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## II.

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### **EXTREMIST DISCOURSES, IDEOLOGIES, AND ALLEGIANCES**

According to the law concerning Romania's national security, it is the competence of the Romanian Intelligence Service to identify totalitarian and extremist activities.<sup>9</sup> The law uses only an implicit definition of "extremism". According to the law on national security, "the initiation, organization, carrying out or supporting in any way of totalitarian or extremist acts, of fascist, legionnaire or any other type, as well as racist or anti-Semite acts" is considered a threat to national security. The Romanian Intelligence Service submits an annual report to the Romanian Parliament. A list of the main extremist movements should therefore appear in the SRI Reports.

The first such Report was issued in October 1994, and it contained the results of the Service's activities during the period October 1993 – September 1994. SRI pointed to the existence of "right-wing extremism" and indicated a party (The Party of the National Right), foundations (Bunavestire, The Association of Ex-Presidents and Leaders of Student Organizations of 1919–1948), publications (*Gazeta de Vest – Timișoara*, *Puncte Cardinale – Sibiu*), and publishing houses (*Gordian*, *Marineasa*). It also identified "left-wing extremism" in The League of Romanian Communists, The Initiative Committee for the Establishment of the Romanian Communist Party, and the newspaper *Scânteia socialismului*.

The Report issued on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1995<sup>10</sup> refers to the old Legionnaire Movement – rekindled in the counties of Alba, Brașov, Constanța, Cluj, Dâmbovița, Dolj, Iași, Galați, Gorj, Prahova, Neamț, Sibiu, Suceava, Timiș, Vâlcea, Vrancea and București. It mentions the Associations of "Moța și Marin", and "Horia Sima".<sup>11</sup> In this Report, left-wing extremism was identified in the attempt to re-establish the old Communist Party, and in particular

9 Law no. 51 on the National Security of Romania, "Monitorul Oficial" [Official Gazette], part I, no. 163, Bucharest, 29<sup>th</sup> July 1991, Art. 3.h.

10 Romanian Intelligence service, Bucharest, 1995.

11 SRI was referring to the complaint of the representatives of the Jewish community concerning the emergence of such movements.

the Romanian Communist Party – Tg. Jiu branch. According to the June 1998 – June 1999 SRI Report<sup>12</sup>, attempts to rebuild an Iron Guard-type of movement at national scale continued during 1999. At this moment, right-wing extremist activities are promoted (usually in ritualistic form) by 28 organizations, associations or clandestine groups. At present, there are 12 foundations or associations that actively support legionnairism. Several of them are openly apologetic of violence and political murder.

Yet during the entire 1994–2001 period, the SRI Reports systematically avoided any reference to the most violent extremist groups and actions: the Greater Romania Party, the Party of the National Unity of Romanians, the Movement for Romania, or foundations such as Vatra Românească (the Romanian Hearth) and Greater Romania (România Mare). There was no mention of periodicals such as *Europa*, *România Mare*, *Totuși iubirea*, *Vremea* or *Mișcarea*. In other words, the SRI conducted its activities depending on its own political interests. SRI's partisanship was possible due, in part, to vices of the specific law ruling its organization and functioning.

It follows that the SRI Reports cannot offer a systematic view of Romanian extremism, in spite of the fact that this Service is an officially empowered institution that possesses clear responsibilities in this field. On the contrary, the Service was itself one of the very effective sources behind extremist incitements.<sup>13</sup>

### **Extreme Right Movements. The Legionnaire Background**

The organizations that SRI listed as (extremist) threat to the rule of law are, most often, textbook-cases of far right-wing extremism. In Romania, this type of extremism follows in the footsteps of the Legionnaire tradition. The Legionnaire Movement, which claimed to be an offspring of, among other things, the Christian-Orthodox tradition, was a powerful political force between the two World Wars. It promoted the thesis of the identity of Romanism and Orthodox religion, it supported the cult of the *glorious history* of the Romanian people, and branded Jews, Gypsies and homosexuals as a threat to Romanian traditional, national background. It was engaged in a symbolic competition with the Hungarians, a community it would accuse of revisionism. The Legionnaires organized political assassinations

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12 Romanian Intelligence Service, Bucharest, 1999.

13 As a matter of fact, the nature and extent of extremism have to be judged *against* the image that the SRI generally sought to offer to the public.

and started a (failed) rebellion aiming to get hold of political power. Finally, they militated for an alliance with Hitler's Germany.

Today's extreme right rehearses most of these themes, to which it adds the cult of World War II heroes – among whom Marshall Antonescu occupies a leading position – and requests for unification with the territories forcefully taken by the USSR at the end of WWII (*de facto*, taken in 1939, as a result of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact).

It is difficult to evaluate the real number of this type of right-wing extremist groups and acts there are, partly because not all the candidates are *beyond a shadow of a doubt* extremist. Some organizations deal with one issue of those mentioned above, while others deal with complementary questions. The goal of eliminating the rules of a democratic society – which is central to extremism – is not assumed by all groups that appropriate the issues associated with the extreme right.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the most visible organization that tries to mobilize public sympathy in the name of the right and openly assumes its Legionnaire sympathies is the New Right. Its posters can be usually seen in the centers of Bucharest and other important cities, and especially on the walls of the University building. This group usually signs extremist statements alongside other similar organizations.<sup>14</sup> It publishes the *Noua dreaptă* (*New Right*) magazine, and has its own Internet site.<sup>15</sup> Here are some snippets: “The Gypsy Danger”, “The Offensive of Religious Sects”, “The Failure of Political Parties”, “NO to Homosexuality”, “STOP Immigration”. According to the members of the New Right, the Roma problem should be solved by “social integration and, in the case of failure, by having them leave the country.”

The Legionnaire tradition is actively promoted by exiled ex-Legionnaires. The Romanian Legionnaire Movement has its own Internet site,<sup>16</sup> *Mișcarea Legionară*, which publishes materials from Legionnaires around the world.<sup>17</sup> *Garda de Fier – Gazeta de Exil* (*The Iron Guard – The Exile Gazette*) also appears on the Internet. The League of National Defense<sup>18</sup> publishes *The New Right* (New York), and is headed by an active

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14 Led by Tudor Ionescu, it was established around 1999, has 300 members and branches in several cities.

15 <http://www.nouadreaapta.ro>

16 <http://www.miscarea-legionara.org>

17 Such as the communiqués of Mircea Dimitriu, a follower of Horia Sima, the Legionnaire commander, secretary general of the Legionnaire Movement – Foreign Branch (currently lives in Stuttgart, Germany).

18 Name taken from the National Christian Defense League, founded in 1923 by A.C.Cuza, which promoted an extremely nationalist/chauvinistic discourse, and, by attracting Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, became a violent adversary to political opposition.

Legionnaire, Constantin Burlacu, who once attempted an alliance with the Greater Romania Party.<sup>19</sup> A researcher of Romanian Legionnarism discussed the affinities between all extreme-right radical groups, which at the same time “fight each other, each trying to introduce itself as the only authentic representative of our traditional nationalist (Legionnaire) heritage.”<sup>20</sup>

The typically Legionnaire periodicals published in Romania after 1989 include, most prominently, *Gazeta de Vest*,<sup>21</sup> *Gazeta Gospodarilor*, *Lumea Satelor*<sup>22</sup> and *Puncte Cardinale*.<sup>23</sup> The magazine *Permanențe* belongs to the Sima tradition,<sup>24</sup> while the Sarmizegetusa Foundation of Cluj-Napoca (member of the Nationalist Christian Club) proposed the sanctification of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu.<sup>25</sup> The Buna-Vestire Foundation has its own *Information Bulletin – Buna Vestire*.

Another organization, the New Right Group (Grupul Noua Dreaptă),<sup>26</sup> issues the *Măiastra* magazine. Although rather obscure, the *Right Generation (Generația Dreptei)* is relevant because it shows that the transfer from extreme-right attitudes to “normal” political life is sometimes easily made. This periodical is published by people close to the Union of Right Forces (UFD), which was a part of the government coalition of 1996-2000. According to the UFD platform: “It is not natural that a national minority should become a social problem in Romania, and that nobody should have the courage to talk about this fact for fear they would hurt the country’s image abroad. ... It is not normal that the death penalty should be abrogated in Romania simply because this is what international bodies requested from us.”<sup>27</sup>

19 William Totok, “Sacrificarea lui Antonescu pe altarul diplomației (II)”, *Observatorul cultural*, No. 75, 2001, p. 17.

20 William Totok, “Sacrificarea lui Antonescu pe altarul diplomației (III)”, *Observatorul cultural*, No. 76, 2001, p. 16.

21 Subtitled a “Magazine for history, attitude and faith”, and originally published weekly in Timișoara. Its first issue came out in 1990 under editor Ovidiu Gules. In 1991, a new series was started, and since then it has been published as a monthly.

22 “A publication for those who work and think as well”, Year I, No. 1, 1994. Chief editor: Gabriel Constantinescu.

23 An independent periodical of National-Christian persuasion, chief editor Gabriel Constantinescu, Year I, 1990.

24 From the name of Horia Sima, Legionnaire commander after the physical disappearance of Zelea Codreanu, an associate in the government of Ion Antonescu until the rebellion of January 1941, when he emigrated to Nazi Germany, and after the war to Spain. He died in Augsburg in 1993.

25 The most important personality of the Legionnaire movement; he was assassinated in 1938.

26 Led by Bogdan George Rădulescu.

27 Gabriel Andreescu, *Polemici neortodoxe*, Bucharest, Fundația Noesis, 2001.

The previous examples point to a typical pattern: associations and foundations, the main purpose of which is to publish a periodical, sometimes just a webzine. Thus, *Sfarmă Piatră* is published in Bucharest by the “Prof. George Manu” Foundation;<sup>28</sup> *Scutul* magazine is published by the Sarmizegetusa Foundation in Cluj; the *Information Courier of the “For the Motherland” Party* is published by the eponymous party, etc.

The Association of Christian-Orthodox Students in Romania (ASCOR) is the most powerful organization of Orthodox fundamentalism. Its main target are the universities, where it acts apparently without restraint and, due to the protection offered by the Romanian Orthodox Church (BOR), it sometimes gets some support from the university administration. Many organizations are easily identified by means of their anti-Hungarian bias (e.g. the “Avram Iancu” Society).

One of the central preoccupations of right-wing traditionalism is the denial of the cleansing of Jews in Romania.<sup>29</sup> The League for the Fighting of Anti-Romanism organized in Bucharest, on June 14–15, 2001, a symposium on “Holocaust in Romania”. Its “Statement” contained the following: “Legionnaires and, implicitly, Romanians are subjected to the same old media pressures created by the persistent accusations of anti-Jewish genocide and holocaust in Romania”. One of the symposium’s initiators stated, on a different occasion, that the assassinations in the Bucharest Slaughterhouse during the Legionnaire rebellion was a story “completely made up by the sick imagination of journalists”.<sup>30</sup>

## **Revisionism and the Cult of Marshall Antonescu**

The word “revisionism” refers here to the contestation of national frontiers established after World War II and the support lent as a consequence to policies that could endanger international rela-

28 <http://www.sfarma-piatra.com>.

29 During the war, over 100,000 Jews were deported in the Transdnier region, to which one should add the 275,000 Jews from Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina and Herța (which then belonged to Romania). A large number perished in the treatment to which they were subjected. In this context, we should remember the victims of the massacres in Mihoreni, Galați, Dorohoi, Iași, etc. Historians have offered strikingly different figures, from somewhat over 100,000 victims (Dinu C. Giurăscu, Florin Constantiniu) to over 400,000 (Jean Ancel, Radu Ioanid). For further reading, see Radu Ioanid: *Evreii sub regimul Antonescu*, Bucharest, Edit. Hasefer, 1997

30 Ion Coja, “Holocaust în România?”, Open letter to His Highness “Alexandru Șafran”, in *România Mare*, No. 555, Year XII, March 2, 2001. During the Legionnaire rebellion of 1940, several dozen Jews were murdered and then hung up from the hooks of the Bucharest Slaughterhouse.

tions.<sup>31</sup> Revisionism happily mixes with nostalgia for the state of affairs before the war and for traditional values.

Nostalgia for the Greater Romania<sup>32</sup> and for personalities who opposed communism is, to a certain extent, an expected development in a country that had lived, for 50 years, the nightmares of communist totalitarianism.<sup>33</sup> But revisionism and the cult of Marshall Antonescu are fostering a culture that is prone to extremism.

Revisionist attitudes are supported by the Romanian population to a surprisingly high extent, when they are asked about. But in fact, polls show that people do not pay attention to this issue. Up to a point, such attitudes were common even among the officials.<sup>34</sup> As an example of revisionism, one should cite “The statement for the unity of all Romanians”, published by a Legionnaire magazine.<sup>35</sup> According to this statement, “after the powers that be signed the capitulation treaty with Ukraine, which acknowledges *de jure* that Romanian territories belong to Ukraine, they now try to do the same with a treaty between Romania and the Republic of Moldova, which ignores the historical truth and thus recognizes the consequences of the

31 To the revisionists, the goal of going back to the frontiers before the Peace of Paris is doubtlessly more important than the goal of international peace today. (Note that this definition does not count as revisionists those who simply contest the morality of the frontiers traced in Paris, or those who attempt to change frontiers by promoting official agreements between the states involved.) Some authors give a broader meaning to “revisionism”, which refers to historical re-interpretation, but for the purposes of this study a narrower concept would be preferable.

32 Between 1918 and 1940, Romania had its largest territory ever, which included Bessarabia and Bukovina, and which at the end of the war were incorporated by the USSR. “The Romania of that period” is referred to as “Greater Romania”.

33 Here the distinction between “innocent” and “malevolent” supporters (Henry C. Carey), as discussed by Michael Shafir, is arguably relevant: “one can argue in favor of distinguishing between ‘innocent’ and ‘malevolent’ supporters of radical return postures in general, with ‘innocence’ being large enough to include not only lack of familiarity with historical fact, but also attitudes deriving from militant anti-Left positions.” (See Michael Shafir, “The Greater Romania Party and the 2000 Elections in Romania: A Retrospective Analysis”, *East European Perspectives*, Vol. 3, No. 15, 2001, p. 5.)

34 This fact generated international concern, as indicated by, among others, a study called “Toward the Return of Balkan Wars”, published in the reputed *Politique Étrangère*, which read: “this stand taken by Romania falls in line, first of all, with the claims vis-à-vis Ukraine over Southern Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, but it undeniably contributes to straining the Balkan climate in the context of the global calling into question of frontiers.” (*Politique Étrangère*, No. 2, été 1992, 57<sup>e</sup> année, p. 266). For a synthesis of these attitudes see Gabriel Andreescu, Valentin Stan, Renate Weber, “Romania’s Relations with the Republic of Moldova”, *International Studies*, No. 1, Bucharest, 1995, pp. 11-27.

35 Published since May 13, 2000. See *Sfarmă Piatră*, December 2001, <http://www.sfarma-piatra.com/noutati/index.htm>.

Ribbentrop-Molotov pact of August 23, 1939. This treaty harms again the national interests of the Romanians. As a consequence, we ask the President of Romania and the Parliament to refrain from signing and ratifying the text of the treaty between Romania and the Republic of Moldova, as concluded on April 28, 2000.” There are a lot of similar statements, but this one was worth quoting if only because it offers a long list of signatures: the Romanian National-Civic Forum, the National Council of Reunion, the Association of Christian-Orthodox Students in Romania, the Student Association of the University of Bucharest, the Student Association of the Agronomical University, the Students’ League, the League of Students in Bessarabia and Bukovina, the “Avram Iancu” Society, the “Pro Basarabia și Bukovina” Association, the Alliance of Romanians in Bukovina, “Glasul Bucovinei” (Cernăuți), the Association of Minority Presses in Romania, the Romanian Commission for the History of World War II, the Historians’ Association (Chișinău), the “Armonia” Foundation of Ethnically Mixed Families in Romania, the “Onisifor Ghibu” Foundation, the “Victoria 1989 Timișoara” Association, the “Profesor George Manu” Cultural Foundation, the Foundation of Anti-Communist Resistance Fighters, the “Buna-Vestire” Foundation and the “For the Motherland” Party.

### **The Cult of Marshall Antonescu**

Another relevant phenomenon is the **cult of Marshall Ion Antonescu**<sup>36</sup>, leader of the Romanian state, who was responsible for the deaths of over 150,000 Jews<sup>37</sup> and several thousand Roma,<sup>38</sup> whom he deported to the Transdnier region during World War II.

Almost all extreme-right organizations participate in the cult of Antonescu. Some even bear his name (e.g. the Marshall Antonescu League). Yet Antonescu’s supporters are to be found throughout the Romanian society. *The Greater Romania Party* deserves the credit for being the most systematically pro-Antonescu organization of all. Together with other radical organi-

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36 See Michael Shafir, Reabilitarea postcomunistă a mareșalului Antonescu: Cui bono? [Postcommunist Rehabilitation of Marshall Antonescu: Cui bono?] in *Exterminarea evreilor români și ucrainieni în perioada antonesciană*, ed. Randolph L. Braham, Bucharest, Edit. Hasefer, 2002, pp. 400-465 (Romanian version of *The Destruction of Romanian and Ukrainian Jews during the Antonescu Era*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1997).

37 This is a minimal figure – see footnote 29.

38 Cf. Lucian Năstasă, Studiu introductiv [Introductory study] in *Minorități etno-culturale. Mărturii documentare. Țigani din România (1919-1945)*, eds. L. Năstasă, A. Varga, Cluj, Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center, 2001, pp. 21-23.

zations, Geo Stroe, President of the Dacian-Romanian Academy, proposed in 1993 during the first national symposium dedicated to Marshall Antonescu “the establishment of an institution of military education bearing the Marshall’s name.” He also proposed the sanctification of the Marshall by the National Church, the rehabilitation of this “brave soldier” and of his collaborators, and the creation of the Ion Antonescu Memorial Museum.<sup>39</sup>

The cult of Marshall Antonescu brought together different political groups. The commemoration of 55 years since his death (June 1, 2000)<sup>40</sup> brought together Gral. Mircea Chelaru,<sup>41</sup> Corneliu Vadim Tudor and the Romanian Hearth’s Honorary President Iosif Constantin Drăgan.<sup>42</sup> Priest Dumitru Radu (Parcul Călărășilor parish) was invited. Mircea Chelaru had headed the Romanian army in Târgu Mureș during the inter-ethnic clashes of March 1990, where he did nothing to defuse (or prevent) the conflict. As a consequence, he participated in the establishment of the Romanian Intelligence Service, was appointed head of the Counterespionage Division, and had prerogatives in the surveillance of irredentist activities. He openly declared his disagreement with respect to UDMR’s participation in the government, he made statements with respect to the danger of losing the Dobrogea region, and he established the National Association of Romanian Army Members, which militated against anti-national activities.<sup>43</sup>

The organizations which support revisionism and the cult of Marshall Antonescu<sup>44</sup> are **often intermingled with extremist forces which hold offi-**

39 William Totok, *Op. cit.* p. 17.

40 The ceremony took place in the yard of the Holy Emperors Constantine and Helena Church, the foundations of which were laid by Antonescu and his wife.

41 Army Corps General, later Head of the General Chiefs of Staff. He was placed in Reserve and then became President of the Party of the National Union of Romanians (PUNR).

42 The treasurer of the old Legionnaire Movement, now a businessman in Italy.

43 Cf. *Cotidianul*, November 2, 2000.

44 See the series authored by William Totok: “Rumänien wird zur Hochburg der Antisemiten”, *Die Tageszeitung (TAZ)*, October 27, 1998; “Schweigeminute für einen rumänischen Patrioten”, *TAZ*, July 3, 1999; “Sehnsucht nach starkem Staat”, *TAZ*, December 12, 2000; “Der heilige Krieg des Antonescu”, *TAZ*, January 30, 2001; “Das Internet als virtuelle Internationale”, *Die Neue Gesellschaft / Frankfurter Hefte*, 48. Jg., No. 4, April 2001, pp. 216-220; “Die Rückkehr der ofschränzen. Restauration und politischer Extremismus in Rumänien”, *Kommune*, 12. Jg., No. 7, 1994; “Faschisten als Hoffnungsträger der Demokratie? Rechtsradikale Tendenzen in Rumänien”, *Kommune*, 11. Jg., No. 6, 1993, pp. 25-27; “Der alltägliche Antisemitismus. Tagebuchaufzeichnungen 1935–1944 des rumänienjüdischen Autors Mihail Sebastian”, *Halbjahresschrift für südosteuropäische Geschichte, Literatur und Politik (HJS)*, 9. Jg., No. 2, 1997, pp. 38-44; “Rumänischen Faschismus”, *HJS*, 7. Jg., No. 1, 1995, pp. 42-55; “Cyberspacelegionäre. Rumänischer Postfaschismus im Internet”, *HJS*, 9. Jg., No. 1, 1997, pp. 7-23; “Der bleierne Vorhang”, *HJS*, 11. Jg., No. 1, 1999, pp. 5-15; “Postkommunistische Märtyrologie”, *HJS*, 12. Jg., No. 1, 2000, pp. 40-55.



**cial powers.** These “civic voices” are capitalized upon by ultra-nationalist forces that are part of the government, especially when the positions of the former may be used as a pretext. As the Ministry of Education initiated in 1998 its own campaign against the requests of the Hungarian community for a State University in Hungarian language, it was immediately seconded by Romanian National Civic Forum statements.<sup>45</sup> When the SRI and its Control Commission published a Report that incited against the same community,<sup>46</sup> a Report that was meant to “help” with the struggle within the government party and dissolve the Social Democrat Party-UDMR government pact,<sup>47</sup> several organizations within Hungarian-majority counties were put to use: the “Andrei Șaguna” Cultural Christian League, the ASTRA Covasna and Harghita branches, the “Miron Cristea” Cultural Christian Foundation, the Romanian Hearth Cultural Alliance – Covasna county, the “Justinian Teculescu” Cultural Christian Alliance – Covasna county, the “Mihai Viteazul” Cultural Foundation, the Teachers’ Association – Harghita county, the Association of Romanian Teachers – Covasna county, the Romanian Christian-Orthodox Youth League – Sf. Gheorghe branch, the “Neamul Românesc” National Foundation – Covasna branch, the National Foundation of All Romanians – Covasna and Harghita branches.

These associations are partly sponsored by the state, which grants them headquarters and access to resources not enjoyed by associations fighting for democracy (human rights, minority rights, anti-corruption, etc.). **Even in 2002, high Romanian officials coordinated their positions with those of chauvinistic organizations in acts against Hungarian Changos.** Ecaterina Andronescu, Minister of Education and Research, was particularly active in this respect, as she propagandized on the national TV channel the theses of Dumitru Mărtinaș, who argued that Changos are of Romanian origin,<sup>48</sup> and referred to the “Dumitru Mărtinaș” Roman-Catholic Association. The theory now popularized by Andronescu was launched by the Romanian Securitate in the 1980s, and

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45 Gabriel Andreescu, *Ruleta*. Români și maghiari, 1990–2000, Iași, Polirom, 2001, p. 222.

46 The Report authored by the SRI Control Commission announced the “loss of state control” in the two Hungarian-majority counties. Consequently, it generated a crisis in the relations between the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR).

47 The effect would have been the buttressing of the Greater Romania Party’s positions.

48 In Dumitru Mărtinaș, “Originea ceangăilor din Moldova”, revised and edited by Ion Coja and V.M. Ungureanu, Bucharest, Edit. Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1985; the volume was republished by I. Coja in 1998, Edit. Symbol, and an English version appeared in 1999, edited by V.M. Ungureanu, I. Coja and Laura Treptow, Iași – Oxford – Portland, The Center for Romanian Studies.

was part and parcel of the regime's assimilationist policies against the Hungarian Changos.

Minister of Public Information Vasile Dâncu, the man responsible for the Department for Inter-Ethnic Relations – the new governmental structure with competences in the field of national minority protection – associated his name to organizations such as the European Studies Center Harghita-Covasna<sup>49</sup> and the “Dumitru Mărtinaș” Roman-Catholic Association in the preparation of an international seminar promoting anti-Chango theses. These organizations, whose aggressively extremist attitudes have been surfacing throughout the past years, have been provided with public money, which they have used to their discretion. The organizers restricted the participation or accreditation of journalists, experts and representatives of human rights and minority groups who were known as promoters of the rights of Hungarian Changos.<sup>50</sup>

Who is the minister responsible for the protection of minority rights that uses such partners from the civil society? Just prior to becoming member of the Adrian Nastase's cabinet, Vasile Dâncu wrote, “Human rights are cheap nonsense, and it is in fact indecent to talk about them. (...) A distinguished deputy makes efforts so that we have a law for professional whores, homosexuals want us to share their experience, Hungarians want us to make them separate Hungaries wherever they come in contact with us. Shameless imbeciles despise us on television screens, they fake our history, demolish our culture, blame us for being the majority and for not being endowed with nomad identities, easy to pack and pass through the customs of the world's airports.”<sup>51</sup>

### **The National Written Press and “High Culture” in the Promotion of Violent, Anti-Minority, Anti-Multiculturalist, Anti-Modern and Xenophobe Discourse**

One of the dangers that aggravates and extends the extremist danger in Romania is the increasingly systematic manifestation of an anti-minority, anti-multicultural, anti-modern discourse in the national written press, and even of highbrow culture, with an increased capacity to penetrate in the circle of educated citizens, newspaper readers, of stu-

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49 It is suggestive that the organization's positions were bowdlerized by an apparently pro-European name – “European Studies Center”.

50 The seminar took place on April 29, 2002, and was titled “The Cultural Identity of (Chango) Roman-Catholics in Moldova”.

51 Vasile Dâncu, *Țara telespectatorilor fericiți – Contraideologii*. [The country of happy viewers – Counter-ideologies], Cluj, Edit. Dacia, 2000, p. 210.

dents and of the social elite. This discourse is not inciting, but its confusion and distortions, aggressive tone, apocalyptic style, reductionism and/or the accusatory note feed a cultural space that spawns right-wing extremist ideologies.

“Adevărul”, the newspaper with the widest circulation, contributes to this phenomenon through the increased visibility of Cristian Tudor Popescu.<sup>52</sup> The articles of the chief editor of this important daily most often appear as editorials, and are later published in volumes.<sup>53</sup> Members of the minorities and the ideology exported on their behalf, as well as affirmative action, are for Cristian Tudor Popescu a threat to “normal” society. They are, at the same time, an instrument of American imperialism, “This ideology, based on the malign modification of what is called “Human Rights”, is political correctness, affirmative action – a more damned concept than communist egalitarianism: the member of whatever sort of minority must not have the same rights as the member of the majority, but more and more powerful, for that’s why he is a member of the minority. Power thus controls the majority, by stirring the minority against it. Not only inside the country. This ideology is heavily imported from the USA, together with hormone-laden meat, for the Soviet lesson shows how useful a doctrinarian straitjacket is for world domination. With each bottle of Coca-Cola, you swallow a dose of affirmative action.”<sup>54</sup>

Cristian Tudor Popescu’s anti-multicultural and xenophobe ideology embraces, of course, the mythology of the “national state”. “Which is why the ideology that goes with the necessary American expansion also appears. It is called many names, which are all related, without overlapping: political correctness, multiculturalism, globalism, post-modernism... A nation state that is injected with these products is attacked in its key points: central authority, official state language, history, the church, traditions, culture, the entire set of spiritual values that define a nation.”<sup>55</sup>

The attitudes that represent the material of extremist ideologies are sometimes seen in the supplements of national newspapers. In the Saturday-Sunday edition, the “Ziua” publishes the supplement of the Anastasia Foundation, and another supplement, called “Dosarele secrete” [Secret files]. The page of the Anastasia Foundation often has a fundamentalist tone, it demonstrates homophobia and orthodox-militantism. For a while, it was hosted by the daily newspaper “România liberă”,

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52 As concerns the traditional anti-Hungarian politics of “Adevărul”, it seems to be part of an eminently political equation.

53 See C.T. Popescu, *România-abțibild* [Romania-sticker], Iași, Polirom, 2000.

54 Cristian Tudor Popescu, *Maimuțăreala* [Monkeying around], in “Adevărul”, September 20, 1999.

55 Idem, *Legea lui Marx și România abțibild*, in “Adevărul”, December 1, 1999.

before moving on to the “Ziua”. Its founder, Sorin Dumitrescu, is quoted as a typical conspirator: “It was late, as I was too busy, like any good-willed person, with our post-revolutionary misfortune and the desire to rebuild, when I realized that someone, some people, well, whom we cannot point at, with feline movements, tamper with the axiological device, with its delicate buttons that have an irreversible effect, with the values of our tradition, of our customs, our Christian-Orthodox nature. The aim is Romania’s spiritual mutilation.”<sup>56</sup>

Vladimir Alexe is another conspirationist, who publishes the “Secret Files” of the daily newspaper “Ziua”. William Totok wrote about him, “Vladimir Alexe emerged lately as one of the most active authors of conspiratorial scenarios, becoming a genuine competitor of the prolific Pavel Coruț (a notorious figure for his past as a Securitate officer and for his revisionist-nostalgic and nationalist-xenophobe attitudes).”<sup>57</sup> William Totok warned about the latest developments of the journalist, referring to the latter’s article published on the very day of Adolf Hitler’s birthday,<sup>58</sup> “Vladimir Alexe’s work style consists in distorting information disguised in misinterpreted readings (which shows even in the fact that he misspells titles and names of authors or persons). While up to now, Vladimir Alexe confined himself to writing conspiratorial literature in which he has mixed phobias of globalism, western values and communism, he has recently discovered revisionist mystifications, practiced by essayists and historians who deny the Holocaust or minimize the European fascist dictatorships. Drawing on these ‘theoreticians’ of the international extreme right, Alexe suggests now in a delirious text that the ‘Crystal Night’ was a ‘conspiracy’ organized with the aim of compromising Hitler.”

“România liberă” publishes the supplement entitled “Aldine”, which provides space for sweetened presentations of legionnairism. Thus, on June 22, 2002, the newspaper propagandized manifestations occasioned by the celebration of 75 years since the Legion of Archangel Michael<sup>59</sup> was set up, in the following terms, “Seventy-five years since a ‘whispered’

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56 Apud George Voicu, *Zei cei răi. Cultura conspiratiei in România postcomunistă*, [The Evil Gods. The Culture of Conspiracy in Post-communist Romania], Iași, Polirom, 2000.

57 William Totok, *O nouă dimensiune a revizionismului din România*, [A new dimension of revisionism in Romania], in “Observatorul cultural”, no.115, 2002.

58 Vladimir Alexe, *Anatomia unei conspirații. “Noaptea de cristal”* [The anatomy of a conspiracy. “The Crystal Night”], in “Ziua”, 20 April, 2002.

59 Extreme right-wing organization set up on June 24, 1927, under the leadership of ‘captain’ Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, whose organizational nucleus was the ‘legionnaire nest’; the Legion declared itself a nationalist movement of spiritual and moral rehabilitation of the country, of fight against the Jews, who allegedly used ‘occult’ means to dominate the Romanian society.

event took place! The true history of Romania (different from that which was distorted by communist historiography) recorded an event which is still spoken of in whisper. The Legion of Archangel Michael was set up in Iasi on the day of Saint John the Baptizer, June 24, 1927. Between 1927–1938, all those who shared the sins and virtues of the Romanian nation, fought for their life with the red pest of the east. Today, communism still haunts the Christian Romania. On Monday, June 24, (...) the ACTIUNEA ROMÂNEASCĂ Association (registered legal person) organizes a public conference on the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event that still preoccupies post-communist historiographers.”

The person who made the anti-minority, homophobic and anti-multiculturalist attitude into a wide cultural success was Horia-R. Patapievic. Patapievic's theses oppose the 'traditional' and the 'modern' man to the more recent modernity, under the threat of political correctness, multiculturalism and pro-minority policies. He cries over the “transitory evanescence, the nervous trepidation, the conscience of identity isolation, the vocation of victimization, the tension of minority disequilibrium, and the arrogance of singular claims – (...) aggressive (...) characteristics, doubled by the awareness that the member of a minority (...) is in a position to always be right in front of the majority”. He denounces pro-egalitarian, anti-elitist policies, seen as producers of a future apocalypse. “The future is grim. (...) The true birthplace of horrors that shall come is a combination of collectivist China and the America of extremist ideologies that are included in the manifest or hidden agendas of political correctness.”<sup>60</sup>

Ovidiu Hurduzeu also interprets political correctness, multiculturalism and protection of minorities as destroyers of values and the elite.

“Under the generous guise of the principles of ethnic diversity, in an interdependent world, multiculturalists hide their thirst for power and their desire to destroy all that is meant by VALUE UNIQUENESS. (...) Multiculturalists are far from a profound understanding of the notion of culture and cultural diversity. In a multicultural world, the standards of value are totally arbitrary. (...) In order to reach its goals, multiculturalism fights to prevent and punish any kind of behavior that might be to the detriment of the 'minority' group. (...) Practically, no western intellectual can speak out against multiculturalist dogmas without running the risk of being labeled racist or elitist, and exposing himself to the consequences.”<sup>61</sup>

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60 H.-R. Patapievic, *Omul recent* [The recent man], Bucharest, Humanitas, 2001, pp. 239-240. In Patapievic's view, “extremist ideologies” are multiculturalism, the theses of affirmative action, cultural relativism, etc.

61 Ovidiu Hurduzeu, *Individualismul românesc* [Romanian individualism], in “România literară”, no. 51-53, 1999.

Here is an example, like so many other examples, of a commentary in the same line, of an author who is much present in cultural magazines: Ioan Buduca. “Before being a great development of human rights, the policy of multiculturalism is a propaganda to complex any majority that might want to raise awareness of the fact that the true father of communist states was the America of businessmen and their political lobby...”<sup>62</sup>

In Buduca’s writings, anti-multiculturalism, anti-Americanism, and the criticism of political correctness are associated almost in the shape of a triad. “Nowadays, a dominant current in the so-called progressist circles of the western elite of American obedience decrees something even more horrible: we have no universal values, we only have cultural conventions, which are unjust, imposed forcibly by the winners of history (the white race, the heterosexual male, European powers). (...) How many will understand the danger that shapes on the horizon a new utopia of unique thinking (the only correct one from the political perspective)?”<sup>63</sup>

Gabriel Liiceanu, the director of Humanitas Publishing House – one of the most important publishing houses in the country – wrote on the back of a volume<sup>64</sup> which he promoted extensively, “Is it not at the very heart of this system of freedoms that madness stays hiding and there is a subtle dictatorship which reveals the grotesque schemes of an unsuspected intellectual dictatorship? In the hallucinatory pages of this book, Edward Behr shows us evidence that there is, at the end of our century, a face of America which is unknown or generally overlooked: the obsession with sexual harassment, absurd deviances to which the new concept of political correctness leads, the fashionable psychotherapies, the dictatorship of racial, cultural and sexual minorities. (...) For the Romanian reader who has already been through a nightmare of history, might this America, with its anguish and obsessions, forecast the meeting with its near-future?”

The notoriety that journalists and writers belonging to the category of the quoted authors puts the values of modern liberal democracy in defensive positions. The cases of Gabriel Liiceanu, who promoted, through his publishing house, the vogue of nationalists and inter-war irrationalists – ideologists of the extreme right – or of Horia-R. Patapievici, author of a book that is equally reactionary and successful,<sup>65</sup>

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62 Ioan Buduca, *Un propagandist de azi* [A contemporary propagandist], in “Contemporanul – idee europeană” [The Contemporary – European Idea], no. 501, 2000.

63 Idem, *Postmodernitatea – mai mult decât o crimă: o eroare!* [Postmodernism – more than a crime: an error!], in “Orizont”, no. 1, 2002.

64 Edward Behr. *O Americă înfricoșătoare*, [A frightening America], translated by Doina Jela-Despois, Bucharest, Humanitas, 1999.

65 It gained awards at two Book Fairs and the award of the Writers’ Union.

show the role of anti-minority and anti-multiculturalist intellectuals in the preparation of a favorable atmosphere for extremist currents.<sup>66</sup>

Emulators rehearse the ideas of such authors in formulations that are often radicalized. Thus, for Nicolae Bobică, “humanity preserves the conditions of perpetuating itself within the limits of civilization exactly because of the natural majority of people with self-respect”, which they oppose to the minorities, i.e. “the mass of criminals, mutilated, self-victimizing people”.<sup>67</sup>

What is remarkable is the reception that these attitudes enjoy from the authentic promoters of right-wing extremism, who ‘acknowledge’ in the ideas of the new cultural stars their own ideologies. One of them, Răzvan Codrescu, welcomes enthusiastically Patapievici’s new book, discovering that it “consolidates the status of a post-liberal Patapievici, a searcher of conservative foundations, a species of *aeternitatis*, refractory to the ideological rigors of an establishment that contributed to propagating him without foreseeing his non-alignment, promoter of a new anti-Americanism in principle, fed not by a nationalist or confessional reactionarism, but by the genuine commitment to a spiritual and cultural tradition – that of a Helen-Roman-Christian Europe.”<sup>68</sup> For Răzvan Codrescu, criticism of such ideas is pathological. “The expected discussions rushed to take on the shape of hysterical jealousy or of inquisitorial suspicion.”

In turn, the “Petru Maior” University of Târgu Mureș, headed by several ex-members of PUNR, invited Horia-R. Patapievici to lecture to its students about multiculturalism exactly when the town was going through the unrest caused by the “Bolyai Farkas” Highschool<sup>69</sup>. While the Romanian students were protesting with tricolor and black armbands, in the Aula Magna of the University, Patapievici was criticizing the attitude of “dominating minorities” – with implicit reference to the Hungarians.

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66 Michael Shafir, *The Greater Romania Party and the 2000 Elections in Romania: a retrospective analysis*, in “East European Perspectives”, vol. 3, no.15, 2001, p.4.

67 Nicolae Bobică, *Guvernatorii cei proști*, [Stupid governors], in “Orizont”, January 21, 2002.

68 *Revolta “omului recent”*, [Revolt of the “recent man”], in “Aldine”, no. 309; “România literară”, March 23, 2002; “Puncte cardinale”, XII, 2002, no. 3 (135), p.2.

69 After dissensions between PSD and UDMR, the Ministry of Education and Research announced, in May 2002, that the “Bolyai Farkas” Highschool – set up some 400 years ago – would not be mixed any more, but would start being a Hungarian Highschool.

