

= Romanian Volunteer Corps in Russia =

The Romanian Volunteer Corps in Russia (Romanian : Corpul Voluntarilor români din Rusia) , or Volunteer Corps of Transylvanians @-@ Bukovinans (Corpul Voluntarilor ardeleni @-@ bucovineni , Corpul Voluntarilor transilv?neni ?i bucovineni) , was a military formation of World War I , created from ethnic Romanian prisoners of war held by Russia . Officially established in February 1917 , it comprised abjurers of the Austro @-@ Hungarian Army , mainly contingents from Transylvania and Bukovina . These had been obliged to fight against Romania , and , once in Russian custody , volunteered for service against the Central Powers . As campaigners for self @-@ determination and union with Romania , they passed political resolutions which , in both tone and scope , announced those adopted on Union Day 1918 .

The Corps was effectively an active military reserve of the Romanian Land Forces , and regularly dispatched new units to the Romanian front after June 1917 . It helped defend the last stretches of Romania against the Central Powers ' unified offensive , and met success in the Battle of M?r???e?ti , but it still lacked a unitary command structure . When the October Revolution in Russia and the Romanian armistice took Romania out of the Entente camp , the Corps was left without backing and purpose . However , it inspired the creation of similar units in Entente countries , most successfully the Romanian Legion of Italy .

Mobilized volunteers or prisoners symbolically tied to the Corps were left behind in Russia after the Russian Civil War was ignited . Various such individuals formed the Romanian Legion of Siberia , which resisted the Bolsheviks in cooperation with the Czechoslovak Legions and the White movement . These units were ultimately repatriated to Greater Romania in 1920 .

= = Darnytsia Corps = =

= = = Origins = = =

During 1916 , Romania entered World War I as an Entente country , in alliance with the Russian Empire against Austria @-@ Hungary and the other Central Powers . After a while , Romania began investigating the fate and loyalties of Austria @-@ Hungarian Romanians who were held in Russian POW camps . Estimates for that period place the total population of Bukovinian and Transylvanian Romanians in such facilities , throughout Russia , at 120 @,@ 000 or 130 @,@ 000 . Meanwhile , in Romania itself there were several thousand Romanian refugees from Austria @-@ Hungary who immediately signed up for service in the Romanian Armed Forces .

In Russia , Romanian captives were complained about being worse off than prisoners from other Austro @-@ Hungarian backgrounds , a matter which may have contributed to their decision of volunteering into Romanian service . Russian authorities were undecided about letting them join , and initially prohibited such initiatives ; those who insisted to establish contact with Romania were arrested by Russian police forces . During the same year , after consultations with Romania , the Russian executive reverted such policies . It was decided that Russia would free at most 15 @,@ 000 of this demographic group , transferring them to Romania in exchange for a similar number of non @-@ Romanian prisoners from Romanian camps .

Subsequently , those who chose to enlist were together relocated at the special camp in Darnytsia ? a suburb of Kiev , known to Romanians as Darni?a . In December 1916 , that facility held some 200 officers and 1 @,@ 200 non @-@ commissioned officers , who formed the nucleus (and general command) of a " Romanian Corps " . Elected First Senior of the Camp , the 40 @-@ year @-@ old Victor Deleu was a legal professional , rank @-@ and @-@ file member of the Romanian National Party (PNR) and opinion journalist from Transylvania , who came to Darnytsia after internment in Kineshma . The other members of Darnytsia camp 's leadership body were Pompiliu Nistor , Vasile Chiroiu , Emil Isopescu , Valeriu Milovan , Octavian Vasu and Ioan Vescan .

Regardless of such initiatives , Romania tended to give little attention to the potential of recruitment in Russia , as many decision @-@ makers were still uncertain about the devotion of Transylvanians

and Bukovinans , and worried that they might be welcoming Austro @-@ Hungarian spies into army ranks . Additionally , probably half of the 120 @,@ 000 men excluded themselves from the pool of recruits , as Austrian loyalists , invalids or men who had reason to fear Austria @-@ Hungary 's retaliation . Support from within Romania was therefore weak , and Russian obstruction still had a part to play , but in January the camp was visited by Lieutenant Colonel Constantin Gh . Pietraru of the Romanian Land Forces , on a mission to evaluate the recruitment project . The reversal of fortunes on the Romanian front had brought a Central Powers ' invasion into southern Romania , and the Romanian military authority became pressured into finding new soldiers for the defensive action .

= = = February Revolution = = =

Shortly after these events , Russia experienced the February Revolution , which brought to power a liberal Russian Provisional Government . As a consequence of these , the whole transfer project was delayed , but the Russian acceptance of self @-@ determination facilitated renewed political action . According to veteran Simion Gocan , the soldiers were inspired by both these revolutionary promises and the American entry into World War I , which seemingly made Wilsonian Self @-@ Determination an official Entente policy .

By Order 1191 of March 8 [O.S. February 23] 1917 , Romania 's Minister of War , Vintil? Br?tianu , created the Volunteer Corps as a special formation of the national army . On the same day , in Darnytsia , Pietraru was tasked by Chief of Staff Constantin Prezan with equipping the new recruits and organizing them into units . The honorary command was assigned to Constantin Coand? , who was already the military attaché with Russia 's Stavka (General Headquarters) . Over the next month , in Mogilev , Coand? again negotiated the Corps ' recognition by Stavka . Coand? received the permission , but the number of recruits was no longer clearly specified .

On March 18 , Coand? issued a " Pledge " (Angajament) , which regulated the status of Corps soldiers in relation to the Romanian Army , and which the recruits had to sign . It integrated the former Austro @-@ Hungarian officers into the Romanian Army , with equivalent ranks , and equated their Austrian service , including time they spent in the POW camps , with active duty under Romanian banners . The pledge ended with the words : " May God help us , so that through our blood we may liberate our lands and create a Greater Romania , unified in substance and everlasting . " All those who backed out after signing the document were to be considered deserters . Demand for enlistment remained considerable , even though rumor spread that Austro @-@ Hungarian repression forces were by then murdering the families of volunteers and confiscating their property . However , Corps veteran Petru Nemoianu (Nemoian) was later to state that envy and class conflict were also characteristic for the formation , where the intellectual leaders quarreled over the better paid assignments .

In April , Pietraru met with the Provisional Government 's Alexander Guchkov , and an agreement was reached regarding the maximum total of troops to be enlisted in the Romanian Corps . Answering to special pleas from Romanian Premier Ion I. C. Br?tianu , Guchkov allowed for the recruitment of 30 @,@ 000 prisoners in his custody . The order was revised by Alexander Kerensky , who reduced that number to 5 @,@ 000 prisoners , noting that they were sorely needed as working hands in Russia 's agriculture and industry . In practice , Quartermaster Ivan Pavlovich Romanovsky only allowed recruitment to take place in Moscow Military District , ordering that no more than 1 @,@ 500 prisoners should be taken into account .

= = = Darnytsia manifesto = = =

By then , revolutionary examples also inspired the prisoners of Darnytsia to proclaim their own political goals , and openly demand the union of Transylvania with Romania . Their manifesto of April 26 (April 13) , reviewed for publishing by the Transylvanian poet Octavian Goga , was signed by 250 officers and 250 soldiers , and is probably the first unionist statement to be issued by a Transylvanian representative body . The document states : " we Romanians , like all other

subjugated nations , have grown aware that once and for all that we [...] cannot carry on with our lives within the frame of the Austro -@-@ Hungarian state ; we [...] demand , with unwavering will , our incorporation into Romania , so that together we may form a single national Romanian state . [...] For the sake of this ideal , we throw in the balance all of what we have , our lives and fortunes , our women and children , our descendants ' life and happiness . And we never will stop , lest we vanquish or perish . "

The text , which also survives in slightly different versions , included a brief analysis of the international scene . It paid homage to Russia 's democratic program , referenced the " generous " Wilsonian doctrine on self @-@ determination , and looked forward to a congress of " blissful , national and democratic states " . The manifesto made ample reference to the activity of " traitors " to the Transylvanian cause . As Nemoianu later recounted , there was a disguised reference to the PNR , whose moderate leaders , ostensibly loyal to the Austro @-@ Hungarian monarchy , still tried to achieve Austrian devolution . More leniently , Goga argued that the PNR at home was " deeply terrorized " and bound to government by a forcefully signed " declaration of loyalty " .

Goga , a civilian refugee in transit through Russia , was supposed to have left Darnytsia with a copy of the appeal . Some argue that he did , and that the subsequent popularization is largely owed to his work as publicist . Such accounts are contradicted by the recollections of another unionist activist , Onisifor Ghibu : " [The appeal] was supposed to be handed down to Goga , on his stopover in Darni?a . For whatever reason Goga stopped for a day in Kiev . In such circumstances I was the one designated to hold it " . In this version , Ghibu passed it on to Romania 's executive , King Ferdinand I and General Prezan .

In Russian and French translations , the document was distributed to various institutions : the Provisional Government , the Mossovet , the Petrograd Soviet and the Central Rada . It was also presented individually to representatives of Russian political life and to the foreign press agencies , and circulated among the national emancipation movements of Czechs , Poles , Serbs and " Ruthenians " . A copy was later taken to the United States by Romania 's special delegates Vasile Stoica , Vasile Lucaciu and Ioan Mo?a , and reprinted in the Romanian American community press . According to one account , it was also included in airborne leaflet propaganda dropped over the Austro @-@ Hungarian trenches on the Italian front .

The Darnytsia soldiers soon gave themselves a special banner , based on the Romanian tricolor , with the added slogan Tr?iasc? Rom?nia Mare (" Long Live Greater Romania ") . Seven such items were sewn in all , of which one was kept by Banat @-@ born soldier Dimitrie L?z?rel (L?z?rescu) .

= = = Arrival in Ia?i = = =

Six recruiting commissions were then dispatched from Romania to Russia . During May 1917 , they received the Romanian volunteers , relocated from Darnytsia to the Girls ' Lycée in Podil , where work also began on tailoring of the new Romanian uniforms . From Podil , a newly formed battalion was quickly sent into Romania to reinforce defense . Comprising some 1 @, @ 300 men , this unit traveled by chartered train , stopping first in Kishinev (Chi?in?u) . The largely Romanian @-@ inhabited Russian city gave them a warm welcome : the battalion received another Romanian tricolor as war flag , and were presented with an Orthodox icon .

The battalion arrived in the city of Ia?i , Romania 's provisional capital , where the volunteers were welcomed as heroes . On June 9 , at Ia?i 's marching ground , they took their oath and were officially integrated into the Land Forces . The ceremony was attended by King Ferdinand , Premier Br?tianu , General Prezan , by representatives of Entente missions (Alexander Shcherbachov , Henri Mathias Berthelot) and by ambassadors of neutral countries . Manuel Multedo y Cortina of Spain recalled the sermon as " a solemn act " , clamoring " the national aspiration " of Romanians .

At a later banquet and public rally in Union Square , Victor Deleu addressed the civilian population , describing the Corps ' arrival as a rescue mission : " We had the duty of coming over here on this day , when you are living through such hardships . We left a foreign country , but did so with just one thought on our minds : coming home . That 's why there was only road meant for us , the one

leading us ahead . [...] We 'll be the victors , for the Carpathians cannot reach as high as our hearts have been elevated ! " As politician Ion G. Duca recalled , no other speech left as deep an impression on the public : " Deleu [' s speech] was a pure and simple marvel , something unforgettable . "

There was a noted effort on the part of Corps staff and other Transylvanian exiles (Ion Agârbiceanu , Laurian Gabor , Octavian T?sl?uanu etc .) to encourage the rapid integration of Podil @-@ formed units into the Romanian line of defense . After a quick session of retraining , the Corps units were attached to the 11th Division , which was recovering in Ia?i . It was , however , decided that the formations , particularly those from Transylvania , were to be kept distinguished from the rest under the common command structure . An official act of 1918 explained the rationale behind this act : " Transylvanians should fight as Transylvanians [...] against the Hungarian state , so as to assert , clearly and beyond all doubt , that the Romanian nationals of the Hungarian state do not recognize its authority . To have fought against Hungary , however the war may end , ought to have been a badge of honor for the Romanian nation in Hungary and a moral reinforcement during the battles to come " . When it was proposed that men from the Corps be assigned noms de guerre so as to avoid execution if captured , Deleu reacted strongly : " We intend to be the army of Transylvania ! We aim to be the conscience of Transylvania , which is for absolute freedom and The Union ! We do not want [to receive] a conquered land , we wish to liberate ourselves with our own forces ! Hangings ? Let them hang us ! But let them be aware that Transylvania herself is fighting for liberty and The Union ! "

= = = During and after M?r??e?ti = = =

In July 1917 , Corps offices in Kiev circulated the first issue of a recruitment gazette , România Mare (" Greater Romania ") , which became the essential component of its propaganda effort in Russia . It was a new edition of the Bucharest gazette founded by Voicu Ni?escu , and , in this new form , was managed by a team of pro @-@ union activists : the Transylvanians Sever Bocu , Ghi?? Popp , Iosif ?chiopu and the Bukovinan Filaret Dobo? . România Mare was successful , despite the fact that only between 3 @,@ 000 and 5 @,@ 000 copies were published per issue .

Recruitment itself continued at a steady pace , and the Romanian General Staff created Biroul A. B (" T [ransylvania] and B [ukovina] Bureau ") to keep evidence of Austro @-@ Hungarian abjurers , on and behind the front . Its founding members were three Sub @-@ lieutenants : Deleu , Vasile Osvad? , Leonte Silion . Biroul A. B. was assisted by a Consultative Commission of intellectuals and politicians of Transylvanian or Bukovinan backgrounds (Goga , Ion Nistor , Leonte Moldovan) and represented in Russia itself by a deputation of Transylvanian officers ? Elie Bufnea , Victor C?dere .

Units of the Volunteer Corps earned distinction in the defense of eastern Romania , which postponed the Central Powers ' advance during summer 1917 . With the 11th Division , the Transylvanians @-@ Bukovinans participated in the battles of M?r??ti , Oituz and M?r??e?ti . At the time , they were split between five regiments of the 11th Division : 2nd , 3rd Olt , 5th Chasseurs , 19th Caracal , 26th Rovine .

The three battles to hold back the Central Powers ended in early autumn 1917 , by which time there were 31 dead and 453 wounded among the volunteers ; 129 received distinction . Dimitrie L?z?rel was one to have survived all three engagements , and legend has it that he never went into combat without the banner . Deleu had left reserve duty to join the 10th Chasseurs Battalion in the M?r??e?ti combat , but fell severely ill and was reassigned to other offices .

The divisive command structure was a disappointment for the Transylvanian and Bukovinan volunteers . In a complaint they sent to King Ferdinand during September , they requested reintegration into a special Corps , arguing : " Through such legions the free will of the formerly oppressed citizens would be expressing a common will . One would not be enrolling isolated individuals [...] , but an entire people free from the [Austrian] yoke . " Like his army staff , the monarch disapproved of this initiative , informing Deleanu and T?sl?uanu that , at most , units overseen by Biroul A. B. could expect to form special regiments within the existing divisions . Parallel negotiations continued between Russia and Romania over the total number of volunteers

allowed to leave Russian soil . During early June , Stavka approved the release of 5 @, @ 000 Romanian Austro @-@ Hungarian prisoners , all of them from the Moscow Governorate . According to historian Ioan I. Țerban , the approval was creating problems for the Romanian side : of the soldiers in question , the majority were held deep inside Russia , and employed " in the agricultural regions and the various industrial centers of southern Russia , the Ural , western Siberia etc . " As the Mărășești battle was waging , the Romanian government called on the Russian leadership to allow yet more recruits to be sent to the front , and received a confirmation of Guchkov 's earlier 30 @, @ 000 directly from Chief of Staff Lavr Kornilov . As a result , two of the recruiting commissions relocated to the Pacific port of Vladivostok , and set in motion a plan for recruiting more volunteers throughout Asiatic Russia .

After Kornilov 's promise , the Romanian high command took measures of creating a single and distinct division , comprising both those who had passed through Podil and those refugees already in Romanian service . Biroul A. B. was replaced by a Central Service , answering to General Staff . In early December 1917 , the Corps was reformed a final time , as a division @-@ sized formation . Colonel Marcel Olteanu was placed in charge of the central Volunteer Corps ' Command , based in Hârlău . By the early days of 1918 , it had three new regiments under its command : 1st Turda (commander : Dragu Buricescu) , 2nd Alba Iulia (Constantin Pașalea) , 3rd Avram Iancu .

Reenlisted prisoners of war formed a large section of the approximately 30 @, @ 800 former Austria @-@ Hungarian citizens who were registered as active on the Romanian side by late 1917 . By the time it stopped recruiting (January 1918) , the Corps had enlisted some 8 @, @ 500 to 10 @, @ 000 men . However , the Kornilov order came too late in the war for there to have been a more significant Transylvanian @-@ Bukovinan contribution to the Romanian effort .

= = = October Revolution and Romanian truce = = =

The October Revolution shook Russia and placed most of it under a Bolshevik government which had no intention of continuing with war against the Central Powers . Although the Romanian presence in Kiev was set back by the November Uprising and the January Rebellion , then dispersed by the anti @-@ Entente Skoropadsky regime , Constantin Gh . Pietraru and a small force remained behind in the new Ukrainian People 's Republic (UNR) , where they signed up the last group of Romanian volunteers . Some of these efforts were hampered by a diplomatic tensions between the UNR and Romania . Ukrainian officials refused to either rally with the Entente or negotiate border treaties with Romania , but tacitly permitted Deleu , Bocu , Ghibu and other Transylvanian Romanians activists who worked against Austria @-@ Hungary to work on UNR territory .

România Mare gazette , which still had Bocu as chief editorial manager , closed down in December 1917 , having published 23 issues in all . By then , Ion Agârbiceanu and family had left their temporary home in Yelisavetgrad for Hârlău , where he became the Corps ' chaplain .

A last group of Romanian units left the UNR and headed for Kishinev , where a Romanian @-@ friendly Moldavian Democratic Republic was vying for power with the local Bolsheviks . The volunteers had dressed as Russian soldiers during their passage to Iași , but were recognized as Romanian units by the Bolshevik garrisoned in Kishinev City Station , where their train stopped on January 6 . A skirmish followed , and the Bolsheviks killed or kidnapped Corps soldiers . The survivors were held captive in the same place as Moldavian Army founder Gherman Pânteă , and were released later that day by Republican troops . Years later , suspicion arose that Pânteă had in fact helped the Bolsheviks , as an alleged enemy of Romanian interests in Bessarabia .

Romania 's own armistice with the Central Powers put the recruitment project on a complete standstill , and diminished the effort to move Transylvanian @-@ Bukovinan soldiers into the single new force . According to his own account , Sever Bocu attempted to quickly dispatch Hârlău troops to the Western Front , but his project vetoed by the Romanian commander in chief Alexandru Averescu .

As Romania faced indecision about its future , the Corps was still the subject of unionist propaganda , spread by Romanian intellectuals in the capitals of Entente nations . From his

temporary home in France , Bocu reestablished România Mare as the tribune of Romanian diaspora politics and unionist aspirations . He was joined there by Octavian Goga , who had crossed over Bolshevik territory and Finland with false papers , claiming to be a Volunteer Corps veteran .

= = Legacy = =

= = = Diaspora units and the cut @-@ off troops = = =

By spring 1918 , Transylvanian @-@ Bukovinan prisoners held in France and Italy proceeded to form their own abjurers ' units , based upon the existing Romanian Corps . Luciano (Lucian) Ferigo became Commander of the newly formed Romanian Legion in Italy (Legione Romena d 'Italia) which took its ceremonial flag from the Regio Esercito on July 28 and contributed the Austrians ' defeat at Vittorio Veneto . On the Western Front , a similar formation was being created , mainly by Romanian citizens who resented their country for surrendering , but also by soldiers who clandestinely left Romania to continue the fight . Its Transylvanian @-@ Bukovinian membership was small , reflecting the number of Austro @-@ Hungarian prisoners in France , who had been taken mainly in the Serbian and Macedonian operations . The 135 who signed up in October 1918 were put off by the refusal of French officials to recognize their Austro @-@ Hungarian officer 's ranks . Their unit was attached to the French Foreign Legion , to be joined by the various other categories of Romanian recruits , but the effort was stopped midway ; in November , the Entente 's victory over Germany ended World War I for both France and Romania .

As the dissolution of Austria @-@ Hungary was taking effect in October 1918 , other such units were spontaneously formed on Austrian territory , mainly from rogue components of the Imperial Army . The Romanian Legion of Prague helped the Czechoslovak National Council and the Sokols gain the upper hand during an anti @-@ Austrian uprising , while other Romanian units were breaking away from Austrian command in Vienna . Romanians also formed a distinct segment of the k.u.k. Kriegsmarine personnel who rioted on the Austrian Littoral and elsewhere in the Adriatic .

A more complex situation reigned in Russia . As early as April 1918 , some Romanian volunteer groups joined up with the Bolshevik Red Army , taking their orders from Commissar Béla Kun , but some of their members continued to serve the nationalist cause . In June 1918 , a number of Romanian prisoners who had signed up for the Volunteer Corps were cut off from Romania by the Russian Civil War and left to fend for themselves . Some crossed into Bolshevik Russia hoping to be repatriated together with the Romanian consulate , while others took to areas controlled by the White movement , reaching Irkutsk ; still others escaped through northern routes into Sweden . The various groups were monitored by French public opinion , and plans were drafted to merge them into the Romanian Legion on the Western Front , or even to have them open up a new Eastern Front .

Meanwhile , in tandem with larger Serb and Czech national units , Romanian prisoners on the Trans @-@ Siberian Railway were involved in creating new armed formations . Their original goal was to show to the Entente that Romanians were still eager to fight against the Central Powers , but the Romanians also defended the line in skirmishes with the Bolshevik or anarchist cells . They resisted especially when the Bolshevik Russian government asked them to surrender all weapons .

= = = " Horia " Regiment and Romanian Legion of Siberia = = =

Some prisoners or drifting units in Russia joined up with new arrivals from Kiev . They created the 1 @, @ 300 @-@ strong battalion of Kinel , which was effectively a subunit of the Czechoslovak Legions . Romanian officers ' clubs were organizing themselves in lands held by the Komuch Democrats and the White Russian Siberian Autonomy . The original force to emerge from such schemes was formed at Samara by Valeriu Milovan . Criticized for his eccentric idea of imitating egalitarian Bolshevik practices and doing away with military ranks , he also sparked a conflict when he arrested the more conservative officer Voicu Ni?escu . Ni?escu escaped imprisonment and fled

to Chelyabinsk , but support for his cause continued to be eroded by the privates ' growing support for the Bolsheviks . As a result of Ni?escu 's activity , supported by Gocan and Nicolae Nedelcu , Dr. iur . , Romanian loyalists in Chelyabinsk created a " Horia " Battalion (or Regiment) . Major Ioan Dâmbu was assigned to lead it , and , under Czechoslovak orders , the new M?r??e?ti and Reserve battalions were sent on mission to other localities .

At the time , the two recruiting commissions in Vladivostok were also reactivated by the arrival of an international anti @-@ Bolshevik force . Their propaganda leaflets , drafted by Bukovinan Iorgu G. Toma , reached all 40 POW camps in the region , urging any volunteer to make his own way to Chelyabinsk . That city emerged as a main site of Romanian political and military activity , with a reported population of 3 @,@ 000 liberated Romanians (July 1918) . Major Dâmbu put a momentary stop to Bolshevik influence by arresting Milovan and ordering the Samaran unit to Chelyabinsk . A complex set of sanctions were imposed , in the hope of curbing dissent , ranks were reintroduced , uniforms on the Romanian Land Forces model were distributed around , and a patriotic cultural section began to function .

Taking a long and perilous journey , Elie Bufnea and some other officers of the original Darnytsia Corps joined up with " Horia " in mid autumn , at a moment when the Romanian soldiers were celebrating the breakup of Austria @-@ Hungary . The union between " Horia " and various new arrivals from the western Siberian camps became a second Volunteer Corps , grouping as many as 5 @,@ 000 volunteers . Through the alliance it formed with the anti @-@ Bolshevik Czechoslovak Legions , it was a Romanian national contribution to the international coalition , but reluctantly so . Once relocated to Irkutsk and Omsk in late 1918 , the volunteers expressed their lack of interest in fighting against the Bolsheviks : after rebelling against Colonel Kadlec , their Czech technical adviser , the Corps was placed under Maurice Janin of the French Mission .

A Romanian Legion of Siberia was formed from this structure , but only 3 @,@ 000 soldiers still volunteered in its ranks ? 2 @,@ 000 others were progressively transferred out of the combat zone , shipped out to Romania or taken back to prisoner of war camps . As ?erban notes , the Western Front victory had opened the way for Transylvania 's union , and " their only thought was to regain , as fast as possible , their families and their places of origin " . A special case was that of Bolshevik sympathizers : in October , Dâmbu was killed by his own soldiers , partly in retaliation for Milovan 's arrest .

The combative Legion defended the Trans @-@ Siberian between Tayshet and Nizhneudinsk , where they forced the Bolsheviks into a truce and established their reputation for brutality with the nickname Dikaya Divizia (????? ??????? , " Wild Division ") . The anti @-@ Bolshevik formation and the Romanian non @-@ combatants were eventually retrieved from the Russian Far East upon the end of foreign intervention , and were fully repatriated with the other Romanians from May 1920 . Milovan , court @-@ martialled by the Legion , was cleared of the charges by a higher authority ; however , those who killed Dâmbu were sentenced as mutineers and assassins .

= = = Late echoes = = =

The original Volunteers ' Corps went out of service in December 1918 , soon after German defeat and Transylvania 's de facto union (see Great Union Day) . The Romanian volunteers ' rally in support of self @-@ determination was judged by some Romanian authors as a direct predecessor of Alba Iulia 's " Great National Assembly " , whereby union was being endorsed on Wilsonian principles . They call the Corps ' April 26 meeting a " 1st Alba Iulia " . Within Transylvania itself , opinion was more divided . Shortly before the Hungarian ? Romanian War erupted , members of Corps were required to present themselves for reenlistment . The old rivals from within the Romanian National Party , who led the Directory Council of Transylvania after 1918 , allegedly refused to welcome the Corps back as a single unit , and plans for its mobilization had to be dropped . A new " Horia " Volunteer Corps was reportedly formed on the Cri?ul Alb River , as a first line of defense against the Hungarian Soviet Republic .

In 1923 , the old Corps set up a veterans ' association , the Union of Volunteers , which carried the reputation of being a fascist @-@ inspired section of the PNR . Petru Nemoianu strongly dismissed

the accounts as " enormities " , and stated that the Union had good cause to reject the PNR for its handling of the Transylvanian issue . More sympathetic to the PNR , Simion Gocan was President of the Union in Bihor County , and complained about tensions with Nemoianu . The Union even ran for Transylvanian seats in Parliament during the 1931 general election . It formed an electoral cartel with Nicolae Iorga 's Democratic Nationalist Party and against PNR 's successors (the National Peasants ' Party) , but was only assigned non @-@ eligible positions on the electoral lists .

All praise for the Corps ' contributions was toned down between 1948 and 1989 , when Romania was a communist state . According to ?erban , communist historiography presented the story " superficially , usually truncated or in the context of other events " . During the first wave of communization , repression touched several figures once associated with the Corps : Bufnea , Sever Bocu (beaten to death in Sighet prison) , Ghi?? Popp .

Interest in the Volunteer Corps ' activity was only revived after the Romanian Revolution of 1989 . Among the relics left behind by the Corps is Dimitrie L?z?rel 's banner , probably the only one of seven to have survived . In 1923 , L?z?rel paraded it at the Volunteers ' Union reunion in Arad . Referred to as the Darni?a Banner , it was donated to a local church , then exhibited by the Museum of Banat , Timi?oara . The Kishinev flag was donated by the Corps to ASTRA National Museum Complex of Sibiu .