

# Gheorghe G. Mironescu- The Political Man

## Summary

The present work is the result of our in-depth research carried out in the last three years with the purpose of bringing to light the outstanding figure of a political personality who became important in a period when Romania witnessed a historical time extremely generous in terms of our people, a time when among such exceptional figures as Titu Maiorescu, Ștefan Ciceo Pop, Nicolae Iorga, Nicolae Titulescu, Ion I. C. Brătianu, Iuliu Maniu, Take Ionescu, Alexandru Averescu, Armand Călinescu etc., Gheorghe G. Mironescu may also be mentioned. Although barely a first rate personality, Gheorghe G. Mironescu nevertheless enjoys undeniable political merits; despite this, his monograph is absent in the Romanian historiographic area which lacks any systematic research in his life and activity.

Through our work, we aim to fill this gap by concentrating on the presentation of this political man's life, his activity in various governments as well as a president of the Council of Ministers, his actions as a congressman, his political efforts in the fight for national unity, the diplomatic skills he has demonstrated both internally and externally, thus demonstrating the genuine political talent of the university professor Gheorghe G. Mironescu.

We have focused our approach of Gh. G. Mironescu's life (b. 28 January 1874, Vaslui – d. 23 July 1956, Iași) on all the aspects of his existence: his intellectual, volitional and moral qualities, the maturity of his political and economic thinking, his remarkable contribution to the socio-political life.

The necessity for data research synthesis and coherence determined us to discuss the results within six chapters, this decrease being imposed by the course of events. The necessary *Introduction* is followed by *Prologue* which comprises some subchapters aimed at presenting *Gheorghe G. Mironescu's Personality*, which was nevertheless complex and controversial, the vision of his contemporaries, well known memorialists such as Nicolae Iorga, Armand Călinescu, Constantin Argetoianu, Grigore Gafencu, their work representing the mirror which could reflect the personality in question. *The Course of Life* offered us the opportunity to focus on the major events in the life of Gheorghe G. Mironescu-the political figure, a life very much similar to that of other political men of the time.

The contribution that the university professor Gh. G. Mironescu brought to the modernization process of the Romanian Legal Education system, his talent as an educator highly appreciated by his students, his ability to contribute to the professional and moral education of several generations of magistrates and lawyers for over thirty years has been synthesized within the subchapter entitled *The Academic Activity*. We have also dealt with data concerning his position as an honorary member of the Romanian Academy, although it was not as important as the political one.

Gh. G. Mironescu's contribution to the achievement of the Great Union is undeniable, his works on the state of Romanian provinces beyond the borders of the country being of great interest for contemporary researchers interested in the life of the Romanians in Banat, Bessarabia, Bucovina and Transylvania, his role being essential in fulfilling the secular dream of Romanians.

Before demonstrating the political personality capacity he had as a congressman, minister and prime minister, we considered necessary to bring into discussion the *Political Path* followed by Gh. G. Mironescu: he was a typical politician for the period in question, his political path being very much similar to that of many of his contemporary political men – „*the Union generation*”. A supporter of the conservative ideology at the beginning of his political life, he migrated towards Nicolae Iorga's pragmatic nationalism and, from this position he joined the national peasants' ideology by dedicating his intellectual capacity as well as by offering pecuniary support to the achievement of the national peasants' ideology, thus serving his own interests as well. Starting in 1938, his membership within the National Renaissance Front must be regarded as an effect of his loyalty to the Royal House for whose representative, King Charles II, he felt deeply.

I had used the rich documentation funds provided by the main specialized institutions such as: National Archives, Foreign Ministry Archives, the Romanian Academy Library, documents held by C.N.S.A.S. as well as the media of the time, memoirs and other representative works which discuss various aspects of Romanian internal and external policy in the interwar period. Gh. G. Mironescu – the congressman was an important political man through his genuine competence and through the length of his activity – over three decades, who enjoyed a high political and professional level (studies in Law, a PhD degree in Paris, university professor of Law, dean of the Faculty of Law in Bucharest) as well as an undeniable political talent ever since his youth. Gh. G. Mironescu – the politician was elected in the Romanian Parliament during nine

legislatures, between 1911-1935 and was therefore part in nine Governments; he held the presidency of the Council of Ministers during two of these, all these distinctions clearly demonstrating political qualities and talent as well as his ability to adapt to the political and social reality of the country in the formation and, later on, consolidation process of the Romanian modern state.

We consider that Gh. G. Mironescu's political activity was performed in close connection with the events generated by the national context specific to his time: the Great War, the Union, the political, economic and social life modernization process.

As a member of the Parliament, during his parliamentary activity, he did not represent a single political party. In his first legislature, which started in 1911, he represented the Conservative Party, in 1929 he was elected on the lists of the People's Party which he led among others and which he left in order to join Take Ionescu's conservatives; however, in 1922, Gh. G. Mironescu becomes a National Democratic Party congressman, a party led by N. Iorga. The year 1926 finds him on the lists of the National Peasant Block as a representative member of the National Party, led by I. Maniu, next to R. Ioanițescu, Al. Vaida-Voevod, I. Dobrescu, Ștefan Ciceo Pop, M. Popovici all of whom he would join in the Executive Central Committee of the National Peasants' Party after the merger between the two parties which took place in 1926, September 26, after the Parliament elections.

As a member of the legislative Chambers he actively participated in the process of elaborating numerous laws with a deep and significant impact on the political and social life.

In order to illustrate Gh. G. Mironescu's contribution to the legislative act we have decided to work on a chronologic selection of laws and content clarifications to the normative acts which were representative in terms of the socio-political and economic perspective, on his legislative initiatives as well as the support he provided to the projects proposed by others, thus bringing strong arguments in favor of his value as a political man.

Gh. G. Mironescu had a significant contribution to the elaboration of the 1923 Constitution as well as to that of 1938. We have demonstrated his contribution by exemplifying with the essential aspect within the new configuration of the three powers: legislative, executive and judicial.

Starting with the 1911 mandate, Gh. G. Mironescu participated in the legislative act for a long period of time which equals his period as a congressman, a reporter or as a supporter of the legislative projects proposed by others.

We have devoted a (substantial) chapter of our thesis to his diplomatic activity which, we believe, demonstrates in the most convincing manner the political man's - the official owner of the Foreign Ministry portfolio – stature.

Without being a career-based diplomat, Gh. G. Mironescu marked positively an important moment in the history of our interwar external policy by continuing Romania's traditional external policy focused on protecting the integrity and independence of the country, on maintaining good rapport with neighbors and ensuring peace.

Gh. G. Mironescu's diplomatic activity, constantly focused on promoting and reaffirming Romania's national interests among other post-war European states. The success of our external policy in the period he led diplomacy was due to the European and democratic orientation that Gh. G. Mironescu promoted for he considered diplomacy „*the art of alternatives*”, himself proving, on various occasions, this selective ability.

The end of 1928 predicted the Great Depression between 1929 and 1933, the effects of the Great War were ongoing and the urgent problems they generated demanded a fast solution.

We have learned from the documents of the period that the major objectives of our external policy were focused on the alliance with France, on diminishing the negative effects of the Soviet Union's attitude towards Romania, the Danube issue, the war reconstruction issue, the problem of optants , the creation of bi or multi-state treaties (The Treaty with Czechoslovakia, The Treaty with Poland, The Little Entente, The Balkan Union), peace insurance.

By following the means by which it was attempted to solve all these problems, we have come to understand the extent to which Gh. G. Mironescu contributed as a Foreign Minister to the positive outcome of all these efforts by actively participating in the diplomatic events of the time, where all important decisions were made: general conventions, conferences, treaties; in this manner, we could become aware of his substantial contribution to the promotion of our diplomacy, his Pan-European vision, as well as his share of effort in the architecture of some European diplomatic projects.

In 1927, Aristide Briand initiated the *Kellogg-Briand Pact* which was signed on the 28th of August, 1928 in Paris.

Romania considered the new treaty a diplomatic and political instrument meant to consolidate and maintain peace relations among states. In order to ratify the *Kellogg-Briand Pact*, Gh. G. Mironescu presented in the Parliament the *Bill for ratification*, the exposition of reasons comprising the ideas of the reporter: the Pact safeguarded the country's security within the framework of a European security policy, Romania being ready to strongly support the international actions meant to reinforce states' security and peace among peoples.

Cautious, Gh. G. Mironescu saw that the amendments wanted by our allies within The Little Entente were postponed, time management being a representative characteristic of the Romanian minister. When, on the 12th of March 1929, it took act of Gh. G. Mironescu's report regarding the works of the Committee concerned with harmonizing the *League of Nations Pact* with the *Kellogg-Briand Pact*, the *Superior Diplomatic Council* approved the conclusions.

Gh. G. Mironescu also contributed to the process of finding the solution to another problem: the *Litvinov Protocol*.

When discussing Romania's position regarding Soviet Russia, Gh. G. Mironescu insisted on the necessity of the normalization of bilateral relations with the Soviet Union although he was aware that this normalization would bring no advantages to Romania especially due to the Communist propaganda danger.

Although a small country, Romania contributed to satisfy not only its own interests but also the general ones, to consolidate peace in Western Europe and its relations with France thus promising through this non-aggression Pact to ease its allies' obligations concerning Bessarabia.

During his term, Gh. G. Mironescu also contributed to the consolidation of the Romanian-Polish relations by signing, together with August Zaleski – Poland's Foreign Minister -, the *Treaty for conciliation and arbitration between Romania and Poland* on the 24th of October 1929.

Within the context of activities meant to guarantee European peace and security we have placed the Romanian Foreign Minister strategy regarding the *French Memorandum* conceived by Aristide Briand. On the 5th of September 1929, he launched his *European Union Project* at the General Assembly of the League of Nations.

Romania was the first European state to approve the *French Memorandum* with Gh. G. Mironescu as the first Foreign Minister who declared his political support for the French initiative.

Within the *League of Nations* debates on the 11th of September 1929, Gheorghe G. Mironescu expressed Romania's support and adhesion in his discourse.

Gh. G. Mironescu conceived his own pan-European architecture *Project*: first, a European economic confederation which would strengthen and deepen economic understanding by creating similar connections in politics in order to reach a political confederation, and finally a *Confederation* that Gh. G. Mironescu named *The United States of Europe*. He went even further and suggested the way in which they would be created, their form and stages. In order to create the *European Confederation*, the Romanian Foreign Minister identified some obstacles as well as the means to overcome these obstacles.

As a Foreign Minister, Gh. G. Mironescu had something to say in terms of war reconstruction as well.

Due to the Romanian delegation's efforts, led by Gh. G. Mironescu, the financial balance for our country was a positive one, Romania being granted the annulment of the enormous debt for the yielded goods and the release of Romanians and Romanian territories under the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Our diplomacy registered great success in the question of *optants* as well: the principles proposed by us regarding the Hungarian issue were accepted and it was agreed that Romania should pay the Hungarian optants just the expropriation rent established by our courts and not by the mixed Courts, the creation of the *A Fund (Agricultural Fund)* and of the *B Fund* thus eliminating the problem of Hungarian complaints.

Following the exposition of the Hague Conference results in the Romanian Parliament, they unanimously voted in favor of the Hague agreements in the 21st of May 1930 session, the ratification instruments being consigned to Paris and signed on the 19th of June 1930.

An emphasis on Romanian attempts, which played a significant role in defending independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within The Little Entente and the Balkan Pact with Gh. G. Mironescu Foreign Minister, is also representative for the relevance of Gh. G. Mironescu - the political figure.

As Foreign Minister, Gh. G. Mironescu signed very important papers for Romania. He contributed to solve some very difficult problems among which that of *optants* by getting the annulment of debts and the release of Romanians in the Austro-Hungarian Empire by closing accounts and mutual renouncement.

We have previously mentioned that the political man Gh. G. Mironescu acted as a congressman during nine terms, as a Foreign Minister, and President of the Council of Ministers twice: once with the occasion of the Restoration on the 7th of June 1930 and shortly afterwards, in the same year, he became the Prime Minister of the new government (for a couple of months) on the 10th of November.

The first Gh. G. Mironescu government was created in order to achieve the act of Restoration and, although it was rather ephemeral, it had a visible impact and a profound echo in the history of our people by accomplishing its mission (we appreciate it was among the few governments in the period between the two wars which accomplished its mission) and then, presenting its resignation in front of King Charles II.

We consider that the most representative Gh. G. Mironescu government was the second one, between the 10th of November 1930 and the 4th of April 1931, when Romania faced an economic crisis doubled by a complicated political crisis with the Maniu government incapable to save the country in front of the more and more obvious crisis, an aspect which was widely criticized by the politicians of other parties.

We must note that Gh. G. Mironescu had an accurate and clear vision on the necessary solutions to overcome the crisis.

But despite all these solutions and measures against crisis, the Government had to resign on the 4th of April 1931.

We consider that the new political crisis generated by the fall of the Mironescu government was determined by the impossibility to immediately solve the economic crisis, the public discontent of some social categories, the royal camarilla moves to seize power, the policy of Charles II, the conflicts between political parties and the fights within parties, the international context.

We mention in the fifth chapter of our thesis, *Gheorghe G. Mironescu – Prime Minister and Minister*, that Gh. G. Mironescu was part in nine governments starting in 1921 and, with some breaks, finishing in 1933.

His one-month Minister position was rather ordinary and lacked in any events which could emphasize his traits as a politician.

In 1932 (the 6th of June- the 10th of August and the 10th of August-the 17th of October), Gh. G. Mironescu was part in the Alexandru Vaida-Voevod government as a Minister of Finance

and, for two days, (the 6-7th of June) he was an interim at the Ministry for Public Works and Communications.

During the first Al. Vaida-Voevod term, which was a temporary one due to the Parliamentary elections period, Gh. G. Mironescu hardly had any time to familiarize with the specific issues of the Ministry.

By using his staff from the Ministry of Finance in order to improve taxation, which had become excessive, to complete the state's treasury, to reduce public debt and to reach its balance, he moved on to improve the legislation by introducing new laws or amendments to the already existing laws. One necessary, although insufficient step, towards financial balance was taken by making a 50 million Swiss Francs loan. Although laws were voted, although their implementation in economy and finance was attempted, the financial restoration of the country could not be reached, the economic crisis triggered the political one thus producing serious „earthquakes” within the National Peasants' Party as well as changes among the leaders of the country.

Al. Vaida-Voevod returned to lead the government as a President of the Council of Ministers (the 14th of January –the 9th of October 1933) and, together with him, Gh. G. Mironescu became the vice-president and Minister of the Interior. Their return was marked by a background of general dissatisfaction which reached a climax in the Prahova Valley and Bucharest C. F. R. Grivita social conflicts which imposed an immediate solution which materialized in radical measures.

On the 31st of January 1935, Gh. G. Mironescu left the National Peasants' Party by forwarding a resignation letter to Ion Mihalache, then the president of the National Peasants' Party.

He would return on the political scene among the senior officials as a State Secretary Minister (the 11th of February 1938) and a royal counselor (the 30th of March 1938), his devotion to the king and the positions he had held in the past promoting him in the party of Charles II, the National Renaissance Front, thus contributing to the introduction and consolidation of royal dictatorship.

A first rate political man, enjoying a parliamentary status of honest and active congressman, constantly involved in dialogue with contemporary personalities, Gh. G. Mironescu was a talented political man, a complex, controversial and unreplicable.



