

**DANIEL HRENCIUC, ROMÂNIA ȘI POLONIA, 1918-1931. RELAȚII POLITICE,  
DIPLOMATICE ȘI MILITARE [ROMANIA AND POLAND - 1918-1931.  
POLITICAL, DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY RELATIONS]\***

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During the recent years, the interest of Romanian young historians shifted to various fields not possible to adequately researching during communist times due to ideological or financial constraints, lack of freedom and networks of research. At first sight, a book concerning Romania's relations with Poland, two countries included in the same bloc during the Cold War, does not fall into this category. However, because Romanian relations with Poland during the inter-war period were primarily motivated by the anti-soviet and anti-communistic ideology of both countries as well as by their security concerns regarding Soviet military and political aims in the region it is not surprising that the first Romanian monograph dealing with Romanian-Polish inter-war relationship got published only in 1991.

Since then two young historians, Florin Anghel and Daniel Hrenciuc, have approached the multiple facets of the Romanian-Polish relationship and have recently published the results of their sound researches. They benefited of the new openness in addressing to delicate issues, basing their research not only on a vast investigation in the Romanian archives and libraries but also in the Polish ones. They both studied Polish language and have thus had access to a wider range of sources.

The book now under scrutiny is a very reliable and effective piece of diplomatic history. It approaches, among others, such dimensions of Romanian-Polish relations as the beginnings of the diplomatic relations between the countries, their contacts at the Paris Peace conference, Romanian and Polish efforts of establishing a common border, their 1921 alliance treaty and the subsequent renewals of this anti-soviet alliance. Everything is painted in large canvas with sound analysis of the Romanian and Polish diplomatic and political aims or their domestic policy commandments that had an impact on Romanian and Polish behavior on the international stage. The author proves in this book a profound understanding of the Polish political life and, especially, of the aims and interests of the elite surrounding the Polish hero, Marshall Pilsudsky. Daniel Hrenciuc does not hesitate to express his opinion that Pilsudsky's French-inspired coup of 1926 represented an adequate political formula to Poland's political turmoil.

As the author points out, Pilsudsky was instrumental not only in shaping the contours of Polish domestic life, but also in inspiring its foreign policy. Such an example is the signing of the March 1921 Alliance Treaty between Romania and Poland. There was no fracture between Pilsudsky foreign and domestic policy thinking. The Polish Marshall considered that the state is driving the nation. Therefore, it is no wonder that he saw from the very beginning the dangers arising for Poland from the new Soviet neighbor. He considered that eventually Soviet Russia would seek revenge and, against such a possibility, Pilsudsky advised his fellow compatriots to erect an alliance with similarly endangered states, among which Romania was the most important one.

However, Romania and Poland shared similar concerns not only regarding the security in the east. As the author of this book demonstrates, Locarno agreements were regarded as a positive development in both Romania and Poland, though important statespersons of the two countries acknowledged that the security issues of East-Central Europe did not receive a solution. This would eventually contribute to diplomatic attempts to forge an Eastern Locarno solving the security problem of the entire continent.

Daniel Hrenciuc is not shadowing in his work the weak points in the Romanian-Polish relationship. They expressed themselves in the limitations of the Romanian-Polish alliance meant only to counter a possible Soviet aggression or in the unsuccessful Polish bid for Romanian support in conquering Ukraine in 1920. Even the 1926 treaty of guarantee signed by Poland and Romania provided some reasons for criticism. The author mentions as the weakest point of this treaty the fact that the support and assistance each party had to provide to the other party was subordinated to certain provisions of League of Nations's pact.

Moreover, Romania and Poland saw in a different light the roles of Czechoslovakia or Hungary in the context of inter-war Europe. For Romania, Czechoslovakia was its closest ally in the Little Entente. For Poland, it was an enemy state with which it had not only territorial disputes but political and definitional ones, too. This played its significant part in denying the Romanians a success in their attempts of drawing Poland within

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the Little Entente. Conversely, Poland considered Hungary a friendly power manifesting a deep regard for its social and political system, while Hungary and Romania were embroiled in disputes over Transylvania.

A wonderful piece of historical writing, Hrenciuc's book is a compulsory reference for any researcher studying not only the Romanian-Polish relationship, but also the Romanian or Polish inter-war foreign policy. Alongside Florin Anghel's Ph.D. published paper, Hrenciuc's own work greatly enhanced the studies of the relationship between Romania and Poland, letting us wondering is anything else significant could be added to the picture of these relations during 1920's.