



Moldova: A Romanian Province under Russian Rule

By Marcel Mitrasca

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Editorial Review

Review

Focusing primarily on the Great Powers struggle surrounding the 1920 Bessarabian Treaty, this is a first-class research study presented within a broad historical context. Mitrasca is well acquainted with all the previous literature on the subject and reviews it objectively, pointing out the differences of opinion. He fully explains the US position (strongly favoring Russia) and gives Romanian diplomacy poor grades, noting that sometimes it tended to be incomprehensibly slow when quick action seemed necessary. So too, the domestic politics of the Romanian government were often unhelpful. Entirely new and original and based on research of the Tokyo Foreign Ministry archives is the extended presentation of the Japanese rationale for vacillating and ultimately failing to ratify the treaty, hereby killing it. The author reveals for the first time how Japanese interests in fishing rights along the Russian Far East coast finally tipped the scales against ratification, despite pressure from Europe. This is by far the best one-volume presentation for the diplomatic side of the Bessarabian Question as it emerged at the end of WW I; at the same time it is a bibliographical mine for further study. A helpful historical and diplomatic chronology, several pages long, is included. Recommended for general readers and upper-division undergraduates through professionals. --L. K. D. Kristof, emeritus, Portland State University

According to Mitrasca, Romania's foreign policy in the 1920s foreshadows the politics of globalization in the late 20th and 21st centuries. Mitrasca, a scholar of diplomatic history affiliated with both Aoyama Gakuin University of Tokyo and Babes-Bolyai University in Romania, examines the Bessarabian Treaty, an agreement concluded at the end of World War I in accord with Woodrow Wilson's 14 points that would officially give Romania control of Moldova (Bessarabia). Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan all signed this treaty with Romania. However, Japan refused to ratify it, and the United States also refused to acknowledge it, allowing the Soviet Union to take control of this geographically strategic land. Mitrasca conducted extensive research of unpublished documents from the national archives of Japan, Romania, Great Britain, France, and Italy to explore why the treaty was never enforced, what was at stake for each of the Great Power nations, and how a small country like Romania dealt with those more powerful countries that decided its fate. The result of his first full-length book in English is a thorough work about an often neglected subject targeted toward historians. Recommended for academic libraries. --Library Journal, November 1, 2002

About the Author

Marcel Mitrasca is a visiting scholar of diplomatic history at the Aoyama Gakuin University of Tokyo, Japan. He began his work on this topic while at Babes-Bolyai University in Romania. He has published numerous scholarly articles in his native Romanian; this is his first book-length work in English.

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