
T A N G E N C I E S

The Battle of Britain As Presented by the Romanian Legionary Media

SORIN ARHIRE (September 1940–January 1941)

“No other people on Earth is capable of so much hypocrisy as the British.”

Sorin Arhire

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THE BATTLE of Britain, one of the most important and dramatic episodes of World War II, was given a great deal of attention by the media of the national-legionary Romanian state. This aspect is easily noticeable if we analyze the contents of the three daily newspapers—*Buna Vestire* (The Annunciation),¹ *Cuvântul* (The Word)² and *Axa* (The Axis)—recognized in a communication of the General Secretary from 19 December 1940 as making up the legionary press.³ It is important to note that there were other newspapers in that period which may very well be seen as legionary, but they did not display the caption “newspaper of the Legionary Movement” on their first page. Therefore, articles written in newspapers such as *Pământul strămoșesc* (The Ancestral Land) and *Glasul strămoșesc* (The Ancestral Voice) did not express the official position of the Legion⁴ towards certain

matters, and the statements made therein did not commit the legionary government to anything.

Each issue of the abovementioned newspapers described the recent events of the British-German conflict in profuse detail. As one can easily anticipate, their attitude was clearly Germanophile and obviously Anglophobic, and they always described the hostilities putting the Germans in a favorable light. The anti-British attitude of the Romanian media even led to a complaint sent by R. A. Butler, the state secretary of the Foreign Office, to the Romanian plenipotentiary minister in London. It was considered that the offensive tone of the Romanian press towards Great Britain had no grounds whatsoever and it was also noted that “the British race is proud and vainglorious; just like it knows how to take death and destruction, it does not understand to take insults.”⁵ An important role in imposing this anti-British vision was played by the Press Directorate of the Ministry of National Propaganda, which organized daily meetings of the directorate representative—who was usually the director—with the accredited journalists. These meetings were used to send verified research materials and information⁶ to newspapers in the capital and throughout the country. Thus, they eliminated from the outset the possibility of someone publishing information contrary to the policy of the state authorities. Moreover, unlike the British press which was almost completely free,⁷ in Romania they also supervised the execution of the received instructions, meaning that the department head had to send files with newspaper clippings on a daily basis.⁸

Also present in the legionary press were direct attacks against Britain and everything that was British, some passages being downright caustic and defamatory. Thus, in one of the articles from *Cuvântul* entitled “The True Face of Britain,” the author vents his anger at the British people, stating that “no other people on Earth is capable of so much hypocrisy as the British.”⁹ In the next issue of the same newspaper, G. Racoveanu showed no compassion for the ordeals of the British people but rather went apocalyptic, foretelling its end: “The sea rovers complain of pirate ships. The slavers speak of freedom of the peoples. The planet’s thieves want to pass as champions of justice in the eyes of the stupid. The land merchants want to be protectors of moral actions. The time has come to drop the masks... And in the final battle, Britain will be crushed.”¹⁰

P. P. Panaitescu¹¹ is no better; he sees the British investments in the Romanian economy only as additional proof of Albion’s perfidious intent to rob the country. “Maybe our oil and wheat are a more interesting historical fact than the fight for the defense of Christendom?... As long as the money goes in the pockets of the British from Royal Dutch and nothing remains in the country, as long as all the engineers are British, like in the other colonies, all is good.”¹²

Since the Romanian national-legionary government only lasted for four months, from September 1940 to January 1941, the press of the régime established in the autumn of the last year of the fourth decade could not analyze the beginning of the German-British conflict for obvious reasons; nor could it surprise in its pages the end of this battle, the first major failure of Germany in World War II. However, it did manage to cover the dramatic moments of this battle and the most important changes in strategy, because it was at this point that the two sides took the most important decisions. The British resistance from the first months was decisive, as once they surpassed the critical moment of the first period, the British morale grew by the day, leading them to victory.

The anti-Semitic component of the Legionary Movement, its atavistic aversion to the Jews, only increased the feelings of hostility and even hatred towards Great Britain. Seeing the Jew as the dissolving element of any civilization, selfish and characterized by a ferocious materialism,¹³ and Britain as one of the favorite places of world Judaism, Vladimir Dumitrescu had no problems in presenting the British archipelago within the abovementioned coordinates in one of the official newspapers of the Movement. In his vision, after the collapse of France, the British isles were nothing more than the last bastion of Judaic Masonry in Europe, a place where “behind the angelic mask of Puritanism lures the satanic figure of Israel.”¹⁴ In the view of P. P. Panaitescu, the influence of the Jewish circles on the policy led by the British government was overwhelming; he believed that Britain was nothing more than “a country turned Jewish to the bone, where Jewish ministers give orders dictated by the big financials from the City.”¹⁵ In one of the articles from *Axa* it was said that a possible victory of the British in World War II, seen as a confrontation between the “occult Judaic freemasonry” and the conquering nationalism, would be nothing more than a triumph of world Jewry.¹⁶

Being in an official state of war since 3 September 1939, the two countries—Britain and Germany—went through the stage of the “Twilight War” as Winston Churchill called it, with numerous attempts at reaching an agreement made by the Germans. For almost ten months after the two states entered the state of war, there was no sign of war in Britain. It was only on 10 July 1940 that the first massive attack occurred, which is why this date is generally seen as the beginning of the battle. But even after this attack, Hitler did not cease to hope that he would reach an agreement with the British government, and on 19 July he made the British a new proposal which could truthfully be seen as the most important of all German peace offers. Even when Winston Churchill rejected this proposed compromise in the most categorical terms, very clearly stating his wish to fight, Hitler thought that this was a trick and that Britain would give in due to its desperate military situation.¹⁷ In fact, by proposing to the British prime minis-

ter a peace which would have forced Britain to guarantee Germany complete freedom of action on the Continent in exchange for the Germans' recognition of Great Britain's and its empire's integrity—for these were the main ideas of the German peace proposal—Hitler did nothing but give the British what they loathed most, i.e. the existence in Europe of a force stronger than the rest of the continent taken together. Besides, the British politicians could not consider the above-mentioned guarantees seriously, as they clearly understood that a nation capable to guarantee the integrity of their country and empire was just as capable of destroying them both.¹⁸ Adolf Hitler, like many other French generals and politicians, could not understand the separate, independent resources of an insular state and, like the French, was wrong in calculating the strength of the islanders' will to fight.¹⁹

The Germans' belief that Britain would have to reach an agreement was so strong that the *Buna Vestire* issue of 6 October embraced this idea and analyzed in detail the alternatives available to the British: compromise or continued resistance.²⁰ Although it blamed them for their stubbornness, between the lines of the abovementioned newspaper one could still read a barely dissimulated admiration for this firm decision to fight, even when the circumstances were critical. This is precisely what the British prime minister intuited and then wrote down in his memoirs, which were awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1953.

Adolf Hitler planned to defeat Great Britain by landing in the southern part of the British mainland. To achieve this, he needed to gain air supremacy over the English Channel. And since the landing operation did not occur, the aerial battle became the main and even the only form of the Battle of Britain. The fate of the British isles and even of the entire civilized world of parliamentary democracy depended on the courage, skill and dedication of the British pilots, as indicated by Winston Churchill in one of his famous quotes.

The German air offensive was supported by the 2nd and 3rd air squadrons, led by Field Marshal Albert Kesselring and by Field Marshal Hugo Sperrle, respectively, the first being based in the northeast of France and in the Netherlands and the second in the north and northwest of France. After the capitulation of the French and the occupation of Norway, the Germans enjoyed a big strategic advantage as Britain was practically surrounded by enemy bases; this gave the German aviation the possibility to use all kinds of feints and conceal their true targets. The main type of fighter plane used by Luftwaffe was the Messerschmitt 109²¹ which was later joined by the Messerschmitt 110 and Heinkel 113. The British had two types of fighter planes: Spitfires and Hurricanes.²² The German planes achieved somewhat higher speeds than the British ones, but they were inferior in terms of maneuverability and weaponry.

After the period 24 August–6 September 1940, when the Luftwaffe attacked fighter bases in Kent and Sussex, on 7 September the plan changed and the German air force shifted its attention to the busy London area. One cannot help but notice that by changing his strategy and distancing himself from the classical principles of warfare and from the minimum ethical standards of the time, Hermann Göring made a foolish mistake and thus gave the Royal Air Force pilots the chance to recover their strength and reenter the battle.²³ The creation of the national-legionary state in Romania on 14 September coincided with two massive attacks on London, followed by another one on 15 September, which also coincided with the postponement of Hitler's "Sea Lion" operation aimed at a German landing in the south of Britain. Mid-September was also the time when the Luftwaffe started using time-delay bombs, which turned a new leaf of the war both for the civilian population and for the so-called "unexploded ordnance detachment."

The day of 15 September was decisive for British morale, marking the RAF's return to the battle and the reversal of fortunes to the disadvantage of the Germans, following their loss of 60 planes as compared to the 26 fighter planes lost by the opposing camp.²⁴ On that day, after two heavy attacks carried the day before, the German aviation gathered a record number of planes to carry out the biggest day attack on London. Although the German forces were attacked as soon as they reached the coast, a large number of bombers managed to reach London and bombed mainly the densely populated districts of the East End.

When analyzing the way in which the Germans wanted to conquer Britain, one cannot help but notice that as time went by they tried to implement several plans, but none would be completed. Attack methods which caused significant damage were often abandoned for others, as the Germans were always looking for something new. The indecision of German aviators and especially of the commander of the German air force, Hermann Göring, had as a first consequence the overlapping of all these stages, which could not be separated by precise dates. Of course, in the end another more important consequence for the Luftwaffe was the loss of the Battle of Britain. As even the British recognized later on, if the Germans had been consistent in carrying out a single plan, Adolf Hitler could have managed to conquer a country which had not been under foreign domination for almost nine hundred years.

FIRST, IT was believed that victory could be achieved by bombing London, at that time the biggest city in the world, as it was a target which did not require too much accuracy. They destroyed strategic points of the metropolis such as factories, docks, roads and residential districts.²⁵ The reasoning behind the destruction of civilian buildings was simple: to create a state of panic among the population, forcing the British government to agree to a com-

promise. For fifty-seven days, between 7 September and 3 November, London was attacked by an average of two hundred bombers each night.²⁶

Although the description made by *Buna Vestire* of the German raid of 14 October is terrible, this presentation is clearly nothing but a pale reflection of the dreadful moments lived by Londoners. According to this article, the enormous pyres reaching for the sky could be seen from the English Channel, and smoldering ruins covered the entire British capital.²⁷

Quoting an article published in the Swiss paper *Le Temps*, the newspaper *Cuvântul* naturally asked itself how the Londoners could live in this fortress, ceaselessly hit by enemy bombers, where thousands of houses were destroyed or badly damaged, the traffic was partially interrupted and even the Buckingham Palace had been hit.²⁸ The only location which gave Londoners absolute safety was the vast tube network, because apart from it there were few basements or cellars which could withstand a direct hit. Therefore, the stations were packed with people who slept on the floor without mattresses and with children sitting on coats and protected from the draught with old newspapers.²⁹

However, Londoners lived in a calming atmosphere of courage, mutual assistance and kindness, as a young member of the Free French forces³⁰ led by General Charles de Gaulle noted. Despite the fact that many Londoners slept in tube stations or in improvised shelters and woke up to see familiar districts turned into ruins, they were serene, relaxed, kind, obliging, while many others in their place would have been worried, preoccupied, bitter, selfish.³¹ This daily courage, “this obstinate refusal to take things tragically, this never-disavowed kindness, is one of the great lessons given by Churchill’s Britain.”³² A very interesting perspective is that of Radu Florescu, the Romanian plenipotentiary minister to London, who did not see any sign that the British resistance would crumble. On the contrary, he noticed their determination increasing as the German attack intensified. The Romanian diplomat made an interesting comparison: “In our world there are feeble organisms which you can crush with one blow. Others have such a solid structure and such a deep vitality that you can hit them ceaselessly and they do not die. Britain falls in the second category.”³³

The self-control raised at the rank of national virtue in Britain and their capacity to remain calm in extreme situations made the British treat the Blitz with contempt. Everybody went about their daily business, dined and slept as usual, the theatres were full and so were the dark streets. This attitude can only be catalogued as a healthy reaction when compared to the frightened whining of the Parisian defeatist elements when the French capital was seriously bombed for the first time in May 1940.³⁴

This image of the courage showed by the Londoners during the bombardment strongly contrasts with the way in which the legionary newspapers described

the morale of the inhabitants of the British metropolis. Quoting reports from the German press agency DNB, it was only natural for them to present the people's state of mind so that Romanian readers may easily conclude that Britain was actually on the brink of collapse. In mid October, the legionary press wrote that the Londoners' morale was so low that a social revolution was bound to occur in the near future. The article published in *Cuvântul*, based on information from the same DNB agency, argued that after four weeks of bombings in which the number of victims had grown constantly, the state of mind of the Londoners was desperate.³⁵ The life of British children was also given a grim presentation by the journalists at *Cuvântul*, who said that they led a savage life; according to their statements, of the 112,000 children in London, only 20,000 still went to school.³⁶

On 3 November, after almost two months of bombardments, the London alarms went silent. The Luftwaffe had changed its tactic. The following night, the German attacks were widely spread across the island. Arguing that London was too big and vague a target for decisive results,³⁷ Hermann Göring decided to carry out focused attacks against provincial towns, which could be destroyed to a greater extent, and thus frighten the population. The first town to be given the "honor" of such an attack after this shift in strategy was Coventry.³⁸ The raid was carried out by over 500 planes which dropped over 500,000 kg of explosive bombs and over 30,000 kg of incendiary bombs.³⁹ This was a most devastating attack and the damage to the town were enormous. Although the German radio stations broadcast the threat that other British towns would be similarly given the *Coventry treatment*, as one could later see many other towns bravely withstood the attacks, because, as the then British prime minister put it, it did not matter where the blow struck, the nation was as sound as the sea had salt.⁴⁰

The day of 15 November brought a new attack on London which ended with the bombing of Waterloo Bridge, of Paddington station and of a factory close to the Commercial Docks.⁴¹ Between 19 and 22 November, three successive raids were carried out against Birmingham, an important center of the British weapons industry. Almost eight hundred people died and over two thousand were injured, but its million inhabitants overcame their physical suffering thanks to their remarkable organization, dedication and commitment.⁴² Then followed Bristol,⁴³ Southampton,⁴⁴ Portsmouth,⁴⁵ Liverpool, and later Plymouth, Sheffield, Manchester, Leeds and Glasgow. The air raids also damaged the Vickers factories at Waybridge which made the Wellington bombers, the Hurricane factories at Kingston upon Thames, the Rootes factories which made the Blenheim planes and the Short Brothers factory in Rochester, where the four-engine Stirling bombers were made.⁴⁶ The choice of Bristol and of the other towns was not accidental, as due to the actions of the Kriegsmarine most of the goods transported by sea presently reached the western coast. With its docks and installations,

the port of Bristol played an essential part in supplying the Midlands and the south of England, London included.

The experience gathered by the Germans in all these months of bombardments was painfully used on 29 December in a devastating raid against London. The *New York Herald Tribune* correspondent quoted by the DNB agency related that the bombardment lasted for three full hours, turning a London district into a true hell.⁴⁷ This was a battle with almost one thousand five hundred fires which caused serious damage to the railway stations and the docks. Eight churches were completely or partially destroyed, and the town hall burned down and was shattered by explosions.⁴⁸ Fortunately, due to heroic efforts, while the center of London looked like a set in a Wagnerian opera, Saint Paul's Cathedral was rescued. According to the correspondent of the same American newspaper quoted above, more than 200 bombs had been dropped over a single district, unleashing a belt of fires which turned the entire sky red.⁴⁹

The British-German conflict was not only a military confrontation between the two opponents, but also a media confrontation. The British and the Germans blamed one another for the most dishonest fighting methods and especially for the intentional bombing of the civilian population. As Romania was already a satellite of Germany and had joined the Tripartite Pact in November, it is easy to anticipate the attitude of the Romanian press in general and of the legionary press in particular. Based on information taken from the German press, all the blame was put on the British. The intentional bombing of German hospitals despite the good visibility and the Red Cross marking the hospitals,⁵⁰ the attacks on occupied France at Christmas,⁵¹ the bombs dropped on historic buildings such as Manheim Castle⁵² are just a few of the accusations brought against the British pilots. Other accusations regarded the failure to respect Switzerland's neutrality by violating its air space, the British sailors' breach of the most elementary rules of war⁵³ and above all the intentional bombing of residential districts.

This last aspect, the deliberate bombing of major urban centers, was one of main points of the media conflict between the British and the Germans. The *Buna Vestire*, *Cuvântul* and *Axa* newspapers and also the German press stigmatized the bombing of German towns by the RAF and described the German raids as a mere response to the British operations, although today we know for a fact that things were exactly the other way around. An eloquent proof of this is the fact that almost all reports presented the German air attacks as retaliatory operations against the British raids on Germany. Often they emphasized the fact that the victims of British aviators were mainly or exclusively civilians and that in the devastated areas there were no military or industrial targets.

Just like Winston Churchill in his celebrated memoirs, the author of this article did not seek to bring back to life a time when, only in London, ten or

maybe even twenty thousand people remained homeless in one single day, when hospitals were full of injured people, roads and rails were damaged, sewage systems destroyed and electricity and gas were cut off and when, in spite of all these, Britain's war effort went on.⁵⁴ We have only tried to show the image of the Battle of Britain, as this episode of World War II is largely known, as seen from the perspective of the three newspapers mentioned above, an image that is probably rather pale compared to the reality of those times. □

(Translated by SILVANA VULCAN)

Notes

1. As of 1937, the *Buna Vestire* newspaper was organised as a joint stock company with the majority of shares being held by Professor Manoilescu and his family. When the newspaper resumed publication on 8 September 1940, the structure of the editorial staff had suffered radical changes due to the fact that many of the old staff had been executed on 21 September 1939 at the order of King Carol II. The new structure of the editorial staff included Grigore Manoilescu as director and Constantin Noica as editor-in-chief, while Valeriu Olaniuc acted as secretary. The editorial staff consisted of: Cristian Petrescu, Ion Stoenescu, Horia Stamatu, Ștefan Ion Gheorghe, Luca Popovici, Radu Gyr, Mircea Streinul, Alexandru Alexianu and Demetrie Soutzu. The contributors to the newspaper were: Mihail Manoilescu, Constantin Noica, Octav Vorobchievici, Emanuel Voinescu, Mircea Mateescu, Dragoș Vrânceanu, Ciril Vârnăv, Nicolae Pană, Demetrie Ganea, Paul Petzi, Barbu Slusanschi and Mircea Pop. During the national-legionary state, the newspaper was suspended for one week when Alexandru Constant, the propaganda minister, became its director and Constantin Noica was replaced by Horia Stamatu as editor-in-chief. Horia Sima, *Era libertății: Statul național-legionar*, vol. 1 (Timișoara: Gordian, 1995), 12–13.
2. Established in 1924 by Titus Enacovici, after 1933 it was classified as a legionary newspaper. After the death of Nae Ionescu, his wife donated the *Cuvântul* newspaper to the Legionary Movement. Under the national-legionary state the newspaper appeared between 13 October 1940 and 23 January 1941. The newspaper director was P. P. Panaitescu and Ștefan C. Ionescu was the general secretary. *Ibid.*, 177.
3. *Ibid.*, 207.
4. The Romanian Legion of the Archangel Michael was created in Jassy on 24 June 1927 by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, who also became the Captain of this political and national movement. Three years later a military wing of the Legion was set up under the name of the Iron Guard, which was soon adopted by the entire organisation. It was a far right movement related to Italian fascism and German Nazism, but with autochthonous roots. It had an anti-Semitic, anti-democratic character, but it

promoted the values of orthodox Christianity and the cult of the peasant seen as a personification of the pristine natural human being. It promoted a Romanian external policy which stood close to that of Germany and Italy. It obtained very good results in the parliamentary elections of 1937, and between September 1940 and January 1941 the Legionary Movement governed together with General Ion Antonescu. *Istoria României* (Bucharest: Ed. Enciclopedică, 1998), 434–435. For further details see Armin Heinen, *Die Legion "Erzengel Michael" in Rumänien: Soziale Bewegung und politische Organisation: Ein Beitrag zum Problem des internationalen Faschismus* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1986); Francisco Veiga, *La mística del ultranacionalismo: Historia de la Guardia de Hierro. Rumania, 1919–1941* (Bellaterra: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1989).

5. The Archives of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereafter cited as Arch. RMFA), coll. 71 Anglia, vol. 14, p. 318. Telegram sent on 25 November 1940 from the Romanian Legation in London to the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
6. The Romanian National Archives, Department of the Central Historical Archives (hereafter cited as RNADCHA), coll. Ministry of National Propaganda. Internal Press 1930–1945, file no. 385, p. 80.
7. During the war, the British press was only controlled when it came to internal news related to state security. Thus, most news were published at the sole responsibility of the various correspondents or press agencies. The same rule applied to radio shows, which were not too strictly controlled by the British government. Arch. RMFA, coll. 71 Anglia, vol. 14, p. 525. Telegram sent on 21 January 1941 by Radu Florescu from the Romanian Legation in London to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.
8. RNADCHA, coll. Ministry of National Propaganda. Internal Press 1930–1945, file no. 385, p. 80.
9. *Cuvântul* 18, 92 (17 January 1941).
10. *Cuvântul* 18, 93 (18 January 1941).
11. P. P. Panaitescu (1900–1967) was born in Jassy and completed his secondary education in his native city but also in Bucharest. Later on he studied at the universities of Bucharest (1918–1922) and Krakow (1923–1924). He was a member of the Romanian School in France between 1924 and 1926. In 1925 he was awarded a Ph.D. in history. He was a lecturer and then a professor at the University of Bucharest, specialising in the history of the Slavs. From 1954 until 1965 he was a lead researcher at Nicolae Iorga History Institute of Bucharest. In 1934 he became a correspondent member of the Romanian Academy. He was a founding member of the Slavic Scholars' Association in Romania. Ștefan Ștefănescu, ed., *Enciclopedia istoriografiei românești* (Bucharest: Ed. Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1978), 250.
12. *Cuvântul* 18, 94 (19 January 1941).
13. Vasile Marin, *Crez de generație* (Bucharest: Majadahonda, 1997), 103.
14. *Cuvântul* 18, 93 (18 January 1941).
15. *Cuvântul* 18, 90 (15 January 1941).
16. *Axa* 10, 47 (1 January 1941).
17. B. H. Liddell Hart, *Istoria celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial*, vol. 1, trans. (Bucharest: Orizonturi, Lider, n. d.), 128.

18. Henry Kissinger, *Diplomația*, trans. (Bucharest: ALL, 2002), 311.
19. Winston S. Churchill, *Al Doilea Război Mondial*, vol. 1, trans. (Bucharest: Saeculum I. O., 1997), 337.
20. *Buna Vestire* 4, 20 (6 October 1940); *Axa* 10, 47 (1 January 1941).
21. The Me-109 plane was made from 1937 onwards and in 1939 the improved model Me-109E was introduced. It was generally equipped with two machine guns set in the fuselage and with two 20 mm canons on the wings. Before the war the Messerschmitt concern had five big factories: at Augsburg, Nuremberg, Regensburg, Erla and Heiterblick-Leipzig. Shortly after the war started five other factories were built or adapted. The ten factories made 10 planes a day and approximately 300 in a month. *Cuvântul* 18, 88 (14 January 1941); Hart, 1: 133.
22. At first, Spitfire and Hurricane planes were only equipped with eight American Browning machine guns fitted in the wings. During the Battle of Britain the Spitfire was additionally equipped with two Hispano 20 mm canons, while the Hurricane was equipped with four canons. Hart, 1: 134.
23. Churchill, 1: 341.
24. Hart, 1: 153.
25. In the Battle of Britain, the intentional bombing of the civilian population by the two conflicting parties originated in a mistake. On the night of 24 August 1940, approximately ten German bombers who had lost their way to the targets dropped their explosive charges over the center of London. The British reply was prompt. The following night there was a retaliation raid over Berlin carried out by approximately 80 bombers. From that moment on they were only a step away from a mad race to kill as many civilians as possible, as Hitler in his turn ordered massive retaliatory raids against London and other major cities. *Ibid.*, 147.
26. Churchill, 1: 346–347.
27. *Buna Vestire* 17, 4 (17 October 1940).
28. *Cuvântul* 17, 1 (14 October 1940).
29. *Cuvântul* 17, 6 (19 October 1940).
30. The volunteer forces who responded to General De Gaulle's appeal from 18 June 1940 in which he asked the French to continue the fight against Germany in World War II. The volunteers came mainly from the units evacuated to Britain during the Dunkirk operation and also from the French troops in the colonies. In July 1942 the movement was named Combatant France, thus including also the partisans which operated inside the metropolis. *Enciclopedia de istorie universală*, trans. (Bucharest: ALL, 2003), 639.
31. Edgard Thomé, *Misiune specială 1940-1945: Epopeea unui parașutist în Franța ocupată*, trans. (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1986), 87.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Arch. RMFA, coll. 71 Anglia, vol. 14, p. 367. Telegram no. 81,089, dated 12 December 1940, sent from the Romanian Legation in London to the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
34. Churchill, 1: 348.
35. *Cuvântul* 17, 5 (18 October 1940).

36. *Cuvântul* 17, 29 (11 November 1940).
37. Churchill, 1: 356.
38. In Coventry there were numerous factories of specialised companies such as Armstrong, Standard Motors, Daimler, Humber-Hillmans, Bredstone, Humping and factories of smaller companies. They produced airplane engines and other complicated and important pieces of equipment. *Cuvântul* 17, 35 (17 November 1940).
39. Ibid.
40. Churchill, 1: 357.
41. *Cuvântul* 17, 37 (19 November 1940).
42. Churchill, 1: 356.
43. The city of Bristol, which then had approximately 400,000 inhabitants, was one of the most important ports on the southwestern coast of England. Here they made airplane engines for the Bristol and Blenheim models but also spare parts. The city was also important for the food industry, as it had big wheat and corn mills and oil presses. They also made chemical substances, leather goods and vehicles. *Buna Vestire* 4, 62 (27 November 1940).
44. Southampton was the third largest port of the United Kingdom and the biggest port on the southern coast, concentrating almost all the passenger traffic from the Atlantic. Here were the Vickers plants which produced Spitfire airplanes and armoured cars. The city was also important because it played a major role in the British production of powder and explosives, but also because its numerous factories produced weapon components. Ibid.
45. Portsmouth was the main base of the Home Fleet. It had big underground fuel tanks and stores of ammunition and mines. At the same time, it had several important schools of special naval studies such as the Submarine School, the Torpedo School, the Gunnery School, the Navigation School, the Signal School and the Anti-Aircraft Gunnery School. The city was also important for the aircraft industry, with assembly shops and plants which made airplane parts. *Buna Vestire* 4, 73 (8 December 1940); *Curentul* 17, 4697 (13 March 1941).
46. *Curentul* 14, 4692 (8 March 1941).
47. *Buna Vestire* 5, 89 (1 January 1941).
48. Churchill, 1: 357.
49. *Buna Vestire* 5, 89 (1 January 1941).
50. *Cuvântul* 17, 2 (15 October 1940); *ibid.*, 17, 37 (19 November 1940).
51. *Buna Vestire* 4, 88 (29 December 1940).
52. *Cuvântul* 17, 67 (19 December 1940).
53. Articles were published which falsely stated that in several cases, after having sunk a German ship, the British seamen had fired their revolvers or even their machine guns at the swimming seamen and stokers. It was also said that the British gunboats premeditatedly launched false distress signals close to the French coast, trying to make the German ships leave the harbor and then attack them. *Cuvântul* 17, 67 (19 December 1940); *Buna Vestire* 4, 73 (8 December 1940).
54. Churchill, 1: 354.

Abstract

The Battle of Britain As Presented by the Romanian Legionary Media (September 1940–January 1941)

The Battle of Britain, one of the most important and dramatic battles of World War II, received considerable media attention in Romania during the national-legionary period. The present article is based upon the investigation of three newspapers, *Buna Vestire*, *Cuvântul* and *Axa*, publications recognized as legionary media by an official announcement of the General Secretary made on 19 December 1940. Each issue of the abovementioned newspapers described in detail the recent events of the Anglo-German conflict. The attitude of these publications was clearly Germanophile and of course, Anglophobic, the hostilities being always presented in a manner favorable to Germany. The legionary media was not short of direct attacks against Britain and against everything British, some passages being really caustic and vilifying. The anti-Semitic component of the legionary ideology, with its atavistic aversion to the Jews, increased the hostility even further, to the point of hatred against Great Britain.

Keywords

Great Britain, Germany, Romanian newspapers, British cities, Anglophobic attitude, Germanophile attitude