

# THE IMPACT OF THE 1929-1933 ECONOMIC CRISIS ON THE ROMANIAN CONSTABULARY

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## **Abstract**

*The great economic crisis of 1929-1933 affected many institutions, including the Gendarmerie. During this period, the budget allocated by the Ministry of Interior was a deficient one, which led to the abolition of some of the gendarmerie units and a drastic reduction of personnel through the transfer of the gendarmes and the endowed goods within the Ministry of the Army. Later, however, due to the dissatisfaction of the population and the intense political activity, the gendarmes were supplemented again. The General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie, with all the difficulties encountered, has found solutions so that the personnel activity not to be jeopardized, taking care of the payment of salaries, the maintenance of the service animals and the renovation of the units' headquarters.*

**Keywords:** *budget, organisation, economic, credits, gendarmerie*

**JEL Classification:** *B20, B29.*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Romania, part of the world system of the capitalist economy, was also hit by the economic crisis of 1929-1933. This crisis covered all branches of activity, from industry and agriculture to the system of public order and safety. The second semester of 1929 - the beginning of 1930 was characterized by the onset of the economic crisis, a crisis that lasted about 4 years and which not only affected the Romanian civil society, but also one of the most important institutions in the system of public order and security and namely the Gendarmers (Iacob, 1996).

## **II. THE IMPACT OF THE 1929-1933 ECONOMIC CRISIS**

In order to solve the complex social and political problems that appeared in Romania, in 1929 two laws were promulgated regarding the organization and functioning of two institutions of public order and safety, the Gendarmerie and the Police (Mihalache & Suciu, 1993). Thus, starting with April 1, 1929, the Law of the Rural Gendarmerie was implemented, being published in the Official Gazette no. 69 of 29.03.1929 (A.N- fond I.G.J, 1893: 73). Based on this normative act, the Gendarmerie operated with a General Inspectorate and seven Gendarmes Inspectorates in Craiova, Bucharest, Chisinau, Iasi, Cernauti, Cluj and Timisoara. Within them there were 72 legions of gendarmes with a total number of 323 officers, 7878 non-commissioned officers, 10820 gendarmes in term and 49 civil servants (Bobocescu, 2002). Since 1929 this weapon had various attribution, namely crime prevention, maintaining and restoring public order, collecting state security information and the actions of foreign intelligence services, investigating and tracking offenses provided by law, prosecuting and catching criminals. From the archival documents we find out that in 1929, a budget of 803,204,996 lei was allocated to the Gendarmerie institution and an amount of 4227 payment orders was issued, and, in order to complete the funds for some budget items that were not given enough money, it was requested to supplement the amounts, the amounts being cancelled from other budget items. The necessary funds for the Rural Gendarmerie were provided annually in the budget of the Ministry of Interior and were administered according to the general accounting law of the State and according to the organization and functioning regulations (Mihalache & Suciu 1995).

Between April and October 1929 some units of gendarmes were abolished and others were transferred to the Ministry of the Army. The number of gendarmerie sections was reduced from 623 to 492, and the positions from 4588

to 2540 (A.N- fond I.G.J, 1893: 74). Starting with May 26, 1929, by the Decision of the Minister of the Interior no. 880/929, 1674 horses were given to the army ministry, and 670 horses were left to the Rural Gendarmerie.

In July 1929, in order to save money, from the budget of the gendarmerie was cancelled definitively - by the Provision of the Minister of the Interior no. 2431- the sum of 17,743.298. During the same year, 1929, by the Decree of the Ministry of the Interior 3818/929, an extraordinary loan of 12,000 lei was opened for the payment of some debts. Due to the budget cuts, on October 1, 1929, the Bucharest Gendarmes Regiment, 12 Training Battalions as well as the companies of Iasi, Chisinau and Cluj were forced to pass under the Ministry of the Army (A.N- fond I.G.J, 1893: 85).

On 30 October 1929, according to art. 4 of this law, the General Inspectorate of the Rural Gendarmerie underwent a reorganization. Thus, from the administrative (logistical) point of view, there were several compartments: the service of the domains, stewardship, administrative control, sanitary, veterinary, garments, equipment, pharmaceutical, armament and ammunition.

In 1930, in the budget of the Ministry of Interior the amount of 798,708,818 was allocated for the General Inspectorate of Rural Gendarmerie. Because the number of the gendarmes from the legions' residence was small, they were increased their food allowance and they were given 50 kg of firewood per day, which were to decrease by balance. For the gendarmes who were working in sections and posts a daily norm of 21 lei of food was fixed. Undersecretary of State D. R. Ioanițescu states at the beginning of 1930 that "although the financial economic situation of the country was not suitable for raising wages, however, due to the urgent need to highlight the principle of a good functioning of the rural police apparatus and, following the successful efforts, the new salaries could be obtained, though no other category of public employees could reach a wage rise. Stepping confidently into 1930, we will continue with the fulfilment and completion of the application of these laws by all the gendarmerie personnel, officers, gendarmes and civil servants...". By the General Circular Order no. 3 of 22.02.1930 it was ordered to keep the troop horses at the sections and positions until the fodder was finished, after which they were to be given to the Ministry of the Army, and only the officers' horses remained at the legions' residence.

The supplies for 1930 for the General Inspectorate of the Rural Gendarmerie were made by the Central Auction Office, and the other formations were given the necessary money (A.N- fond I.G.J, 1893: 84).

On April 1, 1930, according to the Instructions of the Ministry of Interior, namely no. 4201 of March 5, 1930 the decentralization of management in money, in matters and barracks by legions was introduced. The liquidation of the old management was carried out as the quarter was verified and completed. Also, on April 1, 1930 the Cashier's Service of the General Inspectorate was abolished, merging with the Cashier's Workshop. Material and effects stores were also abolished. The inspectorates distributed to the legions the effects they needed, and what was extra was given to the legion.

For the equipment fund, the amount of 82,000,000 lei was foreseen for 1930:

- a) 10% budgetary savings - 8,200,000 lei
  - b) the amount of 20,240,000 lei was cancelled
  - c) the amount of 4911,706 lei was allocated
- Total: 33,351,706 lei

The amount of 48,648,294 lei remained for supply.

The equipment fund was reduced to half, which led to the impossibility of purchasing the materials needed for the complete equipment of the gendarmes in 1930. The measures together with the Instructions no. 7237 and 7665 of March 20, 1930 of the Ministry of Interior, in order to apply the new accounting provisions have been transmitted in time. From July 1, 1930 the payment orders for the Inspectorates 1, 2, 4 and 5 Gendarmes were issued by the Ministerial Directorates from the delegated credits: art. 113 troop balance, art. 114 transportation of inspection officers, art. 116 mission inspection officers, art.117 mission heads of inspection section, art.119 food and maintenance crew, art. 120 chancery allowance, art. 123 equipment maintenance allowance, art. 127 rents, art. 130 fuel, art. 131 lighting (A.N- fond I.G.J, 1893: 107).

On October 25, 1930, the following additional credits were cancelled and opened:

Loan cancellations:

1. From the art. 123..... 16.240.000 lei
2. From the art. 121..... 1.000.000 lei
3. From the art. 128 ..... 500.000 lei
4. From the art. 130..... 1.000.000 lei
5. From the art. 134..... 200.000 lei
6. From the art. 138..... 500.000 lei
7. From the art. 139..... 75.000 lei
8. From the art. 140..... 250.000 lei

9. From the art. 141 ..... 25.000 lei

Credit openings

- a) From art. 119 the food of the troop..... 4.040.000 lei
- b) From art. 122 fodder..... 2.000.000 lei
- c) From art. 135 diseases aids ..... 200,000 lei
- d) From art. 114 additional credits ..... 200,000 lei

Taking into account the budgetary changes from October 1, 1930, by reducing the number of staff and the situation required by the new law of public accounting, changes have been made in the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie, both in the operational plan and economic-administrative plan. On the financial-accounting line there were the Section III Budget-Authorisation with the budget office and the 7 authorisation office and the Accounting Section with the Office 2 Accounting in money, Office 3 Accounting in matters, responsible for money, responsible for warehouse materials, responsible for workshop materials, responsible for reception room materials and responsible for pharmacy materials (A.N- fond I.G.J, 1931: 277). The cashier and barracks service of the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie was abolished, and the distribution of military effects was continued by a single general equipment warehouse (Nuțu, 2012).

In 1931 a reorganization of the gendarmerie takes place. Thus, general sub-inspectorates are created, and the gendarme's inspectorates were named regional inspectorate (the South General Sub-Inspectorate was in charge of the Ploiesti and Craiova Regional Inspectorates, the Western General Sub-Inspectorate - the Regional Inspectorates of Cluj, Brasov and Timisoara, and the Eastern Regional Inspectorate-General by Gendarmi Iasi, Chisinau and Cernauti). The General Sub-Inspectorate was in fact a mediator between the General Inspectorate and the Regional Gendarmes Inspectorates. The number of training battalions was also increased from 11 to 13, and the gendarmes' legions were classified into three categories - large, medium and small in relation to the territory, population and problems encountered in the police activity. At the same time, it was established that the number of gendarmes could not be less than 3-5 gendarmes, of which one station chief and two patrol chiefs (all three judicial police officers and two gendarmes in the field).

The Domains Service continued improving some buildings belonging to the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie, but also those that were state property. The necessary furniture was purchased for the Inspectorates 4 Cluj, 5 Craiova, but also for the Gendarmes Legions Vlașca, Teleorman, Alba, Iasi. The work continued at the headquarters of the General Inspectorate, constructions that started in 1928 at the initiative of General Davidoglu Cleante, former commander of the Rural Gendarmes Corps. In November 1929, the General Inspectorate and the Gendarmes Inspectorate I of Bucharest moved into the new building. In order to this building to be constructed, the amount of 36,000,000 lei was spent. The work performed by military craftsmen, led to an economy of 14,400,000 lei, thus 50,400,000 lei would have been spent. The building is a work of art, Roman-medieval style executed under the supervision of Lt. col. C. Ionescu Beldiman, the head of the Construction and Domains Department of the Rural Gendarmerie, assisted with technical part by the architect I. Mandi and the builder I. Risu. The plans were accomplished according to the instructions of the Inspector General and the Military Domains Service (A.N- fond I.G.J, 1893: 108).

Besides the building of the Palace of the General Inspectorate, other constructions were also built:

- In Focșani - a building with 4 floors and a terrace, the tallest and most modern building in Focșani. The building is in Roman-Byzantine style;
- In Tg. Ocna- a modern pavilion with a basement and 3 floors enough to accommodate 2 Companies, in the court style of Greek-Egyptian forum;
- In Drăgășani, an administration pavilion in the Romanian style;
- In Condrăchești-Tecuci a ground floor building, Romanian house for the post and section;
- In Roman, a building with 3 bodies of houses on a plot of 6000 m.p was purchased and arranged for the legion (A.N- fond I.G.J, 1893: 91).

The increase of the dissatisfaction of the population, as a result of the economic crisis, but also the intensity of the radical and extremist political activity, determined the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie to increase its number. By the Order of the General Inspectorate no. 2982 from 1932 were established 40 sectors, 14 reserve groups, 3 riding groups, 9 motorcycle patrols, 95 positions with 10 gendarmes, 379 positions with 7 gendarmes, 285 positions with 5 gendarmes and 620 positions with 3 gendarmes.

### III. CONCLUSION

The gendarmerie, a military institution that is part of the system of defence, security and national security and of the public order, has undergone a process of transformation from an organizational point of view during the great economic crisis. The purpose of this data was to highlight the fact that the gendarmes, with all the minuses and material difficulties they encountered, represented a team that contributed to maintaining a climate of public order and safety, demonstrating professionalism in performing all their missions.

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