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THE IMPACT OF THE VERSAILLES SYSTEM ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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Abstract

The first rules of international law emerged with the advent of the state and the division of society into antagonistic classes. Of course, the content and structure of international law vary from one epoch to another, depending on the social order that succeeded. The creation of states, the dispute over supremacy among them, the development of diplomatic relations between them, the emergence of new institutions and principles of international law led to the need for systematic research into problems in international practice that gradually formed the object of a new branch of law, international law, which has earned a well-deserved place in the independent sciences.

In the seventeenth and twentieth centuries there were frequent demonstrations of the peoples for the assertion of their national being, for the realization of the aspirations of freedom and progress, for the limitation of the sphere of action of imperialism and, finally, for peace and security. Studying the doctrine of international law, we certainly deduce the existence of two distinct periods of contemporary international law. The first refers to the period between the wars and the second corresponds to the end of World War II. We emphasize the fact that contemporary international law is characterized by the orientation with the scope of assuring peace, human rights, democracy, towards peaceful cooperation between states and the freedom of peoples. Edifying to achieve such desideratum are the series of treaties concluded at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Keywords:
Norms, international law; World War 1; treaties, freedom; peace.

JEL classification: K33.

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I. Introduction

An important moment in the development of international law are the peace treaties of Paris of 1919 and 1920, making up the Versailles System which resulted not only in the emergence of new international actors in the form of independent states on the map of Europe, such as Austria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland, Romania, Hungary, but also the establishment of the League of Nations (initially, together with Romania, there were 32 states with the status of founding *members of the League of Nations,* and in 1937 the number of members had reached 58 states [1]) through the League Pact which is an integral part of the Paris Treaties. The peace treaty with Hungary enshrined the union of Transylvania with Romania, thus fulfilling the centuries-old hopes of the Romanian people for the great national union.

It is the first international organization with a universal character aimed at maintaining international peace and restricting the use of war, guaranteeing the status quo established by the Versailles system, and respecting international law. But, in practice, a competition of negative factors such as the balance of power in the international arena, the lack of involvement of the great dominant powers in the application of the provisions of the Covenant and its shortcomings made the League of Nations inoperable within the international community. For all its imperfections, the existence and activity of the League of Nations have made important contributions to international law, to its institutions that have as an aim ensuring and maintaining peace, and, in addition, the peaceful settlement of international disputes.

II. Causes of the World War I

In an age of multinational empires, many of which were undemocratically ruled by militaristic aristocrats (as in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the German one, the Ottoman Empire, and the Tsarist Empire), terrorism, as a method of opposition to refusal of accepting the national aspirations of the enslaved peoples, was a ubiquitous reality on the old continent. Although in Europe political and religious terrorism was present from the British Empire in the west to the Ottoman or Tsarist Empire in the east due to the unjust, racist (the heir to the Habsburg throne before assassinating them in Sarajevo, Franz Ferdinand considered the slaves from the empire as sub-people, the Serbs being considered pigs [2] and brutally

way in which the non-German and non-Hungarian minorities of Austria-Hungary were treated, the Habsburg Empire was a permanent and favourite target of nationalist terrorism. The assassination increased the tension, already high, that existed in Europe. Rebellions took place in Sarajevo following the death of the archduke, being led by the Serb minority. Although this assassination was seen as the direct reason for the outbreak of World War I, the real causes of the war go further, in the *complex network of alliances and counterbalances* that developed between different European powers following the *defeat of France and the formation of the German state under the leadership of Otto von Bismarck in 1871* [3]. The causes of the First World War are a complicated problem; there are many political factors that led to the war. The most important can be considered: nationalism, previous unresolved disputes, the system of alliances, fragmentary governance, delays and misunderstandings in diplomatic communication, the arms race, etc.

The main cause of the First World War was the refusal of empires to grant their peoples the right to self-determination. Bosnia was annexed by the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1908, in „contempt of the feelings or desires of the population, Austria-Hungary itself being already at that time a multi-ethnic state in which many minorities were dominated by a clique of Germans and Hungarians. Just as Transylvanian Romanians under Austro-Hungarian oppression looked hopefully for help to the already free Romanians in the kingdom of Romania, so did Serbs in Bosnia and the rest of the Austro-Hungarian Empire look hopefully to their brothers in the independent kingdom of Serbia" "The Austro-Hungarian, German, and Russian governments showed little skill in handling their minorities. Some groups were treated more harshly than others, but everywhere the minorities grew increasingly restless under political repression and economic oppression, and they demanded concessions. In Austria-Hungary some minorities were able to look across their frontiers to the free kinsmen who, they hoped, would one day free them from the antiquated rule under which they suffered. The Yugoslavs of both Austria and Hungary, refused concessions by their Habsburg rulers, looked for help to Serbia, which, under King Peter 1 Karageorgevich, was an independent nation; and the Romanians of Transylvania, in south-eastern Hungary, gazed across the Carpathians to independent Romania, which had a Hohenzollem king" [4]. *There are many hypotheses that try to explain what, or who was to blame for the outbreak* of World War I. The first explanations, published between 1920 and 1930, concerned the official version which, in accordance with the *Treaty of Versailles* and the *Treaty of Trianon*, gave responsibility to Germany and its

allies. The official version was a statement based on the idea that the war began when „Austria-Hungary invaded Serbia and then Germany invaded Belgium and Luxembourg. The official version is justified by the fact that the responsibility for the war consists only in the aggression manifested by Germany and Austria-Hungary, and that states like Russia, France and Great Britain reacted legitimately against the aggression of the Central Powers" [5]. Over time, other analysts have taken into account other factors such as the rigidity of Russian and German military plans, the habituation with British wars, alliances that preceded World War I, and the growing nationalist waves in Europe. There are sufficient reasons for the escalation of the conflict in July 1914. Under these conditions, diplomatic efforts to mediate the Austro-Serbian conflict had become futile, as aggressive action by Germany and Russia only increased the severity of the conflict. In addition, the means of communication at that time were extremely limited, as all nations still used telegraphs and ambassadors as the main method of communication and negotiation, which led to long delays, in terms of hours or sometimes even days in the course of international relations.

III. The significance of the Paris Peace Treaties of 1919-1920

The Versailles system, which was called the Paris Peace Treaties of 1919-1920, marked the beginning of the contemporary era in the development of international law, characterized by the efforts of peoples to establish a system of collective security, condemnation of aggression and carrying out disarmament. The chronology of the conclusion of the treaties was as follows: Germany at Versailles, 28th of June 1919, with Austria, at Saint Germain 10th of September 1919; with Bulgaria, at Neuilly on 27th of November 1919, with Hungary, at Trianon on 4th of June 1920; with Turkey, at Sevres on 10th of August 1920, and with Romania, at Paris on the 9th of December 1919. All these treaties marked the dismemberment of the Habsburg Empire and the emergence of new independent states in Europe: Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, including the union of Transylvania with Romania [6: 65-66].

Peace Treaty between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany: On June 15/28, 1919, the Peace Treaty between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany was signed at Versailles (This treaty was signed by the United States, the British Empire, France, Italy, and Japan as principal allied and associated powers; of Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, China,

Cuba, Ecuador, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Hedjaz, Portugal, Romania, the Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian State, Siam, Czechoslovakia and Uruguay, together with the above Powers, constituting the Allied Powers and associated, on the one hand, and Germany, on the other. The treaty entered into force on the 10th of January 1920 - the date of deposit of the instruments of ratification by England, France, Italy and Japan, and for Romania, on the 14th of September 1920 (Official Gazette No. 42 of May 27, 1921). We note that the Treaty was voted by the Chamber of Deputies on the 25th of August 1920 and by the Senate on the 14th of August 14 1920. It was promulgated by Royal Decree No. 3611 bis of the 30th of August 1920 and published in the Official Gazette No. 134 of September 19, 1920). Article 27 of the Treaty established the borders of Germany with Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Denmark. Pursuant to Article 290, Germany recognized as existing and remained abrogated – through the Peace Treaty - all treaties, conventions or agreements which it concluded with Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria or Turkey, from 1 August 1914 until the Peace Treaty with Germany entered into force. According to Article 292, Germany recognized existing and remained abrogated all the treaties, conventions and agreements it had concluded with Romania, before the 1st of August 1914, or from that date, on the entry into force of the Peace Treaty concluded with Germany.

Peace Treaty between the Allied and Associated Powers and Austria: „On 28 August / 10 September 1919, the Peace Treaty between the Allied and Associated Powers and Austria was signed in Saint Germain-en-Laye. The treaty was signed by the United States, the British Empire, France, Italy, and Japan, powers designated by the Treaty as the principal allied and associated powers; by Belgium, China, Cuba, Greece, Nicaragua, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian state, Siam, Czechoslovakia, constituting - together with the main Powers above - the Allied and Associated Powers, on the one hand, and Austria, on the other" (The treaty was voted by the Senate on 30th of July 1920 and by the Assembly of Deputies on 13th of August 1920. The law ratifying the Treaty was promulgated by Royal Decree No. 3699 of the 30th of August 1920, published in the Official Gazette No. 140 of 26th of September 1920 entered into force for Romania on 4th of September, 1920, the date on which the Romanian Government deposited its instruments of ratification in Paris) [7].

Pursuant to Article 27, the Treaty establishes the new borders of Austria with Switzerland and Liechtenstein, of Italy, of the Serbo-Croatian-

Slovenian State, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Germany. According to Article 46 of the Treaty, Austria recognized the full independence of the Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian state and relinquished - in its favour – „all rights and *titles over the territories of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy, located beyond Austria's borders*. According to Article 53 of the Treaty, Austria recognized the full independence of the Czechoslovak State and renounced all rights and titles over the territories of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy, located beyond the borders of Austria, as set out in Article 27 of the Treaty, and were recognized as part of the Czechoslovak State. At the same time, *based on Article 59 of the Treaty, Austria renounced, in favour of Romania, all the rights and titles over the part of the former Duchy of Bukovina, included beyond the borders of Romania*. Also, the Treaty stipulates that, in respect of territories outside its borders, Austria waives its rights, titles or privileges of any kind over any territory other than Europe which may have belonged to the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy or its allies, and to any rights, titles or privileges of any kind" [6: 67].

With regard to the *Arrangement on the contribution to the expenses of the liberation of the territories of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy*, we recall that on 28th of August / 10th of September 1919 in Saint Germain-en-Laye, on the same date with signing the Treaty with Austria, this document was also signed. According to Article 1 of this Arrangement (The arrangement was signed by the USA, Belgium, Great Britain, China, Cuba, France, Greece, Italy, Japan, Nicaragua, Panama, Poland, Portugal, the Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian State, Siam and the Czechoslovak State. Romania signed it on the 9th of December 1919, the same day it signed the Peace Treaty with Austria, as well as the Special Treaty on the Protection of Minorities and International Transit), Poland, Romania, the Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian State and the Czechoslovak State (as states which have been granted territories of the „former Austro-Hungarian monarchy, or which were born out of the dismemberment of the monarchy) have agreed to pay as a contribution to the tasks and expenses caused by the liberation of these territories, amounts with a total of no more than 1,500,000,000 gold francs, the gold franc being taken by weight of fine gold, established on January 1, 1914" (The weight of the gold franc was 0.32225 g between 1879-1928. In 1915 one franc was equivalent to 2.53 euros). The total amount of contributions stipulated in article number 1 was to be divided between the 4 states, according to the proportion between the average incomes for the financial years 1911, 1912 and 1913, of the territories acquired from the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The revenues of the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina were excluded from these calculations.

Convention on Control of Trade in Arms and Ammunition: on the same date as the signing of the „Treaty with Austria and the Arrangement on Contributions to the Expenditure of the Territories of the Former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the Convention on Control of Arms and Ammunition Trade was signed in Saint Germain-en-Laye" (The Convention was signed by the USA, Belgium, Bolivia, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, South African Union, New Zealand, India, China, Cuba, Ecuador, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Italy, Japan, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian State, Siam, Czechoslovakia. The following acceded to this Convention: Venezuela in 1921; Chile in 1921, as well as Brazil, Bulgaria and Finland. Romania deposited its instruments of ratification in Paris on May 31, 1924), in accordance with Article 1 of the Convention of the Contracting Parties undertake to prohibit the export of the following categories of weapons of war: artillery pieces, explosive or gas projectile launchers, flamethrowers, bombs, grenades , machine guns and small arms, as well as the export of ammunition for these categories of weapons.

Peace Treaty between the Allied and Associated Powers and Bulgaria: This legal instrument was signed on 14/27 November 1919 in Neuilly-Sur-Seine (The Treaty was signed by the United States, the British Empire, France, Italy and Japan, designated by the Treaty as the main allied and associated Powers; of Belgium, China, Cuba, Greece, Hedjaz, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian State, Siam and Czechoslovakia, constituting the Allied and Associated Powers, on the one hand, and Bulgaria, on the other). The treaty „establishes the borders of Bulgaria with the Serbo-Croatian-Slovak State, with Greece and with Romania based on article 27. According to the Treaty, Bulgaria undertakes to grant all the inhabitants of Bulgaria full protection of their life and liberty, regardless of birth, nationality, language, race or religion. According to article 60 of the Treaty, Bulgaria undertakes to recognize the full value of the Peace Treaties and additional conventions concluded by the allied and associated Powers *with the Powers which fought alongside Bulgaria"* [8]. At the same time, Bulgaria undertook to accept the provisions taken with regard to the territories of the former *German Empire*, the *Austro-Hungarian Empire* or the *Ottoman Empire*.

The treaty concluded by the Main Allies and Associated Powers and Romania: it was concluded on November 26 / December 9, 1919 in Paris (The treaty was signed by the United States, the British Empire, France, Italy, Japan - the main allies and associated powers, on the one hand, and Romania, on the other. The treaty was voted by the Senate on the 30th pf July 1920 and by the Assembly of Deputies on August 13, 1920. By Royal Decree no. 3699 of August 30, 1920, the Law for the Ratification of the Treaty was

promulgated, published in the Official Gazette No. 140 of September 26, 1920. The Treaty entered into force on the 16th of July 1920, and for Romania, on the 4th of September 1920 [6]). Based on the Treaty, the Romanian Government undertakes to grant to all inhabitants, regardless of birth, nationality, language, race or religion, the full and complete protection of their life and freedom. Furthermore, the treaty stipulated that all the inhabitants of Romania will have the right to the free public and private exercise of any type of faith, religion or denomination, whose practice is not contrary to public order and morals. In accordance with the provisions of the Treaty, Romania undertakes to grant, on Romanian territory, including in territorial waters, the freedom of transit of persons, goods, ships, cars and postal couriers, transiting from or to any of the allied or associated Powers, and to grant them, in terms of facilities, taxes, restrictions, a treatment at least as favourable as to persons, goods, ships, cars, wagons and postal couriers of Romania or of any other nationality.

The peace treaty between the Allied and Associated Powers and Hungary was signed on May 22 / June 4, 1920, in Trianon. Articles 27-3 5 of the Treaty established Hungary's borders with Austria, the Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian State, Romania and Czechoslovakia. Hungary renounced, in favour of Romania, in accordance with the provisions of article 45 of the Treaty, to all rights and titles over the territories of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy, located beyond the borders of Hungary, as set out in article 27 - The borders of Hungary, and recognized by the Treaty or by any other treaties concluded in order to regulate the problems between the two countries, as part of Romania. According to Article 46 of the Treaty, a 7-member Commission, of which 5 were appointed by the main Allies and Associated Powers, one from Romania and one from Hungary, was set up after the entry into force of the Treaty to set the route of the border line on the spot described in article 27, Part II, Borders of Hungary. Based on Article 47, *Romania recognized and confirmed to Hungary* the commitment to introduce in a Treaty with the main allied and associated Powers, *provisions to protect in Romania the interests of the inhabitants who differed by race, language or religion from the majority of the population*. In its turn, Hungary undertakes, in accordance with the provisions of article 55 of the Treaty, to grant to all the inhabitants of Hungary, regardless of birth, nationality, language, race or religion, the full and complete protection of their life and liberty. Pursuant to the provisions of article 74 of the Treaty, Hungary recognized the borders of

Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, Poland, Romania, the Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian Stable and Czechoslovakia, as set by the main allied and associated Powers.

The peace treaty concluded with Turkey was signed on July 28 / August 10, 1920, in Sevres. Article 27 of the Treaty established the borders of Turkey in Europe and Asia (The treaty was signed by the British Empire, France, Italy and Japan - as the main Allied Powers; of Armenia, Belgium, Greece, Iledjaz, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian State and the Czechoslovak State, constituting - together with the main Allied Powers above, the Allied Powers, on the one hand, and Turkey, on the other. The Treaty has not been ratified and has not entered into force). At the same time, the Treaty „provided for the opening of the Straits, in time of peace and war, to all commercial or warships and military and commercial aircraft, without a flag distinction. Turkey delegates control of the waters of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles to the Straits Commission. Greece also delegates the same powers to the commission and pledges the same facilities. The treaty also includes Turkey's Declaration on the Recognition of the Borders of Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian State and the Czechoslovak State, as set out in the specified treaties or complementary conventions" [9].

Covenant of the League of Nations. The Covenant of the League of Nations or the Statute of the League of Nations was the fundamental document by which the League of Nations was created. On 15/28 June 1919, at Versailles, the League of Nations Pact was agreed, under which the members of the society *assumed the obligation to respect and maintain, despite any external aggression, the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League* (according to Article 10). The Covenant of the League of Nations was enshrined in Articles 1-26 of the Peace Treaties of Versailles, Saint Germain-en-Laye, Neuilly-Sur-Seine, Trianon and Sevres. The Covenant was voted by the Senate on August 14, 1920, and by the Assembly of Deputies on the 25th of August 1920. Royal Decree No. 3611 bis of the 30th of August 1920, promulgated the Law ratifying the Covenant. On the 10th of January 1920, the Covenant of the League of Nations entered into force. For Romania, it entered into force on the 14th of September 1920, when the Romanian Government deposited in Paris the instruments of ratification.

Under the Covenant, any member of the League had the right to draw amicably the attention of the Assembly or the Council to any circumstance likely to affect international relations, and which threatens to disturb peace or good understanding between nations (art. 11). The members of the League of Nations undertook, in the event of a dispute between them, likely to degenerate into armed conflict, to submit it to the

arbitration procedure or to the Council of the League (art. 12). The members of the Society undertook to execute in good faith the sentences given by the Court and not to resort to war against any member of the Society who complied with them.

IV. Conclusions

The Great Russian Socialist Revolution of 1917 split the capitalist system, an event that led to a rethinking of trends in international relations. The triumph of the Socialist Revolution resulted in the acceptance of the division into states and, implicitly, the coexistence of the socialist state with the national one (as a remnant of the French Revolution). Issues of common interest continue to be resolved by the collective powers that have achieved a *de facto* governance of international society, in the absence of an institutional organization of the society of sovereign states. Following the dismemberment of the Habsburg Empire, new independent states emerged - Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland, the new Romania to which Transylvania was attached - all these new states being enshrined in the *Paris Peace Treaties of 1919 and 1920* (These treaties have been the subject of research by renowned authors of international law in Europe and the United States, and are considered essential for ensuring peace in Europe and in the world. The significance of this system lies in the fact that it represents the beginning of the contemporary era in the development of international law on new bases of condemnation of aggression, achievement of disarmament and a system of collective security.

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