

## **DIVISION GENERAL CONSTANTIN DRAGU – A MILITARY EDUCATOR**

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*The pedagogical training side of a fighter requires that the changes that have taken place during the training be assimilated of what has been learned so that similar soldierly knowledge will enter into the substance of his personality. Such an idea is not new. In the inter-war, a number of officers were interested in transmitting knowledge to soldiers respecting the principles of military pedagogy, contributing, repeatedly, by personal experience to enriching this discipline. Such a personality, who felt that he had the sacred duty to dedicate his life to teaching, is General Constantin Dragu. Throughout this article, we will attempt to portrait this distinguished general of the Romanian Army, and through his writings show what means to be a military teacher.*

**Keywords:** teacher; military pedagogy; moral education; army.

*„The officer must be worked by the thought and the burning desire, to always be led by the principle and to stand up for the call. Nothing is for his personal interest, all for the moral training of his soldiers under his command.”*

Army General Constantin Dragu

Born on 8 January, 1873 in the town Străulești, Vâlcea, the General of Division Constantin Dragu, attended the Military School from 1894-1896, serving as an internship year in the Austro-Hungarian army (1905), and having various positions in the Romanian army.

In his activity, he paid special attention to issues regarding the military pedagogy, bringing through his own experience and written works, notable contributions in this area. For two years between 1910 and 1911, he was professor of tactics at military school of infantry and artillery in Sibiu, during which he improved his qualities of military educator.

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He also improved his pedagogical skills by holding various positions of commander: he commanded the 3rd Battalion of the Regiment 33 "Tulcea", fighting at the head of the subunits in the Romanian military campaign in the south of the Danube during the Second Balkan War (1913); he was Chief of Staff of the Division 13 and 16 Infantry, taking part in the battles of the war Nămolosa and Mărășești of wholeness (1916-1919); he was Commander of the 47 Infantry Regiment, taking part in battles in the fall of 1917 against Bolshevik Russian troops, working mainly in southern Bassarabia (Cahul Bolgrad Ismail New Chilia, Vâlcov); he was Commander of the 41 Infantry Brigade and Commander of the Infantry Training Centre, which acted to Sebeș (1919) and Timișoara (1920), where they trained officers come from the Austro-Hungarian army involved in the Romanian army; he held the position of senior director of inspection and Infantry in two periods (1921-1924, 1927-1928), he served as commander of the large unit: Division 3 frames Army Corps (1924-1925), Division 18 Infantry (1925-1926), 13th Infantry Division (1926-1927) and 3rd Army Corps deployed in Bassarabia (1929-1931).<sup>1</sup>

He was concerned with problems of military pedagogy, especially moral issues and education in the army, and wrote a series of works: *Moral education of the army (notions of pedagogy)*, 1910; *Moral and national education of Army (Notions of pedagogy)*, second edition revised and adds, 1921; *Army achievement of democracy and "armed nation". Problem of reducing active military service*, 1925; *Facts and prosperity fulfilled to strengthen the nation, ascension moral strength of the Army*, 1930; *Marshal Alexander Averescu*, 1939 etc.

Good knowledge skills of the environment of his time, Constantin Dragu Division General considers that: "Education of youth is the target of all, because he reached the conviction that the only way to achieve the ideal of the great philosopher Kant stated: man can only become man by education. He is what education makes him. The great secret of human perfection is found in education"<sup>2</sup>.

Defining "education" (development and the improvement of the human being), the teacher (who is dealing with growth and education) or by referring to the "four powers - physical, intellectual, professional and moral" that go hand in hand and reinforce each other to each individual and the entire mass to produce maximum gain and moral and material gain for the benefit of people and civilization<sup>3</sup>, General Constantin Dragu reveals himself to the

<sup>1</sup> Petre Otu, Teofil Oroian, Ion Emil, *Personalități ale gândirii militare românești*, Academy of High Military Studies Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Căpitanul Constantin Dragu, Educațiunea morală în Armată. Noțiuni de pedagogie*, „Cooperativa” Typography, Bucharest, 1910, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> *General Constantin Dragu, Educațiunea morală și națională în Armată (Noțiuni de pedagogie)*, II<sup>nd</sup> Edition reviewed, Typography of Army Geographical Service, Bucharest, 1921, p. 32.

readers and to the people who love the military training in pedagogy as a fine connoisseur of many issues, which at first sight would seem insignificant. So, for example, moral power is considered to be "the lever that helps development and the flourishing of the other three"<sup>4</sup> He gives as examples America and England, to illustrate the primacy of moral power, countries where "it seems perfect harmony reigns between the four kinds of education"<sup>5</sup>. For Romania, the military educator, General Constantin Dragu, believes that the future of the four branches of education must be coordinated, "for youth, adults and even the elderly, to receive true education, prosperity and strengthen the Romanian people whole"<sup>6</sup>.

Pedagogy is for the General Constantin Dragu, the „science dealing with real and practical search methods, with which you can make education of soul, cultivation, growing good habits and ‘true’ virtues soldiers”<sup>7</sup>.

Not everyone can be educator, argues Constantin Dragu, but one that meets a number of requirements<sup>8</sup>, namely:

1. *personal beliefs*, materialized in passion for career in arms:

"Educator is fully aware and convinced of his calling, is beaten by weapons career passion, and then works well to pass inspections, to obtain good grades, to satisfy personal desires or interests, but must work with great zeal and love, for people that control unit, to be really well prepared and ready for war and for the morally life for citizenship, where to go-confidence inspired by love and trust in the institutions of the state and its military power, armed to the teeth with a boundless love of country and dynasty, and with the highest familiar and national feelings";

2. *moral qualities* namely:

- blood duty power considered the moral foundation from which other national sentiments will arise;

- feeling of brotherhood and love of soldiers he commands: "Teachers are parents of soldiers, during both serving under the flag, and you always love them like their parents";

- sense of duty and zealousness "must be the first educator on duty, working cheerfully and with great zeal, for only in this way, it takes dedication, love and joy for duty, from those whom he instructs and who make education";

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 33.

<sup>5</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 34.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 77.

<sup>8</sup> *General Constantin Dragu, Educațiunea morală și națională în Armată (Noțiuni de pedagogie)*, II<sup>nd</sup> Edition reviewed, Typography of Army Geographical Service, Bucharest, 1921, pp. 45-76.

- the sense of honor and justice "teacher must be fair and just, because the only way to get these feelings deep root in the hearts of the call of education of them";

- feeling soldierly courage and responsibility "must be brave officer, and ready to take responsibility for all acts and actions, for only in this way educated people are lead on the true path of soldierly courage, and liability for acts and actions";

- sense of honor and dignity, neither bought nor inherited but obtained through good deeds;

- character, determination, superhuman energy, "the teacher must be convinced of his calling, honesty, righteousness, faithfulness and determination etc. and above all decisiveness";

3. *physical qualities*, namely physically well built, sturdy, agile, nimble, strong;

4. *intellectual qualities* that help the future teacher military to face difficult circumstances "reading, rereading, and looking to keep up with the progress of science and civilization ... Exercise judgment must be cultivated with care";

5. *general knowledge rather developed and land*, resulting in strong and clear principles of anatomy, biology, physiology, hygiene and nutrition, psychology, philosophy, sociology;

6. *professional knowledge, techniques and tactics* that help the educator "to become an artist in his career, for only thus is the living example and gain confidence souls that command is obeyed and followed blindly";

7. *pedagogical qualities*, namely: patience and perseverance, self-discipline and perseverance, spirit of observation and research, personality educator;

8. *military skills* such as: skilled and equipped instructor, passionate and convincing educator, wise, determined and energetic commander, cultivated through work and education.

In his works, he makes known "notions of pedagogy that correspond to the nature of a Romanian", namely: labor division principle, knowing the soldiers in all relationships, mood of the soldiers, for any action (work) must pursue development and the raising moral powers; example – instance<sup>9</sup>.

The military teacher refers in his writings to moral education teaching methods and educational resources necessary to reach some relevant details<sup>10</sup>:

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>10</sup> *Capitanul Constantin Dragu, Educațiunea morală în Armată. Noțiuni de pedagogie*, „Cooperativa” Typography, Bucharest, 1910, pp. 51-60 and *General Constantin Dragu, Educațiunea morală și națională în Armată (Noțiuni de pedagogie)*, II<sup>nd</sup> Edition reviewed, Typography of Army Geographical Service, Bucharest, 1921, pp. 86-96.

- "moral education of must vary in relation to the nature of each individual": for this emphasis on conversation and advice given to each individual separately;

- "way of teaching" can take two forms: synthetic (from simple to complex, from small to large) and intuitive (from the known to the unknown). Through these forms of teaching, more complex knowledge is added to recruits' more simple ones and so, "the simple concepts that are found in their brain folds and their souls, strengthen, and are empowered to develop and increase";

- the need to "talk" with them to implement two teaching methods mentioned above, "because while working as educator intellectual faculties and those of students. Looking for answers ... not devised or made by educators, but excitement turned into notions felt up and expressed deep down I can. Deeds, not words!"

- "development and setting the concepts" is based on laws of psychology, "the perception, through representation, reaching sense, the desire and finally at will". Military teacher emphasizes repetition (which I called schooling), mainly as a means of making pedagogical education, which turns moral concepts moral habits.

In Constantin Dragu's view, the military educator must be careful to the demands of war, and have in mind that every soldier has his own personality and his duty is "to make every fighter be convinced of the role he has to fulfill, the importance of individual personality, the spirit of enthusiasm, initiative and camaraderie that we must master"<sup>11</sup>.

The military teacher does not mention in his writings coercive measures and penalties to be applied "with great greed and very careful"<sup>12</sup>, and only educational means that prevent it. In their application, military educator must take into consideration the severity of mistake, and its cause.

In his works dedicated to military pedagogy, he includes a list of "vices or passions that attack and destroy the moral strength of a soldier"<sup>13</sup>, identifying over 50 vices and passions (E.g.: laziness, truancy, betrayal, lies, deceit, drunkenness, gambling, debauchery, simulation, pretense, fear of death and honor, cowardice, lack of will and energy, flattery, espionage between comrades, discipline, disgrace, hatred, envy, malice, envy, jealousy, poor preparation for the war etc.) and proposes some pedagogical measures to defeat them as follows:

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<sup>11</sup> General Constantin Dragu, *Educațiunea morală și națională în Armată (Noțiuni de pedagogie)*, II<sup>nd</sup> Edition reviewed, Typography of Army Geographical Service, Bucharest, 1921, p. 96.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 97.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 109-134.

- "commanders", the example you give to be imitated;
- "companions of equal rank" considered to be of paramount importance for good or evil on the attack power of moral vices;
- "education by itself" by creating a role model to promote the cult of great men through leisure activities, or by talking to people with personal combat powers in the war against vices.

For the moral education of young people, educators should pay special attention to fostering religious feeling ("the foundation of soldierly virtues of our ancestors") and honesty ("the most beautiful ornament of every human soul ... the foundation of virtue").

According to General Constantin Dragu, the units and subunits must have coherent educational program, which should contain guidelines for building moral strength for officers and troops.

While he was working at the Military School of Infantry in Sibiu, he displayed in the hallways and in classes the Calendar of Franclin, which I will quote in the desire to give cause for reflection to those who read this article:

"Calendar of Franclin

1. *Thrift*. Do not overeat, don't drink until you're dizzy.
2. *Silence*. Speak only what is useful to you and others, beware of verbage;
3. *Order*. Every thing should have its place; every activity a decided time;
4. *Decision*. Be determined to do your duty; do what you decided without hesitation;
5. *Economy*. Be ready to spend money only for your sake or for other's; don't spend money without having to do so;
6. *Endeavor*. Do not waste time, but continually get busy with what is useful and refrain from any useless activity;
7. *Sincerity*. Beware of any harmful form of thought; think of right things and take them into account when speaking;
8. *Justice*. Do not hurt anyone, or his interests; do your duty in helping others;
9. *Moderation*. Beware of extreme thought; do not be upset because of injustice done to you even you think they are undeserved;
10. *Cleaning*. Don't keep your body dirty. Neither clothes nor household;
11. *Silence*. Do not get upset with trifles, ordinary events, or those that are beyond your control;
12. *Chastity*.
13. *Humility*. Imitate Socrates and Christ."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 147.

Eager to contribute to moral education, the distinguished general published a booklet entitled "Facts fulfilled for strengthening and prosperity of the nation, the army's moral power ascension" in 1920 in 10,000 copies, which summarizes the special moments of military history and national public photos describing personalities and members of the royal family, which gave its students to read and cherish.

At the time of their appearance, the works of Dragu General Constantin established military pedagogy remained only at popularization. Over the years, those who have committed no wrong if applicable military education by adapting the military educator with more than 70 years ago.

The distinguished General Constantin Dragu died in an autumn day, and he was buried at Bellu Cemetery in Bucharest, on the Saint Paraskeva day, on 14 October 1956.

In the end, the short presentation of the military teacher, General Constantin Dragu, can be done through his own words: "Work ceaselessly to do your duty as it is the source of health and happiness for each person and for all Romanian people"<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> General Constantin Dragu, *Fapte de împlinit pentru întărirea și prosperarea neamului, înălțarea puterii morale a Armatei*, INF. No.2 Military School Typography, Sibiu, 1930, p. 4.