



## LEGISLATIVE MEASURES TAKEN DURING THE RULE OF ALEXANDRU IOAN I REGARDING THE ORGANISATION OF THE ROMANIAN MILITARY SYSTEM – CASE STUDY: PERMANENT ARMY AND TERRITORIAL ARMY –

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*In the current, highly unpredictable context, in which the great powers want to preserve their economic, political, cultural and military influences, and the regional powers seek to receive an as comfortable as possible place at the table of the powerful ones, there is still a dilemma for which military strategies do not have a definitive answer: territorial troops versus professional forces. The two concepts are found, in specific forms, in the Romanian military terminology, as well as in the legislation approved in order to modernise the Romanian military body ever since the time of Prince Alexandru Ioan I (Alexandru Ioan Cuza).*

*In the first years of the establishment of the modern Romanian Army, the political factors, but especially the military ones, with decision-making power, enacted the organisation of the Romanian armed power, introducing modern doctrinal concepts, starting, however, from the traditional military doctrine, according to which the national territory of the country is defended by the entire people. Thus, during the reign of Alexandru Ioan I, the main components of the Romanian Army were the permanent army, with its reserve forces, the territorial army, as well as the militias, which included, without being paid special importance, the city guard and the crowds.*

*Keywords: Romanian Army; permanent troops; territorial troops, recruitment; armed power;*

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## INTRODUCTION. ORGANISATION OF THE ARMIES OF THE TWO DANUBE PRINCIPALITIES DURING THE ORGANIC REGULATIONS PERIOD

The modernisation and adaptation of the Romanian military body to the economic, political and, especially, military context were basic concerns for Romanian political and military decision-makers. The need to build a strong army, able to face any challenges, internal and external ones, as well as to defend Romania's legitimate interests, both on land and at sea, was taken into account, regardless of the historical period and the political orientation. Thus, even from the time of the Organic Regulations reigns, major measures were taken regarding the development of the permanent army, but also the adaptation of the territorial military formations to the needs of that period.

In accordance with the provisions of the Romanian doctrine of defence of the territories of the Danube Principalities, the decision made was to recruit all men that could carry a weapon, in order both to stop a possible armed aggression and to maintain order within the territory (*Istoria militară a poporului român*, 1987, pp. 284).

After the end of the Romanian Revolution of 1848-1849, political and military decision-makers from the two Principalities came to the conclusion that the permanent troops, the main category of the two Romanian armies, had neither the human resources nor the necessary equipment to carry out the missions to defend their territories, in an extremely volatile international context, in which the divergences between the Great Powers, which sought to divide or, as the case may be, to redistribute the spheres of influence in Europe, especially in the Peninsula, grew more and more until they reached the phase of military conflict, especially in the Balkan area and at the mouths of the Danube (Ib., p. 288).

Therefore, in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the Romanian area, two theoretical concepts were developed, materialised, at the beginning, reluctantly, namely the *national guard* or the *civic guard*, as well as the *home guards*<sup>1</sup> *regiments*, the basis for the future *territorial*

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<sup>1</sup> In Romanian, *dorobanți*.



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army. According to those who proposed these new structures in the army organisation, they had to be made up of men who could carry weapons, but were not part of the permanent army. Obviously, the aim was not to disband the permanent army, but to bring under arms all able-bodied men, capable of fighting and mobilisation, in order to create as much combat power as possible in case of war.

A first stage of the process of modernisation and reorganisation of the permanent army was represented by the period after the suppression of the Revolution of 1848-1849, when the conditions imposed by the Ottoman Empire, as a suzerain power, limited its powers to perform administrative, internal tasks and those regarding the cordon sanitaire. These missions were officially recognised by art. 43 of the Paris Convention of August 1858, which provided that *“militias must reunite whenever internal security or border security is threatened”*. (România la 1859, 1984, p. 288).

The need to strengthen the fighting capacity of the armies of the two Danube Principalities, at the beginning of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, determined the development and expansion of the attributions of *territorial troops*, which were meant to relieve *the permanent army* of some administrative tasks. These formations also had to receive proper military training to increase combat in the event of external aggression.

### **THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT REGARDING THE ROMANIAN ARMY ORGANISATION DURING THE RULE OF ALEXANDRU IOAN I. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL CONCEPTS**

The double election of Colonel Alexandru Ioan I (Alexandru Ioan Cuza) as ruler of Moldavia and Wallachia, in January 1859, followed by an intense diplomatic campaign for its recognition by the Great Powers of Europe, marked the beginning of concrete actions taken by the Romanian political and military authorities in order to strengthen the new status of the United Principalities.

Given that not all European powers agreed to the personal union of Colonel Cuza, it was necessary to take immediate measures to unify, reform and modernise the Romanian military body, the main tool for safeguarding the young Romanian state. Thus, the legislation and the existence, *de facto* and *de jure*, of a system of defence intended to ensure both the order within the borders and the protection

of legitimate interests in the event of an external attack were required, inter alia, by the existence prior to the 1859 Act, as well as the connections between the two fundamental structures of the Romanian military body, respectively the *permanent army* and the *territorial army*.

A first step was represented by the measures taken at the level of the Ministry of War to standardise the units and subunits of the two Danube Principalities, which would have implicitly led to the standardisation of the act of command and training both in Moldova and in Wallachia. In this respect, the *Order of the Day on the entire Army* no. 11 of 10 January 1860, signed by General Ioan Emanoil Florescu, as Minister of War, clearly stipulated the organisation of companies within a battalion in the organisation of a regiment, as follows: in Battalion 1, companies received numbers from 1 to 4, while in Battalion 2, the companies were numbered from 5 to 8. Also, companies 1 and 5 of each battalion were organised as subunits of grenadiers (*Monitorul Oastei*, 1861, no. 3, p. 36).

Given the volatility of the domestic and international context, in which the Great European Powers continued to raise economic, political and military claims on the territories of the Balkan Peninsula, Romanian military decision-makers reaffirmed the principle of the *armed nation* at the basis of the Romanian military system. It took into account the experience of the armed forces of the Great Powers which, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, adopted a military system that focused on the *permanent army* and a *reserve force* that could be mobilised as soon as possible. Also, in case of war, but also in peacetime, a *public force* acted to maintain order within the borders. And, last but not least, an important role was given to the *military establishments*, respectively to the Officers' School and to the cultural institutions which ensured a high degree of education of the officers (Id., no. 4, p. 63).

Good theorists, but also fine connoisseurs of the organisation of the military structures of the Great European Powers, the Romanian staff officers were aware of the importance of the permanent army. Thus, this institution, the most important structure of the national military body, provided the troops with "*the military training needed which cannot be obtained without it*" (ib.). In order to modernise and strengthen the fighting capacity of the permanent army, in 1860, the Bucharest Electoral Assembly adopted the *Provisional Law on Army Recruitment*, ratified by the ruler, which introduced the obligation to fulfil military service by all citizens of the country, regardless of the social class to which they belonged (Id., 1860, no. 45, p. 773).



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Another component of the Romanian military body, the second most important, was represented by the territorial troops. They consisted of troops working in shift, home guards and border guards, as well as gendarmes and servants and came to the attention of the ruler who, in 1860, considered that “the armed power of a country must be organised as in the old days, namely divided in regular army and militia”.

In a speech for the inhabitants of Moldavia, Mihail Kogălniceanu, one of the most active promoters of the modernisation of Romania and, implicitly, of the Romanian Army, showed that, “... according to the Law of 25 July 1860, our army, like a true national army, will be made up of the sons of the country of all ranks, be they rich or poor; townspeople or villagers. From now on, recruitment has to be done by drawing lots, as it is done in all free countries, where justice is justice”. (Ib.). Thus, through this normative act, young people were generally recruited through a somewhat cumbersome procedure, called *conscriptio*, more precisely annual calls by drawing lots. However, in order to complete the troop requirements for all corps, the enlistment of volunteers was encouraged. In this sense, on 15 February 1861, General Ioan Emanoil Florescu, Minister of War, signed the *Order of the Day on the entire Army no. 45*, by which the corps commanders could receive, “without referring to the Ministry, all the volunteers who present themselves to be enlisted in their Regiments, but guarding the conditions of nationality, skills and age set out in *Order of the Day no. 90 of 16 May the previous year*”. (Id., *Monitorul Oastei*, 1861, no. 11, pp. 164; 175)<sup>2</sup>.

This measure was taken in the conditions in which, at the order of the ruler, the modernisation of the military power represented a constant of the policy on national defence. That is why special attention was paid to the permanent army, around which all the other components of the Romanian military body were to be developed. Aware that the national will alone was not enough to modernise the army, Prince Alexandru Ioan I ordered the Minister of War, in December 1860, to supplement “...the cadres, take care of the equipment and, if necessary, go even above the numbers provided in the budget. Today, the country has its national flag, the Romanians will gather around it to defend it”. (*Monitorul Oficial al Țării Românești*, 1860, no. 291, p. 1385).

Another component of the Romanian military body, the second most important, was represented by the *territorial troops*. They consisted of troops working in *shifts*, home guards and border guards, as well as gendarmes and *servants* and came to the attention of the ruler who, in 1860, considered that “the armed power of a country must be organised as in the old days, namely divided in regular army and militia” (*Monitorul Oastei*, 1860, no. 6, p. 81). Taking into account

<sup>2</sup> Another way to supplement corps strength was represented by the reengagement of those who already fulfilled the military service, being permitted for a period between two and four years.

this component of the Romanian Army, the military factors with decision-making power considered it necessary to generalise it throughout the United Principalities, especially since 1864, when the institution of *region servants in Moldova* was abolished. Thus, by Order no. 892 of 24 July 1864, in Moldova also there were organised the home guards troops, and by Order no. 893 of the same day, the bases of the border guard units were laid (Id., 1864, no. 18, pp. 351-354; 357).

The reorganisation and modernisation of the Romanian Army required, in addition to the human and material effort of the Romanian authorities, an approach that would enable the development of the Romanian military body in a favourable legislative framework. Therefore, aware of the importance of the laws, the Romanian staff officers, under the coordination of the Minister of War, actively participated in the drafting of the *Law for the organisation of armed power in Romania*, which was ratified by the ruler by High Decree no. 1680 of 27 November 1864 (Id., No. 27, p. 455). This was the most important legislative act adopted during the reign of Colonel Alexandru Ioan Cuza regarding the organisation of the Romanian Army and the crystallisation of a national defence doctrine, given that the Great European Powers made economic, political and military efforts to attract the young state of Romanian in their sphere of influence.

It is interesting that, from the first articles of the law, references were made to the organisation of the Romanian defence system starting both from the tradition of the fight of the entire people and from the needs of an insecure domestic and international context, in which Romania was forced to create a strong army, always capable of defending the legitimate interests of the country. Thus, in chapter 1, *Basics of organisation*, art. 1, it is clearly specified that “*The armed power in Romania comprises two elements: 1. The permanent army with its reserve force and 2. The militias composed of border guards, home guards and their reserve troops*” (Ib.).

Art. 2 referred to the period in which the military service was fulfilled. Thus, in accordance with the provisions of the law, “*All Romanians and those who became Romanians citizens, from the age of 20 to 50, are called to take up arms as follows: from the age of 20 to 26, in the standing army and militias, border guards and home guards*”. Also, art. 3 provided the way in which young people served under arms, maintaining the system of drawing lots that, although difficult, was considered effective, given that political decision-makers in Bucharest wanted to eliminate social inequalities and strengthen



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the military body through the participation of all citizens. Thus, according to this article, *“all young people, in the year they have reached the age of 20, draw the lots for the numbers necessary for the annual quota and go to the permanent army, namely, four years in the permanent army, and two years in the reserve force”* (Ib.). It is interesting that, in this law, the inhabitants of the border localities did not participate in the actual recruitment, because they served in the border guard units (Ib., pp. 455-456).

### MISSIONS OF THE MILITIAS AND THE PERMANENT ARMY

A special place among the provisions of this law was occupied by the *militias*, to which the legislator dedicated the entire chapter III. Thus, art. 49 clearly stated that they were composed of *border guards* and *home guards*. Good connoisseurs of the military system, the Romanian staff officers proposed, and the two Chambers of the Parliament approved, that the inhabitants of the border communes should be part of the Border Guard Corps. As in the case of the permanent army, the border guards also fulfilled their military service for a period of six years, more precisely two years in the active service and four years in the reserve forces, as it results from art. 51 (Ib.).

As part of the militia, the home guards played a significant role in the Romanian military body. That is why, art. 52 provided that this corps should consist of *“all young men aged 20-26 whom where not drawn by lots to serve in the permanent army”* (Ib.). As in the case of the border guards, the military service was performed by home guards for a period of six years, respectively two years in active service and four years in reserve.

As the home guards generally carried out law enforcement missions throughout the country, they were given special attention in terms of organisation. Thus, in accordance with art. 53, *“the home guards form as many squadrons as there are districts, the Staffs of the squadrons and battalions residing in the district capital”* (Ib.). The law also established that *“those young people with the means to own and maintain horses”* would be part of the squadrons of mounted home guards. It is interesting that those home guards who *“will be take up the duty to equip themselves with their means”* would serve half the period of activity (Ib., P. 462).



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The same article stipulated that, *“in the event that, in the annual quota, there will not be enough young people with means to maintain horses, the communes will contribute to their purchase”* (Ib.).

In the chapter *General provisions*, the legislator stipulated, in art. 58, that, *“in extraordinary cases, the Government may call under arms, under a Royal Ordinance, persons aged 17-20 and 26-50 years also”*. In art. 60, the Ministry of War wanted that, in case of concentration of troops, militia regiments and *assembled classes* could form Large Units with the strength of a brigade with regiments from the permanent army (Ib., pp. 462-463).

Law for the organisation of the armed power in Romania was followed, as it was natural, by the *Law for the Army recruitment*, promulgated by Alexandru Ioan I by the High Decree no. 1727 of 5 December 1864 (Ib., 1864, no. 28, pp. 474 ff.). In principle, the *Law for the Army recruitment* resumed the provisions of the *Law for the organisation of armed power in Romania* regarding the principles that formed the basis of the Romanian military doctrine from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, respectively the participation of the whole nation in the efforts to defend Romania. Also in the case of this legislative step, the legislator, starting from the point of view expressed by the Ministry of War, substantiated the compulsory military service for all Romanian men, the recruitment being done by *calls or enlistments of good will, according to the prescribed laws, except for extraordinary cases*. Also, art. 2 of this law provided that the fulfilment of the compulsory military service was conditioned by the possession of Romanian citizenship: *No one will be allowed to serve Romanian troops unless he is Romanian; any individual born in Romania by foreign parents will be subject to the duties imposed by this law, as soon as he is admitted to enjoy the rights given to him by his naturalisation. However, foreigners living in the country, and who will not be subject to foreign protection, will also be subject to recruitment* (Ib., P. 479).

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Starting from the fact that the permanent army, the most important structure within the Romanian military body, had as main mission the defence of the national territory of Romania, the political and military decision-makers in Bucharest created new theoretical and practical concepts regarding the role the territorial army had to have, more precisely the militias, a secondary element in the national defence system. Thus, normally, these concepts had to be found in the related legislation, reason for which Alexandru Ioan I signed the High Order of the Day no. 286 of 15 February 1865, approving the *Regulation*



Art. V of the Regulation on the service and training of the home guards in the active service of the state stipulated that the military training of the home guards was carried out in assembly centres, and the training “of those staying home is done on Sundays, in communes, only two hours”. The Ministry of War paid special attention to the ways in which the home guards, part of the territorial army, along with the border guards, were called under arms.

on the service and training of home guards in the active service of the state. Art. 1 of this Regulation is very interesting, namely *the service of home guards in operation lasts 10 days*”. Because, according to the *Law for the organisation of the armed power in Romania*, adopted in 1864, the service under arms of the *home guards* was six years, respectively two years in active service and four years in the reserve forces, the military decision-makers decided, by this order, that *“the service shift change day is on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of each month”* and that the 20 days, as long as the home guards do not perform the service under arms, are considered a period in reserve (Id., 1865, no. 4 , pp. 116).

## RECRUITMENT AND MILITARY TRAINING

Art. V of the *Regulation on the service and training of the home guards in the active service of the state* stipulated that the military training of the home guards was carried out in assembly centres, and the training *“of those staying home is done on Sundays, in communes, only two hours”* (Ib., p. 117). The Ministry of War paid special attention to the ways in which the home guards, part of the territorial army, along with the border guards, were called under arms. In this sense, on 15 February 1865, Alexandru Ioan I signed the *High Order of the Day no. 290*, approving the *Regulation for the call into service of pedestrian and mounted home guards*. In accordance with art. 1 of this *Regulation*, the required number of pedestrian and mounted home guards was to be established, as for the standing army, *“according to the needs of the state”*. After the drawing of the young people who were to fulfil their military service in the permanent army, the sub-prefect of each county drew up a new table, in which the young people left outside the main table were listed. Eight days after this, the sub-prefect displayed the new table in each locality, and after another three days, each young man was free to declare, in writing, to the mayor’s office, *“whether he wants to serve among pedestrian or mounted home guards”* (Ib, p. 119). It is also interesting that, in accordance with art. 11, the young people who had the possibility to equip themselves served a term reduced by half.

Very familiar with the economic and social realities of the rural environment, the Romanian staff officers found it appropriate to apply the most effective methods to explain to the young recruits that *“taking them into service is not a new task imposed on them”* (Ib.). In this regard, General Savel Manu, in his capacity as Minister of War,

sent a document to all district commanders, asking them to make all efforts necessary in “making the law enforceable” (Ib., 1865, No. 6, p. 148). By this order, the military decision-makers in the territory were asked to explain to the young people that “the government and the Legislative Bodies, searching the most proper way to ensure Romania’s defence, found it necessary for all young people aged 20 to come under arms and thus they created the institution of the home guards” (Ib.). In the same order, General Manu asked the commanders of the territorial troops to add that the young people “owe it to the country to come today all the more in a hurry, because being its sole owners, they come in this way to guard and defend their own fields whenever danger occurs” (Ib.). Next, the Minister of War ordered the young people to be convinced that, “the law can be tough, but it is just” (Ib., pp. 148-149).

In order to consolidate both the permanent army and the territorial troops, the civil and military authorities in Bucharest allocated, during this period, important sums from the budget. Thus, for the permanent army, in 1860, a budget of 21,350,437 lei was allocated, and, in 1865, the amount of 31,990,410 lei was allocated. It is worth noting that, during the same period, the numbers for irregular troops were extremely important, but much smaller. In 1860, this structure was allocated the amount of 5,229,296 lei, while in 1865, the authorities unblocked the amount of 6,533,832 lei (Popovici, 1902, p. 235).

Even in these conditions, the budgetary effort was important, in a turbulent period from an economic, political and military point of view, in which the Great European Powers looked with suspicion at the consolidation efforts of the young Romanian state.

Romania’s military power had a special significance during the reign of Alexandru Ioan I. If, in the first years, the Army of the United Principalities was insufficiently staffed, in 1865, the battalions and regiments that formed the permanent troops had 19,365 officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers, as well as 3,459 horses, while irregular troops totalled 24,548 men and 7,930 horses (Ib., pp. 241-242).

## TERRITORIAL TROOPS AND CROWDS

During 1865, the Ministry of War paid special attention to the legislation on the status of territorial troops, namely the home guards and border guards, as well as the missions they performed both in peacetime and at war. At the same time, special importance was paid to the reserve troops for the permanent army and for the territorial



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Another component of the Romanian military system was represented by the *crowds*, established by the Law on the organization of armed power in Romania, adopted in 1864, as the third element of the military body. Under these conditions, on 28 December 1865, by High Decree no. 1753, signed by Prince Alexandru Ioan I and countersigned by General Savel Manu, as Minister of War, the Regulation for the Call and Training of Crowds was adopted. In accordance with art. 1, the inhabitants aged between 17 and 50, not included in the other two elements of the armed power, were part of the crowds.

troops. Under these conditions, in March of the same year, the *Regulation for the periodic calls for the army reserve* was adopted (Monitorul Oastei, 1865, no. 7, p. 160). Since the beginning of this *Regulation*, more precisely in art. 1, it was shown that “*the reserve of the permanent army is composed ... of the people who served four years*” (Ib.). Aware that, if necessary, the army command had to have the exact situation of the reservists, more precisely their number, the units in which they served, as well as the Territorial Division to which they belonged, the staff officers included, among the articles of the *Regulation*, the provision according to which those in reserve were “*subjected to periodical exams ... every six months*” (Ib.).

In accordance with the need to know exactly the condition of the reservists, this normative act stipulated, at art. 17, the provision according to which “*the reserve troops will not be able to change their residence until they have notified the commander of the deposit...*” (Ib., p. 163). By drafting this document, the Ministry of War proved, once again, that it was paying special attention to the military body meant, in accordance with the national military doctrine, to defend the legitimate interests of Romania.

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of reserves, thus aiming at unifying and homogenising the combat training of all components of the national defence system (*Istoria militară a poporului român*, lb., p. 451).

## CONCLUSIONS

In an extremely precarious international economic, political and military context, in which the great European powers wanted to split and, as the case may be, to rearrange the spheres of influence in Eastern and Central Europe, but especially in the Balkan Peninsula, the reign of Colonel Alexandru Ioan Cuza, although short and quite convulsive, represented one of the most important moments of defining and modernising the Romanian military body, as well as crystallising the national military defence doctrine. Through the legislative and organisational measures taken, the political and military decision-makers in Bucharest considered that the awakening of the military spirit is a necessary condition for “leading the nation towards a solid future, because, as it is known, only the military skills of our ancestors enable them to strongly support the rights and independence of the country” (*Monitorul Oficial al Moldovei*, 1860, p. 985). In conclusion, we can say that the reforms of Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza generated profound transformations in Romanian society, thus laying the social, economic, political and cultural foundations of modern Romania.

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