ABOUT MODERNIZATION AT THE ARMY’S TEMPO:
MILITARIZATION OF PUBLIC LIFE IN INTERWAR ROMANIA
(Summary)

*Keywords*: the cult of the uniform, militarization, ideological radicalism, political violence.

The strategies of militarization of public life represented a component of the interwar political practice. The regimes that succeeded each other at the helm of the Romanian state used the army as an instrument of social control, with a view to regimenting the population to their own interests. Together with censorship, the discretionary utilization of the “state of emergency” was a political constant of the interwar cabinets, along with the violent crushing of protest movements. These coordinates indicate a fragility of the democracy existing in the period between the two World Wars, one that had to be exceptionally defended by the military and civil authorities. The army values adopted during the military service influenced in a negative way the population’s perspective upon political life; the social discipline of the barracks led to increasing vulnerability towards the voluntarist and extremist ruling solutions. The cult of the uniform, the “demonstrations of force” on the occasion of the national holidays, the penetration of military music in everyday life, all of them perpetuated the myth of the war victory and kept alive the memory of World War I confrontations. And yet, in spite of the discourses based on order, army discipline and “directed” reconstruction of the Romanian state, many discrepancies appear at the practical level; here, most of the times the action was chaotic, consistent with the temporary needs or the leaders’ caprices.

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