertion was not imminent.¹⁹ Colonel Pétin, acting head of the French military mission while Berthelot was temporarily away in Russia, warned that the Sturdza incident should not be exaggerated:

It should not be inferred from this sad incident that the Romanian army intends to pass to the enemy. Certainly the desertions are numerous, resulting from the misery, but the massive sentiment of the army is pro-Entente.²⁰

But not all of Romania's allies shared the optimism of the French military mission about the loyalty of the Romanian army. The Russians were quick to see in the Sturdza incident proof of the unreliability of the Romanians and the presence of a "dangerous" Germanophile current there. Serious military action on the Romanian front had to be excluded in this atmosphere of "spies and traitors."²¹ Sturdza's defection also seemed to lend new credence to the longstanding Russian demand that large portions of the Romanian army be withdrawn into Russia. Likewise, the British and even some French leaders in Paris were encouraged by the Sturdza affair to support temporarily the Russian viewpoint.²² Berthelot felt it necessary to challenge sharply these conclusions: "It would be an error to conclude from the isolated case of the Sturdza defection that Germanophile ideas have overrun the Romanian army; that the latter are ready for defection."²³

Romanian authorities took immediate steps to improve the living conditions and morale of the troops²⁴ and Averescu, who saw the Russians in a better light than most, issued instructions that his officers do their best to improve relations with their allies.²⁵ Measures were taken to banish any thoughts of desertion. Orthodox priests visited the front and exhorted the men with patriotic appeals. At the same times extensive positive coverage was given to acts of heroism. The tone and content of the official newspaper of the Romanian General Staff, *România*, were increasingly aimed at discouraging desertions, printing articles describing deplorable conditions in the prison camps of the Central Powers, denouncing treason and appealing for patriotism.²⁶ The Romanian government also soon took steps to improve the long range hopes of their troops by promising them land and the vote.²⁷

At the same time, draconian measures were taken against real or suspected sources of disaffection. One colonel and two lieutenant colonels were put on inactive service because of their close association with Sturdza.²⁸ Mixed Brigade No. 7 was taken from the front and later disbanded.²⁹ Men who had discussed contents of the Sturdza manifesto were sent before courts martial.³⁰ The trial of General Alexander Socec, who had shown cowardice on the field of battle in December, was brought to a swift conclusion with the defendant publicly degraded and sentenced to five years hard labor.³¹ Later, two lieutenant colonels and one major were sentenced to death for "leaving their posts and capitulating on the field of battle." These trials were given vivid coverage in the press.³² Several other officers were kept under surveillance. Suspicion reached ever higher. Averescu privately labeled Sturdza and Crăiniceanu as "heroes" of General Grigorescu.³³ General Christescu felt it necessary to defend himself against the insinuations (in Sturdza's captured journal) that he had approved of Sturdza's intention to disobey if ordered to take his troops across the Prut.³⁴

Sturdza, Wachmann, and Crăiniceanu along with two other soldiers who had participated in their action were quickly tried. As General Grigorescu put it, speedy judgment was necessary so as to constitute "a horrible example which would put a brake on (if not extinguish completely) tendencies to treason which exist in the ranks."³⁵ At the trials, held early in March, Sturdza and Wachmann were judged in absentia, so only Crăiniceanu could be personally interrogated. He maintained a subdued attitude throughout the proceedings, denying that he had any prior arrangement with Sturdza at Wachmann. He had gone to the German lines simply to find out "what they were up to" and then to report to his superiors. The French observer at the trial characterized his defense, as "lamentable ... the attitude of a child who promises not to do it again."³⁶ No witnesses were presented for the defense but only depositions which

described him as an officer of valor. The defense spoke of a mental lapse. The point was made that he had not distributed any of the manifestoes and therefore could not be guilty of incitement to desertion. The prosecutor, on the other hand, presented 20 witnesses and read from Crăiniceanu's personal journal which was filled with "admiration for Germany." The summation by the prosecutor stressed the disgrace to the Romanian army and the need to deter similar crimes.³⁷

The jury deliberated for over three hours which signaled some disagreement on Crăiniceanu. When the verdicts were announced for all three men, there was "stupification" in the hall. Whereas Sturdza and Wachmann were condemned to death as expected, Crăiniceanu was given only 15 years at hard labor on the basis that he had not yet actually commenced incitement to desertion. Of the two enlisted men, one was sentenced to death, the other to two years imprisonment.³⁸ Crăiniceanu's verdict on caused a negative reaction throughout the army. As a company-grade officer in the field commented in his diary, "Everybody finds that it is too light."³⁹ Cynics charged that his sentence was due to his being the son of General Crăiniceanu and the nephew of General Prezan.⁴⁰ Turkish justice it was called.⁴¹

General Averescu was furious, terming the result "shocking." "The trial must absolutely be re-examined, because it is truly illogical, due to the fact that an enlisted man, who accompanied him, was condemned to death," while Crăiniceanu escaped with his life.⁴² In the face of a possible scandal, the Royal Commissioner at the trial now turned the case over to General Averescu directly. He in turn called in General Crăiniceanu to help arrive at the most "proper" resolution of the case. Averescu thought Crăiniceanu would prefer to convince his son to shoot himself rather than be condemned. However, the father responded that there could be no hesitation in deciding between fatherland and family.⁴³ As a consequence the younger Crăiniceanu was tried again and condemned to death. He was shot on Easter Friday, in front of the regiment which he had commanded, by a platoon of soldiers representing all its sub-units. It is said he died bravely, refusing a blindfold, asking to kiss the Romanian flag, and awaiting death quietly.⁴⁴

Footnotes

¹Duca, II, pp. 130-131.

²Duca, II, p. 131.

³Marie, Queen of Romania, *Ordeal: The Story of My Life* (New York, 1935), pp. 131-132.

⁴J.E.O. Screen, *Mannerheim, The Years of Preparation* (London, 1970), p. 112.

⁵Lt. Chauveau to Albiat, 29/11 February 1917, A.G., 17 N 541, (Vincennes).

⁶A.S. (Bucharest), Fond Casa Regală, Marie, "Memorii," vol. 107, 2/15 March 1917. Wachmann commented later to a politician in Bucharest about the journal falling into Romanian hands. "This was a great imprudence on our part." A. Marghiloman, *Note politice*, vol. III (Bucharest, 1927), p. 91.

⁷Kapri, p. 37.

⁸K.A. (Vienna), 20 February, Heeresfrontkmdo Joseph, Ops. Akten; Heeresfrontkmdo Joseph to Gruppe Gerok ops. 912.

⁹Kapri, p. 38.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 39-41.

¹¹Scărișorionu, *Fragmente*, pp. 194, 206; Averescu, pp. 134-35; Barclay to F.O., 4 March, P.R.O./F.O. 371/2873.

¹²Kriegsarchiv (Munich), Alpen Korps, Band 176 I (5), 15, 19, 24, 27, 28 February 1917; K.A. (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo Fasz. 23, 3/16 March.

¹³Glenn Torrey, *General Henri Berthelot and Romania 1916-1919: Mémoires et Correspondance* (Boulder/New York, 1987), p. 53; Averescu, p. 132.

¹⁴K.A. (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo Fasz. 88, 10 January; Fasz. 123, 15, 16 January. See also the abundant French testimony to the bad blood between the Russians and Romanians. Notes du Capitaine de Maleissye 15/28 March 1917, A.G. (Vincennes), 5 N 118 (reproduced in 1918 *La Români: Documente externe 1916-1918*, vol. II (Bucharest, 1983), no. 277.

¹⁵K.A.(Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo Fasz. 123, 12 June 1917.

¹⁶Lt. Colonel Sterea Costescu, *Din carnetul unui căpitan: Insemnări și amintiri din războiul pentru întregirea neamului 1 August 1916-1 April 1917* (Focșani, 1927), pp. 216-217.

¹⁷Fasciotti to Sonnino, 8 February 1917, *I Documente Diplomatici Italiani*, Quinta Serie 1914-1918 (Rome, 1978), vol. VII.

¹⁸St. C. Petrovici to A.C. Cuza, 3/16 March 1917, B.A. (Bucharest), Fond. A.C. Cuza.

¹⁹Lt. Colonel Albiat, Bordereau d'envoi 1st Infantry Division, 30/12 February; Hucher to Berthelot, 7/20 February 1917, A.G. (Vincennes), 17 N 541.

²⁰Pétin to St. Aulaire, 1/15 February 1917; *ibid.* Some Romanians believed that if Sturdza had taken his brigade over, things would have been critical. Octavian Goga to Hortense Goga, 23/8 March 1917, B.A. (Bucharest), Corespondența Goga.

²¹Pokrovskii to Alekseev, 17 February 1917, Arhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossii (A.V.P.R.) (Moscow), fond 133 (1917); Fasciotti to Sonnino, 19 February 1917, Archivio Storico (Rome), vol. 456; Janin to Guerre, 10 March 1917, A.G. (Vincennes), 5 N 143.

²²See Torrey, "The Reorganization of the Romanian Front, 1916-1917." Thus, ironically, Sturdza's act lent impetus to what he feared most.

²³Berthelot to Guerre, 5 April 1917, A.G. (Vincennes), 16 N 2994. But evacuation itself would trigger mass desertions, the Romanians and Berthelot insisted. Torrey, "The Reorganization of the Romanian Front," pp. 60-62.

²⁴Averescu, pp. 132-136.

²⁵Averescu to Mardarescu c. 1 March 1917, A.G. (Vincennes), 17 N 541; Averescu, p. 388.

²⁶Romania, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17, 19, 23, 24, 26 February 1917; Prisoner interrogation, K.A. (Vienna), 1st Armeekmdo Fasz. 123. Although the outbreak of the Russian Revolution most certainly precipitated the Romanian government to announce reform, a more important reason was morale of troops at the front. See Duca, II, p. 164.

²⁷Berthelot to Guerre, 5 April 1917, A.G. (Vincennes), 16 N 2994.

²⁸Averescu to MCG, 3/16 March 1917; Marele Stat Major to MCG, 18/31 March 1917, B.A. (Bucharest), Fond Kirileanu.

²⁹G.A. Dabija, *Armata română în războiul mondial 1916-1918*, vol. IV (Bucharest, 1936), pp. 12-13.

³⁰Neagu, *Fapte din umbra*, p. 94.

³¹See the French report of the trial, Pétin to Guerre, Rapport no. 9, 2/15 February 1917, A.G. (Vincennes), 16 N 2994; Duca, II, p. 130.

³²România, 3/16 February, 4/17 May 1917.

³³Averescu, p. 129.

³⁴Christescu to Prezan, 30/12 April 1917, A.S. (Bucharest), Fond Casa Regală, 74/1917.

³⁵Grigorescu to Averescu, 3/16 February 1917, quoted in Neagu, *Fapte din umbră*, p. 94.

³⁶See the detailed report by a French observer, "Procés Sturdza - Crăiniceanu, Seances des 9, 10, 11 Mars 1917," A.G. (Vincennes), 17 N 541. Crăiniceanu stressed his naiveté. See A.S. (Bucharest), Fond Sturdza, for the notebooks of Crăiniceanu's interrogation.

³⁷*Ibid.*

³⁸*Ibid.*

³⁹George Mavrodi, "Notes et souvenirs de ma vie" (unpublished manuscript in possession of family), p. 40.

⁴⁰Duca, II, p. 132.

⁴¹Neagu, *Fapte din umbra*, p. 96.

⁴²Averescu, *Notițe zilnice*, p. 137.

⁴³"Procés Sturdza - Crăiniceanu," A.G. (Vincennes), 17 N 541.

⁴⁴Duca, II, p. 132. Duca says that Prezan pressed for the death sentence for his nephew and personally signed the warrant.

Upon his failure to induce desertion from the Romanian army, Colonel Alexandru Sturdza next turned his attention to the second part of his plan, the recruitment of a Romanian legion from the prisoner of war camps of the Central Powers. More than 100,000 Romanian soldiers were being held in Germany and Austria at Dänholm, Schwarmstedt, Lamsdorf, Stralsund, and Krefeld, among others.¹ In mid-February, Sturdza succeeded in interesting General Hans von Seekt, German chief of staff to Archduke Joseph, commander of the eastern front, in his plan and left for Germany to seek additional support.² Passing through Vienna, Sturdza was told not to travel in a Romanian uniform, so upon arriving at the Habsburg capital he outfitted himself in civilian dress at a fashionable shop, Rothbergers on Stephen's Platz. He had an audience with Foreign Minister Count Ottokar Czernin but refused a luncheon in his honor.³

From Vienna, Sturdza intended to travel to Germany but the Balauta letter interrupted his plans enroute. After returning briefly to Romania to meet with Captain Balauta, Sturdza continued on to Germany to seek cooperation in his plan to raise a Romanian army from among prisoners of war in the camps of the Central Powers as well as from free Romanians in German-occupied Wallachia. Although Sturdza made a "good impression" on Ludendorff, the O.H.L. delayed making any commitments until they had a chance to query Field Marshal August von Mackensen and the military government in Bucharest.⁴

Sturdza also wrote to his father-in-law, Petre Carp, through German diplomatic mail, to see if he was ready to launch his "political and economic reorganization" of Romania at the same time.⁵ Carp had been the most outspoken proponent of a "staatsstreich" or "coup d'état" in which the politicians in Bucharest would declare King Ferdinand deposed and form a new government to sign peace and align Romania once again with the Central Powers. The Germans were attentive to Carp's action as he favored orienting Romania toward Germany rather than Austria-Hungary. Throughout most of 1917, they attempted to create behind Carp a coalition of other prominent Bucharest politicians, especially Titu Maiorescu and Alexandru Marghiloman. The latter two had reservations, however. Except in the case where the King would desert Romanian soil, they were opposed to overturning the dynasty. Furthermore, they desired to nurture relations with Austria-Hungary as a counter-weight to German dominance. In any case they would not act until and unless the Central Powers conquered Moldavia.⁶

Sturdza's connection with these Bucharest leaders *before* his defection is unclear. No direct evidence has come to light indicating prior collusion between him and Carp or any other politician in Bucharest. But it was unlikely that Sturdza had not been influenced by his father-in-law's point of view. It is also obvious that Sturdza's military scheme implied a political *coup d'état*.⁷ But Carp was now mainly afraid that cooperation with Sturdza would compromise his own political plans and refused any connection with him. He even opposed Sturdza's return to Romania allegedly for fear of the latter's safety.⁸

Sturdza received little encouragement from the Germans either. Mackensen was negative to the idea of Sturdza's *Freicorps*:

According to the opinion of O.K.M. [Oberkommando Mackensen], the A.O.K. 9th [Army] and the M.V.R. [Militär Verwaltung Rumänien], the creation of a reliable Romanian army on the precondition of a connection with a new Romanian state cannot be counted on for the time being. The attempt would doubtless fail even if it [the army] were sent to another front. The mass of the people have no desire for war, certainly not on our side. Among the population hardly any suitable soldier material can be found A necessary precondition of an army, reliable leaders, is seen from here as doubtful. The Romanian officers in Germany might be offered. Prisoners remaining here [in Wallachia] are mostly in hospitals or quarantine camps. Apart from this there is the manpower of prisoners and the necessity of developing agriculture. If it is carried out, the economic exploitation of Romania would be excluded.

Ludendorff, who was obsessed with exploiting Romania's riches, "completely agreed" that the utilization of Romania would not permit the formation of such an army. But he did secure the approval of the O.K.M. for Sturdza's return to Romania as a private person.⁹ In connection with this plan, Sturdza also made two trips to Berlin to meet with Foreign Secretary Hilmar von dem Bussche, former German minister in Bucharest, with Constantin Stere, a Romanian politician from Bucharest, and with Alexandru Beldiman, former Romanian minister in Berlin who was actively promoting the Carp faction's policies.¹⁰

Although not allowed to form a Romanian "Army of Liberation," Sturdza was given free access to the prison camps. During the spring of 1917 he and Wachmann visited a number of these, although hostility of prisoners kept Sturdza out of some and Wachmann incognito in others.¹¹ Denied the opportunity to recruit a mass force, Sturdza concentrated on wooing the officers, especially at Krefeld where some 700-800 were held prisoner. He offered them not service in a Romanian army of liberation but repatriation to Romania to contribute with him to the rebuilding of Romania under German *aegis*. Instead of military positions he offered them the

opportunity for "useful services" in Romania, that is, jobs in the Romanian bureaucracy under the German occupation regime.

According to an eyewitness,¹² Wachmann arrived at one camp late in February 1917 with three other Romanian officers and was given special treatment by the camp commandant. Two days later Sturdza arrived and presented his appeal with "much tact and foresight to the assembled officers." He presented a fearful picture of Russian mistreatment of Romanians in Moldavia, of incompetent Romanian military leaders, of the failure of the government and king, and of the loss of the war. Nothing remained, he argued, but for everyone to return to occupied Romania with the agreement and friendship of the Germans in order to reestablish at least there "the normal life of our poor people." He promised jobs in the civil administration which, he warned, if not filled by Romanians, would be given to Bulgars, Turks, and black French Senegalese prisoners. Sturdza also strongly emphasized love of country and love of family as motives for going, stressing the need to heal the wounds of the nation. According to one inmate at another camp, Sturdza advocated the replacement of Brătianu, the overturn of the dynasty and the founding of a republic.¹³ In addition to Sturdza's appeals, in the weeks that followed more lectures and discussions were arranged, at which Wachmann and other Romanian officers presided. Excursions to nearby factories, businesses, and farms were arranged in order to illustrate German superiority.¹⁴ Most of the Romanian officers refused to have anything to do with Sturdza, but a number cooperated and led study groups dealing with various aspects of the "reformation" of Romania (economic, constitutional, legal, educational). A few eagerly accepted Sturdza's offer immediately. Others openly opposed him. Sturdza's visits touched off a prolonged conflict at the camps. Two very pronounced groups now appeared, "the traitors" and the anti-Sturdza federation. The atmosphere became so passionate that the German camp commandant had to intervene frequently to restore order.¹⁵ One repatriate later complained that whereas before Sturdza's arrival they had lived "quietly, morally contented," afterward there was "division, suspicion and accusation." Even though living under poor conditions and anxious to return home, only a relatively few responded to Sturdza's offer, and some of those that did appear to have been motivated by purely personal reasons.

One who did said that he accepted Sturdza's offer only because his father had died in Bucharest.¹⁶

Sturdza and those who did return with him, a group of about 50 in July and another 130 in September, found life in occupied Romania far from easy. Conditions of their release obligated them to refuse to take part in any action or statements hostile to the Central Powers under penalty of death, not to engage in politics, and not to change residence without first

notifying the occupation authorities. Other stipulations, in a "declaration" by these officers obligated the German government to utilize their abilities, and if, at the signing of peace, they were forced to leave their homeland, provide an occupation in one of the countries of the Central Powers and a pension for their families.¹⁷

Disillusionment awaited the repatriates at home-coming. After a day in a hotel in Bucharest they were taken to various locations: Buftea, Mogoșoaia, and later Pitești. Discord surfaced repeatedly. As many were destitute, a collection was taken for them at the Jockey Club.¹⁸ In the end, only a few received jobs in the Romanian bureaucracy. One served as an interpreter for the regional German occupation authorities, others were forced to accept menial jobs which they felt were beneath their dignity.¹⁹ Most simply returned to their homes and professions. This led to a decision to repatriate others only if a positions were available. Wachmann was installed as a director of the state bank by German fiat after the Romanian authorities had rejected him as a "deserter."²⁰ Socially, he was insulted.²¹ This rejection seems to have been a common experience for the repatriates. As one confessed: "I was ashamed to show myself. We are suspect to everyone."²²

Sturdza's return to Bucharest was equally disappointing for him personally. His father-in-law avoided contact and never publicly endorsed his action. Even his brothers-in-law hesitated to meet with him. Sturdza generally stayed out of sight. Meeting Marghiloman by accident he apologized for not having paid him a visit sooner, adding: "I hope that you agree to all that is being done." Marghiloman responded evasively, "I know nothing and nothing has been told me." Later, when Sturdza did come to talk with Marghiloman he was full of disillusionment. He complained about the "indecision" of the Germans and the "intrigues" of the Romanians. He said he might retire to his rural home and "wait there until he was needed."²³

Lupu Kostake, the chief of the Romanian administration under the occupation, was one of the few who welcomed Sturdza. He let him stay at his house and gave him a sinecure as president of the Commission for the Inspection of Prices. Earlier Kostache had spoken of appointing Sturdza minister of war in a new ministry he hoped to head. Even the Germanophiles considered this ludicrous. Sturdza is a "traitor" one retorted.²⁴ But Kostache persisted in attempting to utilize Sturdza's repatriated officers to overturn the regime in Iași. Ten were recruited to go to the front where they would be used to indoctrinate recent Romanian prisoners to return through the lines to propagandize in the Romanian army. One who refused predicted to Marghiloman that those who did would be shot. The officers who did agree were to be paid 20 lei per day and have

privileges at the German officers' mess. Reportedly the German officers refused to eat with them.²⁵ A number of German and Austrian propaganda leaflets, which cannot be traced to Sturdza directly but bear evidence of his ideas, were prepared for distribution.²⁶

The best possible hope for Sturdza's future lay in the success of the German offensive against the Romanian army in July-August 1917, an offensive which was designed to complete what had not been accomplished in January--the occupation of Moldavia. The Romanian army also had planned a summer offensive in 1917 to be coordinated with the Russian "Kerensky offensive." But, when the latter broke down almost as soon as it started in Galicia, Petrograd ordered the Russian troops fighting in Romania to break off their attack as well. Deserted by its ally, the Romanians were forced to curtail their operation, which had won early success.

At this very moment, the Austro-German offensive began. The German field commander was General Kurt von Morgen; Marshal von Mackensen moved from Bucharest to Focșani to be near the action. The field marshal was optimistic and fully aware of the political significance of the operation. His staff was preparing to utilize Sturdza in an attempt to make peace contacts with Romanian generals (unauthorized by the government at Iași) if the offensive proved successful.²⁷ Sturdza followed the battle in Moldavia closely, clinging to each bit of news that would indicate a German victory and new life for his plan.²⁸ Instead the Romanian defeat of the enemy offensive in the crucial battles of Mărășești, Mărăști and Oituz spelled failure not only for the plans of the Central Powers but those of Sturdza and Carp as well.²⁹

This strong stand by the Romanian army in 1917 inclined the Germans to shift their support toward Marghiloman whose policy was negotiation with the legal Romanian government in Iași. The need, in this case, to reconcile with King Ferdinand and his government made Sturdza a liability to the Central Powers. Captain Horstmann, Mackensen's political advisor on Romanian affairs, reflected this shift in German policy. In the autumn of 1917, he warmed to the idea of peace negotiations which would allow the dynasty to continue and he was openly critical of Sturdza. His subsequent references to Sturdza were contemptuous,³⁰ illustrating Tacitus' conclusion: "Traitors are odious, even those I use."³¹

But the Bolshevik takeover in Petrograd in November gave one last hope to Sturdza. He and Wachmann revived the idea of creating a military force to conquer Moldavia and Bessarabia as well.³² However, Marghiloman termed this scheme a "monstrosity" and Horstmann vetoed a proposed trip to Berlin by Sturdza to discuss military preparations.³³ However, Sturdza was consulted by the Germans before they opened

armistice negotiations with Romania at Focșani (December, 1917). Wisely, he stood aloof from these talks and from the following peace negotiations at Buftea and Bucharest (February-March 1918).³⁴ The imminence of peace between the government in Iași and the Central Powers made Sturdza a growing embarrassment to the latter. Realizing this, he resigned from his sinecure in the occupation administration early in 1918.³⁵ As soldiers demobilized by the peace began returning from Moldavia,³⁶ Sturdza quickly became the target of their hostility. Prince Carol told Marghiloman that there was even the danger Sturdza would be assassinated.³⁷ Mackensen, himself, suggested to Sturdza that he leave Romania until a change of opinion set in. Consequently, he left for Germany on March 19, 1918.³⁸ He was never to see his homeland again.

Footnotes

¹Kirițescu III, pp. 267-270; A.S. (Bucharest), Fond Casa Regala, 52/1916, "Mémoire au sujet du ravitaillement des prisonniers roumains." This memorandum gives the figure of 168,000 as of 1 October 1917.

²Kapri, p. 36; Seeckt continued to see propaganda value in Sturdza long after his plan failed. Germany, Reichsarchiv, *Der Weltkrieg 1914-1918*, vol. XII (Berlin, 1939), p. 505.

³Kapri, p. 36.

⁴Lersner to A.A., 15 March 1917, A.A. (Bonn), G.H.Q., Rumanien no. 30f.

⁵Zimmerman to Ludendorff, 18 March 1917, *ibid.*

⁶A good summary of the attitudes and activity of the politicians at Bucharest is Victor Anastasiu, *et. al.*, *România in primul război mondial* (Bucharest, 1979), pp. 368-374. See also, "Staatsstreichplan Stourdza-Carp," 14 February 1917, H.H.St.A. (Vienna), P.A. I/Krieg 59i. On Marghiloman see, Glenn Torrey, "Alexandru Marghiloman of Romania: A Wartime Statesman" in Bela K. Kiraly, ed., *East European War Leaders: Civilian and Military* (New York, 1988), pp. 95-116.

⁷See, below, the details of the program Sturdza presented at the prisoners of war camps.

⁸Ludendorff to Bussche, 21 March 1917, A.A. (Bonn), Rumänien 30f.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰Sturdza to Beldiman, 22 February 1917, Lersner to Bussche, 15 March 1917, Bussche to Lersner, 14, 16 March 1917, A.A. (Bonn), Rumänien 30f.

¹¹Marghiloman, III, p. 92.

¹²Alex. Dăscălescu, *Jurnal-Operativ de pe câmpul de război* (Roman, 1925), pp. 62-63.

¹³Ionel Arifeanu, "Memoriu asupra activitatea d-lui Colonel Sturdza în captivitatea," A.S. (Bucharest), Fond Casa Regală, 74/1917.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵Dăscălescu, pp. 64-68.

¹⁶Marghiloman, III, p. 117.

¹⁷"Declarația Ofițerilor Români Eliberați," Biblioteca Centrală de Stat, Fond St. George; Abwehr to A.O.K., 9 September, 1917, H.H. St. A (Vienna), P.A. I Rot 1043; Marghiloman, III, p. 83. It is not clear what German sanction, if any, this declaration had.

¹⁸Konradshaim to Czernin, 16 August 1917; Abwehr to A.O.K., 9 September 1917; H.H.St.A. (Vienna), P.A. I Rot. 1043; Marghiloman, III, p. 83.

¹⁹Arifeanu, "Memoriu"

²⁰Marghiloman, III, p. 119.

²¹Arhibald, *Porcii: Impresii din timpul ocupației*, vol. II (Bucharest, 1921), p. 175.

²²Marghiloman, III, p. 117.

²³Marghiloman, III, p. 92.

²⁴Sturdza to Alexander Tzigara-Samurcaș, 10 August, 1917, A.S. (Bucharest) Fond Al. Tzigara-Samurcaș. Marghiloman, III, pp. 20-21, 88, 200.

²⁵Marghiloman, III, pp. 116-117, 166-167.

²⁶An Austrian memorandum suggests that Sturdza be used as an advisor in developing Romanian propaganda, K.A. (Vienna), Ops. Geheime Nr. 329, 30 June 1917. The Austro-Germans were most pleased, not with anything written by Sturdza, however, but with the appeal of an Orthodox clergyman, Metropolitan Dr. Kono A. Donici. For examples of these pamphlets as well as a copy of the Metropolitan's appeal, which castigated the Russians and offered deserters a chance to return home to Wallachia, see K.A. (Vienna), 1st Arneekmdo, Fasz. 145.

²⁷Von Lersner to Reichskanzler, 17 September 1917, Bundesarchiv (Koblenz), Akten des Reichkanzler.

²⁸Arhibald, II, pp. 325-330.

²⁹For the battles of 1917, see Ilie Ceaușescu, ed., *ARAPRM*, II, pp. 143-376 and Wilhelm Foerster, ed. August von Mackensen, *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* (Leipzig, 1938), pp. 335-337.

³⁰Marghiloman, III, pp. 90, 125, 157, 181, 200, 221-222.

³¹Neagu, "Fapte din umbra," p. 88.

³²Marghiloman, III, pp. 236-37.

³³Marghiloman, III, pp. 237-38.

³⁴K.A. (Vienna), Ops. nr. 28, c. 8 December 1917.

³⁵Sturdza to Kostache, 20 March 1918, Biblioteca Centrală de Stat, Secție de manuscrise, Fond. St. Georges.

³⁶Horstmann to A.A., 30 March 1918, "Archives of the German Foreign Ministry Filmed for St. Antony's College" [Hereinafter S.A.], reel 90.

³⁷Marghiloman, III, pp. 527-28.

³⁸Horstmann to A.A., 1 April 1918, S.A. 90.

The German government loyally insisted on the inclusion in the final draft of their peace treaty with Romania (May 1918) an amnesty clause which covered Alexandru Sturdza's case, among others. Though Alexandru Marghiloman (prime minister March-October 1918) was not enthusiastic about Sturdza's rehabilitation, he had a purged Romanian parliament pass the necessary legislation.¹ Sturdza's amnesty was short-lived, however, being overturned by the postwar Romanian government which proceeded to arrest and imprison even those guilty of less flagrant collaboration.² With time, however, most of the latter were freed and rehabilitated. But Sturdza's case was considered more serious because he had actively incited others to desert. In addition, he was under a second death sentence for "illegally" condemning a soldier to death in December.³ Finally, his hostility toward Brătianu who continued to dominate Romanian politics in the postwar decade and his demeaning comments about King Ferdinand in his captured wartime journal made Sturdza's rehabilitation impossible as long as these two men remained in power. Both died in 1927 but a pardon continued to elude Sturdza. In 1930, General Averescu met Sturdza in Ulm, Germany to discuss a possible amnesty. Averescu reportedly succeeded in getting the approval of the Romanian military, but in the end the political situation would not allow it.⁴ Sturdza remained an exile until his death in 1939.

Although rejected by the Romanians, Sturdza found acceptance in Germany, whose government felt "honor bound" to grant him refugee status.⁵ Initially he was aided by Alexander Beldiman, longtime Romanian minister in Berlin, who had opted for exile himself. He lived, for a time, in Beldiman's house in Charlottenburg or with a friend of Beldiman's in Thuringia.⁶ At one time he carried a German passport under the name Max Peters.⁷ In mid 1919, Elizabeth and the children joined him, even though she was under considerable family pressure to divorce him instead. The family settled in Munich where the children entered school.⁸ The realization that he could not return to his beloved homeland and the rejection by his people and even by most of his extended family created a situation with which Sturdza had to come to terms. Writing to a friend in 1921, he reflected on the reasoning he had followed in dealing with his personal tragedy.

... I am the slave of my convictions, granted that they took a form which led to a catastrophe for me [but] it seems to me on close inspection, then this either has a cause in me or is the result of superior will and logic

and may be only a passing misfortune; I do not know because I am not able to understand⁹

Although Sturdza's philosophical beliefs allowed him to come to terms eventually with his predicament, ahead lay 20 years of exile which were often lonely, always penurious. Included in his condemnation had been the forfeiture of his personal wealth. The estate at Grăiceanu that he inherited from his father was taken over by the state, eventually passing to the Romanian Academy.¹⁰ His wife's property which included the Carp estate at Tîbănești after her father's death in 1919, was the main source of family income. But this necessitated that Elizabeth spend summers in Romania managing the property, returning to Germany to be with her husband in the winter.¹¹ After 1930, their separation increased as her visits became less frequent.

Their three sons, Alexandru (Sandu), Dumitru, and Ion, lived with the father during their school days, but later returned to Romania for careers. During the 1920s, the family continued to reside in Munich, where Sturdza eventually found employment as a functionary with a Swiss bank.¹² His career significantly improved in 1930 when he accepted an invitation to teach German, French, and history at Schule Schloss Salem. This school had been founded in 1920 by Kurt Hahn, under the patronage of Prince Max of Baden, whose home in a former Cistercian Abbey near Lake Constance provided the space for the institution. The Salem school became one of the most prestigious in Germany and internationally famous under the inspired leadership of Hahn, who later went on to found the Gordonstoun School in Scotland and, still later, the pioneering Outward Bound movement in experiential education.¹³

Hahn, who studied several years at Oxford before the First World War, was employed 1914-1918 as an intelligence technician, first by the German Foreign Office and then by the German Supreme Command. It was probably in connection with this latter service that he first heard of Sturdza.¹⁴ On a broader political level Hahn was associated with a group of German politicians and intellectuals who sought to moderate German war aims and work for a negotiated peace. These men included Paul Rohrbach, Johannes Müller, Max Weber, and Prince Max. Hahn was especially close to the latter and when Max was appointed Chancellor of Germany to seek peace (October 1918), Hahn went with him as his private secretary. Most commentators credit Hahn with exerting an enormous influence on his patron.¹⁵ After his brief tenure in office, Prince Max retired to his home in Salem. In July 1919, he summoned Hahn and outlined his vision for a different type of school which would contribute to the regeneration of Germany and to international reconciliation.¹⁶ Hahn quickly agreed to head it and the school opened in 1920 with a handful of students.

As headmaster at Salem, Hahn introduced principles borrowed from Plato, from certain English public schools, and from German country schools (i.e. Hermann Lietz schools) which departed from the more narrow academic emphasis of the German school system. He emphasized non-competitive physical activities, democratic forms of social cooperation, and self-development. The latter included challenges in which the student should learn to experience failure as well as success, to prevail against adversity, to discipline his own needs and desires for the good of the community, and to practice periods of silence and introspection.¹⁷ It is easy to see why Sturdza could identify with the program at Salem which embodied so much of his own experience and inclination.

Although it is likely that Hahn had become aware of Sturdza during his wartime service, there were other links between Sturdza and Salem, including the historic connection between the Sturdza family and Baden.¹⁸ Sturdza's association with the school began with the fall term, 1930. His two youngest sons were enrolled then and Sturdza's letters speak of going daily to the school to talk with the professors whose company he enjoyed and to visit history and French classes. At this time or soon after he began to teach these subjects along with German. He was assigned to a second campus at nearby Spetzgart which stressed foreign languages in its curriculum. He seems to have been a dedicated teacher. A student from that era remembers him as "a quiet person looking like a retired cavalry officer and exuding culture."¹⁹ In addition to a higher status as a teacher, the intellectual atmosphere at Salem also provided an opportunity for Sturdza to lecture and to enter into dialogue on literary and philosophical themes with the circle of prominent figures who were associated with or who visited the school.²⁰

Sturdza's first years at Salem (1930-32) were the happiest, with his major concern being financial, as might be assumed for a teacher without independent means in depression Germany. The low cost of living in Salem allowed him to live modestly in two rooms and have a servant, whose lodging and meals were provided by the school. But even the purchase of a bicycle was a major problem for him, and for a time he wrote to his family on scraps of paper and the backs of old calendars. Almost every letter or postcard to his family then and for the remainder of his stay at Salem contains a request for money.²¹ After his sons left to return home or continue their education he was especially lonely.

But in 1933, with the accession of Hitler to power, the congenial intellectual atmosphere at Salem dramatically changed. Late in 1932, Hahn, reacting publicly against a particularly brutal act of political violence by the Nazi S.A., wrote the alumni of Salem: "Salem cannot remain neutral. I demand that members of the Salem Association who are in S.A. or S.S.

activities give up either their commitment to Hitler or to Salem."²² Among the first acts of the Nazi "*Gleichschaltung*" after the March 1933 elections was the arrest and imprisonment of Hahn, who, in addition to being an outspoken critic of Nazism, was Jewish. Through the intervention of the British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, Hahn was released from prison and allowed to emigrate to England, where he carried on his innovative style of education.²³ The arrest of Hahn signaled a great Nazi press campaign against Salem. The Baden government appointed the school director of nearby Überlingen, Johannes Müller, as a "kommissar" to investigate the complaints. Müller absolved the school of any "political intrigues."²⁴ Nevertheless, the problems of Salem continued.

Sturdza was very loyal to Hahn when the latter was arrested and felt apprehensive about his own position. Writing to his wife on April 24, 1933 he reported that Jews were being released from the teaching staff at Salem and added: "As a foreigner I do not know what this upsurge of nationalism will bring."²⁵ For almost a year, until a new and competent successor to Hahn was found, general disorder ruled at the school. Mistrust, breakdown of discipline, personal vendettas, and the appearance of a group of older students who had joined the Nazi S.A. contributed to chaos.²⁶

On May 19, 1933, Sturdza commented to his wife: "... with a half dozen directors the progress of the school is stumbling the majority of the children are Nazi with all the enthusiasm of youth." He observed,²⁷ with insight, that National Socialism

... is no longer a party; it is a formidable army which forms a national movement very powerful and very well led. I do not say this under censure; these are the actual facts. Students at Salem have demanded adherence, open and without restriction, to the national cause. For the moment, the insurrection has been calmed and they follow orders.

But students wrote to their parents asking why Sturdza, as a foreigner, was teaching German history. Consequently,

I presented my resignation as teacher of German and history ten days ago because it seems to me that in view of the current of nationalism these disciplines should be carried out by a German. But I continue until a replacement can be found. Although I share your judgement of the Nazis, they have not caused me any difficulty and my opinion of things has no need of being changed.

Commenting on Hitler's Reichstag speech of May 18, 1933, he

found that this recalled Bismarck. All the schools of the Reich have heard it. Think about the effect! I am curious about the reaction

abroad. The truth has been said and crudely; nothing remains but to misrepresent this speech in order that the larger public not understand that which has been said publicly and overtly for the first time. With us, I suppose one will say simply that it was an impertinence.²⁸

A few days later the Margrave Berthold, who had succeeded Prince Max, summoned the school and announced that the institution, following to the ideas and programs of the regime, had excluded professors and educators who were Jewish and that the school was absolutely forbidden to have any relationship with Kurt Hahn. "The School collaborates haltingly with the Nazi Youth," was the way Sturdza put it²⁹

Further insight into the situation at Salem comes from Prince Philip, the present Duke of Edinburgh, who became a student there during Sturdza's tenure through his connection with his sister, the wife of the Margrave.

Even as a 13 year old I was aware that tensions had begun to rise. The juniors' dormitory was under the charge of a much-liked senior and it came as a very nasty shock when we discovered that he had been "mugged" by a gang of Nazi sympathisers and had most of his hair cut off. It so happened that I had my Cheam Second XI Cricket cap with me and I lent it to him to cover the chopped remains of his hair.

Things got progressively worse after that. In the mornings we were all made to parade around a flag pole to watch the swastika flag being hoisted and to sing the Horst Wessel song while giving the Nazi salute. This struck me as ludicrously funny and I was not all that keen to cooperate. This was certainly rather foolhardy, but it never occurred to me that it might actually be dangerous and awkward for my sister and brother-in-law.

As their rooms were directly adjacent to the school, it was considered prudent for me to move into a room in their apartments for the rest of the term. I simply had to walk down the corridor and through a locked connecting door to get to the school.

Meanwhile the whole discipline of the school was breaking down, although the class-work and sports continued more or less unaffected. It was, however, noticeable that staff members suddenly disappeared from the scene without any explanation.³⁰

Departure of faculty provided an opportunity for Sturdza to move from the Spetzgart branch to Salem proper beginning with the autumn semester, 1933. But, the uproar at Salem caused many parents to withdraw their children and this decline in enrollment caused a severe financial crisis which threw into question Sturdza's ability to remain on the staff at all.³¹ But in the summer of 1934, he was invited back for another year and these renewals continued through 1938.

Sturdza's good fortune was the result of a stabilization of the situation at the school traceable primarily to the work of a new headmaster, Dr. Heinrich Blendinger. Because he was a member of the N.S.D.A.P., Blendinger had enough influence to protect Salem from the worst forms of political intervention. With a combination of tact, humor, discretion, and diplomacy he was able to balance the pressures from students and the government, and keep Salem functioning more or less smoothly until just before War II. In this he was aided by the efforts of the Margrave.³²

However, Sturdza's status was constantly in question and he had to be very circumspect. Beginning in January 1934, he made it a practice of crossing over Lake Constance into Switzerland frequently where he could send letters to his wife commenting openly about what was going on in Germany. Their tone differed markedly from the earlier letters from Salem quoted above. In January 1934, he remarked: "There it is not free and many Germans are being assassinated as in Soviet Russia." On his classes: "I just read from *Mein Kampf* and let it speak for itself." His analysis of the Nazi regime was mixed. "The future will show what this movement is: a great step forward toward a new more enlightened epoch of the organization of the state, or a dissolution and a complete degeneration of a corrupt bourgeois regime. It appears to me that the evolution will be toward the good My friends here are completely against any Hitler regime and condemn him totally"³³ According to Sturdza, Hahn, before he left, had told him: "We (that is Salem) will last longer than they (the Hitler regime)."³⁴

Although Sturdza remained at Salem, his continuing trouble is amply reflected in his letters. On March 27, 1936, during the surge of nationalism surrounding the Rhineland Crisis, he became the target of "*pronunciamento*" against him by the students, making him feel it "unnatural and unworthy" to appear before them in class. Nevertheless, his concept of service was such he did not intend to make an issue of it, but would "think over" what he would do to "endure my precarious situation."³⁵ The school was influenced not only by the students but also by the attitudes of the administrative officials in Karlsruhe who had to enforce the dictates of the Nazi regime. Nevertheless, there were those in the state educational hierarchy who sought to shield Salem and even Sturdza himself. *Ministerialrat* Kraft, in the Department of Religion and Education in Karlsruhe, who had a special concern for the school, also protected Sturdza's job, taking pity on his dire economic situation, despite the fact that Sturdza by formal education and age did not fit the Salem profile. Sturdza recognized and praised Kraft's solicitude.³⁶

Despite the ups and downs of these years, Sturdza could look back in June 1936 on his seven years at Salem with satisfaction. He had

triumphed over difficult conditions. He saw his work as being productive and interesting except for the last two. However, his health had suffered under "this time of anxiety and insecurity."³⁷ Believing that his situation (in Salem) could not be extended much longer, he considered another position as an assistant to Johannes Müller, the former government commissioner at Salem and the director of a retreat center for intellectuals at Elmau in Bavaria.³⁸ Although he would have no clearly defined activity at Elmau and tiny accommodations with little income, he would be free of the "troubles" at Salem. Also, he would enjoy "more contact, however, superficial, with men of importance" there. Yet he hated to break "the many good relationships I have in Salem." He clearly dreaded preparing for "this last phase of my life," in which the weeks of transition would be "troubled and inquiet."³⁹

Throughout this period, Sturdza maintained a deep concern for his family. There were difficulties. Dumitru suffered from a long term illness and apparently there was a temporary misunderstanding between the father and the third son, Ion. Nevertheless Sturdza wrote to his wife on the occasion of Ion's birthday: "September 9 is Ion's birthday ... greet him for me My love for him has not changed and I love him with the greatest love."⁴⁰ He asked Elizabeth to write him more often, "so that my dark days will be better lighted and that I will be more encouraged to face the unknown, the uncertain and the unfamiliar change."⁴¹ Their meetings became less frequent. When she traveled to Western Europe he sometimes lacked the money or the time free from Salem to meet her. He longed for more letters: October 28, 1937, "Dear Dud: I haven't heard from you for a long time and I hope that this silence does not hide anything but the result only of the quantity of your concerns and lack of time." A short time later in discussing their relationship he expressed a wish that she could come to Salem so that they could "have some quiet time together."⁴²

The move to Elmau failed to materialize and Sturdza reconciled himself to remaining at Salem. His superior at Karlsruhe (Kraft) had encouraged him to stay and Sturdza believed that "even in my weak position," he would be able to contribute to the students and professors given his "vast experience."⁴³ During 1936, he spoke of a "cabala" against him among "the women around the Margrave," but conversely toward the end of the year he believed the atmosphere at the school had improved again. The "cabala" had desisted and "the new director appears to be good. Order and happiness enter again in the institution." Even though his situation vis-a-vis the "Old Salem and the court of Baden had fallen," his position before the students, the professors, and the government at Karlsruhe had risen much, "an apparition of the old Salem."⁴⁴

But Sturdza was far from happy. He was having heart trouble (angina) and he was in "moral depression" about remaining at Salem. He wanted to travel but lacked funds. In December 1937, he "escaped" across Lake Constance to Winterthur, Switzerland, his favorite "refuge."⁴⁵ He wrote a long letter to Elizabeth recapitulating his situation at Salem. His troubles had begun when Hitler came to power, some people worked against him and some students wrote their parents asking why he, a foreigner, was teaching German history. During 1937 he had had to endure many intrigues.⁴⁶ Although Sturdza returned to Salem for the spring semester, it is evident he was planning to leave Germany permanently.

In March he met with Ernst Jünger at Überlingen, and "spent much time talking about the future."⁴⁷ His letters demonstrate the circumspection he had to exercise. From Salem (March 1938) he gave perfunctory praise to Hitler's Königsberg speech ("his ideas are excellent from the point of view of history and practical politics").⁴⁸ But even then he was under suspicion. Although the details are not known, the state prosecutor apparently was investigating Sturdza on denunciations made to the Gestapo. The letter of *Ministerialrat* Kraft in Karlsruhe, mentioned above, contains the following passage: "But after certain state prosecutor's documents concerning the person of Prince Sturdza became known to me, I could, of course, no longer keep him, but would have been forced to [his] dismissal from the school, in case the prince had not acted first to leave the school and move to Switzerland." Kraft went on to indicate that Sturdza had appeared to have the "right views" regarding the "Salem Question" after 1933 but "now after I have read what he wrote you I have reason to doubt."⁴⁹

On April 28, 1938, Sturdza, on vacation in Switzerland, wrote to the director of the school, Dr. Blendinger, that on advice of doctors he was resigning as of June 1. And, also on doctor's advice, he would not be present for duty during May, which would involve paperwork only. He expressed thanks for the opportunity to teach at Salem and affirmed that in his decision "the weal and woe of the school lies on my heart above all." The letter was closed with the obligatory "Heil Hitler."⁵⁰ When Sturdza returned briefly to Salem to collect his furniture in June it was apparently in haste as he did not pay a customary departing call on Blendinger. In a gracious letter of farewell, Blendinger told Sturdza

You must not believe that I was uninterested in your fate, but also understand that I have not completely got over it that you never told me anything about the threatening situation in which you were so long. It must be yet said that Salem also becomes charged thereby and that Salem agreed to no such charges. There are people who are happy if they have something to criticize Salem for.⁵¹

Reading between the lines one would have to conclude that Sturdza's person and/or conduct had led to a denunciation, a likely result of the attitudes he revealed in his Swiss letters and his obvious lack of enthusiasm for the Nazi regime.

From the safety of Switzerland Sturdza spoke frankly in condemning the Krystall-Nacht (November 1938). Recognizing it as an "organized movement" he labeled it "brutal and barbarous"; it may even have been an

imprudent policy to have unleashed some hunting dogs as Dr. Goebbels [did] in this manner. The future will show how today's events will stand in this respect. The immediate consequence is an antipathetic movement against Germany, or Hitlerism, above all in the United States and in England.

He mentioned the escape to England of a Jewish family he knew and how he had attempted to help them: "the Home Office granted them the right of residence. I don't know if my letters to Kurt Hahn and the Archbishop of Canterbury helped or not."⁵²

During the last remaining year of his life in Ermatingen, just across Lake Constance in Switzerland, Sturdza remarked that his "historical work" (his memoirs?) was "going slowly" and he also mentioned a possible film (of his life?). He was very much concerned about the threatening atmosphere of war.⁵³ He lived to see the threat become reality before he died in Zurich on September 28, 1939, at the age of 70. In the absence of an Orthodox priest, a Swiss Reformed pastor gave the eulogy. He was remembered later in an Old Slavonic service at the Stourdza Kapelle in Baden-Baden.⁵⁵

Footnotes

¹See Torrey, "Alexandru Marghiloman of Romania," p. 105.

²Colonel Victor Verzea, Ion Slavici, Lupu Kostake, Al. Tzigara-Samurcaș, among others.

³Neculau, "Cazul sublocotenentului Ciulei," p. 87.

⁴Interview with Dr. Sandu Sturdza, 24 March 1990.

⁵A.A. to chargé (Munich), 23 February 1920, S.A. 90.

⁶Memo by Beldiman, 18 June 1919, S.A. 90.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸A.A. to chargé (Munich), 23 February 1920, S.A. 90; Dr. Sandu Sturdza to author, 15 March 1992.

⁹Sturdza to Peter Pannescu, 29 July 1921, letter in the possession of Dr. Sandu Sturdza.

¹⁰Interview Dr. Sandu Sturdza, 24 March 1990.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³Thomas James, "Kurt Hahn and the Aims of Education," *The Journal of Experiential Education*, vol. 13 (1980), no. 1, pp. 6-13. Among the distinguished alumni of Salem in its early years were Prince Philip, Professor Golo Mann (son of Thomas Mann, and a distinguished German historian), Prince George William of Hannover and, of course, Prince Berthold of Baden (the son of Prince Max) and many others.

¹⁴Hahn first served as a reader and analyst of the English language press in the Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst, an *ad hoc* bureau founded by Paul Rohrbach and attached to the German Foreign Ministry. When this was dissolved in 1917, Hahn joined the staff of Colonel (later General) von Haefen, the O.H.L. representative to the Foreign Ministry. "Haefen was the political advisor of Ludendorff; Hahn was the political advisor of Haefen." Golo Mann, "Kurt Hahn als Politiker" in *Bildung, Als Wagnis und Bewährung: Eine Darstellung des Lebenswerke von Kurt Hahn*, ed. Hermann Röhrs (Heidelberg, 1966), pp. 13-14.

¹⁵Mann, "Kurt Hahn," pp. 23-25. Although Prince Max's short tenure of office ended before the armistice and peace negotiations, Hahn went to Versailles as assistant to a member of the German delegation, Dr. Carl Melchoir.

¹⁶Maria Ewald, "Der Aufbau und Ausbau Salems (1919-1933)" in Röhrs, *Bildung*, pp. 108-126; Kurt Hahn, "Rückblick," *Die Sammlung: Zeitschrift für Kultur und Erziehung*, vol. 8 (1953), pp. 573-4.

¹⁷Hartmut von Hentig, "Kurt Hahn und die Pädagogik," in Röhrs, *Bildung*, pp. 41-82. See also, P. Carpenter, "Kurt Hahn and the Salem Tradition," *New Era*, vol. 55 (September/October, 1974), pp. 187-91.

¹⁸Prince Michael Sturdza lived in exile in Baden in the mid-1800s when internal intrigues toppled him from the throne of Moldavia. He built a beautiful orthodox chapel in Baden-Baden. Sturdza, "Mein Lebenslauf" It is also possible that Sturdza had come to the attention of Prince Max as a result of the latter's work among enemy prisoners of war in Germany.

¹⁹J. Winthrop Young to author, 15 April 1992. Young, an Englishman, was a student at Salem in 1931-1933 and later was associated with Hahn at Gordonstoun. Since 1964 he has been active in the directorate at Salem and as founder of the Kurt Hahn Archives.

²⁰Sturdza to Elizabeth, 13 March 1932, B.A. (Bucharest) Fond Sturdza. All subsequent letters of Sturdza to Elizabeth and Sandu Sturdza, come from this source. With the death of Prince Max in 1929, there ceased to be a "court" in Salem.

²¹Sturdza to Sandu Sturdza, 1 July, 4 November 1930; Sturdza to Elizabeth, 14 May, 6 June 1931.

²²Hahn, "Rückblick," p. 575; Mann, "Kurt Hahn," pp. 30-32.

²³James, "Kurt Hahn and the Aims of Education," pp. 7-12. Exiled from Baden upon his release from prison, Hahn lived largely in Berlin until his emigration in July 1933.

²⁴Heinrich Kupffer, "Die Periode der Anfechtung und Gefährdung (1933-1945)" in Röhrs, *Bildung*, p. 127.

²⁵Sturdza to Elizabeth, 14 April 1933.

²⁶Kupffer, "Anfechtung und Gefährdung," p. 128.

²⁷Sturdza to Elizabeth, 19 May 1933.

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹Sturdza to Elizabeth, 22 May 1933. Kupffer places the Margrave's action in context and praises his efforts to preserve the school's independence. Kupffer, "Anfechtung und Gefährdung," p. 128.

³⁰Personal reminiscences of HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, "Schule Schloss Salem - 1933." The author would like to express his gratitude to Prince Philip for preparing and sending these impressions of Salem, dated April 2, 1992.

³¹Sturdza to Dr. Mittelstrass (interim headmaster), 9 September 1933; Mittelstrass to Sturdza, 16 September 1933, Kurt Hahn Archives, Salem. Kupffer, "Anfechtung und Gefährdung," pp. 128-130.

³²J. Winthrop Young, letter, 15 April 1992.

³³Sturdza to Elizabeth, 13 January 1934.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 8 August 1934.

³⁵Sturdza to Blendinger, 27 March 1936, Kurt Hahn Archives.

³⁶Kraft (Karlsruhe) to Oberleutenant Wendel, 21 March 1940. *Ibid.*; Sturdza to Elizabeth, 13 January 1937.

³⁷Sturdza to Elizabeth, 4 June 1936, 13 January 1937.

³⁸*Ibid.* Müller, a well-known religious writer, was now the director of "Freistätte persönlichen Lebens" in the Schloss Elmau, which was in close connection with Salem. It was

sort of a retreat for personal thought and renewal. Hans Schumann, ed., *Baden-Wuerttembergische Portraits* (Stuttgart, 1988), p. 265.

³⁹Sturdza to Elizabeth, 4 June, 8 September 1936.

⁴⁰Sturdza to Elizabeth, 4 June 1936.

⁴¹Sturdza to Elizabeth, 8 September 1936.

⁴²Sturdza to Elizabeth, 28 October 1937.

⁴³Sturdza to Elizabeth, 13 January 1937.

⁴⁴Sturdza to Elizabeth, 28 October 1937.

⁴⁵Sturdza to Elizabeth, 19 December 1937.

⁴⁶Sturdza to Elizabeth, 9 January 1938.

⁴⁷Sturdza to Elizabeth, 20 March 1938.

⁴⁸Sturdza to Elizabeth, 31 March 1938.

⁴⁹Kraft to Wendel, 21 March 1940, Kurt Hahn Archives. Unfortunately, details of the complaints against Sturdza are not known.

⁵⁰Sturdza to Blendinger, 28 April 1938, Kurt Hahn Archives.

⁵¹Blendinger to Sturdza, 11 June 1938, Kurt Hahn Archives, Salem.

⁵²Sturdza to Elizabeth, 25 November 1938.

⁵³Sturdza to Elizabeth, 5 December 1938, 17 April 1939.

⁵⁴Interview, Dr. Sandu Sturdza, 24 March 1990.

Conclusion

The case of Colonel Alexandru Sturdza follows the scenario of a Greek tragedy: the clash in the human conscience between two fundamental loyalties; the spiritual agony accompanying this conflict; and an avoidable outcome which is disastrous. Prior to the First World War Sturdza's basic loyalties were in harmony. His love of country and his Russophobe/Germanophile orientation both dictated a close relationship between Romania and Germany. Most Romanian policymakers agreed with him that Romania's national interests were best served by an alliance with the nation where, for almost 20 of his formative years, he had drunk deeply of its traditions.

But with the outbreak of war in 1914, a majority of these policymakers decided that circumstances now dictated a reorientation of Romanian foreign policy. Alliance with Russia and her allies offered Romania an opportunity to realize the "national ideal" by attacking Austria-Hungary and annexing Transylvania. But this would mean war with Germany as well. Two of Sturdza's most basic loyalties were now on a conflict course. In August 1916, with Romania's entry into the war, this conflict became a reality.

Perhaps if the war had gone well for Romania, Sturdza could have lived with this contradiction. But the Romanian forces suffered a catastrophic defeat which, on the one hand, reaffirmed his belief in Prussian superiority and the folly of the policy adopted by Romania's leaders. On the other hand, this defeat made necessary the virtual occupation of Romania by massive Russian reinforcements which enflamed his inbred distrust and fear of Tsarist intentions. Like many prominent Romanians who remained in Bucharest and even some who had fled to Moldavia, Sturdza came to believe that national interest dictated rejection of the Russian alliance and reorientation to the side of Germany. This solution would not only save Romania but also resolve his personal struggle between duty and conscience; his patriotic obligations would once again correspond to his personal beliefs.

During the autumn and winter of 1916, severely depressed by this internal turmoil, Sturdza conceived a plan to "rescue" Romania from what he considered to be the "diabolical" policy of Brătianu and the "folly" of King Ferdinand. By leading the Romanian army, or part of it, into the camp of the Central Powers, he would help drive the Russians out of Moldavia and pave the way for Romania to rejoin the German sphere of influence. Thereby the future of his people, his family, and himself would

be assured. Obsessed by patriotic and personal considerations, Sturdza acted, not on impulse, but on deeply-held convictions, after much deliberation.

On the other hand, there were catalysts. Sturdza's reprimand for his conduct in the fighting over Soveja and his consequent reassignment tarnished his professional reputation and wounded his pride. His impending transfer to the command of a division scheduled for reorganization exacerbated his paranoia *vis-a-vis* the Russians. Sturdza seems to have genuinely believed he (and the Romanian army) would be sent eastward into "captivity." This was a premature and, as it turned out, a false assumption. The proposed evacuation into Russia (which undoubtedly would have led to disastrous disaffection) was in the process of being discarded. Sturdza's obsessive fear of Russia, his anxious concern for the future of his people, his family, and himself, plus a complete alienation from Romania's leaders convinced him that it was necessary to initiate his "plan" before it was too late.

Other questions remain. One Kapri puts quite correctly: "How could Colonel Sturdza, an intelligent, cultured, and consummate officer, believe that an action so great, difficult and risky could really succeed when it was known that Romanian officers and soldiers loved their country and King greatly?"¹ Kapri suggests that Sturdza made at least two errors of judgment. First, he assumed a quick and complete victory of the Central Powers. Even apart from the uncertainty of an overall Austro-German victory (especially in light of the impending entry of the United States which Sturdza dismissed as inconsequential), Sturdza failed to foresee that the Central Powers would not give priority in resources the occupation of Moldavia, then or in the summer of 1917. The prerequisite for the success of Sturdza's plans failed to materialize. Second, Sturdza misjudged the sentiments of the Romanian army. While his hostility to the Russians was widely shared, it did not reach the exaggerated stage of paranoia in others that it did in him. But Sturdza's greatest miscalculation in regard to the Romanian army was "the childish belief" (as Kapri puts it) that the loyalty of Romanian officers and men to the dynasty had been weakened as much as his. In reality, their loyalty remained strong as was amply demonstrated throughout the fierce combat of 1917 and during the Russian Revolution. The Romanian queen, "Regina Maria," was especially beloved as a result of her tireless visits to the front and to hospitals, giving out small gifts and words of encouragement to the suffering and holding the hands of the dying. Her charismatic personality and fierce determination to fight on aroused intense loyalty.²

A contemporary German analysis of the failure of Sturdza's plan stressed another cause: "insufficient" preparation. To succeed, this

analysis concludes, it would have been necessary "to have in each regiment at least one officer, to whom would be revealed in secret [his] intentions and who, at the opportune moment, would enter into action."³ Although Sturdza talked in vague terms with several officers, apparently only Crăiniceanu knew the details and agreed beforehand. And even the latter's commitment was questionable. However, the more widespread the "preparation" the greater chance of compromise, especially in view of the fact that a large number of French officers were attached to the Romanian army. These officers, present at every level of command, engendered a strong camaraderie. They also exercised a measure of control over the Romanian army. Their presence and advice helped contain the growth of defeatism and Germanophile sentiments and created a sense of support from France. It is interesting to speculate what might have happened if Sturdza's mixed brigade, the only major Romanian unit without them, had also been assigned French officers.

Sturdza also erred in failing to ascertain in advance the attitude of the Central Powers toward his plan. The Austrians would have little to do with it and ultimately the Germans pulled back after his initial appeal failed. Another false assumption of Sturdza was that he would have the support of the Germanophile politicians in Bucharest. Their own factionalism and rivalry perhaps precluded any coalition with Sturdza; but if he had been in confidential contact with them he might have been more realistic about the chances of success for his plan.

This study has also attempted to add a new dimension to an understanding of the life of Alexandru Sturdza, his "second" career as a dedicated teacher, who, as before, remained guided by his convictions. He was loyal to Kurt Hahn and the Salem tradition, refusing to be swept along in the tide of National Socialism. Although in a weak position as a foreigner, Sturdza stood on humane and personal values that eventually put him at risk from the Nazi regime.

While his second career by no means atones for the mistakes of his first, it must also evoke a certain amount of sympathy. After adjusting to exile and finding a more satisfying life in Salem, Sturdza's last chance for happiness was marred by the political aberration that appeared in Germany. Consequently the years that remained to him were filled with tension and turmoil. Again, as in wartime Romania, he was marching to a different drummer. This was the tragedy of Colonel Alexandru Sturdza.

Footnotes

¹Kapri, p. 21.

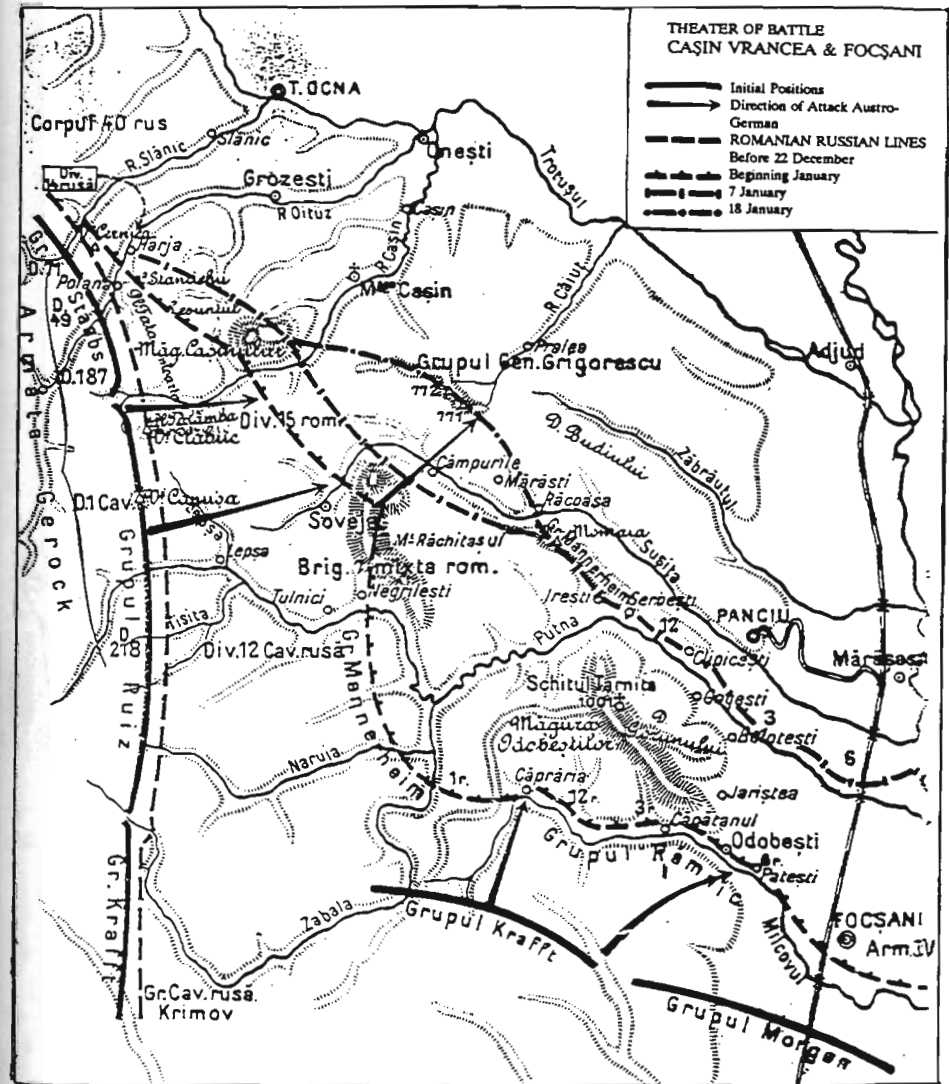
²See the excellent biography of Marie by Hanna Pakula, *The Last Romantic* (New York, 1984), especially pp. 198-200.

³Report of the 218th Germany Infantry Division, 16 February 1916 (reproduced in Kapri, pp. 32-33).



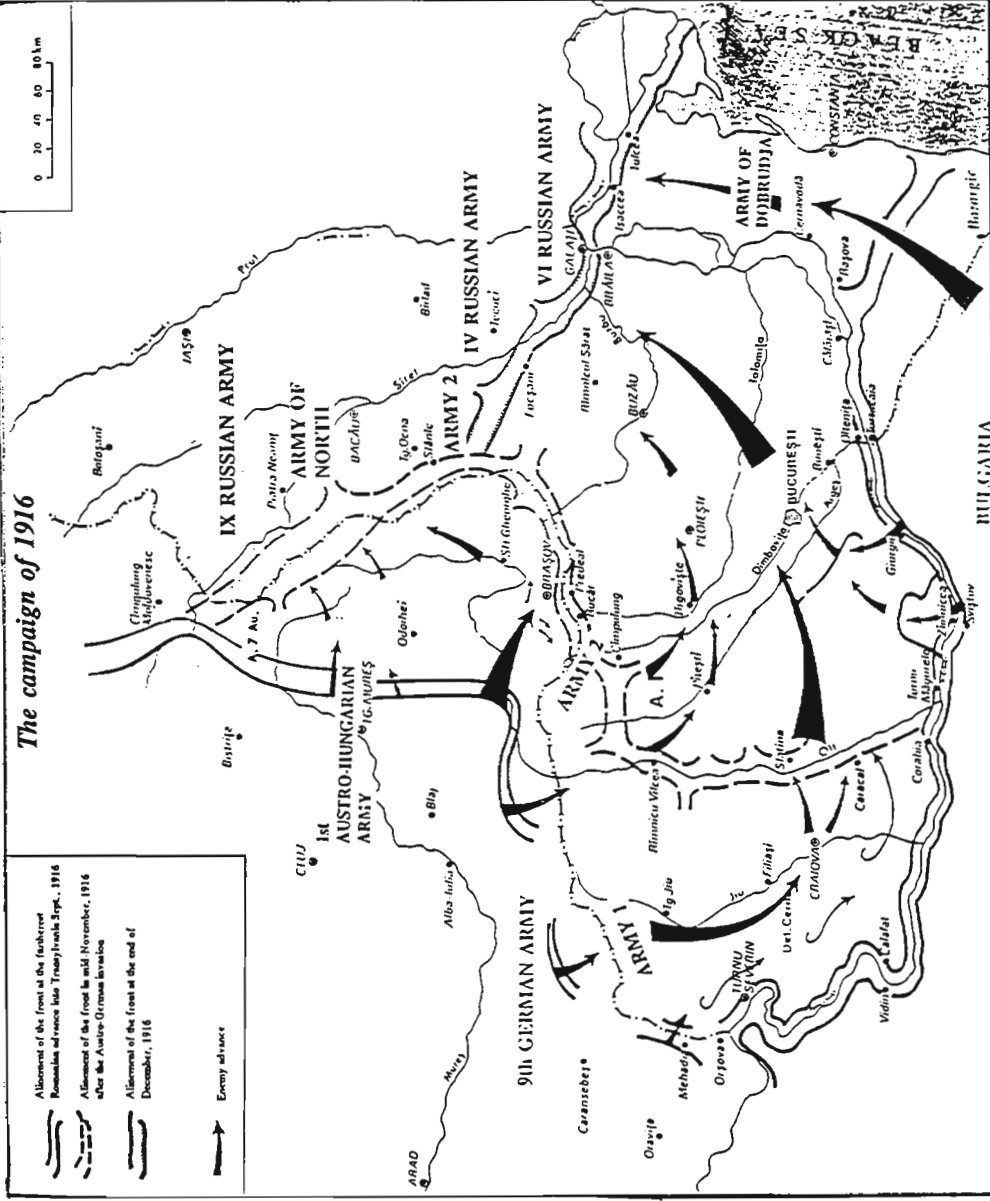
Romania in 1914

Hanna Pacula, *The Last Romantic* (New York, 1984).

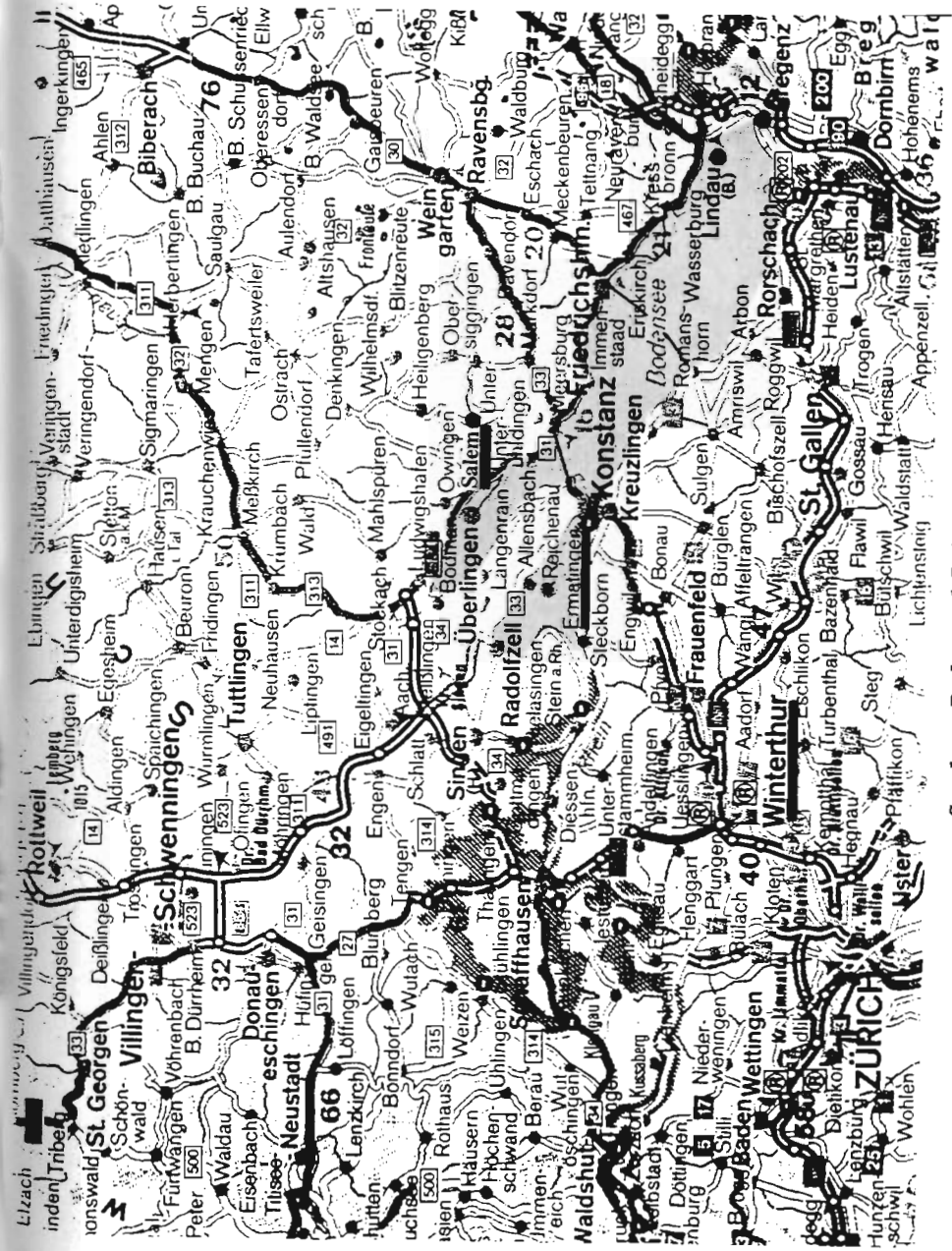


Adapted from Ion Cupșa, *Armata Română în campaniile din anii 1916-1917* (Bucharest, 1967).

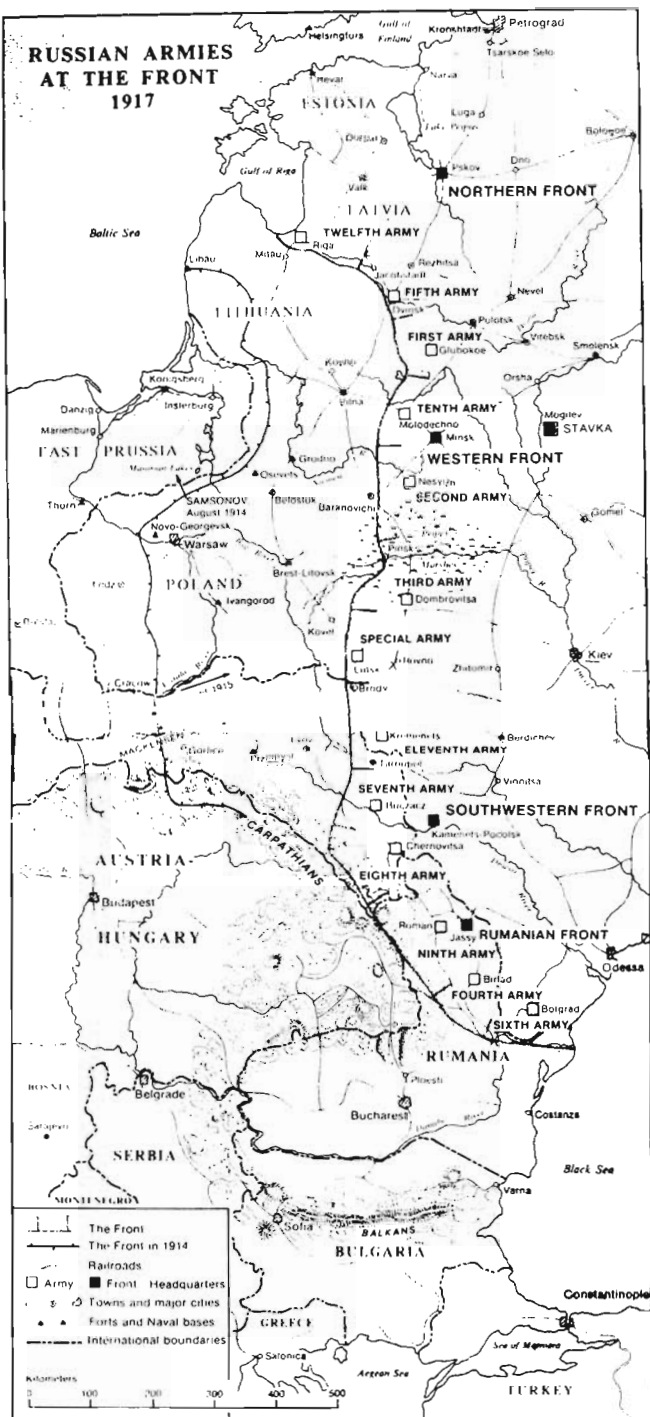
Alignment of the front at the outbreak
 Romanian advance into Transylvania Sept., 1916
 Alignment of the front in mid-November, 1916
 after the Austro-German invasion
 Alignment of the front at the end of
 December, 1916
 Enemy advance



Adapted from Constantin Kiriljescu, *Istoria războiului pentru întregirea României 1916-*



Southern Baden and Switzerland
 German National Tourist Office.



Allan K. Wildman, The End of the Russian Imperial Army, vol. I (Princeton, 1980)



A sketch of Sturdza in the Austro-German camp



*Sturza, General Gentner, Wachman
(left to right) 10 February 1917*



Sturza-Crăiniceanu rendezvous



General Presan



Queen Marie and General Averescu



Premier Ion Brătianu



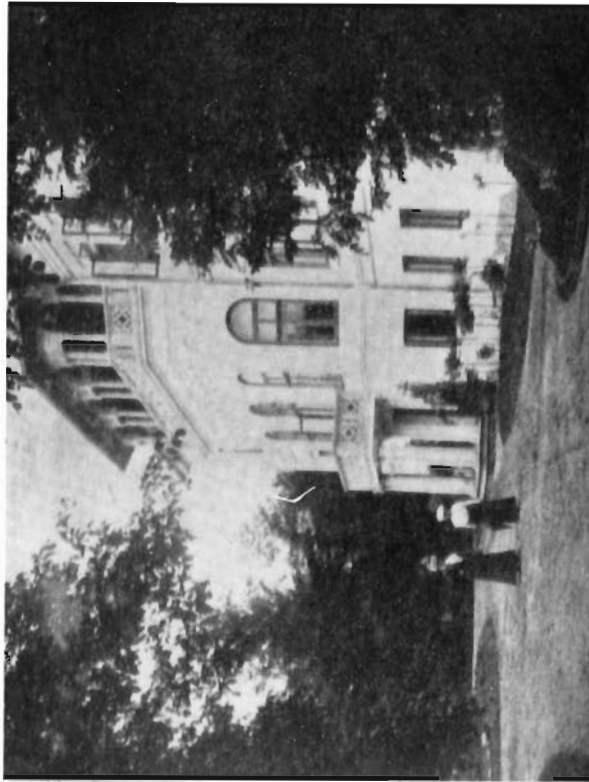
King Ferdinand



Schule Schloss Salem



Sturza at the beginning of his career at Salem



Carp-Sturdza Estate at Țibănești



Sturdza's father-in-law



Ferdinand reviewing a Romanian unit



Romanian prisoners in occupied Bucharest



Romanian trenches



Romanian troops at rest



Reading, Summer 1935



In the classroom



Sturdza as a schoolboy



Sturdza in his 30s



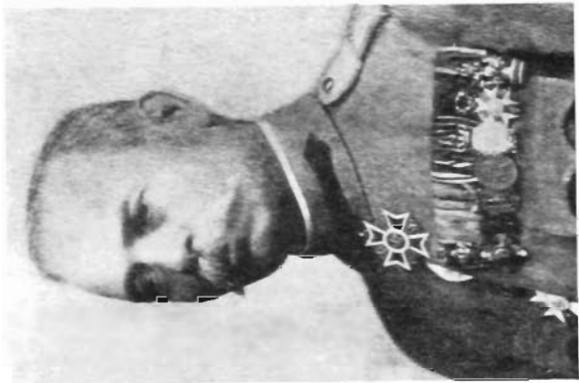
Sturdza's father



Sturdza's mother



General Christescu



General Grigorescu



*Salem and English hockey teams,
Kurt Hahn extreme right*



Dr. Blendinger and outdoor class



Russian generals in Romania



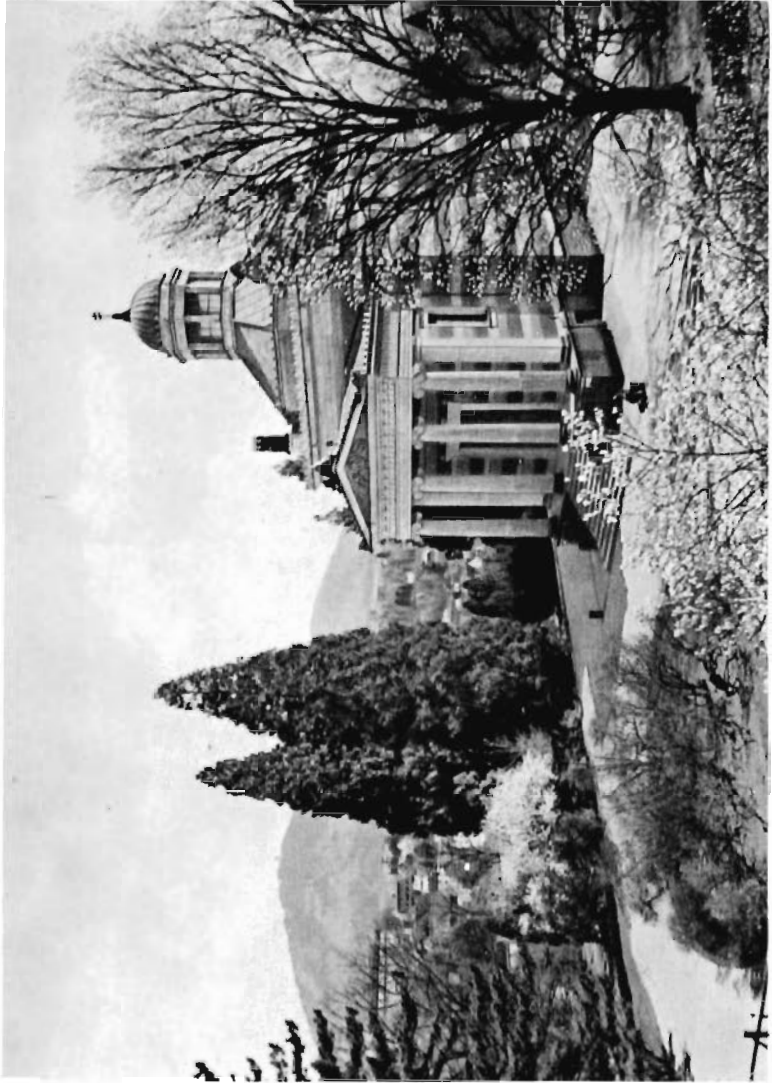
Alexandru Marghiloman



Russian troops in 1916



Romanian troops march into Transylvania



Stourza Chapel, Baden-Baden

