TERRITORIAL CHANGES ON THE ROMANIAN-UKRAINIAN BORDER BETWEEN WORLD WARS

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Abstract. *This paper will carry out a detailed study related to the change of borders that occurred in Romania and Ukraine from the end of the First World War to the Second World War. In order to understand the territorial changes, the proposal will focus on examining how the borders of both territories with the main Peace treaties were left after the First World War. But undoubtedly the most important issue in this paper is the analysis of the border situation between the two countries after the Second World War. In this sense it is of vital importance to know the contacts that took place with the great powers of the war for the development of the events.*

Keywords: *Ukraine, Romania, borders, First World War, Second World War*

Introduction

From the beginning of the First World War until the end of the Second World War, there were major changes in the borders of most of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In this paper we will focus on the case of two neighbouring countries: Romania and Ukraine, in order to see how these two global conflicts affected their current territorial formation. To begin with this historical review, it is necessary to consider the different situation from which each of these countries started at the beginning of the First World War in 1914.

On the one hand, there was Romania, a kingdom ruled by Carol I, and formed at that time by the great regions of Wallachia, Moldavia and Dobrogea. Before the outbreak of the First World War, and as a consequence of the Balkan Wars, the situation with the neighbouring countries was quite complicated, as large territories were disputed with them: with Bulgaria, the Dobrogea[1] area; with the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Transylvania; and with the Russian Empire, the region of Bessarabia. Thus, at the start of the war, Romania was in a difficult situation to support both the Triple Entente or Allies —France, Great Britain and the Russian Empire— and the Triple Alliance or also known as Central Powers —Germany, Austro-Hungarian Empire and Italy—. Even though, in 1883, under pressure from Bismarck, King Carol I had signed a secret defensive alliance with the Austro-Hungarian Empire; but only he and a couple of ministers knew of its existence (MacMillan, 2013: 568).

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[1] After the end of the Russian-Turkish War that took place between 1877 and 1878 and the consequent peace, the former Dobrogea region belonging to the Ottoman Empire was divided into two parts: the northern region was for Romania, while the southern area was established for Bulgaria. After the end of the Second Balkan War with the Treaty of Bucharest in 1913 the southern area belonging to Bulgaria was annexed by Romania.

On the other hand, Ukraine, which did not exist as an independent country, since it was divided into two major empires: the western part —Galicia, western Volhynia, Subcarpathian Ruthenia or Transcarpathia and Bukovina— as part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and its central and eastern part integrated into the Russian Empire. This separation began in 1773 with the first partition of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, also known as the Republic of the Two Nations. The Austro-Hungarian Habsburg Empire retained the most populated part, Galicia; Russia with the largest portion of territory and important acquisitions in Polish Livonia and White Russia; and Frederick II obtained Polish Prussia (Black, 2001: 361). Although the part that belonged to the Republic of Two Nations was annexed by the Russian Empire because of the second partition in 1793. However, despite this fragmentation, the declaration of war in 1914 had equal importance for national life on both sides of the Austro-Russian border (Doroshenko, 1962: 568), as it will be detailed in the following sections.

1. Territorial Changes in Romania and Ukraine at the end of First World War
1.1. Romania: from First World War to Greater Romania

Already with the war started and despite the existing alliance between Austria-Hungary and Romania for the mutual defence of these countries in case they were attacked by any of their enemies, Romania declared neutral. Moreover, both within Carol's government and Romanian society, the division between entering the conflict on either side was very resilient. All this together with the temptations they were receiving to enter the war both from the Central Powers, which offered the region of Bessarabia —at that time in the hands of the Russian Empire—, and from the Allies, who promised Romania the territory of Transylvania —with a large Romanian population, but under the domination of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—. Therefore, a declaration of neutrality was the only rational choice in view of the situation and the Romanian public opinion, incensed over Transylvania and with Francophile inclinations (Jelavich, 1992: 451).

However, in October 1914 the death of King Carol I took place, and his successor, King Ferdinand I, showed greater sympathy for the Allies influenced by the tendencies of his wife, granddaughter of Queen Victoria and Alexander II of Russia (Lozano, 2011: 233). Thus, after two years of Romanian neutrality in the conflict, on 17 August 1916, the treaty of alliance and the military convention were signed; Romania committed to enter in the war ten days later (Renouvin, 1990: 319). Thus, on 27 August 1916, Romania declared war on Austria-Hungary, Germany declared war on Romania on 28 August, and between 30 August and 1st September both Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire joined against the new enemy (Baccaglioni, 2014: 168).

After good initial results in the Transylvania region, the situation in Dobrogea, that is in the southern border with Bulgaria worsened. All this, together with the terrible economic situation that was taking place in Romania, resulted in the Treaty of Bucharest, which was signed on 7 May 1918 and was never be ratified (Renouvin, 1990: 452).

Despite this Treaty, Romania re-entered the war shortly before its end, on 10 November 1918, once again declaring war on the Central Powers by joining the Entente forces advancing from Bulgaria, occupying Wallachia and crossing the Carpathians into Hungarian Transylvania (Lozano, 2014: 514). The first world conflict ended with the victory of the Allies, the disintegration of the Russian Empire and the first steps towards the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. With this outcome, Romania claimed from the Allies the territories that had been promised to it to enter the war on their side.

Thus, the initial incorporation of the territory of Bessarabia into Romania on 27 March 1918 was followed after the end of the armed confrontation: Bukovina on 28 November, through the vote of the Romanian National Council of Bukovina, and finally Transylvania on 1st December, through the Resolution of the Great Assembly of Alba Iulia (ABC, 2018)[2], as well as part of the Banat region. In this way, all the provinces considered Romanian by the Government became part of Greater Romania, which was supported by the following Peace Treaties:

- Saint-Germain-en-Laye, took place on 10 September 1919 between the victorious Allied Powers in First World War and Austria-Hungary. In which the Kingdom of Austria on the one hand and the Kingdom of Hungary on the other were recognized. In addition, the bases were laid for the cession by Hungary of the regions of Transylvania, part of Banat and the province of Bukovina to Romania —to be confirmed in the Treaty of Trianon.

- Neuilly-sur-Seine, signed on 27 November 1919. In this case the agreement was between the victorious powers and the Kingdom of Bulgaria. By means of this Treaty the region in dispute with Romania, Southern Dobrogea, was to be returned and recognized as an integral part of this country.

- Trianon, was held on 4 June 1920 between the Allies and the Kingdom of Hungary. In this Treaty, the cessions of Hungary to Romania were confirmed and the transfer of Transylvania was made official. A historical moment that the Romanian people considered as an expression of their yearnings and their consciousness of unity, the formation of a single State bringing together all Romanians (Pascu, 1977: 196).

- Paris, in 1920, by which the annexation of Bessarabia to Romania was recognized by the Allies.

Therefore, as a consequence of the Balkan Wars and after the First World War, Romania obtained not only the totality of Dobrogea and Bessarabia, but also Bukovina and Transylvania, with a large part of Eastern Hungary and Banat, thus becoming one of the most important second-order States [...] (Machatschek, 1993: 203).

1.2. Ukraine: from a division between Empires to a division between countries

In the case of Ukraine, the situation was completely different. As seen above, each region of the present state was within one of the great European empires, so they had no choice but to choose sides to enter the war. Thus, during the First World War the current Ukraine fought at the same time on the side of the Central Powers and the Triple Entente (García Andrés, González Martín, Martín de la Guardia, 2017: 67). With the unfolding of the war and after the disintegration of the Russian Empire in 1917, the central and eastern parts of Ukraine saw the possibility of achieving independence. For this reason, in November of the same year, the fourth and last universal declared the independence of the Ukrainian People's Republic and demanded the convocation of elections to the constituent assembly (Applebaum, 2019: 49). After which, in January 1918, came the Bolshevik attack to control the whole territory, but the Ukrainians got the help of the Central Powers. Thus, on 9 February 1918, a first Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed by Germans, Austro-

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[2] ABC., *<Rumania en la Primera Guerra Mundial>desde este jueves en el Museo del ejército,* 22/01/2018, in https://www.abc.es/espana/castilla-la-mancha/toledo/ciudad/abci-rumania-primera-guerra-mundial-desde-este-jueves-museo-ejercito-201801221316_noticia.html, accessed: 13 July 2019.

Hungarians and Ukrainians (Pérez Sánchez, 2016: 507). However, as the war unfolded, this aid declined until January 1919, when a new attack by the Bolsheviks took place.

The same claim had the western region of Ukraine controlled by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but after the beginning of the disintegration of this Empire, the National Council of Ukraine was formed of October 1918 in Lvov. With this institution, the People's Republic of Western Ukraine was created at the end of that year (García Andrés, 2018: 87).

However, both attempts at independence from the central and eastern People's Republic of Ukraine and People's Republic of Western Ukraine were ineffective for a diverse of reasons. Among them, in the central and eastern part due to the situation of Civil War that was living inside the old tsarist territory to impose the Bolshevik authority; and, later, in the western zone, the war that took place between the newly created Poland, —by means of the Treaties of Peace that put an end to the First World War— and the Russian revolutionaries to extend their dominions in the Ukrainian territory.

Thus, an independent Poland prevented the creation of an autonomous Ukraine: it did not seem possible that either of the two Ukrainians visible in 1919 could prosper. Neither the National Republic of Ukraine nor the Western Ukrainian National Republic (Pérez Sánchez, 2016: 508).

In this way, after the signing of the Peace Accords, the situation in Ukraine was reflected as follows in two of the previous Treaties:

- Saint-Germain-en-Laye, through which the old Austrian province of Galicia and western Volhynia passed into Poland. And as mentioned earlier, the region of Bukovina became part of Romania.

- Trianon, in which the Transcarpathian region was handed over to the newly created Czechoslovakia under the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

In the case of Ukraine, account should be taken of the Peace Agreement signed between the Bolsheviks and Poland, which put an end to the conflict, through the 1921 Treaty of Riga, which established the borders between the two States. It was agreed that the so-called Curzon line[3], which fixed the border between the two States, should be removed from the Polish border further east, enlarging the Polish territory by a third part (Palmowskim, 2002: 177).

2. The Inter-War Period in Romania and Ukraine
2.1. Political situation in Romania (1918-1939)

When the First World War ended, and after the aforementioned Declaration of Alba Iulia of 1st December 1918, the situation to give continuity to the newly formed Greater Romania was affected by the policy of Hungary.

After the beginning of the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, on 16 November 1918 the People's Republic of Hungary was proclaimed, and on 30 November power was handed over to a National Council presided over by Count Mihály Károlyi (González Calleja, 2017: 167), as a result of the formation of this territory. However, because of to the difficult economic and territorial situation —due to the losses of large regions mainly in favour of Romania— in March 1919 a radical turn in the country's

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[3] This line of separation left out of the new Poland all the territory that marked the line that went from Grodno, passing through Brest until the south, and arriving at the Carpathians, leaving inside part of the region of Galicia, including Lviv. However, after the Soviet defeat, the imaginary line moved several kilometres to the east, including these regions.

politics took place. At that moment, a socialist government was established in Hungary under the leadership of Bela Kun, whose Hungarian aspirations to recover the lost territory in Romania was maintained until its end in August of the same year (Lozano, 2014: 527). For this reason, in April, Romanian military troops, with the help of others from neighbouring countries, intervened to ensure that these territorial cessions were carried out as soon as possible. Thus, for instance, the process of transferring authority from Hungarian to Romanian in Bihor began with the entry of the Romanian army into Oradea on 20 April 1919 (Zainea, 2019: 27). This confrontation lasted as long as Bela Kun's attempt at a socialist government in Hungary, until August 1919 when Romanians entered in Budapest to evict him from power.

Finally, the territory that had been fixed for the new Romania at the end of the war came under the administration of King Ferdinand I, and was confirmed in the peace treaties. Thus, Romania represented, after 1918, the most important vector of the South-East, given the territorial and international by right situation extremely circles favourable, as well as the extraordinary view, in the political, diplomatic and media of the Royal family (Citiriga, Anghel, 2009: 173). From that moment on, the main problems presented to the Romanian State have been to straighten the economy, to consolidate the State internally, firstly, by the unification of legislation in the whole territory of the country, and externally, the defence of territorial integrity, the maintenance of the post-war status quo (Botar, 1976: 20).

During the 1920s, Romania entered a moment of acceleration in both the industrial and economic fields, and in 1923 a new Constitution was promulgated to support the new State and its rulers. Ferdinand I continued to reign in Romania until 1927 when he died, at which time his grandson, who at that time was a minor, was proclaimed king as Mihai I. This happened because in 1926 Ferdinand's son and heir, Carol, renounced his dynastic rights to the throne. Due to Mihai's minority his grandfather before his death he had prepared a Regency Council to govern until such time as Mihai could accede to the throne. However, this fact generated amongst population some degree of uncertainty, for that reason and with the support of certain sectors of society, Carol returned to Romania and gained power under the name of Carol II, naming his son Mihai as heir to the throne. The situation in Romania in the 1930s suffered a worsening in all economic and political sectors, when in 1938 the civil rights of Jews were annulled and later political parties were outlawed (Rejmer, 2019: 129). Moreover, in order to combat the fascist and Hitlerian danger threatening the national independence and territorial integrity of Romania (Botar, 1976: 21), the so-called Royal Dictatorship was proclaimed in February of the same year, with short-lived and even less effective governments. It was in this situation that Romania found itself on the verge of the outbreak of the Second World War.

2.2. Political situation in Ukraine (1918-1939)

After the new separation of the Ukrainian regions into new states, the situation was completely different in each of them. It should be remembered that, in the 1920s, the present territory of Ukraine was divided into four different countries: Bukovina in Romania, Transcarpathia in Czechoslovakia, Galicia and part of Volhynia in Poland, and the central and eastern part as Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic —Ukrainian SSR— within the Soviet Union. So, it is necessary to see how was the position of each parts into which was divided the current territory of Ukraine.

Firstly, as for the region of Bukovina during the interwar period, it was immersed in a process of assimilation of the new policies being followed by the newly created Greater Romania, whose situation has already been commented on in previous lines.

Secondly, the Transcarpathian region had been integrated after the peace agreements within the state of Czechoslovakia, which emerged in 1918. Throughout this period until the outbreak of the Second World War, the Czechoslovak government tried to improve the reality of life in this territory. But the situation became more complicated at the end of the 1930s after the German invasion of Austria and the Sudetenland region in Czechoslovak. For this reason and at the request of the Axis powers —Italy and Germany— an agreement was possible between Hungary and Czechoslovakia in order not to reach a conflict between them over territorial possessions. Thus, the first arbitration was reached in Vienna —1938—, by which Hungary recovers a strip inhabited by the Magyars in the south of Slovakia and incorporates Transcarpathia —1939— within its borders (Marín González, 2000: 306). In such a way that this region, before the beginning of the second world conflict was part of Hungary again.

Thirdly, the part that Poland had achieved after the peace treaties, that is to say the region of Galicia and a large part of Volhynia was in a process of assimilation by the population into the Polish lifestyle. However, it was in this territory that certain resistance movements against the Polish government, whose main objective was the independence of Poland, were created during the 1920s. Although these groups initially fought separately and with differentiated actions, from the first Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists held in Vienna in 1929 they agreed to merge, as the delegates voted in favour of the creation of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists —OUN: *Orhanizatsiya Ukrayins'kykh Natsionalistiv*— (Satzewich, 2003: 67). Organization that during the 1930s carried out certain actions against the Polish government and it was be of great importance for the Ukrainian resistance during the Second World War.

Finally, mention should be made of the part in which Ukraine's SSR was created, in which the situation during the interwar period was quite complicated. After the end of the Polish-Bolshevik War and the near end of the Russian Civil War, Ukraine formed, together with other republics —Russia, Belarus and Transcaucasia— a federal state called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics —USSR— (Bilyk, 1958: 175-176), on 30 December 1922. For some time, but especially from then on, Ukrainian SSR was subjected to an intense process of *Ukrainianisation*[4]. During the first moments of the arrival of this new policy by Lenin's government, the population understood it as an attempt to maintain some aspects clearly identified with Ukrainian society. However, little by little the inhabitants of the Ukrainian SSR saw that it only represented the need to consolidate socialism in this territory without causing the complaints and demonstrations of the population. This policy came to an end with Lenin's death in 1924, the moment of Stalin's rise to power, with the consequent change in Soviet policies towards Ukraine's SSR. In one way or another, the repression against Ukrainian nationalism and, in general, against Ukrainian national culture intensified especially from 1928 onwards (Cucó, 1999: 276). With the implementation of collectivisation and five-year plans, Stalin's new policy turned to a fierce process of forced sovietisation, which in the 1930s was reflected in a terrible famine that took place in the country, called *Holodomor*, and in the continuous purges that were carried out among different classes of the population.

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[4] Term used to designate certain policies proposed by Lenin's Soviet government to promote certain aspects related to Ukraine such as: culture, language, education...

3. The Ukrainian-Romanian Border During Second World War

As can be seen from the previous section, during the interwar period the situation was complicated both for Romania and for the Ukrainian population living in different countries to which it belonged. However, the situation worsened with the outbreak of the Second World War.

3.1. Romania: from neutrality to war (1939-1945)

Despite its initial neutrality, Romania was an objective from the first moment of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, since Bessarabia was nominated and commercialized by article 3 of the additional secret protocol of the abominable document, the most catastrophic in the entire history of the 20th century (Buzatu, Dumitrescu, 2011: 14), signed days before Germany's invasion of Poland on 1st September 1939. With the beginning of the war, King Carol II tried to maintain Romania's impartiality as much as he could, however, a series of events precipitated his involvement in the war. At the beginning of 1940, the Soviet government continued with its interest in recovering the old territories that had belonged to the Russian Empire, or with a majority of Ukrainian population, therefore issued an ultimatum to the Romanian government demanding the immediate cession of Bessarabia and the northern part of the province of Bukovina. As a result of the request made by the Soviet government through a note addressed in June 1940 to the Romanian government, Bessarabia and northern Bukovina entered the composition of the USSR (Botar, 1976: 22). After this event Romania's neighbours and Germany's allies also presented their territorial claims. As for Hungary, after the Second Vienna Arbitration, —1940— it occupies northern areas of Transylvania and some districts inhabited by the Magyars in the former Yugoslavia —1941— (Marín González, 2000: 306). Meanwhile, Bulgaria obtained the cession by the Romanians of the southern region of Dobrogea, after making the Craiova Agreements effective on 7 September 1940.

As a result, Carol's regime was left in a compromised situation by accepting, from 1940 onwards and without a military response, territorial cessions to its neighbours —the Soviet Union, Hungary and Bulgaria— while Romania was isolated from Europe (Stefanescu, 2004: 227). These concessions were not well seen on Romanian territory, so a dictatorial cabinet was created to form a new government with the main figure of Ion Antonescu. The same general forced the abdication of the monarch, on 6 September, seconded by a massive pronouncement of the Army and the political forces of the country. The monarch [...] transferred power to his son Mihai, who would be the last king of Romania (Veiga, 1989: 197). However, the power was exercised by General Antonescu by establishing a military-fascist dictatorship from September 1940 to August 1944, while his approaches to Hitler's Germany brought Romania into the Second World War. On 22 June 1941 the so-called Operation Barbarossa against the USSR was launched, and from the beginning of the offensive, the Romanian Army took an active part together with the Germans. Romania contributed 585,000 Romanian troops during the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union between June and October 1941 (Kaplan, 2016: 198).

With this operation, the situation returned to its origin, as Romanian troops with the help of Nazi Germany managed to recover the lost territories of Bukovina and Bessarabia during much of the Second World War. However, the situation took a new turn with the German defeat at the beginning of 1943 at the Battle of Stalingrad which meant the beginning of the Soviet advance throughout Eastern and Central Europe, and the recovery of the previously lost territories.

With the entry of the Soviet Army into Romania, Antonescu was overthrown on 23 August 1944, and a decree was signed that marked Romania's return to the 1923 Constitution and a parliamentary system (Stefanescu, 2004: 233). Following these events, on 12 September 1944, an armistice took place between King Mihai I and the Soviets, with regard to their borders, in Article 4 agreed to re-establish the State border between the USSR and Romania on 28 June 1940 (Neagoe, 1996: 54) —that is, before the beginning of the Romanian occupation of the territories that the USSR had previously obtained— which was confirmed in the 1947 Paris Peace Treaties.

Later, in March 1945, a government linked to the Soviet world was established with the figure of Petru Groza in power, who would change political, economic and social life towards the ideals advocated by Stalin in the USSR. These progressive changes were completed on 30 December 1947 when King Mihai I was forced to abdicate and a Romanian People's Republic under the dictatorship of the proletariat was proclaimed (Bideleux, Jeffries, 2007: 137).

3.2. Ukraine: again invaded (1939-1945)

The situation in Ukraine at the beginning of the Second World War was different, as after the 1939 Pact between Ribbentrop and Molotov dividing Poland, the part of Galicia and western Volhynia that belonged to that country would become part of Soviet rule. Therefore, as of 17 September 1939, in the still Polish Ukraine, the USSR forces promoted the sovietisation of the territory (Pérez Sánchez, 2016: 510). With the conquest of various territories by the USSR, as mentioned above, the regions of Bukovina and Bessarabia became part of the Soviet Union, but Bukovina and the southern part of Bessarabia —the region bordering the Black Sea— became part of Ukraine's RSS. In the other part of Bessarabia, in August —1940— the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic was created —RSS of Moldavia—, which included Bessarabia and part of the former Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldavia —concretely the current Transnistria— (García Andrés, González Martín, Martín de la Guardia, 2017: 23). This situation changed the following year with the invasion of the USSR by Germany and its allies, with Romania taking control of the entire region, including Transnistria, which had never been under Romanian power before.

The outlook in Eastern Europe changed as a result of the aforementioned Operation Barbarossa, launched at the end of June 1941, in which the USSR began to be defeated by Hitler's Germany. Thus, the territory of Ukraine was occupied by the Nazis, and shortly thereafter, specifically on 17 July 1941 Hitler promulgated instructions on the administration of the occupied territories on the Eastern Front (Doroshenko, 1962: 649). The so-called *Reichskommissariat Ukraine* was established in most of the territory of the former Ukrainian SSR, which was the body responsible for handling matters relating to this area. Although Germany's military advance through Ukraine was fast and spectacular, —Kharkov was achieved on 29 August 1941—, it took very little time until the roles were changed (Toynbee, 1985: 427). The end of this occupation began after the Soviet victory at the Battle of Stalingrad in February 1943. From this moment the Ukrainian territory was again occupied by Soviet troops, recovering the territories that had also reached the Romanian forces. Finally, and after Germany's unconditional surrender on 8 May 1945 —for the purposes of the USSR on 9—, Stalin became the new "owner" of all central and south-eastern Europe, while regaining control of Ukraine (Pérez Sánchez, 2016: 511).

4. Current Formation of Ukrainian-Romanian Borders

As can be seen after the end of the Second World War, both Romania -—as a satellite state of the USSR under the command of Petru Groza— and Ukraine —which was once again part of the Soviet Union as Ukraine's SSR— came under the orbit of Soviet power. With this end for both countries, all that was left was to sign the peace treaties in order to establish the new border limits that we know nowadays. The final point of the negotiations took place on 10 February 1947 with the signing of the Treaties of Paris, where delegates from twenty-one nations met to decide on the peace agreements with Germany's five allies in the Second World War: Bulgaria, Hungary, Finland, Italy and Romania (Palmowski, 2002: 613). There, the definitive borders and the territories that would integrate each country after the war were established.

4.1. Romania

The text of the treaty with Romania said:

On 10 February, the Peace Treaty between Romania and the Allied and Associated Powers was signed, in which it was established: in part 1 dedicated to borders:

Article 1

The borders of Romania, as indicated on the map annexed to this Treaty —Annex I— shall be those existing on 1st January 1941, except for the Romanian-Hungarian border, as defined in Article 2 of this Treaty.

The Soviet-Romanian border is established in accordance with that between the Soviet-Romanian countries on 28 June 1940 and with the Soviet-Czechoslovak Agreement of 29 June 1945.

Article 2

The decisions of the Vienna Arbitration Court of 30 August 1940 are declared null and void. The border between Romania and Hungary is hereby restored as it existed on 1 January 1938 (Neagoe, 1996: 435).

Thus, this treaty confirmed for Romania, on the one hand, the recovery of the northern Transylvania region that had been ceded to Hungary during a major part of the conflict through the Second Vienna Arbitration; and, on the other hand, the cession of the northern part of the region of Bukovina and Bessarabia to the Soviet Union, and the cession of the southern Dobrogea territory for Bulgaria, officially assigned to Romania after the end of the First World War.

4.2. Ukraine

In the case of the new SSR of Ukraine that emerged after the conflict, the formation of its borders was carried out through the territories that the Soviet Union gradually obtained from the cessions of those defeated in the Second World War.

First of all, and even before the end of the war, the Yalta Conference took place in February 1945, at which the leaders of the countries that were defeating in the Second World War -—Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt— met to decide on the establishment of the new order in the territories that were being liberated from the Nazis. At this meeting, the borders of some of the new states coming out of the war were decided. Thus, in the case of Poland, the territory of Galicia and western Volhynia was lost to the USSR. Despite Lvov's belonging to the Galician region, the Allies finally accepted the Soviet purpose of diverting the "Curzon Line" to include that city and its region in the USSR (Ruiz

González, 2014: 103), unlike the previous time with the 1921 Riga Peace between Poland and the Bolsheviks, in which the former managed to keep that region in their power.

Secondly, since the end of the First World War Subcarpathian Ruthenia or Transcarpathia, had been part of Czechoslovakia. After the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Hitler's Nazi army, this region was occupied by Hungary, as it had an alliance with Germany. In 1944 and with the Red Army starting its way to Berlin, it entered in Hungary and it ended the control exercised over Transcarpathia. Later the Czechoslovaks tried to reorganize their state again, however, they had to sign an agreement with the Soviet Union. Hence, on 29 June 1945, Czechoslovakia's provisional Parliament ceded Subcarpathia Ruthenia —Transcarpathia— to Soviet Union (Magoscsi, 2010: 688).

Thirdly and finally, we must talk about the regions of Bukovina and Bessarabia, which have already been mentioned in the section on Romania. With the Paris Peace Treaty, the Soviet-Romanian border was confirmed, as it was on 28 June 1940. In other words, the northern part of Bukovina became part of Ukraine's SSR again, as did the southern part of Bessarabia; while the rest of Bessarabia reinstated Moldova's SSR. In such a way that at the end of the Second World War all the lands of the Ukrainian ethnic group were grouped within the USSR.

Conclusions

As we have seen throughout this paper, the changes in the borders suffered by both Romania and Ukraine were very important for the definitive formation of the two countries.

In the case of Romania, it can be said that, after the initial period of neutrality, its entrance into the First World War was determined by the aspiration to realise its national idea with the territories it considered linked to the country. It was because of this desire, and after the end of the conflict, that he succeeded in creating Greater Romania. The first years of this new territorial entity were marked by the government of Ferdinand I and his interest in making Greater Romania a powerful state in Eastern Europe. However, with the arrival to power of Carol II the situation in the country took a radical turn and led to the difficult situation that Romania lived during the Second World War. Because of the territorial losses by the designs of Germany and the USSR at the beginning of the Second War World, Romania found itself in the necessity after the arrival to the power of Antonescu to enter the war of the hand of Germany to recover the lost territories. However, with the unfolding of the war and the tremendous of the victory of the USSR after the battle of Stalingrad, the loss of some of the territories that had been part of Greater Romania for more than twenty years will finally be confirmed: Northern Bukovina, Bessarabia and Southern Dobrogea.

As far as Ukraine is concerned, the First World War began separately and integrated within two Empires —Austro-Hungarian and Russian—, so it did not have the option of choosing sides autonomously. This, together with the brief attempt to achieve independence in the two parts of Ukraine —the People's Republic of Ukraine and the People's Republic of Western Ukraine— and the wars fought within those territories —the Russian Civil War and the Polish-Bolshevik War— led to the separation of Ukrainian territory into four different states: Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Poland. During the interwar period, each of these parts experienced different situations that ended during the Second World War. For this reason, and as seen in this paper, the definitive territorial formation of Ukraine's SSR was completed with the territories that were ceded in peace treaties to the Soviet Union.

Thus, the period from the First World War to the end of the Second World War and its peace treaties shows the different end of the Romanian-Ukrainian borders. In the case of Ukraine, the new borders since 1947 included all territories considered ethnically populated by Ukrainians. Whereas, in the case of Romania this fact was achieved in 1918 with the creation of Greater Romania and the establishment within the same State of the population and regions considered ethnically Romanian. However, almost thirty years later, the dream of this great union faded with the loss of three of its regions.

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