

## SERVING ROMANIAN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN FRANCE – EMIL CIORAN AND HIS DIPLOMATIC EPISODE

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**Abstract.** *The very short diplomatic episode in the career of Emil Cioran is almost unknown. Even less known is probably his only Report as a cultural counsellor of the Romanian Legation in Vichy. The Report is a sharp, incisive and uncomfortable analysis of the Romanian cultural diplomacy and propaganda in France, including his recommendations for a badly needed change. The article also came to criticize some of the recent works regarding Cioran's activity and character.*

**Keywords:** *Emil Cioran, International Relations, Cultural Diplomacy.*

**Motto:**

*You cannot find anything if you are not looking for something. I wanted to see cultural monuments, temples or palaces, statues or works of art, places where real or legendary heroic characters passed. In one sentence, I wanted to gather and decipher on the spot a message of an old culture, taken from generation to generation.<sup>1</sup>*

Until the middle of the 90's in the career of a character as bohemian and rebellious as Cioran the short episode as an official *cultural counsellor* employed in the Romanian diplomacy was almost unknown. The archive funds of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Propaganda were not yet declassified at the time. His letters will be exhibited at the Romanian Literature Museum just in 1994, and only subsequently published. The *Diary* of Mihail Sebastian will also be published, in fragments, only in 1996. Cioran himself was discreet with this short episode of his life – and for good reason. Being recommended for the position by the Iron Guard's head Horia Sima and officially appointed by the propaganda minister Nichifor Crainic may have associated him with the fascist movement, a very uncomfortable position for anyone in France after the

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<sup>1</sup> Mircea Malița interview granted to Cristina Dobrotă, "Mircea Malița – *Biobibliografia*", author Lucian Pricop, Editura *Comunicare.ro*, 2012, pp. 28-29.

War, and more especially for a political refugee. Eugen Ionescu (who has taken over since 1942 the position previously occupied by Cioran) will be discrete regarding his diplomatic career for the same reasons (in his case not episodic but rather long, from June 1942 until October 1945). Unlike Eugene Ionescu (a well-known antifascist with a Jewish mother), Cioran's extreme right sympathies were known (after all he enjoyed the appreciation and trust of Horia Sima). He was a scholar of the Humboldt Foundation in 1935, and from notes published by Simona Cioculescu in 1998 was an enthusiastic (like many others) promoter of the political regime established there, which had been able to establish order in a country dominated by chaos; in his mind the same political regime could be the only antidote for the Romanian "political flunkey-ism".<sup>2</sup>

On March 1, 1941 we find Cioran in Vichy, as representative of the Ministry of National Propaganda at the Romanian Legation.<sup>3</sup> The *Information Note* from February 7, 1941, sent by Foreign Minister Mihai Sturza to Dinu Hiott, the plenipotentiary minister of Romania in Vichy, informed him about the appointment by the Ministry of National Propaganda via address no. 432 from February 5, 1941, as a "cultural counsellor".<sup>4</sup> In May, he was dismissed. So, he occupied the position only for about three months. Various speculations have been made in recent years about his activity at the post and the real reason for his dismissal. A lack of activity due to his bohemian, meditative or slimming character, as Marta Petreu stipulates in her book, is unlikely.<sup>5</sup> Marta Petreu speaks of Cioran's possible circumvention of the job presumed by the post under conditions in which she did not find in the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs archive any reports sent by him.<sup>6</sup> Other information is provided from a *Report* of the Romanian Consular Affairs Department, in which Cioran is portrayed as a *dangerous legionnaire* who does nothing on the job for which he is paid. The eight-hour bureaucratic routine may have been stressful for Cioran who (like many other intellectuals) used to work on his own time schedule (yet with visible results). It is surprising that a researcher labels Emil Cioran as a "slacker" after a superficial investigation into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (M.A.E) archive, where she has not found a Report for his three months of activity.<sup>7</sup> Looking for a diplomatic Report in three months of activity in the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs archive is like looking for a needle in a hay stack. Identifying the activity of a diplomat (in this case a cultural counsellor) in the M.A.E archive would involve years devoted to this topic alone. The historical archive of M.A.E. at the time I researched there was presented in a state that (if we are to express ourselves in diplomatic terms) did not favour research. There is no "Vichy fund", but only the general fund "France" or the "Paris" fund. Even in these archival funds (possibly re-archived in the 60's)

<sup>2</sup> Simona Cioculescu, *Manuscriptum*, no. 1-4, Bucharest, 1998, p. 250.

<sup>3</sup> Cioran, *Letter to Petru Comărnescu* from Vichy, 1<sup>st</sup> March 1941, in *Manuscriptum*, pp. 236-237, apud Marta Petreu, *Cioran sau un trecut deocheat*, Iași, Polirom, 2011.

<sup>4</sup> The document was published by Simona Cioculescu in "Emil Cioran sau neliniștea de a exista", *Manuscriptum* XXIX, no.1-2, 1998, p. 231.

<sup>5</sup> Marta Petreu, *Cioran sau un trecut deocheat*, Iași, Polirom, 2011, p. 289.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*.

documents are missing for months or years, making it difficult to reconstitute the work of a cultural counsellor in post for a segment of only three months. Add to this the unfriendly and restrictive (though probably motivated) conditions of access to the M.A.E Archive. Digital photographing of documents was forbidden and Xeroxing was at a prohibitive price for a researcher's wages. Many of those who deal with the activity of Emil Cioran probably do not know that at that time the foreign cultural representation did not belong to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but to the Ministry of Propaganda (led by Nichifor Crainic), detached in 1940 from MAS Press Directorate, which has its own archive in ANIC custody (Central National Historical Archive). Cioran was not an employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAS) but of the Ministry of Propaganda; but probably paid from the MAS funds (which is why documents related to the remuneration of cultural counsellor Emil Cioran are in the MAS archive). Given that, during its existence – under two years – as an independent institution, the Ministry of Propaganda had its location divided into five different places in Bucharest; the archive of this institution are even more incomplete and difficult to investigate. In the background of the Ministry of Propaganda archives in the 1960s, however, there is an Emil Cioran dossier, in which there is a *Report* sent by him on 30 April 1941 to Propaganda Minister Nichifor Crainic. Unlike other often formal and incomplete reports, we are dealing with an extensive report describing the state of affairs (in his opinion) of Romanian cultural diplomacy in France (both the occupied part and the part administered by the Vichy regime) and the institutions that represent it (in this case the Fontenay aux Roses School and, of course, the propaganda activities of the Romanian Legation and various Romanian citizens, beneficiaries of scholarships in the Sorbonne). With its nine pages, is one of the most extensive reports I have personally seen from a cultural counsellor. Considering that he had been in position for only three months, I can conclude that it was not the “bohemian character”, the “laziness” or the “obfuscation” of his duties which caused his removal and replacement with Ion Dragu (a career diplomat).

There were many speculations about the reasons behind Emil Cioran's dismissal from such a well-paid and desirable post, considering those times of restraint. Both Simona Cioculescu and Marta Petreu speculate on his pro-legionary sympathies, not compatible with the Antonescu regime after the Iron Guard rebellion. During the Iron Guard rebellion in February 1941 Cioran was in Bucharest but there is no evidence that he had any concrete involvement or knowledge of what was being done. The proposed appointment to the post, even though it seems to be done by Horia Sima, was reconfirmed by the new Propaganda Minister, Nichifor Crainic.

Both Simona Cioculescu, in an article in *Manuscriptum*, and Marta Petreu, debating the circumstances of Cioran's appointment, use as a source a note from Mihail Sebastian's *Diary* which recalls a dialogue on 2 January 1941 in which Cioran expressed his satisfaction for the appointment as a cultural attaché in Paris just on the day the order of concentration in the Army had come, which he was not going to respect anyway (Sebastian's note). Mihail Sebastian's *Diary*, published in Romania only in 1996, is undoubtedly a unique source of exceptional significance for the knowledge of the intellectual atmosphere of the interwar period. It was

written from the perspective of a “persecuted Jew” but also close friend of both Mircea Eliade, Cioran and Nae Ionescu (all three with extreme right sympathies). The notes in Mihail Sebastian’s *Journal* are still memoirs and must be corroborated with other documentary sources. Other opinions speak of Antonescu’s attempt to save the well-known names of the Romanian culture of the time by offering them positions in diplomacy in neutral countries (Eliade, Blaga, Cioran, Eugen Ionescu). This is a very unlikely speculation. Blaga was already a career diplomat for more than a decade, and surprisingly left the post of Legation Chef in Lisbon for a position as a professor at the University of Cluj’s department in 1939, despite the fact that WWII already started. Both Cioran and Eliade were appointed to posts during Romania’s neutrality, when Hitler’s plans to attack the former USSR were unknown. Also, the fear of concentration in the army was probably a simple regular concentration of training for a few days. And Cioran, as well as Eliade, were both closer to the legionnaire’s regime than to Antonescu.

It is little known or understood also why Cioran came back to Romania in January-February 1941. The efforts of some researchers (Marta Petreu, Irina Năstasă, Simona Cioculescu) began to shed some light on what Cioran was actually doing in Romania in January-February 1941. Until recently, the mystery of his presence in Romania was due to the belief that his scholarship from the French Institute for Studies and Research in France in 1937 was renewed periodically until 1944. The scholarship was lost when the French foreign exchange office was dismantled in the conditions of the German occupation. Remaining without means of subsistence in Paris, Cioran took advantage of the free repatriation action of Romanian citizens from occupied France organized by the new Legionary National Government established on 14 September 1940.<sup>8</sup> Without money, and in the turbulent conditions of France, the prospect of doing something in Romania where there were significant political changes in the way he wanted (being known and benefiting from the admiration and trust of Horia Sima and Nichifor Crainic) must have been attractive. Arriving in Romania in November 1940, things are happening with that rage specific for times of restraint. He has a rather pro-legionary journalistic activity, apparently trying to find a teaching position in Sibiu or Braşov, later to culminate in his appointment to the diplomatic corps in Vichy.<sup>9</sup>

The erroneous belief that the scholarship of the French Institute had been re-assigned to Cioran at some point made me believe that a certain financial comfort determined by the re-allocation of the scholarship would have led Cioran to try to get rid of the official function (and implicitly the link with Romania) by drafting an extremely critical report on the state of affairs of Romanian propaganda in France managed by its own employer Propaganda Ministry. In the *Report* Cioran does what no normal career-oriented civil servant would dare. He puts the work of the Romanian Propaganda from France not only in its institutional but also in its conceptual dimension. He argues in the *Report* that the Fontenay aux Roses

<sup>8</sup> Sanda Stolojan, *Nori peste balcoane – Jurnal din exilul parizian*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 1996, p. 102.

<sup>9</sup> Mihail Sebastian, *Jurnal 1935-1944*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2016, p. 306.

School is an “empty place”, and the most common themes of Romanian propaganda, such as *Latinity* etc. are already well known and so “used and abused” that they have become useless and boring to the French public. Marta Petreu talks about Cioran’s ongoing quarrels with his boss Dinu Hiott during his months at the post. Certainly, Cioran was not the prototype of the obedient public servant, rigorous with the tasks and docile to the superiors. For an intellectual with Cioran’s profile, rebellious and bohemian, the aversion to functional formalism involving an inevitable compromise with his own beliefs could have prevailed against the fear of poverty and misery. Cioran was not lazy. He wrote a lot, and could work for 10-12 hours a day provided he did it after his schedule, and not after the rigid eight-hour program of an institution. Like many other intellectuals in the administration, it may have been impossible to adapt to a program involving the obligation to spend eight hours a day at the office, and in particular the obligation to draw inconsistent notes of a few lines which just counted the events, the number of participants, the budget...without any critical appreciation. From the *Report* I reproduced below, it appears that he has done enough in the three months of posting (apart from the actual drafting of the *Report*). Among other things, he mentioned that he had contacted Mr. A. Dupront, the former director of the French Institute in Bucharest, who became a teacher in Montpellier and was tasked with organizing a work of intellectual collaboration with foreigners in order to set up a *Centre Roumain* in the *free area*. At the same time, he claims that following talks with Dupront he offered to hold radio conferences about Romania. Cioran specifies his investigations and concerns regarding the activity of the 10-15 doctoral students whose studies were covered financially by the Romanian state at Sorbonne. He investigates if their doctoral theses were of any relevance and interest for the Romanian cultural diplomacy in France. He also planned to send to the Ministry of Propaganda a list with PhD theses in progress at the time in France whose subjects were relevant for the Ministry, and in general for the Romanian cultural presence in France. So, it was not really a chore as depicted by Marta Petreu in her book. Conflicts with the liaison chief Dinu Hiott added to the delicate situation he had had since leaving Romania. He was already on surveillance by the Romanian Secret service (*Siguranța*) as an adept of the *Transilvanist* current promoting the regionalization of Romania (there was a complain registered at the Ministry of Propaganda by the Prefect of Sibiu following the publication of an article “Transylvania the Romanian Prussia”).<sup>10</sup> Irina Năstasă also mentions the existence of a *Report* of the Consular Affairs Directorate that included Cioran among the “rebel” and “dangerous legionnaires” in Paris, with no activity on the job for which he was paid.<sup>11</sup> On May 2, liaison chief Dinu Hiott expressly demanded in his report 1197/2 of May the dismissal of Cioran.<sup>12</sup> The exchange of diplomatic notes and the decision to remove Cioran

<sup>10</sup> *Către Ministerul Propagandei*, 20 February 1940, in Stelian Tănase, *Cioran și Securitatea*, Polirom, Iași, 2010, pp. 19-20, apud Marta Petreu, p. 286.

<sup>11</sup> Irina Năstasă, “Emil Cioran și Școala Română de la Fontenay-aux-Roses. Mărturii documentare”, in *Anuar Historica*, Cluj Napoca, 2010, pp. 240 -243.

<sup>12</sup> Marta Petreu, *Cioran sau un trecut deocheat*, Iași, Polirom, 2011, p. 289.

signed by Ion Antonescu in June 1941 were published and prefaced by Marta Petreu in 2001.<sup>13</sup>

What did Cioran do after the dismissal? For perhaps a year and a half, the money saved as a cultural counsellor may have been enough to insure a modest existence. Marta Petreu (including in the third edition of the book dedicated to Cioran) claims that from 1941 until 1945 he was a scholar, subsidized with a scholarship by the French state. It was not the case. Cioran was indeed a beneficiary of a scholarship, but not from French state. Instead he received a small scholarship from the Romanian Ministry of Public Instruction to complete his PhD thesis at the Romanian School from Fontenay aux Roses. From documents published by Irina Năstasă we learn that Cioran addressed in October 1942 an application for a scholarship to complete his work of doctoral studies, especially on “vitalism” philosophy, phenomenology and existential philosophy<sup>14</sup>, to the Minister of Public Instruction and implicitly the Director of the Romanian School in France, Fontenay aux Roses (whose activity was so criticized in his own report) The request was made, strategically, to the Minister of Public Instruction Ion Popovici, who used to know and appreciate him, his works and intellectual capacity. In response to the request, in the Archives Fund of the Ministry of Public Instruction there is a note from the Minister recommending that the request be sent to the Director of the School of France, Vintilă Mihăilescu, to come up with a proposal to grant the scholarship (according with the official bureaucratic procedures). From the exchange of messages between the director of the Romanian School in Paris and the Minister of Public Instruction it results that despite the financial restrictions, the Paris School had available some funds and savings, due to the impossibility of some of the nominated scholars to show up during the war. From the fall of 1942 until March 1944, Cioran will be granted a scholarship from the Romanian Fontenay aux Roses School (most likely being the only one to receive a scholarship). The monthly scholarship was amounting to 5000 francs.<sup>15</sup> The amount was small (four times lower than the lowest salary in the diplomatic staff post at the Romanian Legation) but probably allowed him to live as he was used, as an “eternal student”. Cioran may have completed the scholarship with small commissions, and maybe money from his parents (Martha Petreu’s supposition).<sup>16</sup>

Personally, I found Cioran’s only diplomatic report in 2005 in the Ministry of Propaganda Fund of ANICT. The Report, although available for consultation since years ago, bizarrely was not at the time in the academic circuit. For instance, I published it a year later in the *Familia* Magazine.<sup>17</sup>

Through the depth and courage of the approach, the sharp criticism of institutional inertia, including some of the key and much praised institutions of Romanian

<sup>13</sup> Marta Petreu, “Cioran în Diplomatie”, in *Apostrof*, year XII, no. 5, pp. 16-17.

<sup>14</sup> Arh. St. București, Ministerul Instrucțiunii Publice. Învățământul Superior, file.1088/1941, f.155-157, apud Irina Năstasă “Emil Cioran și Școala Română de la Fontenay-aux-Roses. Mărturii documentare”, in *Anuar Historica*, Cluj Napoca, 2010, pp. 240 -243.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>16</sup> Marta Petreu, *Cioran sau un trecut deocheat*, Iași, Polirom, 2011, p. 290.

<sup>17</sup> Lucian Jora, “Diplomația Culturală din activitatea lui Emil Cioran”, in *Familia*, no. 7-8, series V, July-August 2006, Oradea, pp. 488-489.

cultural representation abroad, the knowledge of Cioran's Report is a necessary and useful reading for anyone involved in foreign cultural representation. More than a decade after the first publication, I noticed that the document is still almost unknown. This is the reason why, in this article, I reproduce it for the third time and submit it to debate and analysis.

*Vichy, 30 April 1941*

*Mr. Minister*

*As a result of Circulaire No 1 of April 11, we have the honour to present you the following:*

*1. The Romanian propaganda in France, as it has been done in recent years, has been wrongly conceived, and judging by its results in recent years, ineffective.*

*On the theoretical side, it has shrunk to the same insidious insistence on our "Latinity", which no French person is contesting anyway, but to which no one attaches the importance we think it may have in our official manifestations. Propaganda cannot be done with vague ideas and grandiose formulations. Instead of showing what is the specific effort of Romania, the currents of ideas that were born after the war to individualize it, we revealed only the elements common to the West as if through this we had more easily attracted the interest of the French intellectuals. In this regard, I can give an example: two years ago, Henry Coroin, a professor at Hautes Etudes, and a librarian at the National Library and the Knowledge Center of Byzantine Culture, currently a solicitor in Constantinople, asked me to recommend a Romanian student who knows Orthodoxy and is able to read Greek texts, because he found in the Library new documents of Byzantine Mystique which might interest us. It was impossible for me to find even one. Among the 10-15 doctoral students from Sorbonne none of them treats a subject relevant for the Romanian culture. I will send to the Propaganda Ministry later on a list of the doctoral theses submitted or written by the Romanian students. It will then be seen what sterile and detached issues from the circle of ideas relevant to us are being debated in France by our students. The state granting scholarships is obliged to control the intellectual activity of the beneficiaries. Almost all other foreign students write theses about their states and problems in their country. Under the suggestion of a false Occidentalism we have specialized in adding trivialities to problems depleted by qualified intelligences. A Frenchman does not care what a Romanian thinks about Nietzsche or Bergson, but about the systematic exposition of some aspects characteristic of our country. But this has not been done. In the academic circles, we have been absent.*

*2. Romania does not have a truly Romanian Culture House in Paris, which may supplement the absence of an Institute. What we did: We set up a Romanian School at Fontenay-aux-Roses, 10 km from Paris, where no Frenchman and no stranger go, of course with the exception of a few scholars. The Ministry of Propaganda in agreement with the Ministry of Education on which this school depends, should make any material sacrifices to move it to Paris. In this way, conferences on Romania could be organized in a more appropriate context.*

*It is not, I think, useless to recall a completely missed propaganda attempt. The former Minister in Paris, Mr. R. Franasovici, wished to see the realities between the French and the Romanian students, and gave them some funds. They have been redeemed by an agape. The students were welcomed to the table for gourmet pleasures, but the discussions did not fit the frame. It would be otherwise if the Romanian School, moved to Paris, would organize receptions and would provide a serious accent to the events. This is how other countries are doing propaganda. We invite the French to the restaurant instead of offering them the conditions of an intimate approach, an approach which may show that we know how to respect ourselves in our environment. Not with balls and banquets we will save ourselves from the state of Gallic irony.*

*The Romanian School in France, which should have been the essential point of support for our propaganda because its intellectual facade may have removed the inevitably embarrassing propaganda intentions, was a completely dead institution beyond the spirit of national and spiritual efficiency. I wish this to be considered as a protest. I think I am the interpreter of all who have known it, and in the same way have been revolted by a state of intolerable things.*

*There is another aspect of the situation and which is quite worrying. Our students who have been in France for several years have lost contact with the Romanian books. The explanation is very simple. The only Romanian library is at Fontenay-aux-Roses. It is far from Paris; the books cannot be lent home for instance, and no one consults the library. I was given to see cases of amazing ignorance in contemporary Romanian literature. If we had a Romanian school in Paris, Romanians could meet there, not in cafes. The value of intellectual and therefore propagandistic circulation of students is reduced, as long as they are not aware of the values of their country. In all the intellectual societies I have participated in Paris, I have met Hungarians whose mission is precise: to sneak their obsessions into the discussions. Their political preparation is much more homogeneous and more consistent than our students'. Every Romanian student abroad should have all the publications of propaganda interest in the language of the respective country, to spread them among teachers and acquaintances. It is the German principle that propaganda should not be done on the diplomatic level but on the public level through progressive and systematic infiltrations. We must take advantage of the historical and psychological momentum of current France, which, by its own disappointment, extends its curiosity beyond, consoles its own deficiencies and infuses through information the irreducibility of its infallible destiny.*

*3. We need, as an addition to Mr. Bazil Munteanu's book – much used by the Germans, as we learned in Berlin – an anthology of Romanian literature in French. Those that have been done so far are inadequate. Of even greater utility would be a study of Romania's issue, as it has been debated over the past two decades, with extracts from the most characteristic essays. It is difficult to explain with controllable references – to the Western world – that we have insistently put Romania's problem in its historical sense, as it was the case only in Spain, Russia and Germany. To lament the lost provinces without showing that there is a necessity, an immanence of our national concern, a formative thought at the*

*basis of our becoming, means striving hard to sustain a theoretically unfounded thesis. As long as we will not have at our disposal a literary and ideological material that will justify our aspirations, our propaganda will be affected by an artificial and sterile character. In particular; the French, obsessed by legalism, are quick to believe that Romania is a result of the treaties. In fact, the Romanian authors did nothing but repeat that we are the creation of Napoleon III and other such absurdities.*

*German students and intellectuals in general who were sent abroad by the national socialist regime had determined missions. We neglected this problem. Until now, we could have the fundamental works of our literature translated into French, or at least some articles nominating and describing them. I think we could use for our purposes teachers from the French mission who have returned to France and who know Romanian. It all depends on the funds the Ministry can provide.*

*4. As far as the Franco-Romanian friendship associations are concerned, it is obvious that in the German occupied area they cannot be created without difficulty. That is why I decided with Mr. A. Dupront, the former director of the French Institute in Bucharest, currently a professor at Montpellier and in charge of organizing a work of intellectual collaboration with foreigners, the establishment in the free area of a Centre Roumain, which would have more prominence than other centres. At the same time Mr. Dupront offers to sustain radio conferences about Romania. He also asked me to communicate to the Ministry the state of serious lingering of the Romanian School in France and the fact that it is in our interest to impose to it another rhythm and to expand its importance. If we do not have an Institute in France, at least we can extend the prestige and usefulness of the School. Keeping the School location in Fontenay-aux-Roses means spending money in vain. Also, school administration should be entrusted to an intellectual well-acquainted with the current problems. The Ministry of Propaganda has all the interest to intervene with the Ministry of National Education for a speedy resolution of this problem.*

*5. This year, a Western Congress will be held in Lisbon, organized largely by French intellectuals, to discuss general culture issues and to determine spiritual physiognomy in the historical moment we live in. Mr. Valery Radot, one of the initiators of this Congress, proposed to me to take part as a representative of Romania. Until now, neither the exact date nor the precise elements of the discussion have been fixed. It may be that the events postpone it, the instability of the general situation modifying the date every day, if not the nature of the problems.*

*Cultural Advisor*

*Emil Cioran*

*Addressed to His Excellency Professor Nichifor Crainic, Minister of National Propaganda*

From the first lines, the style of an intellectual who is less familiar with administrative language is noticeable, and it is hard to believe that even a versed man like Nichifor Crainic would have understood concretely what Cioran refers

to when he asks that Romania's propaganda focuses on our national concern, on a *formative thought as the basis of our becoming*. The fact that the *de facto* propaganda of a country is not into the hands of diplomatic institutions, but especially of students (or each Romanian citizen in part), a strategy based on the German principle of *systematic infiltration*, is not something new and not necessarily German. The idea of turning every Romanian student in France into a propaganda agent endowed with specific propaganda material translated into French to distribute to various circles of acquaintances was nevertheless novel, relatively functional and possibly justifiable considering the war times. Like all those outside the system, who are accustomed to living on a small budget, Cioran is revolted by the formalism of manifestations, agapes and other events marked in the Legacy agenda, that are so costly with so few visible effects. We observe that, as most of his contemporaries involved in diplomacy or propaganda, Cioran does not escape the obsession of comparing everything to Hungary, whose students come with precise assignments – to squeeze into any discussions and debates the concerns of the moment, relevant for their national interest.

The fact that he quarrels with liaison Chief Dinu Hiott does not surprise. The routine propaganda actions of the Legation (official meals, receptions) seem to Cioran (perhaps motivated) unnecessary expenses that, through their formalism, do not impress anyone as form and content. He is particularly "sick and tired" of Propaganda actions and official materials approved by the Ministry of Propaganda used at the level of the Legations, which circulated the same slogans (about Latinity, civilizational belonging to the West) at the expense and neglect of the contemporary Romanian cultural phenomenon. It insists on what many still demand even today in the work of Romanian cultural diplomacy, namely the abandonment of sterile forms, respectively the perpetual presentation of a rural, landscaping, ornamental version of the Romanian civilization. It is a plea that was then, as it is now, difficult and risky to implement. What is most relevant in contemporary Romanian culture? Abandoning consecrated formulas, folklore, Latinism, will Romania be recognizable in the eyes of the internal or external public?

Cioran's *Report* lacks the contextual approach. It does not seem to know in what context and under what conditions of war and occupation the institutions of the Romanian state in France had to operate. Nicolae Iorga, the mentor of the Fontenay-aux-Roses School, had been assassinated. The institution no longer benefited from funds, and most likely the French public, in war and under German occupation, lacked the appetite to visit the library of the Romanian School. Last but not least, Cioran's information and opinions must be seen from the perspective of Cioranian philosophy, in which pessimism and self-flagellation are the dominant note.

But at least in one aspect he was right. Romania had not translated the fundamental works of its national literature and culture into French or another language of international circulation; translators were also missing. In this situation, Cioran's proposal to use the teachers of the French mission who returned to France and who knew the Romanian language was noteworthy.

The critique of one's own institution in an official report is inadequate in administrative and diplomatic usage. What Cioran testifies to, as an employee of the Romanian Ministry of Propaganda with diplomatic status, denotes naivety and eventually a lack of tact and opportunism. The report was sent to Nichifor Crainic as a result of requesting information from the cultural advisers of all Romanian diplomatic missions. Cioran could write (as well as others) a good report in which to endorse the propaganda achievements of the Romanian mission in France. He did not. The opportunity to say what he considered wrong or improvable in the hope of changing something in the Romanian institutional inertia was too tempting for a "pure blood" intellectual. The temptation was irresistible for a real intellectual and free spirit, and defeated the fear of poverty and misery involved by the risk of losing the job. Perhaps the aspects reported by Cioran in the *Report* on the location of the Romanian School in France and the need to find a building in Paris will determine, during 1942-1943, the exchange of official notes between the Public Instruction Minister and the Director of the French School, Vasile Marinescu, on the disbursement of necessary funds by the Ministry of Finance in order to find a new place. The evolution of the situation in Romania will yield these attempts.

Cioran's description by Marta Petreu as the eternal beneficiary of the system, a perpetual student whose "little trick" worked through his entire life is rude and unfair. After all, what did he ask from the system? A modest attic and a meal in student canteens? This is so little, for a character whose work succeeded to enter in the consciousness of Romanian, French and universal culture. Perhaps those who are still throwing an ironic thorn at the "eternal student" should be deeply rattling through the army of luxury officials and diplomatic pensioners, and the sums – as enormous as they are unnecessary – spent for actions of dubious intellectual quality, and an even more dubious impact. At least in Cioran's case, for sure the investment in a small scholarship and his tolerance in student canteens provided visible profits.

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