

ROMANIA AS A BROTHER-IN-ARMS THROUGH FINNISH EYES IN WORLD WAR II

Kari ALENIOUS

Ph.D., Professor, University of Oulu, Finland

kari.alenius@oulu.fi

Abstract: *Very little has been relatively studied about the interaction between Finland and Romania. Most existing studies deal with the interwar period and World War II, but there is still room for complementary interpretations. This study focuses on Finns' perceptions of Romania, especially from the perspective of brotherhood in arms between the two countries. The theme is worth exploring because during the Second World War, both Finland and Romania considered the development of mutual relations more important than ever before. This study is based on an extensive number of original sources. The analysis shows that there were different attitudes towards Romania as a brother-in-arms, but the attitude was positive in principle. The differences are explained by the type of goals set for the future development of the relationship between Finland and Romania. It is evident that Romania was valued as a brother-in-arms by a wide range of citizens. The Finnish media and the NGOs behind it conveyed a positive image of Romania, and emphasized the common interests of Finland and Romania in the ongoing war. However, the Finnish leadership was cautious about developing bilateral relations, as it considered it necessary to strike a balance between Germany and the Western powers. The brotherhood of arms was therefore not allowed to become too close.*

Keywords: *Romania; Finland; bilateral relations; military history; Second World War; mental images; diplomacy; media history.*

Introduction

This article examines how Finland reacted to Romania during the Second World War, and why the attitude was of a certain kind. The period under consideration extends from the summer of 1941 to the autumn of 1944, i.e., the period when both countries fought alongside Germany against the Soviet Union. Finland and Romania were brothers in arms and virtually allies for more than three years, albeit without a formal alliance agreement. It is analyzed, in particular, how the various actors in Finnish society saw Romania as a brother in arms, and why the views differed in part.

The analysis focuses on both the formal policy and informal interaction. In this context, official bodies refer to the Finnish state leadership (President, Government, and Ministry for Foreign Affairs). Informal actors refer to individuals, associations, parties, and the media, respectively. The original sources of the study consist of the archives about these actors, which are mainly kept in the National Archives of Finland. Some have also been printed, such as Parliament's minutes and annexes. The Finnish newspaper and magazine press has been digitized, and the materials can be found in the electronic collections of the National Library of Finland.

In terms of theories and methods, this study utilizes, above all, a historical source critique ("close reading"), which emphasizes contextuality and the analysis of actors' goals. In addition, the importance of historical imagery in the formation of attitudes towards other countries and peoples is taken into account. The rhetoric of diplomacy and the media's typical narrative approaches are also aspects that complement the analysis.

The topic has been researched to some extent in the past. Among Romanian researchers, Silviu Miloiu has published several articles on relations between Finland and Romania during the Second World War. His subjects have included diplomatic and cultural

relations between Finland and Romania (Miloiu 2005, a), wartime propaganda (Miloiu 2005, b), the reflection of the Transylvanian question on relations between the two countries (Miloiu 2006), and a comparison of the war aims between the two countries (Miloiu 2010). Among Finnish researchers, Mikko Uola has dealt with Finnish-Romanian relations as part of a broader study of the mutual relations of Germany's small allies and their relations with Germany (Uola 2015). In these works and articles, a considerable amount of attention has been placed on how Finns perceived Romania as a co-belligerent, but a special study on the subject has not yet been published. This article seeks to fill that gap.

1. Finnish official perceptions: Recognition of common interests, avoidance of alliance

1.1. The first glimpses of brotherhood in arms during the Winter War

Romania was a fairly unknown country to Finns before World War II. All Finns received some basic information about Romania's geography and economic life through school education, but the information was scarce, and Romania hardly stood out from other Eastern and South-Eastern European countries far from Finland. Immediately after the First World War, however, both countries were interested in establishing diplomatic relations, and recognized that they were in a similar geopolitical and security policy position to the East. Russia (Soviet Union) ruled by the Bolsheviks was a security threat, and the countries had common interests in countering that threat (Miloiu 2006-2007, 276-280).

When Russia's civil war ended, the Soviet Union seemed to abandon its active efforts to spread the world revolution, thereby diminishing the direct military threat. From the perspective of both countries, relations between Finland and Romania lost their importance. The legations, which had been established in the early 1920s, were abolished for austerity reasons and were not re-established until the 1930s (Miloiu 2006-2007, 280-284). Finland did not open a legation in Bucharest until the spring of 1939. Economic and cultural relations also remained relatively thin between the world wars, largely because the countries were far apart, and neither had specific reasons to actively develop bilateral relations (Miloiu 2007, 93-110). World War II brought a change to this.

In the eyes of Finns, the first glimpse of the brotherhood in arms was seen during the Winter War. The unprovoked Soviet invasion of Finland at the end of November 1939 aroused great interest and widespread sympathy for Finland almost everywhere in the world. The Romanian state leadership also expressed its political support for Finland. Romanian Prime Minister Gheorghe Tătărescu told the Finnish Envoy and Bucharest's Bruno Kivikoski that Finland's struggle against the Soviet Union had given Romania more time to prepare for a similar Soviet aggression against Romania (Kivikoski 1940). As it is well known, the Soviets had plans to recapture the Bessarabia that it had lost, and it was clear that it was only a matter of time before the Soviet Union would see a suitable opportunity for such an operation.

Romania and Finland were already equated with brothers in arms in one way in Tătărescu's comment: the countries had a common enemy, and Finland's struggle was directly relevant to Romania's defense. The Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs stated that the comment was correct for assessing the strategic situation. The sympathy expressed by Romania was welcomed, but during the Winter War, there was no time to develop relations on this basis, nor was there any military co-operation between Finland and Romania. Romania did not allow its own citizens to go to Finland as volunteers to fight the Soviet Union because Romania was in immediate danger from the East, and all able-bodied men were needed at home. A few foreigners living in Romania – mainly Polish soldiers who had retreated to Romanian soil in September 1939 – were, however, allowed to travel to Finland. Moreover, the Romanian Red Cross collected grains and other food, and sent it to Finland as a donation. Small-scale fundraising was also carried out for Finland (Uola 2015, 86-87).

As Finland received a lot of attention and help from many other countries, Romania's share did not exceed the news threshold in the Finnish media. The Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the state leadership were nevertheless aware of Romania's benevolent attitude and assistance. However, the Winter War lasted only three and a half months, which is a short time for the development of bilateral relations and concrete military cooperation. The political and military situation in Europe also changed significantly with the end of the Winter War in March 1940. Germany's expedition to the West changed the strategic settings. Romania was hit by internal and external crises in 1940, and Finland was preparing for the worst – a new and stronger attack by the Soviet Union, which was thought to be highly probable in the near future (Uola 2015, 113-120).

In the spring of 1941, both Finland and Romania decided to rely on Germany to eliminate the threat of the Soviet Union. When Germany launched Operation Barbarossa in June 1941, Finland and Romania joined the war alongside Germany to defeat the Soviet Union and restore the lost eastern territories (Karelia and Salla; Bessarabia and North Bukovina). For the next three years and three months, the countries had a real opportunity for a brotherhood of arms. The relationship was also seen as such in both countries. In Finland, the brotherhood of arms received different shades and concrete manifestations, depending on whose perspective this issue was viewed from.

1.2. The Finnish highest leadership maintains a "suitable distance" to the brother-in-arms

When Germany launched an attack on the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, Finland wanted to avoid the impression that it was involved in starting a war. Yet, the Finnish army was already grouped for an attack, and there were many German troops in northern Finland who launched their own attack from Finnish soil. The starting situation was thus clear, and the Soviet Union began to take military action against Finland on the same day, which gave Finland a chance for a small propagandistic maneuver. Referring to the operations of the Soviet forces against Finland, the Finnish state leadership declared on June 25 that Finland had "become into a state of war" and started a "defensive battle" (Uola 2015, 200-212).

The next day, the Romanian government, through the Finnish Legation in Bucharest, greeted the Finnish leadership and expressed its satisfaction that Romania was on the front line with Finland, and wished Finland success in the forthcoming battle (Finnish Legation 26.6.1941). The Finnish government responded to the Romanian government's diplomatic courtesies with a nearly identical message on June 27. Finland also expressed its satisfaction that "Finland and Romania were on the common front to defeat Bolshevism and safeguard the rights of the peoples of Europe" (Foreign Ministry 27.6.1941).

Finland's word choices were carefully considered. Finland sought to maintain relations with the United States and the countries of Western Europe; and emphasized from the beginning of the war that it was waging a "separate war," and cooperated with Germany only because the countries had a common enemy threatening Finland's existence: the Soviet Union (Miloiu 2005, a, 68-69). No actual alliance with Germany, Romania, or other countries on the same side of the front came into question from the perspective of the Finnish state leadership. Officially, it was a matter of "co-belligerence" and brotherhood of arms, in principle.

Finland's highest leadership avoided emphasizing the ideological nature of the war, and particularly avoided associating itself with any manifestation of National Socialist racial ideology throughout the war. The latter position was real, as Finland also practically refused to extradite Jews to Germany, despite such proposals from Germany. Admittedly, Finland, like Romania and other "co-belligerents" of Germany, joined the Anti-Comintern Pact in the fall of 1941. Finland thus undertook to oppose the spread of communism; officially, Finland still tried not to present its primary struggle as a crusade against communism when Finland

informed the Western powers or neutral countries. Ideological comments against Bolshevism were made only in bilateral communication with “co-belligerents”. Officially, Finland was also silent about the goals it had in the ongoing war. Returning the areas lost in the Winter War to Finland was the only concrete declared aim, but other aims and alternatives were discussed in secret from the public (Uola 2015, 275-278).

The Finnish government reported to Parliament on its key policies and activities in various areas of life at the end of each year throughout the war. At the end of 1941, the government stated that the common struggle against the Soviet Union had brought Finland closer to Romania and other small countries on the same side (Finnish Government 1941). A report with the same content was issued at the end of 1942 (Finnish Government 1942). However, the strategic situation deteriorated in 1943, and the Finnish leadership began to seriously seek the opportunity to secede from the war and make peace on tolerable terms. Because the government’s annual reports were public documents, the government no longer mentioned closer relations with Romania or other “co-belligerents” at the end of 1943 (Finnish Government 1943). The emphasis on common war goals was no longer propagandistically advantageous, as Finland tended to distance itself from Germany and its official and unofficial allies – especially in the eyes of the Western powers.

Romania was more interested in closer relations with Finland than Finland with Romania. Initiatives to develop relations throughout the war came mostly from Romania, especially in political and military matters. As for the economic relations, both countries had roughly equal interests in increasing trade, and the same can be said for cultural relations. Admittedly, wartime conditions made it difficult for the economies and cultures to interact, although both sides were positive about increasing them (Palin 1943).

One concrete, official way of demonstrating the brotherhood of arms was to award decorations to representatives of a partner country. It is a common diplomatic way to show a desire to develop cooperation. In practice, decorations can be given in advance, and not only on the basis of long-term merit and considerable deeds. The purpose of awarding decorations is to encourage key executives in another country to do things and to show a positive attitude in general. In this case, Romania was the initiator.

Romania awarded the Commander-in-Chief of the Finnish Army, General (later Marshall) Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim with the highest class of Romania’s highest order (Ordinul Mihai Viteazul) in the fall of 1941 (Palin 1941). Between 1942 and 1943, a large number of other Finnish politicians and senior military leaders were awarded high Romanian decorations. Among them were President Risto Ryti, Prime Ministers Jukka Rangell and Edvin Linkomies, General Erik Heinrichs and the Finnish Envoy to Bucharest’s Eduard Palin (Palin 1943). As a rule, Finns were awarded very high decorations to show Romania’s appreciation for Finland, and Romania’s strong desire to bring the mutual relations closer.

Finland responded in the same way to the compliments and gestures of goodwill from Romania. Finland’s second highest decoration – Grand Cross of White Rose of Finland – was awarded to the actual state leader (Prime Minister and Conducător) and the Commander-in-Chief of the Romanian Army, Marshall Ion Antonescu, in January 1942. The highest decoration (the above-mentioned medal with Collar) was reserved for King Mihai and was awarded in April 1942. As in the case of Romanian awards to Finns, high Finnish decorations were given to dozens of high-ranking Romanian officers and prominent politicians in the following years (Uola 2015, 309-310). The awarding of decorations was an impressive diplomatic gesture, in which Finland was able to maintain relations with its brother-in-arm at a positive but general level. At the same time, however, Finland avoided developing the brotherhood of arms so close that it could have damaged Finland’s image of itself as a wager of a “separate war.”

When it came to a concrete security policy cooperation, the Finnish state leadership acted rather restrainedly, but was careful not to directly offend Romania. In November 1942, the Deputy Prime Minister of Romania, Mihai Antonescu, proposed to Finland that the countries exchange confidential information on foreign and security policies and military matters (Uola 2015, 308-309). The Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs welcomed the proposal, as it confirmed that the countries' interests were parallel, and sent a summary of the views of the Finnish state leadership to the Romanian state leadership (Foreign Ministry 30.11.1942).

The strategic situation had nevertheless become unfavorable by the end of 1942, and Finland was reluctant to tell Romania, Germany, or anyone else what the real assessment of the situation in the Finnish state leadership was. The information provided to Romania was therefore quite general and partly misleading. Finland, for instance, denied that it had become more active in seeking cooperation with Sweden, and the argument that Finland's attitude towards Germany had not changed in any way can also be considered somewhat purposeful (Foreign Ministry 30.11.1942). It is quite understandable that it was impossible to give important secret information even to the brother-in-arms, as it could have jeopardized Finland's goals in the near future. Nor could it be assured that the information would not end up in Germany or any other wrong recipient.

The clearest example that Finland officially wanted to avoid military engagement with Romania was that Finland did not have a military attaché at the Finnish Embassy in Bucharest. Finland differed from most other countries that had a mission in Bucharest in this respect. Finland appointed Colonel von Essen with a military attaché after a short delay in 1942, but as it can be seen from the Finnish embassy's annual reports, Colonel von Essen never arrived at Bucharest, so the appointment remained purely formal (Palin 1943). It is difficult to find any other reason for this than that Finland's highest leadership was reluctant to intensify practical military cooperation with Romania. Although Finland's highest leadership considered Romania a brother-in-law in principle and used the term from time to time, due to Finland's political caution, the relationship was more distant than it could have been - and what appears to have been the wish of the Romanian side.

1.3. Finland's envoy E. Palin as the most enthusiastic advocate of closer cooperation

In the state leadership, it is extremely rare for all actors to agree on things and support the same goals. This also applies to Finland's official relations with Romania during the Second World War. Diplomatic missions; and in their heads, i.e., envoys and ambassadors, have an important role to play in building bilateral relations. Although envoys and ambassadors represent the official foreign policy of their own country and must comply with regulations from a higher level of the State Department, envoys and ambassadors usually have the opportunity to express their own views as well. They can try to influence their own country's foreign policy, and the envoy's or ambassador's personality also matters in how well he or she can succeed in their duties. Finland had two envoys to Romania during the Second World War: Bruno Kivikoski in 1939-1941, and Eduard Palin in 1941-1945. Kivikoski was the Finnish envoy during the Winter War, and he reported on the sympathy shown by the Romanians for Finland. It was practically the only thing that aroused positive feelings towards Romania in Kivikoski. Otherwise, he seems to have been constantly very stressed and disappointed with the circumstances, in which he had to work. The criticism was directed partly at the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and partly at the Romanian society, whose customs and practices Kivikoski never adapted to. In Kivikoski's opinion, everything differed too much from what he was used to in Finland and Northern Europe (Kivikoski 1940). It seems that he did not experience the Romanians as interesting partners, let alone brothers-in-arms of the Finns during his entire career in Bucharest. Even in the spring of 1941,

he never considered whether Finland and Romania had any common interests, and it was an obvious relief for him when his term ended in June 1941.

Eduard Palin's first impressions of Romania were similar to those of Kivikoski, and from time to time, Palin was also irritated by some things that differed from the Finnish way of doing things. Palin eventually became a great friend of Romania, however, during the second half of 1941. In his strategic thinking, Romania was Finland's most important and useful partner in East Central Europe, and he openly said that Finland should have strongly developed bilateral relations with Romania in the spirit of brotherhood of arms (Palin, Annual report 1941).

He differed remarkably from Aarne Wuorimaa, Finland's envoy to Budapest, who emphasized the importance of Hungary for Finland. Wuorimaa represented a very common position in Finland, based on the view of the linguistic kinship of Finns and Hungarians. The crucial reason was that Palin spoke Swedish, so linguistic kinship did not matter to him (Miloiu 2006, 109-117). Second, Palin saw that Romania was the most resource-rich country in the region. Palin also found that the conditions for cooperation were excellent, as Finland's and Romania's security policy positions vis-à-vis Russia were practically identical and that Romania was very interested in increasing cooperation with Finland (Palin 1941).

Palin summed up his views in the spring of 1942, when he prepared the first annual report for the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Palin's predecessor, Kivikoski, had made only a few brief and neutral comments on relations between Finland and Romania in his own report (Kivikoski 1940), but they were the central issue in the report for Palin. The report is worth quoting because it illustrates Palin's thinking very clearly:

"It is safe to say that political relations between Finland and Romania can be labeled as the best. Since our Winter War, Finland has enjoyed the greatest dignity, respect, and sympathy in Romania. And as last summer, Finland and Romania undertook to fight a common enemy on the same front, against Bolshevism and Russia, a most sincere spirit of brotherhood of arms has left its mark on Finnish-Romanian political relations. From the King, the state leadership and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nothing short of excellent courtesy and kindness have been shown to the Finnish representative, and in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as in other general staffs and other agencies, I have invariably been shown the greatest sympathy, helpfulness and open-mindedness. My work in the political field has therefore been both easy and rewarding. My presentations and queries have been uniformly and openly welcomed, and on my initiative, I have been provided with valuable information and have been kept informed of development in the situation [---] In addition, in the ongoing war against the Soviet Union and perhaps even more so in the coming arrangements for peace, Finland and Romania's interests are so parallel that close contact and cooperation between Finland and Romania does not only feel desirable but necessary. Therefore, for this reason also, an eye must be kept on and action must be taken in the direction that Finnish-Romanian relations remain as good as the reasons why they – with pleasure, I can say – have developed during the year" (Palin 1941).

Palin reported on the brotherhood of arms and good relations between Finland and Romania in the same tone in his next annual reports and many other documents (Palin 1943). His views were thus very permanent, and very likely based on his real opinions. The brotherhood of arms was not left out until Palin's last report in the spring of 1945. The situation had already changed completely by then. Finland and Romania had withdrawn from Germany's side in September 1944, Romania had been occupied by Soviet forces, and Finland also had to succumb to a ceasefire agreement and Soviet control. In those circumstances, Palin's hopes for the development of the Finnish-Romanian brotherhood of arms and other kinds of cooperation had waned, and for political prudence, it was not worth

remembering the events of 1941-1944 in a positive light. There was, in fact, no mention of them in Palin's last report (Palin 1944).

2. Finland's unofficial perceptions: Strong sympathies for the southern comrade-in-fate

2.1. The view of the Finnish-Romanian Society: Finns and Romanians as "vanguards of Western civilization"

Envoy Palin was the most significant and influential figure in the Finnish Foreign Service, who sought to promote fraternal relations between Finland and Romania. He was the one who, for instance, worked hard to ensure that Finland awarded sufficient decorations to prominent Romanians, and reminded the Ministry of Foreign Affairs numerous times that Romania's cooperation initiatives should be responded to quickly and positively in all walks of life (Palin 1941). Palin was not alone, but had a number of active ideological partners who organized themselves at the beginning of 1943 as a Finnish-Romanian society.

The initiative again came from Romania. The Romanian-Finnish friendship society was established in Romania first, and the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs then proposed a similar one to Finland through George Duca, the Romanian envoy to Helsinki. The Romanian legation also provided monthly financial support to the Finnish-Romanian society. The beginning of the society was thus slightly unusual, but the society developed into a prestigious and active player that promoted interaction between the countries on the Finnish side (Miloiu 2005, b, 415-417).

There were many well-known and significant people from various walks of life on the board of the Finnish-Romanian Society. Chairman Eero Rydman was the managing director of the Finnish Social Security Institution. Other members of the board included Eino Kalima, director of the Finnish National Theater, and Rolf Nevanlinna, rector of the University of Helsinki. There were, in fact, so many high-ranking representatives of the public administration and the academia on the board of the society that the society could even be called a semi-official institute. The unifying factors for the board members were not only their interest in Romania, but also their disinterest in kinship-based national ideologies (such as between Finland and Hungary). Besides, most of them were oriented internationally, especially to the United Kingdom and France, instead of the more popular German-oriented cooperation in Finland (Salo 2013, 7-18).

The main task of the society was to provide Finland with information about Romania and its society and culture. The society organized several visits and exhibitions of Romanian scientists and artists in Finland, and published articles on Romania in Finnish newspapers and magazines during the years of 1943 and 1944 (Salo 2013, 35-53). The most important single achievement was a 109-page Finnish-language book entitled "Romania: A Latin Enclave in South-eastern Europe" published in the spring of 1944. The book was by far the largest work published in Finnish, presenting various areas of life in Romania (Rydman 1944). The previous and only similar work was "Romania: Country and People," published in 1935, which was 31 pages long (Mansikka 1935).

"Romania: A Latin Enclave in South-eastern Europe" portrayed Romania in a very positive light. There is no definite information about the authors; possibly, it was born as a Finnish-Romanian co-operation. As such, it was one of the strong manifestations regarding the attitude of Finnish friends of Romania towards the southern partner country. Of particular significance to the topic of this article is the long foreword by Eero Rydman. Even in the spring of 1944, the chairman of the Finnish-Romanian Society considered it necessary to strongly emphasize the common destiny of Finland and Romania, and how both peoples had fought again and again throughout history "against the tidal wave of the Slavs." For Rydman, Romania was clearly a brother-in-arms and a comrade of fate. Finland and Romania – in

Rydman's words, "the vanguards of Western civilization" – once again "fought side by side against the barbarians of the East" (Rydman 1944, 5-7).

It may be inferred from the activities of the Finnish-Romanian society that at least a part of the Finnish educated elite and the wider public were able to look at things from a strategic perspective. The security policy interests of Finland and Romania were indeed convergent, and in that sense, many Finns certainly felt some kind of brotherhood of arms towards the Romanians. Both state and informal actors still had to balance it between Romania and Hungary. Namely, the Hungarian legation to Helsinki closely followed any Finnish statements, and protested very easily if it found shades that could be interpreted as unfavorable for Hungary. Finnish actors were often confused about the situation because they did not understand why praising one brother-in-arms would have been offensive to another brother-in-arms. It seems that very few Finns understood how hostile relations Hungary and Romania were with the Transylvanian issue (Miloiu 2006, 105-117). Both parties followed the statements of Finland's official representatives in particular, but the word choices of prominent individuals could also provoke protests and disapproval if they showed any approval to the other party in the dispute (Uola 2015, 310-317).

2.2. The consensus in the Finnish media about a respected brother-in-arms

The above-mentioned disputes between Romania and Hungary were also reflected in the writing of the Finnish press throughout the war. It was customary for the legation of one of the countries to protest to the Finnish Foreign Service if there was something in the papers that the Romanians or Hungarians felt was favorable to the other party. In most cases, it was the fact that Finnish newspapers showed understanding for Hungary, which offended Romania. Romania was not usually directly mentioned in such writings, but commenting on the Trianon Peace Treaty, for instance, was a topic, in which understanding the Hungarian perspective automatically meant paying less attention to the Romanian perspective (Uola 2015, 312-316).

There were fewer problems in the other direction. When Finnish newspapers wrote about Romania, the news and articles mostly focused on other topics, such as Romanian culture, the economy, or society. Considering the presentation of Romania as Finland's brother-in-arms, the spring of 1942 was the peak period for writing. Romanian National Day (May 10) in particular was widely mentioned in the Finnish printed word. Supporters of all parties then published at least a short article, as did major non-political newspapers.

It is understandable that newspapers that supported nationalist values portrayed Romania more positively. For example, the newspaper *Uusi Suomi* of the Conservative Party praised Romania as Finland's reliable brother-in-arms, with whom Finland fought on the same front against Bolshevism. The Romanian army also received praise for its military performance in the East (*Uusi Suomi* 1942). The newspaper *Ilkka* of the nationalist-minded Agrarian Union also described Romania very positively and called the country a "strong ally" (*Ilkka* 1942). The term "ally" could thus be used without any problems in the Finnish press, even though there was no official alliance agreement. However, in the broader perspective of World War II, the situation was clear to many Finns.

Helsingin Sanomat, which represented the liberal political center, was essentially in line with right-wing newspapers. For them, the war was a "joint crusade against Bolshevism" by Finland and Romania (*Helsingin Sanomat* 1942). The voice of national unanimity was complemented even by the newspaper *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti*, who, like others, praised Romania for fighting the "threat of the East". The word choices of the left-wing newspaper differed only in that they did not emphasize the ideological nature of the struggle, but only spoke of the enemy (*Suomen Sosialidemokraatti* 1942). Based on these writings, there were no dissenting opinions about the threat of Russia, which had to be resolutely opposed. In that

context, the Finn-Romanian brothers-in-arms were also recognized across the political spectrum.

A year later in May 1943, the tone of Finnish newspapers towards Romania was still friendly, but as the war turned in a worrying direction, it had clearly affected the content of the newspaper articles. If we compare these two situations through the same four newspapers, then only *Uusi Suomi* was still highlighting the brotherhood of arms and community of fate between Finland and Romania in the fight against the East (*Uusi Suomi* 1943). Instead, all other newspapers (for instance, the largest Finnish paper, *Helsingin Sanomat*) emphasized the general development of relations between Finland and Romania and the friendly relations between the two countries (*Helsingin Sanomat* 1943). Many Finns' belief in victory had begun to wane, and taking distance from other co-belligerents apparently seemed to be a safer option in the new circumstances.

In any case, the single most significant Finnish media incident involving Romania during World War II was a special issue of *Suomen Sotilas* (The Finnish Soldier) in April 1942. *Suomen Sotilas* was a widely circulated military magazine for anyone interested in the subject. The magazine was apparently well-edited and published a wealth of technically good quality images, so it attracted a large audience. The 36-page special issue, published on April 1, 1942, was devoted to Romania and a presentation of its state leadership and armed forces.

The entire section of the magazine's content (two-thirds of the issue) was extremely positive about Romania. Finland and Romania were described as brothers in arms, who were now forever connected through a common heroic struggle. King Mihai was introduced under the title "King Beloved by His People." Marshal Antonescu was a "Skillful Head of State" and a "Brilliant Warlord," who had led his army from victory to victory and was also highly respected by Germany. The operations of the Romanian army were presented in detail, and at the end, there was a shorter section describing Romanian society and religious life. The special issue of *Suomen Sotilas* (1942) was the purest example of how Romania was seen as a respected brother-in-arms in Finnish patriotic circles. For these patriots, an official alliance with Romania would hardly have been a problem – rather, it was a clear wish and in line with how they saw the future of Finland and Romania after the victorious war that still loomed on the horizon in the spring of 1942.

Conclusions

It is evident that the Finnish media was very positive about Romania throughout the war. Romania was a respected brother-in-arms, with whom the Finns gladly cooperated. Especially in the early part of the war, when the war went well, the media was very optimistic about the future and highlighted the common goals and common struggle of Finland and Romania with strong, emotional expressions. Finland and Romania were practically seen as allies. The media thus saw the strategic setup of the war precisely as Europe's struggle against Russia and Bolshevism, and through it, the alliance with Romania seemed logical.

A variety of non-governmental organizations can be identified in the background of newspapers and magazines, such as all major Finnish parties. It is obvious through military publications that a similar mood prevailed among the Finnish army and voluntary national defense organizations. The same group also included the Finnish-Romanian Friendship Society, which brought together a large number of highly educated and high-ranking Finns. On this basis, it can be estimated that there was considerable support among a wide range of citizens for the positive attitude towards Romania and the development of cooperation with Romania.

The only – but at the same time, decisive – slowdown in the convergence of Finland and Romania was the cautious attitude of the Finnish state leadership. The Finnish

government and highest decision-makers assessed the situation from a global perspective during World War II, concluding that it was not worthwhile for Finland to bind itself to Germany or to any other co-belligerents of Germany. The goal of the Finnish state leadership was to maintain the greatest possible freedom of action and a balance between Germany and the Western powers. Although the Finnish leadership also welcomed Romania in principle, there was no desire to become too close. That is why Romania never became an ally of Finland, even if there were natural preconditions for it on the basis of the generally recognized brotherhood of arms.

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