

GHEORGHE CLIVETI*

ROMANIA AND THE LONDON CONFERENCE IN 1883,
ON THE DANUBE QUESTION
(Summary)

Keywords: the Danube Question, the diplomatic conferences, the European Commission of Danube, the Mixed Commission, the Barrère' project, the regulations..., the Treaty of 10 March 1883.

An event like the 1883 Conference – expected to provide a European solution to the complicated Danubian question – should have had a historiographic reflex as per its importance. That was far from reality, however. However, that conference was insufficiently analysed by specialists. The histories, dictionaries or guides of international congresses and conferences do not really mention or comment upon it. Among the most disseminated syntheses on the history of diplomacy or diplomatic history, only A. Debidour assigned a line in his text to it and a brief note on the same page. Almost all the other syntheses fail to mention it as an event, like the London Conference of 1871, which mainly concerned the implications of Russia unilaterally denouncing the neutralisation of the Black Sea but, under the Treaty signed by the deliberating Powers on 13 March that year, the Danubian navigation, too. It is not even featured in respectable syntheses of international relations history or, more recently, international policy history; the syntheses are systematic, without omitting data or details. The historiographical reflection of an event whose preliminaries, occurrences and consequences held the attention of newspapers since 1883 and stirred parliamentary debates, analyses and governmental decisions at the level of the leading European powers seems strange. An equally peculiar aspect is the scarcity of documents regarding the same event – the London Conference – included in the best-known significant collections in French and German, even on the origins of the First World War. Those collections and the underlying historiography have relied on the London Conference of 1883. They focus on the diplomacy of formal reunions under the auspices “frozen” by the Berlin Congress of the concert of the Great Powers. They do not consider the diplomacy of direct contacts and arrangements (often secret) between governments, strategically led by the chancellery of the Second German Reich.

* Prof. univ. PhD, m.c., Director of the “A. D. Xenopol” Institute of History, Romanian Academy – Iași Branch; e-mail: gheorghecliveti@uaic.ro.