

Constraints and Failures in Bucharest During the German Administration (1916-1918) as Reflected Within the Romanian Memoirs*

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Abstract: Beyond the classic relations between the occupier and the occupied, the German occupation of the Kingdom of Romania during the Great War implied an interesting cohabitation between two nations which, until the conflict, had practically nothing to quarrel about. Various aspects of this cohabitation can be identified and analysed using the Romanian memoirs, whose authors have presented, in a specific manner, the period in question. Through this text, we attempt to provide an overview of the relations between the German occupation administration and the population of Bucharest, as they emerge from the Romanian memoirs of the time.

Keywords: First World War, Kingdom of Romania, German occupation, hardships, memoirs.

Rezumat: Ocupația germană a Regatului României în timpul Marelui Război a presupus, dincolo de clasicele raporturi dintre ocupant și ocupat, o interesantă coabitare între două popoare care, până în timpul conflictului, nu avuseseră nimic de împărțit. Diverse aspecte ale acestei coabitări pot fi identificate și analizate prin parcurgerea textelor memorialistice românești, ai căror autori au prezentat, în manieră specifică, perioada respectivă. Prin intermediul acestui text, încercăm să oferim o privire de ansamblu asupra raporturilor dintre administrația germană de ocupație și populația Bucureștilor, așa cum reies acestea din scrierile memorialistice românești ale epocii.

Cuvinte-cheie: Primul Război Mondial, Regatul României, ocupație germană, greutăți, scrieri memorialistice.

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Romania's entry into the Great War in August 1916 brought the armies of two nations face to face in a major confrontation, for the first time in modern times – namely the German and the Romanian armies – which, until then, had had nothing to quarrel over. From the Romanian point of view, there was no historical rivalry, as in the case of the Hungarians, nor any other recent territorial dispute, as in the case of the Bulgarians and the Russians. Until the outbreak of the world conflagration, the image of Germany and the German people in the eyes of the Romanians was almost exemplary, defined by rigour and thoroughness, order, conscientiousness and fairness, attributes that found their natural expression both in the work of the ordinary German citizen, in the rhythm of daily life, and in the institutional practice that ensured the efficient functioning of the German state.

The relations between Germans and Romanians had undoubtedly progressed in the decades before 1914, and there was a fairly large German community in the Old Kingdom, well integrated into the Romanian society and generally appreciated by ordinary Romanians, even though the sympathies of most natives were directed towards France.¹ The fact as such was admitted even by some of the supporters of the Entente involved in the campaign promoting the idea of achieving Greater Romania:

*Despite his stodginess and narrow spirit, the German was, before this war, if not loved, at least esteemed and to a certain extent, very admired in Romania. He was admired for that great enterprising spirit which, unfortunately, we have not had the opportunity to witness in either the French or the English; he was admired for his wonderful spirit of organisation, which Europe appreciated, at its true value, even during this war; he was admired, above all, as a compatriot of Beethoven, Goethe, Schiller...*²

¹ Claudiu-Lucian Topor, „Auf nach Rumänien!”. *Beligeranța germano-română 1916-1918* (Iași: Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 2020), 52.

² N.P. Comnène, *Războiul românilor 1916-1917. Însemnări și documente din prima conflagrație mondială* (Iași: Editura Moldova, 1996), 83. Romanian original: “În ciuda greutateii sale și a spiritului său îngust, germanul era înainte de acest război, dacă nu iubit, cel puțin foarte stimat și până la un punct, foarte admirat în România. Era admirat acel mare spirit întreprinzător, pe care din nenorocire n-am avut ocazia să-l constatăm nici la francezi și nici la englezi; era admirat minunatul spirit de organizare, pe care Europa l-a apreciat, la justa sa valoare, chiar și în timpul acestui război; era admirat, mai ales, ca fiind compatriotul lui Beethoven, Bach, Goethe, Schiller...”

The outbreak of the Great War led to a change in the mutual perceptions, a process that experienced an increasing trend during the neutrality of the Romanian Kingdom (1914-1916). Obviously, before Romania entered the war, the two political and military structures, the Entente and the Central Powers, fought each other through propaganda. All the clichés and stereotypes used by the two warring sides were thrown into the battle of words and images, guilty historical complicities were instantly uncovered, and the supporters and promoters of the Entente fervently and persistently presented to the Romanian public opinion the atrocities that suddenly made the German the barbarian of Europe and the enemy of human civilisation as a whole.³ As a somehow normal consequence of the spreading of this rhetoric in the public space, the harmony and good understanding that had existed up to then disappeared, gradually replaced by the growing suspicion and hostility of many of those who, until then, had viewed the Germans quite differently.⁴ Unquestionably, the proven cases of espionage for the Central Powers and the various incidents involving the Germans further strained this tense atmosphere dominated by mutual distrust.

The radical change in the rhetoric and the way of relating to Romania and the Romanians was triggered by the country's entry into the war on the side of the Entente in August 1916. After overcoming the initial surprise and shock caused by the intervention of their former ally, the political and military establishment, the propaganda apparatus and the entire German press reacted practically in unison in condemning Romania for its act of treason. By their action, the leaders in Bucharest placed the country alongside the other traitors, namely the Italians. While the latter were described as a "people of bandits," the Romanians were immediately labelled as "a band of gypsies" and the famous "Schweinehunde."⁵ All the sympathy and goodwill that had existed towards them went up in smoke. The attack on Austria-Hungary, Germany's faithful ally, was an attack on Germany itself, so the punishment of this very real act of treason had to be carried out as soon as possible.

The subsequent course of hostilities is well known and we believe there is no point in insisting on this aspect, especially as the aim of our research is to address certain realities of the occupation period. Since their

³ Topor, „*Auf nach Rumänien!*“, 52-54.

⁴ Ibid., 54 and the following.

⁵ Ibid., 41.

installation in the Romanian territory and, in particular, after the occupation of Bucharest, the Germans were concerned with the organisation and control, in a specific manner, of the conquered regions and localities. Anticipating the annihilation of the Romanian resistance in the southern part of the country, the representatives of the Central Powers had discussed and prepared, since October and November 1916, in working meetings held in Berlin and Vienna, the institutional architecture following the occupation of the Romanian territory.⁶

From December 1916 to November 1918, for two whole years, Bucharest, the former capital of the Kingdom of Romania, was under German occupation. The Romanians felt the full impact of this situation, according to numerous statistics and official reports, as well as the testimonies recorded within the memoirs that were published, for the most part, in the interwar period. Like any other regime thus installed, the German occupation of Romania qualified for dramatic descriptions, most of those who left their recollections to posterity depicting images of great mental and emotional impact. Having endured at first hand the rigours and constraints of this occupation, witnessing the despoliation of their country of all possible resources, it was also difficult for the authors of these works to find anything positive in those trying times for the Romanian nation.

Nevertheless, at a closer look, one can also identify some voices, even among those who had to deal with the abuses and rigours of the occupation back then, and who, shortly after the Great War, saw things somewhat differently. They have even pointed out in their works that not all measures taken by the Germans were inherently harmful, but certainly the timing and the manner chosen for their application condemned them to failure from the very beginning. In the present text, we refer to several of these essentially useful actions taken by the German occupiers, but which, given the situation in the country, were seen as abusive and even offensive by the Romanians. Ironically, some of these measures were, however, applied later, after the end of the war.

First of all, one should mention the German attempt of changing the calendar, materialized in an ordinance signed by August von Mackensen, which specified that “in all official documents and acts, the date and time will be indicated exclusively according to the Gregorian calendar and the

⁶ Ibid., 149-150.

Central European Time.”⁷ The issue turned out to be much more complicated than the occupiers had anticipated, especially as it involved changing the dates of the most important Christian holidays, Christmas and Easter, which the initiators only later realised.⁸ Thus, the date of 19 December 1916 should have become 1 January 1917, which meant that Romanians would no longer celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in 1916! The foreshadowed difficulties finally drove the Germans to give up on this intention, recorded in the Romanian memoirs in different tones, ranging from revolt and concern to self-pity and irony.⁹ However, beyond these aspects, the question of changing the calendar threatened to cause a real turmoil for the Orthodox Church and the Romanian population in the territories occupied by the Germans, so they were forced to bow to the evidence. The prospect of eliminating the holy celebration of Christmas in a country which, in terms of morale and fortitude, was almost on the verge of complete disaster at the end of 1916, could not have contributed to calming the spirits and establishing the good relations that the occupiers would have wanted with the occupied. The problem of changing the calendar style in use, which had been discussed in the Romanian society for several decades, was not definitively resolved until after the war, between 1919 and 1924.¹⁰

⁷ N. Georgescu, *În puterea „Pumnului de fer”*. Ordonanțele Comandamentului German. *Viața la București și în țara invadată* (Iași: Editura Tipografiei P. Iliescu, [1917]), 91.

⁸ Raymund Netzhammer, *Episcop în România într-o epocă a conflictelor naționale și religioase*, second edition, revised and added, edited by Nikolaus Netzhammer in collaboration with Krista Zach, volume I, translation from German by George Guțu (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2005), 699, 704-705.

⁹ Pia Alimăneștianu, *Însemnări din timpul ocupației germane 1916-1918* (Bucharest: Imprimeriile Independența, 1929), 23; M. Theodorian-Carada, *Efimeridele. Însemnări & Amintiri*. Vol. II, 1908-1928 (Săbăoani: Tipografia „Serafica”, 1937), 69-71; Al. Marghiloman, *Note politice*. Vol. II – 1916-1917 (Bucharest: Editura Institutului de Arte Grafice „Eminescu” S.A., 1927), 356-358; Virgiliu N. Drăghiceanu, *707 zile sub cultura pumnului german* (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1920), 24; Vasile Th. Cancicov, *Impresiuni și păreri personale din timpul războiului României*. *Jurnal zilnic*. 13 august 1916 – 31 decembrie 1918. With an introductory letter by Take Ionescu, vol. I (Bucharest: Atelierele Societății „Universal”, 1921), 255; C. Bacalbașa, *Capitala sub ocupație* (Brăila: Tiparul Institutului de Arte Grafice, 1921), 68.

¹⁰ The Union of 1918 was undoubtedly the one that finally led to the adoption of the Gregorian style. As early as January 1919, the War Ministry had asked the Government to introduce the new calendar style for practical reasons (various actions and activities of the army were encountering all sorts of difficulties, errors and confusion due to the new realities, since in Transylvania, Banat, Crișana, Maramureș, and Bucovina, which formerly had been a part of the Austro-Hungarian

One issue that would most certainly spark protests and dissatisfaction nowadays for the way it was handled was that of the stray dogs in Bucharest. As some contemporaries pointed out, “in the Capital, the enemy found a large number of dogs, which they promptly disposed of.”¹¹ The thousands of stray dogs in the city represented a real public danger, not only because of their bites and attacks on passers-by and soldiers of the occupying troops, but also because of the diseases they could spread. Without much hesitation, the Germans promptly took the necessary actions to eradicate the stray dogs and imposed fines on those who let their companion dogs loose on the streets or walked them without a muzzle:

*An ordinance appeared, announcing that all dogs found loose on the streets or in the yards would be picked up and killed at the veterinary school. Owners of unchained dogs will also be fined 1000 marks, while insolvent owners will be sentenced to 6 months in prison.*¹²

Of course, there were also excesses, in the sense that, on occasion, even dogs that simply barked at German officers were shot on the spot.¹³

Empire, the Gregorian calendar was in force, while in the Old Romanian Kingdom and Bessarabia, the Julian calendar was used). On 5/18 March 1919, the Romanian Government passed the Decree-Law no. 1053 for the *Adoption of the Gregorian calendar on 1 April 1919 old style*, published in “Monitorul Oficial” [“The Official Gazette”] on 6 March. Thus, the date of 1 April 1919 old style became 14 April new style. From then on, all dates in Romania were subject to the Gregorian calendar.

The issue was more complicated in the Romanian Orthodox Church, for institutional and dogmatic reasons, which also had to do with the specific realities of the community of Orthodox Churches internationally. However, following the Pan-Orthodox Conference in Constantinople in 1923, the Romanian Orthodox Church decided to replace the Julian calendar with the Gregorian one. The change was implemented in October 1924.

¹¹ Vasile Th. Cancicov, *Impresiuni și păreri personale...*, 250. Romanian original: “În Capitală inamicul a găsit o bună recoltă de câini, de care a profitat numaidecât.”

¹² *Ibid.*, 250-251. Romanian original: “O Ordonanță apărută, anunță că toți câinii ce se vor găsi liberi pe străzi sau în curți vor fi ridicați și uciși la școala veterinară. Proprietarii câinilor, ce nu vor fi găsiți în lanț, vor suferi și o amendă de 1000 de mărci, insolvăbilită 6 luni închisoare.”

¹³ C. Bacalbașa, *Capitala sub ocupație*, 74-75.

However, the overall result, although it caused dissatisfaction among most of Bucharest's inhabitants, was appreciated by some Romanians: "In a few weeks, Bucharest was dog-free. It was not a big sin."¹⁴

Moreover, in the first part of the occupation of Romania, in the winter of 1916/1917, the occupying troops and the population of the occupied territories were confronted with "a number of epidemics that were unavoidable in wartime. Especially epidemic typhus. [...] At one point, smallpox broke out, a black pox with haemorrhages, of great virulence."¹⁵ In this context, as the Romanian memoirs show, the Germans quickly implemented the general vaccination of the population to stop the spread of epidemics. "Everybody had to be vaccinated whether they wanted or not."¹⁶ The results were as expected, and the measure turned out to be salutary and it was promptly applied even in the case of other infections, despite the various inconveniences that some Romanians had to endure because of the excessive German bureaucracy.¹⁷

In order to rapidly clear the city's roads and traffic routes during winter, the Germans issued an order to remove the snow from the sidewalks. For various reasons, some of the inhabitants did not comply with this measure, which is why several people were picked up by German soldiers, taken out of the city and forced to walk back through the snow which was about one metre high.¹⁸ Sometimes, however, the rigours of the occupiers were doubled by the overzealousness of the Romanian officials who thus sought to get into the good graces of the temporary masters of the country.¹⁹

¹⁴ Ibid., 75. Romanian original: "În câteva săptămâni Bucureștii au fost curățiți de câini. Păcatul nu erea mare."

¹⁵ Ibid., 123. Romanian original: "un număr de epidemii de neînălăturat în timp de război. Mai ales tifosul exantematic. [...] Într-un moment a izbucnit și vărsatul, un vărsat negru cu emoragii, de o mare virulență."

¹⁶ Ibid. Romanian original: "Toată lumea vrând nevrând, a trebuit să se vaccineze."

¹⁷ Vasile Th. Cancicov, *Impresiuni și păreri personale...*, vol. II (Bucharest: Atelierele Societății "Universul", 1921), 297, 442, 445.

¹⁸ One such situation was mentioned by Pia Alimăneștianu, *Însemnări din timpul ocupației germane...*, 89: "On Christmas Eve, they picked up two ladies (one was in her late 70s) in the evening and took them 3 kilometres out of town on foot, in snow that was almost a metre high, because they had not cleared their sidewalk."

¹⁹ Vasile Th. Cancicov, *Impresiuni și păreri personale...*, vol. I, 506: "The Romanian deputy commissioner is unrecognizable. He is excessively severe when the German is next to him. Even where the German finds it clean, the deputy is displeased. Mrs. Motru was telling us one day at the Imperial [a hotel in Bucharest – our note] that during the heavy snow that fell last winter, in the absence of

While in the winter the population had to take care of the snow, in the summer they had to sweep and wash the sidewalk in front of their yards four times a day. Refusal or failure to do so was severely punished by heavy fines. However, quite often these fines were applied even to those who had complied with the provision, but had the misfortune of living in an area where there were several persons who had not.²⁰ After all, this measure was met with such hostility that it was only partially implemented in the summer of 1917, only to be abandoned by the Germans the following year.

As a general prophylactic measure, the German administration also considered the problem of the sanitation of streets in Bucharest. Thus, each owner was obliged to collect and dispose of his garbage in the street for later collection by the sanitation service. Even one of the memoirists who harshly condemned the German occupation acknowledged, in the context of the beginning of the occupation regime, the usefulness of the concern for the prompt sanitation of the streets: "Measures were taken to carry away household waste, which, through decomposition, was an endless health hazard."²¹

servants, her daughters were trying to clear the snow from the sidewalk in front of their house. One day, this operation was not going so well, when here came the Bavarian gendarme and the Romanian deputy commissioner. Scandal, the Romanian official got the homeowner's name, pulled out the fine booklet, shouted, threatened with sky thunder. The crying children said they had no servant and they shovelled the snow as best as they could. The Kraut smiled, patted them on the shoulder with 'gutt, gutt' and left without a fine, much to the discontent of our agent." Romanian original: "Subcomisarul roman e de nerecunoscut. E de o severitate excesivă când e neamțul lângă el. Chiar acolo unde neamțului i se pare curat, subcomisarul este nemulțumit. D-na Motru ne istorisea într-o zi la Imperial că pe timpul zăpezii mari ce a căzut astă iarnă, în lipsă de servitori, fetițele ei se străduiau să depărteze zăpada de pe trotuarul, din dreptul casei lor. Într-o zi operațiunea aceasta nu tocmai reușise prea bine, când iată jandarmul bavarez și subcomisarul român. Scandal, funcționarul român a luat numele proprietarului, a scos carnetul de amendă, a sbierat, a amenințat cu trăsnetul cerului. Copilele plângând au spus că n-au servitor și că pe cât au putut ele, au îndepărtat zăpada. Neamțul a zâmbit, le-a bătut pe umăr, cu «gutt, gutt» și a plecat fără amendă, spre marea nemulțumire a agentului nostru."

²⁰ Ibid. Pia Alimăneștianu, *Însemnări din timpul ocupației germane...*, 83: "Anyone who does not water the sidewalk and half the street four times a day is fined 100-200 lei. That would not be bad, but since they need the money, they fine whole neighbourhoods, no matter if they get wet or not". Romanian original: "Cine nu-și stropește trotuarul și jumătate stradă, de patru ori pe zi, este condamnat de la 100-200 lei amendă. Asta n-ar fi rău, dar cum au nevoie de bani, pun la amendă cartiere întregi, de se udă sau nu."

²¹ Virgiliu N. Drăghiceanu, *707 zile sub cultura pumnului german...*, 26. Romanian original: "Se iau măsuri pentru cărarea gunoaielor menajere, care, prin descompunere, erau un veșnic pericol pentru sănătate."

We shall not elaborate further on other aspects which, in times of peace, if proposed by a national administration, might have been accepted and well received by the whole of the population, like the cultivation and use of fruits and vegetables, various measures regarding the perimeter of horticulture and zootechnics, or the reconstruction of the railway system which had been heavily damaged during the autumn campaign of 1916 and the withdrawal of the Romanian troops.²²

One of the few Romanian memoirists who plainly admitted the fact that some of the measures taken during the German occupation were undoubtedly useful was Constantin Bacalbaşa. In his book, published in 1921, he summarized the benefits of the German administration that were dismissed by the inhabitants of Bucharest because of their association with the corrupt and abusive regime of occupation:

As good administrators, the Germans took some excellent measures.

First, they obliged all residents to sweep, water and clear the sidewalks of snow.

Second, they obliged everyone to sow vegetables on all empty spaces, in the larger yards and in the gardens.

Third, they showed that fortunes could be made by turning a good deal of fruit into marmalade.

Fourth, they profited by many things which we, in our ignorance, despised; for instance, they gathered wild chestnuts from the chestnut trees on the boulevards, for their industries.

Fifth, they prohibited the eating of too young potatoes, chickens, calves (as veal), and lambs, showing how much we would gain by allowing all these products to reach their maturity.

And many other good measures.

*Of all these, we kept nothing.*²³

²² C. Bacalbaşa, *Capitala sub ocupație*, 115: "Although there was not much railway stock, they still organized a number of trains in which people could move around in a decent manner, while the trains in Moldavia were in a terrible state of misery." Romanian original: "Deși nu prea era material rulant, totuși au organizat un număr de trenuri în care lumea putea circula cuviincios, pe când trenurile din Moldova erau într-un hal de mizerie fără nume."

²³ Ibid., 196. Romanian original: "Ca buni administrative germanii au luat câteva măsuri excelente. Întâi au obligat pe toți locuitorii ca să-și măture, să ude și să curețe de zăpadă trotuarele. Al doilea au îndatorat pe toată lumea să semene legume pe toate locurile virane, în curțile mai mari și prin grădini."

What were the reasons why none of the actions taken by the Germans remained in force? Why were even the provisions of obvious immediate utility not preserved after the occupation ended?

One should mention here that it is easily understandable that every occupant wants to enforce their own regulations in order to ensure the maximum material, economic, and political profit for their mastery within the occupied territory, obviously drawing the antipathy of the local population. The Germans were no exception. Besides, they were also uninspired in their choice of certain measures and especially of the moment to impose them, the appropriate example in this regard being, indisputably, in our opinion, the attempt to change the calendar.

Then, various provisions were applied in a discretionary or abusive way, which was deemed vexatious by the citizens of Bucharest. Practically all of the useful measures, which could have been true lessons in administration, were imposed in a brutal manner, accompanied by numerous fines and excesses. Therefore, somewhat naturally, the population regarded them only as decisions of the occupying regime and not as measures of management that could have been further adopted by the Romanians. It was then easily visible that the obligations incumbent on the Romanians did not apply to foreigners, namely the subjects of the Central Powers and their allies. In other words, the rules did not apply to everyone. Plagued by the corruption virus, suffering from the “baksheesh syndrome” (in which they were also strongly influenced by the Romanians²⁴), and showing, in many cases, a terrible

Al treilea au arătat că se pot câștiga averi transformând o bună parte din fructe în marmeladă. Al patrulea au tras foloase din multe lucruri pe cari noi, în neștiința noastră le desprețuim; de pildă au adunat castanele sălbătice de la castabii de pe Bulevarde spre a le întrebuința în industriile lor.

Al cincilea, au interzis să se mănânce cartofi prea noi, puii, vițetii și miei prea tineri, demonstrând cât am câștiga dacă am lăsa ca toate aceste produse ale naturei să ajungă la maturitate.

Și încă alte multe măsuri bune.

Din toate acestea, noi n-am păstrat nimic.”

²⁴ Vasile Th. Cancicov, *Impresiuni și păreri personale...*, vol. I, 352-353: “It is curious what influence our mores had on German mores. When he came to us, the German soldier was a man of duty; unyielding, his orders were mechanically and faithfully carried out. The Turks taught us the baksheesh, we taught the Germans during the occupation. When, at first, for small services, they were given their first pennies – the baksheesh – they were astonished, asking for all sorts of explanations, unable to conceive how, for a service owed as a soldier, he could receive money, and from the enemy, no less. In the beginning, I did not even dare to

degradation of morals, the Germans lost the trust and authority they had enjoyed, at least in the eyes of some Romanians, at the beginning of the occupation.

give them money, but in order to spare their susceptibility, I offered them cigarettes, which they were tempted to take, given that they were fond of good cigarettes; even the cigarettes I offered them with great fear. [...] Today, however, things have changed and have gone even further; the smallest service must be paid with a baksheesh, you feel him serving you with malice when he weighs that what you have given him would not be enough. The guard now accepts to treat him with wine or beer, and the sentries who accompany the permittees to the dentist accept to be treated through the taverns with food and drink, fully aware that what they do is an abuse for which they would be severely punished. Well, at first this would have been an aberration. It is even said in the city that, in order to gain access into an office or to arrange some matter for which you must contact their authority, you cannot take a single step without paying. The baksheesh opens the door anywhere. In this respect, the German has become easily accustomed. All officers serving through the police, the komandatur, and the economic bureaus went into business. Each has attached to his person a businessman, usually a Jew who works and gives advice on his behalf. This is common knowledge. More often than not, the individual attached and with whom the business is dealt even bears an official status, he is given the task of interpreter. Their offices are full of these interpreters swarming the halls of the komandatur." Romanian original: "E curioasă influența ce a avut moravurile noastre asupra moravurilor nemțești. Soldatul german când a venit la noi era omul datoriei; neînduplecabil, ordinele primite erau mecanicește și cu sfințenie executate. Turcii ne-au învățat bacșișul, noi i-am învățat cu ocazia ocupațiunii pe nemți. Când la început pentru mici servicii li s-au pus în palmă primii gologani – bacșișul – au rămas uimiți cerând tot felul de explicațiuni, neputând concepe ei, cum pentru un serviciu datorat în calitatea lui de soldat, poate primi bani și încă de la inamic. Eu la început nici n-am îndrăznit să le dau bani, ci menajându-le susceptibilitatea le ofeream țigări pe cari erau tentați să le primească ca amatori de țigări bune; chiar țigările le ofeream cu multă frică. [...] Azi însă lucrurile s-au schimbat și au ajuns chiar departe; cel mai mic serviciu trebuie plătit cu bacșiș, îl simți cum te servește cu răutate când cântărește el că ceea ce i-ai dat n-ar fi suficient. Garda primește acum să o tratăm cu vin sau bere, iar sentinelele ce întovărășesc pe permisionari la dantist, primesc a fi tratați prin birturi cu masă și băutură, știind că ceea ce fac e un abuz pentru care ar fi aspru pedepsiți. Ei bine, la început acest lucru ar fi fost o aberațiune. În oraș se spune că pentru a pătrunde în vreun birou sau a-ți aranja vreo chestiune pentru care trebuie să ai raporturi cu autoritatea lor, nu poți face un pas fără a plăti. Bacșișul îți deschide ușa oriunde. În această privință germanul s-a împământenit ușor. Ofițeri slujbași prin poliții, komandaturi și birourile economice înființate, toți s-au vârat în afaceri. Fiecare și-a atașat persoanei lui un om de afaceri, de regulă un evreu, care lucrează și dă sfaturi în numele lui. Lucrul e cunoscut de toată lumea. De multe ori individul atașat și cu care se tratează afacerea are chiar o situațiune oficială, i se dă însărcinarea de interpret. Birourile lor sunt pline de acești interpreți ce mișună pe sălile komandaturii."