

## POLITICAL IMAGE, THEORY AND PHILOSOPHY

### NOTES CONCERNING “ELIADE FILE”

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**Abstract.** *In order to understand the work of Mircea Eliade in its whole complexity, it should be situated within the context where it was thought and written. Whether the period beginning with the years after the war is somehow easier to follow in Eliade's intellectual biography, the most discussed period and that gave way to numerous contradictory interpretations is, naturally, the '30s.*

*In this sense, the present study makes a small inventory of some obscure moments, because this obscurity gave birth, most of the times, either to misunderstanding or, where there was an ill will, to the misrepresentation of his words.*

*To have been kept silent was for Eliade (especially during the '50s) a form of intellectual survival and maybe survival per se. Now, we have the right to judge things in a more nuanced manner, without denying the facts, but also without interpreting them tendentiously and approximately. But we can express reserves, of course, toward the method of the 'file' applied to Eliade, as well as to other important authors (such as Heidegger, Cioran and others), a modern form of a Manichaeism which has no place within the world of culture, the eternal empire of the nuances.*

**Keywords.** *“Eliade file”, intellectual biography, obscurity, misrepresentation and clarifications.*

“And against all odds I stubbornly believe in the ‘initiation’ meaning of these pains and impotencies.

I do not think necessarily at death.

At my age this is not a problem anymore.

The initiation toward something else: a ‘new life’, *i.e.* a total regeneration, revealing a different sort of creativity for me.

I must exit the surrounding fence of minor preoccupations, where I have closed myself, unknowingly, for so many years”.

Mircea Eliade, *Journal*<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Journal*, vol. II, pp. 436-437.

In order to understand the work of Mircea Eliade in its whole complexity, it should be situated within the context where it was thought and written. Whether the period beginning with the years after the war is somehow easier to follow in Eliade's intellectual biography, the most discussed period and that gave way to numerous contradictory interpretations is, naturally, the '30s. This is also the period when the personality of the Romanian scholar is fulfilled, but also the time of a confrontation with history, from which, apparently, Eliade did not always turned out victorious, illustrating through his person the old saying of the humanist Miron Costin who, living in an epoch of equal turmoil, memorably spoken of the poor man who is always under the times.

Obviously, nobody can start on a reconstruction of the whole epoch and not even of the entire activity of Eliade during the '30s, in a few pages. This is not and it cannot be the object of this chapter. Yet, there are a few legends that acquired a certain consistence over the years and that obscure a correct reception of the meanings of the Eliadian writings. As Ioan Petru Culianu also wrote, there is an "unknown Mircea Eliade"<sup>2</sup>. Even more, according to Ioan Petru Culianu, "*Eliade is a myth builder through the incapacity of the others to decipher his story*"<sup>3</sup>.

We cannot discuss here in detail all the litigious aspects of a complex existence, which is in itself situated in an even more complex epoch, but we can make a small inventory of some obscure moments, because this obscurity gave birth, most of the times, either to misunderstanding or, where there was an ill will, to the misrepresentation of his words.

Often, the Romanian author was the prisoner of a context, of some confrontations, rather of a political order, than of theoretical type, and some facts or some of his writings were used, not necessarily against himself as a person, but against a presupposed adverse team where he was registered without being asked. For instance, a fact suggested by Ioan Petru Culianu, a disciple who had the privilege of numerous direct talks with the Romanian Professor at Chicago and who wrote about these meetings: at some point, in the West, was registered what was called at the time "a recrudescence of the rightwing," significant inclusively among the young people of university age. There began a process of identification of the exponents of this "theoretical rightwing," who were subjected to a concentric fire. Was this, maybe, intended to control their influence on the youth? Were there other motivations? A cert result is that in a certain period of time was propagated the idea of a rightwing Eliade, and afterwards, Culianu writes, "rumors began to circulate, timid at first, about his supposed anti-Semitism and pro-Nazism. Eliade's method was to never answer the rumors, and so they quickly amplified under the quill of a Di Nola, a Furio Jesi and others, all the way to France"<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Ioan Petru Culianu, *Mircea Eliade necunoscutul*, in vol. Ioan Petru Culianu, *Mircea Eliade*, Nemira Publishing House, Bucharest, 1995, pp. 153-292.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 159.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 264.

The image of a rightwing, anti-Semite and pro-Nazi<sup>5</sup> convictions Eliade places under uncertainty the humanist Eliade. It is not easy to understand a philosopher who attempts to rethink humanism and to re-describe its importance within the context of our times, but at the same time nourishes resentments against a certain part of humanity under the pretext of the cultural differences and who expresses cryptically these resentments in philosophical and scientific writings. For this reason, among the complicated matters discussed around, in Culianu's phrase, *Eliade, the unknown*, even if some cannot be addressed in these pages, at least that of his presupposed anti-Semitism and the question of a possible belonging to the Legionary movement of Eliade should be deciphered and clarified once and for all, at least in its essential aspects, returning to specific primary sources of the debate.

The researcher who is attentive to the biography and bibliography of Mircea Eliade, Mircea Handoca, has offered recently a brief, but very useful, history of the attacks to which the Romanian scholar was subjected, in *Foreword*<sup>6</sup>, elaborated while gathering Eliade's incriminated texts.

Mircea Handoca reminds that Eliade was even since the '20s considered superficial and a swindler and that his novels were considered indecent and forbidden by the Ministry of Public Instruction in 1934, and that afterwards the author of the novels was excluded from the system of education by the same authority. After more than a decade, in 1948, a part of Eliade's books are listed among the forbidden publications. However, Eliade's writing were note-edited in his natal country only until the end of the '60s (with some titles from his literary prose) and toward the '80s (his works of the history of religion).

The attacks did not target only the writings, but also the person of Eliade. Even a hasty reading of Eliade's *Memoirs* shows, however, the fact that the young author did not employ much diplomacy in his professional relations and that this brought him a great number of enemies, from P.P. Negulescu, his Professor, whom he jars on the occasion of his PhD thesis defense. To characters such as Oscar Lemnaru, who was to dedicate him an irreducible hate.

Belu Silber, close to the *Criterion* group for a while, about whose doubtful morality were found more after the publication of Pătrășcanu file, accuses him, Eliade tells that, to be "a Security agent" (as we can see, nothing new under the sun within Romanian society!) and to the troubled blame that was addressed to him, he offered the excuse that such an accusation ...is part of the methods of the Marxist journalism. From the same area emerge rather early infamy accusations: "Mr. Mircea Eliade is a fascist who ignores himself and a xenophobe with anti-Semitic prejudices. Even Mircea Eliade's terminology is reminding of Hitler's"<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Such image is not, however, concordant with the notes from the *Journal* of the Romanian author. In a few places, Eliade laments about the historical destiny of the millions of "Jews killed or cremated in the Nazi concentration camps," considering them "the avant-garde of humanity that waits to be incinerated through the will of 'History'" (Mircea Eliade, *Jurnal [Journal]*, vol. I, p. 412, note from November 27, 1961). This is certainly not the jubilating discourse of a Nazi.

<sup>6</sup> Mircea Handoca, *Cuvînt înainte [Foreword]*, in vol. Mircea Eliade, *Textele "Legionare" și despre Româanism*, anthology by Mircea Handoca, Dacia Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2001, pp. 7-35.

<sup>7</sup> *Șantier*, January 1, 1935, p. 5 (*apud* Mircea Handoca, *op. cit.*, p. 10).

In a letter to Cezar Petrescu, Eliade summarizes in a few words the police regime to which he is subjected in June 1938: “to be Nae Ionescu’s assistant, understandably, is right on subversive. To be a redactor of *Cuvântul* newspaper is even worse. Adding up these two faults, my family and I are unceasingly guarded by agents, for the last six weeks. There were five raids and searches, a descent to the owners, policemen on the street, and a sergeant at the gate. (...) For five days straight, since they came to ‘pick me up’ – warrantless, of course – I am chased as a luxury game, from house to house, from station to station, from town to town”<sup>8</sup>.

At the time, Eliade is under the cross fire of the two teams which became ever more exclusivist, and ever more intolerant within the Romanian society by the end of the '30s. Mircea Eliade recalls in his *Memoirs* the reception in epoch of his book *Yoga. Essai sur les origines de la mystique indienne*: «For the nationalists, *Yoga* was of no interest because it was not concerned with ‘Romanian realities.’ For the leftwing journalists, *Yoga* had no value because it was written by me, Nae Ionescu’s assistant and collaborator of *Cuvântul*, thus ‘a rightwing man’”<sup>9</sup>.

Now a method, a person and the works gain contour, framing that method which was to follow Eliade his entire life and which can be phrased as “Eliade file”. Starting with the second half of the '30s, Eliade was to be the perpetual object of a “file”, which, periodically, became re-actualized, according to circumstances independent of his will and his knowledge. A Kafka-like instance opens a trial against the Romanian scholar, which, in a parallel with the trial from the writing of the author from Prague, cannot be won. As in *The Trial* signed by Kafka, the judging instance is never there where expected to be, but it is by accident found in the most unlikely places. The accusations are formulated with such ambiguity that any method of defense becomes inefficient in front of a public opinion that never finds the time to critically analyze the facts and the defendant is lost by the simple fact that he is accused, exactly as in the crepuscular Kafkaian writing. On the other hand, any excess of defense becomes, as we shall see, incriminating in itself.

The best method to form an opinion remains the attempt to present succinctly the concrete data. The corner stone of the architecture of Eliade “file” is the accusation of belonging to the Iron Guard. From this point follow a development of the accusatorial themes: as the Iron Guard was, according to the wider spread opinion, an anti-democratic, totalitarian, anti-Semite and even terrorist movement, using violence as a political method, the accusatorial logic implies that Eliade was an anti-democrat, a partisan of totalitarianism, an anti-Semite and, why not, a terrorist.

In reality, things are, obviously, more complicated than this pseudo-syllogism implies. The relations between Eliade and the Iron Guard have a history that has to be investigated with impartiality before validating these accusations.

A first aspect: Is the adhesion of Eliade to the Iron Guard an incontestable fact? There are proofs indicating some times to one direction, and other times to

<sup>8</sup> *Apud* Mircea Handoca, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>9</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Memorii* (1907-1960), p. 337.

the other. The belief that Eliade was part, in the clearest manner, in the legionary movement is based on several elements:

1. The notoriety of his adhesion, to which refer, in the epoch or afterwards, a sum of friends (for instance, Mihail Sebastian), acquaintances<sup>10</sup> or adversaries; 2. His public attitudes<sup>11</sup>, culminating with his arrest at July 14, 1938 and his imprisonment in the camp from Mircurea Ciuc by the authorities of the time and with his refusal to sign a declaration of desolidarization with legionarism; 3. The fact that he published in publications of legionary orientation; and 4. His testimonies included in his correspondence and, as suggested by Claudio Mutti<sup>12</sup>, certain allusions with a supposed autobiographical character, from the Eliadian belletristic<sup>13</sup>.

Concerning the first point mentioned above, it may carry a certain weight, but it does not constitute an absolutely irrefutable proof for Eliade's regimentation. In Romania, public rumor is an institution that always functions according to particular laws and that can not be invoked as truth by no one else but the interested parties. Sebastian, sensible observer, is often someone extremely subjective; he perceives Eliade's political opinions which are different from his, first of all as

<sup>10</sup> In this category could be placed the testimony of a former legionary, Zeană, conform to which Eliade "was 'regimented', as part of the legionary branch ('nest') 'Axa', led by Mihail Polihroniade" (apud Claudio Mutti, *Penele arhanghelului. Intelectualii români și Garda de Fier*, Anastasia Publishing House, Bucharest, 1997, p. 58). On the other hand, one can presuppose also that the legionaries attempted, as they had the interest, for reasons concerning the image, to claim the adhesion of Eliade even against historical reality. Another testimony was that of J. Evola (*ibidem*), sustaining that Eliade placed him in relation to Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, could have been true, but it is not, in itself, conclusive in what concerns the relations of the Romanian scholar with the legionary movement. However, there are authors contesting the role of Eliade in the relation Codreanu-Evola (cf. Claudio Mutti, *Evola and România*, preface to J. Evola, *Naționalism și Asceză. Reflecții asupra fenomenului legionar*, Fronde Publishing House, Alba Iulia, Paris, 1998, pp. 26-28).

<sup>11</sup> According to a testimony of G. Bălănescu, quoted by Claudio Mutti, "Eliade was even a candidate on the electoral lists of the legionary party 'Everything for the country' and he expected that soon he were elected deputy" (Claudio Mutti, *Mircea Eliade și Garda de Fier*, Puncte cardinale, Publishing House, Sibiu, 1995, p. 31).

<sup>12</sup> Claudio Mutti, *Mircea Eliade și Garda de Fier*, p. 15 *passim*.

<sup>13</sup> Eliade takes sometimes a distance from such interpretations in autobiographic spirit of certain literary texts. For instance, in his *Memorii*, Eliade writes: "I have used many of my memories from the General Security and from Ciuc in *The Forbidden Forest*, and I am sorry; I may have left thus the impression that Ștefan Viziru (a character) was an *alter ego* of myself, which was not true" (Mircea Eliade, *Memorii. Recoltele solștiului* (1937-1960), Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1991, p. 28).

<sup>14</sup> "On Sunday, April 4 (1937) (...) I could not bear what came next. Not only because it seem stupid to me to hear him repeating Nae's words – but also because his platitude of thought where I could see him sinking terrified me (...) But is friendship possible under such circumstances?" (Mihail Sebastian, *Jurnal*. 1935-1944, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1996, p. 123). A more general observation: Sebastian's *Journal* should be read maybe also with the eye of the psycho-analyst. This quite feminine sensitivity of Sebastian undertakes sometimes, in his relationship with Mircea Eliade, the accents of a rejected and betrayed love. Here is probably as well the source for (the psycho-analyst may say) certain exaggerate accusations or for the hysterical desire to believe all the negative things related by third parties, concerning Eliade (for example, the observation made by P. P. Comarnescu, included in the entry from September 20, 1939). Other victims of this manner of perceiving things, through particular lenses, in the *Journal*, accentuated by the events from January 1941, are Camil Petrescu (abundantly), Cioran (February 12, 1941), even Eugen Ionescu (February 10, 1941), but also, unexpectedly, E. Lovinescu (February 12, 1941) and even G. B. Shaw (May 6, 1941). There are, as well, in the same journal, cruel expressions and concerning certain women whom Sebastian loves and whom he seems to include in this ambivalent complex of "love and hate", which the author of the *Journal* has developed within the terrible circumstances in which he found himself during the last years. Sometimes, the caustic spirit present in this writing led him to a sort of indifference to his own destiny, but also to a sort of despire for his congeners, caught within the same trap of the Jewish destiny in Romania of the '40s.

a betrayal of the friendship between them<sup>14</sup>. However, we have to say that Sebastian places Eliade's adhesion to the legionary movement on his naivety<sup>15</sup>. A thing less emphasized by those who consider Sebastian's *Journal* a piece of accusation in Eliade's "file" is noticeable: Sebastian, so careful with any anti-Semitic nuance from the language of his friends does not mention, even once, anti-Semitic expressions in the conversations between them, but only what other communicated him, more or less veridical (for instance, P. Comarnescu).

The arrest of Eliade had its arbitrary and, if it attested the young writer as a follower of the legionary movement, it does not represent a proof for his regimentation. There is a good probability that Eliade was followed, as he accounts as well, more as an assistant, and as an intimate of Nae Ionescu<sup>16</sup>, who was also imprisoned in the camp from Miercurea. But, some may say, Eliade refused to sign a declaration of desolidarization from the movement. Nevertheless, he founded his refusal on the fact that he did not sign up in the legionary movement ("It is, probably, true"<sup>17</sup>, Z. Ornea comments). In his *Memoires*, the author explains this in a verisimilar mode. They have required from him a desolidarization that looked as an cowardly act and seemed rather a betrayal of his friends, and even, Eliade says, of his generation: "It seemed unconceivable to me to desolidarize from my generation during extreme persecution when people were followed and persecuted without any guilt"<sup>18</sup>. The fact that Eliade publishes in various periodical publications of philo-legionary orientation should be interpreted through the content of his articles. With few exceptions<sup>19</sup>, Eliade maintains his independence of thought in his writings from this epoch.

<sup>15</sup> "Tuesday, 2 (March, 1937) (...) Not to forget, also, the explanation for his heartfelt adhesion to the Guard: 'I have always believed in the primacy of the spiritual.' He is neither a swindler, nor a demented person. He is only being naive. But there are such catastrophic naiveties!" (Mihail Sebastian, *Jurnal*. 1935-1944, p. 115).

<sup>16</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Memorii. Recoltele solstiului* (1937-1960), p. 25.

<sup>17</sup> Z. Ornea, *Anii treizeci. Extrema dreaptă românească*, Fundația Culturală Română Publishing House, Bucharest, 1995, p. 209.

<sup>18</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Memorii. Recoltele solstiului* (1937-1960), p. 28.

<sup>19</sup> An exception, which is often reminded, is Eliade's answer to an investigation of the official publication of the movement, *Buna Vestire*, answer entitled "Why I believe in the triumph of the legionary movement?" (*Buna Vestire*, no. 244, December 17, 1937, pp. 1-2). Mircea Eliade sustained afterwards that the answer in discussion does not belong to him, as it was composed in the redaction, and that he did not attempt a denial because it would have triggered a public scandal. Here are, indeed, a few phrases with explicit Semite content. But the answer cited offers some points of view that obviously belong to Eliade, concerning the specific of the "legionary revolution", as he imagined it, and which prove that the naivety mentioned by Sebastian in the *Journal* was not just an outthought word: "...While all contemporary revolutions are political, the legionary revolution is both spiritual and Christian. While all contemporary revolutions have as purpose the conquering of the political power by a social class or by a person, legionary revolution has as a supreme aim the salvation of the nation, the reconciliation of the Romanian people with God, as the Captain said. For that reason, the meaning of the Legionary Movement is different from everything that was done in history until now, and the legionary triumph will bring about not only the restoration of the virtues of our people, a worthy Romania, dignified and powerful – creating a new man, adequate to a new type of European life. The new man has never been born in a political movement – but always in a spiritual revolution, within a vast inner transformation. This way was born the new man of Christianity, of Renaissance, etc., in an accomplished primacy of the spirit against the temporal, with the victory of the spirit against flesh. The new man is born through a truly lived freedom. I believe in the triumph of the Legionary Movement, because I believe in freedom, in the power of the soul against the biological and economic determinism" (Mircea Eliade, *Textele "Legionare" and Despre românism*, anthology by Mircea Handoca, Dacia Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2001, p. 65).



Special weight carry some phrases from his correspondence from which one may derive, though, the regimentation of Mircea Eliade as legionary. In a letter from 15<sup>th</sup> October 1948 to his friend, Brutus Coste, Eliade tells him about the turmoil of the Romanian exile from Paris and, condemning the intrigues of the legionaries' refugees in the capital of France, he writes: "As for me, I am forbearing. I know that nothing can remain pure eventually. In 1938 I have adhered to the Iron Guard for the memory of Moța, only to see, in 1940, a Guard led by outlaws, loafers and semi-literates, compromising even the memory of the ideal of Moța. This is 'History' – this is the reason why I am for metaphysics"<sup>20</sup>. An apparently irrefutable testimony, this 'in 1938 I have adhered to the Iron Guard.' But one may notice that this adhesion was not necessarily a formal one, registered in official documents, but contingently a sentimental one. However, the motivation of the supposed adhesion is avowedly sentimental: 'for the memory of Moța.' On the other hand, it is possible merely that Eliade has somewhat underlined the data of reality, writing to a legionary member, his alleged adhesion being a formula of souled correspondence with it.

Anyhow, the recent publication, in its integrality, of the *Portuguese Journal* of Mircea Eliade appears to clarify, at least formally speaking, the matter. Indeed, some passages from the notes made by Eliade between April 21, 1941 and (probably) September 5, 1945, which constitute the "Portuguese" section of the *Journal*, unpublished until recently, but partially, constituted as undisputed proof of the adhesion to legionary movement.

July 1942, Eliade recalls a discussion in the journal, at Mircea Vulcănescu's home, between Constantin Noica and a group of former "*criterioniști*". Noica accuses the other that they have abandoned the movement that, after him, represented especially a moral position of condemnation of the bourgeois spirit in favor of a certain political objectivity; with the alibi of the formula "we are content to be technicians and to serve the state in whatever form it would require". Noica asks, vehemently: "What have you done when Codreanu was killed? When have you voted the Constitution? The Plebiscite?"<sup>21</sup> Eliade intervened in discussion with the confession that "*although legionary* (my emphasis I. G.), I have suspended any political internal judgment as long as the war with Russia is taking place"<sup>22</sup>. A few days sooner, with the occasion of a meeting with Mihai Antonescu, some of Eliade's friends, in conformity with the same pages of his journal, hoped that the *ad interim* President of the Council of Ministers will attempt with the former 'an understanding with the Legion'<sup>23</sup>. January 1945, he recalls, nostalgically, a certain youthful drive toward adventure. Within this context, Eliade writes the following lines: "To my pathetic love for Nina, or the legionary adventure corresponded my passion for the absolute in metaphysics

<sup>20</sup> "Mircea Eliade în corespondență cu Brutus Coste", in *Jurnalul literar*, no. 5-10, March-April-May 2001, p. 14.

<sup>21</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Jurnalul portughez și alte scrieri*, preface and editing by Sorin Alexandrescu, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 2006, vol. I, p. 133.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>23</sup> Mircea Eliade, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

and religion”<sup>24</sup> and avows himself incapable to objectively rememorize the past. “The past freezes me”<sup>25</sup>, notes the author.

It seems that these confessions are meant to end any discussion concerning the question of Eliade’s belonging to the legionary movement, recognized by him as *expressis verbis* in a text that doesn’t have, as the already mentioned letter to Brutus Coste, an immediate finality of communication. The Journal is, for Eliade, an occasion to clarify for himself several thoughts and, as such, he cannot be suspected of secondary intentions and of the desire to denaturize the facts.

However, the mentioned aspects from the *Portuguese Journal* are summary enough to permit different interpretations, and it must be said, with all the directness of the expressions (“although legionary”, “my legionary adventure...”), they do not lack a certain ambiguity. First, legionarism seem to be, for the author of the journal, not as much a form of participation to the political action, as rather, a state of mind, a spiritual experience. This way, if the soulful adhesion is undisputable, the matter of the formal, effective adhesion to the Romanian radical right wing movement remains to be further discussed. Anyhow, we could interpret this way the repeated denial of his participation to legionarism, later on, to which we are going to refer hereon. Those who accused Eliade considered, obviously, a “regimentation” of the scholar in a movement understood as close to fascism (Eliade refers in the journal, in quotation marks, to the possibility to be perceived in the country, in 1945, as “fascist”<sup>26</sup>, as a brutal denaturizing of reality). Or, for any objective observer, Eliade’s personality (characterized by narcissism, with a clear cut obsession for the development of his own ideas and for the literary expression of his own feelings) is, evidently, profoundly incompatible with any form of political regimentation. For this reason, Eliade was not to recognize himself, especially in the following decades, in the hypostasis of “adherent” to the Legion and not necessarily cowardice is what prevents him from seeing his past in these terms. And, while the accusation of legionarism proves to be evermore an instrument to deny him even the right to a scientific career, Eliade renounces, as his adversaries, to nuances and he rejects any relation between himself and the Legion, over passing sometimes the limits of truth<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 293.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>26</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 291.

<sup>27</sup> Eliade’s letter of July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1972 to Scholem, to which we are going to refer immediately, is an example of highly equivocal presentation of the relations of the Romanian scholar with the legionary movement. Without containing flagrant inconsistencies, the text is ambiguous enough to leave room for the idea that Eliade was altogether a foreign to the Legion, which is, however, not true. Evidently, Eliade’s excuse is that, at their turn, his accusers are, most often, indifferent to the truth, what is intended, in his case, could be qualified, simply, as a tentative of moral assassinate. For instance, in the article from *Toladot* which occasions the correspondence exchange Scholem Eliade, the Romanian scholar is no more and no less... than one of the leaders of the Iron Guard and among the main anti-Semite ideologues of the legionary movement. If one can extract a more general conclusion from this Eliade case, I believe it could be the following one: the 20<sup>th</sup> century invented not only the technologies of incarceration and mass assassinate, but also a technology of systematic, one may say, almost scientific deformation of the truth, against which the historical antecedents (“the black legend”, the propaganda of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, etc.) appear as belonging to paradisiacal times. Mircea Eliade is just one of the victims of an extremely refined system, where the quarters of truth, next to inferences,



However, there are in his texts numerous proves that Eliade understood to maintain a certain distance from the legionary movement and these are, as a rule, overseen by those who bring periodically Eliade's file in front of the public opinion. Eliade's relation with the legionary movement is, mainly an echo of Nae Ionescu's relations with the same movement<sup>28</sup>, or these relations knew complex evolutions<sup>29</sup>. Even more, when Nae Ionescu declared himself an adept of the hostile attitude toward the Jews of the legionary movement, Eliade refused to follow him, as it happened on the occasion of the famous preface to the book of Sebastian *De două mii de ani*<sup>30</sup>. Even if we can register a period of appreciatively two or three years of closeness between Eliade and the legionary movement, it must be said that afterwards Eliade distanced himself from legionarism as what he thought to be a movement of spiritual renewal of Romania, transformed into a fight for political power, heavily manipulated from abroad, to extend the sphere of influence of Germany in Eastern Europe, and, of course, as the intellectuals of the legion were set aside by the militants of the movement, especially after the assassination of Zelea Codreanu and with the ascension of Horia Sima. As we have already shown, the motivation of the closeness of Eliade to the legionary movement is, according to all the available documents, not political, but a philosophical one. For Eliade, the legionary movement was rather a mystical sect<sup>31</sup>, a he declares himself, a movement called to (blindness of scholar obsessed with the religious evolution of mankind) to reinstall the primacy of the spiritual within a civilization became excessively materialistic. And, non the least, he was fascinated with the heroic idealism of young people who were ready to lose their life for this noble cause, missing for now, as he was to discover later that their idealism could be manipulated without scruples in the fight for power in Romania<sup>32</sup>.

rumors and the reiteration of information back and forth until its complete deformation, as in the aria "Calumny is a little breeze" of the Jesuit Don Basilio, which has destroyed thousands of lives within the poisonous atmosphere of the Cold War, which otherwise seems to return periodically. It is significant the fact that, after 1990, Eliade was, like Noica, accused in Romanian press of ...collaboration with Security.

<sup>28</sup> Even if this affirmation can be corrected through opinions, for instance, as that of Sorin Alexandrescu: "Eliade's closeness to legionarism had a different character than the adhesion of Nae Ionescu, although, even this one was never proven to be formal. Ionescu got to the side of the Iron Guard in the fall of 1933 for *political* reasons (...) The following four years, after the adjourning of the newspaper *Cuvântul*, Eliade did not follow his mentor, from a political point of view. He campaigned, especially in 1935 and 1936, simultaneously for the "spiritual revolution", realized by the intellectuals, and for the overcoming of the political, rejecting both communism and Nazism" (Sorin Alexandrescu, "Fenomenul legionar: cuvântul și faptele – sau despre un caz colectiv de miopie politică" (III), in 22, no. 37, 15-21 September 1998, p. 10).

<sup>29</sup> In this respect, suggestions are found also in Mircea Vulcănescu's book, *Nae Ionescu așa cum l-am cunoscut*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1992, pp. 100-101. Vulcănescu affirms even that "...some (legionaries – my emphasis, I.G.) from those who kept in touch with Nae Ionescu formed, later on, the moderate wing of the movement and some of them even its Dissidence" (*op. cit.*, p. 101).

<sup>30</sup> Mircea Eliade, "Creștinătatea față de iudaism", in *Vremea*, no. 349, 5 July 1934; Mircea Eliade, "Iudaism și anti-Semitism", in *Vremea*, no. 347, 22 July 1934.

<sup>31</sup> "...the legionary movement has structure and vocation of mystical sect, and not of political movement" (Mircea Eliade, *Memorii. Recoltele solstițiului* (1937-1960), p. 30).

<sup>32</sup> "All the more serious is the responsibility of these legionary heads who cancelled 'the saturation with torture and blood sacrifice' through the odious assassinations from November 30, 1940, when, next to many de mulți alții, au fost uciși N. Iorga and V. Madgearu» (*ibidem*).

On the other hand, this description of Eliade's position toward the legionary movement should consider that the theoretical reservations of the scholar toward the ideology of the movement are present even in the moments when his enthusiasm and naivety determine him to express a rather personal adhesion than an intellectual one.

Things aggravate after the war. Eliade sets his domicile in Paris, in September 1945, in difficult material conditions, intending to enter within the ranks of the French university professors. In Romania, Mircea Eliade's name is synonym with being a war criminal, given the bitter resolve of some old adversaries, such as the above mentioned Oscar Lemnaru (probably, rather an instrument of other's hate, whose names are not present for now). In *Dreptatea*, Oscar Lemnaru writes: "...Mircea Eliade, who not a long time ago asked for blood and death ...In journalism, it should not enter any of those who have the hands stained by the ink of hate and infamy. Let not them penetrate the noble world of printing, let not them write, let not them think aloud, that is, in public, these teachers of crime, these professors of atrocities, these schoolmasters of impieties"<sup>33</sup>. After a month, the accusations of Oscar Lemnaru return, with the same virulence: "[Mircea Eliade] represented in *Criterion* hooliganism, orienting the word toward obscurantism both by writing and by patois"<sup>34</sup>. Apparently on an objective tone, Pavel Apostol denounces the "bourgeois idealism" of Eliade in *Iluzia Evadării*: "The exaltation of the past results in detouring the attention from the historical reality, from the reality of the fierce struggle of the working class against exploitation"<sup>35</sup>. In the publication *Glasul patriei*, for the Romanians from Diaspora, Eliade is accused of being responsible for the assassination of Iorga and, in a different issue, of a 'dubious past, with criminal records at all the European police departments'<sup>36</sup>.

Eliade is followed by the same methods also in the West. Due to the negative references of the Romanian ambassador in Paris, is rejected a scholarship approved by C.N.R.S. for the mathematician S. Stoilow.<sup>37</sup> Vittorio Lanternari relates that the ambassador of Italy at Warsaw, Ambrogio Donini (the well-known historian of religions) "has received *direct information* from a Romanian diplomat (ambassador at Warsaw), as well as from French colleagues, about the anti-Semite and pro-Nazi past of Mircea Eliade". The effect, comments Mircea Handoca, did not delay to appear, "Ambrogio Donini – who wrote the chapter Mircea Eliade in *Enciclopedia Religiilor* – calls him an *anti-Semite and pro-Nazi writer*"<sup>38</sup>.

The Romanian scholar, despite these latent or manifest adversities, managed to publish numerous books and, starting with 1956, became professor of the History of Religions at the University of Chicago. In the country takes place, after 1964, a process of liberalization of the regime and, within this context, a

<sup>33</sup> Oscar Lemnaru, «Perna cu ace», in *Dreptatea*, no. 8, September 3, 1944, p. 2 (apud Mircea Handoca, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15).

<sup>34</sup> *Idem*, October 11, 1944 (apud Mircea Handoca, *op. cit.*, p. 15).

<sup>35</sup> Pavel Apostol, *Iluzia Evadării* [*The Illusion of Escape*], Scientific Publishing House [Editura Științifică], Bucharest, 1958 (apud *ibidem*).

<sup>36</sup> Apud Mircea Handoca, *Op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>37</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Memorii. Recoltele solstițiului*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1991, p. 92.

<sup>38</sup> Mircea Handoca, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

series of literary writings of Eliade are emerging and several articles regarding his work, especially the literary one, in spite of the opposition of a Gogu Rădulescu, a Miron Constantinescu, a Leonte Răutu or a Ștefan Voicu. In 1969, at Chicago appears the homage volume consecrated to Eliade by an important number of researchers of the field: *Myths and Symbols: Studies in Honor of Mircea Eliade*. This volume, which marks the definitive consecration of Eliade as one of the most important researchers of the history of religions, awakens the old animosities. In *Toladot*, a bulletin in Romanian language of the institute 'Dr. J. Niemirower' from Israel, in 1972, is published an unsigned commentary concerning Eliade, entitled '*Mircea Eliade File*'. The author of the article that later on was invoked as incontestable proof against Eliade, criticizing him among the authors who signed the homage volume for Gershom Scholem, the eminent scholar writing on the Jewish mystique, professor at the Jerusalem University, in the following terms: "The presence of the professor at our Hebrew university in the choir of those who bring eulogies to Mircea Eliade is embarrassing, to use a milder word. His colleague from Chicago was not worthy of a salute from Jerusalem. Mircea Eliade was part of the 'The Iron Guard', an extremist anti-Semite organization, whose activity of assassinations is inscribed into our history with the blood of thousands and tens of thousands of victims from the Jews in Romania"<sup>39</sup>. Among the proofs gathered to support these affirmations, the author invokes the *Journal* of Mihail Sebastian, which was published in fragments at the time in the two volumes of *Works* edited by the Publishing House for Literature and which was published integrally by Humanitas Publishing House in 1997<sup>40</sup>.

Regarding the content of the article in *Toladot*, there is a letters exchange between Eliade and Scholem, published by Mircea Handoca in his *Literary Journal* in May 1998. Scholem urges Eliade to explain himself in what concerns the accusations in *Toladot* in the following terms: "These pages contain personal attacks against me and yourself, against me because I am 'guilty' to have honored you through my contributions to *Festschrift*; against yourself – because the author accuses you to have been a leading figure of the anti-Semite organization 'The Iron Guard' from Romania and to have been expressed anti-Semite ideas during the period of their activity and that you continued during the period of Hitler, including during the years of World War II. The author – Dr. Lavi (Theodor Lowenstein) is a Jewish historian from Romania; he works at the Institute Jad Vashem which is a memorial of the dead in Holocaust (...) I am hoping that you will understand that I am preoccupied by these problems and I would like from your part to react to these accusations, to express your attitude at the time and if necessary the reasons why you have changed your views. For the long while I have known you, I had no reason to believe that you have been an anti-Semite, much less a leader of the anti-Semite movement. I consider you a sincere and righteous man, whom I am looking up to with great respect, and for this reason it seems only normal to ask you to tell me the truth. If there is

<sup>39</sup> «*Dosarul Mircea Eliade*», in *Toladot*, an I, 1972, pp. 21-27 (apud Mircea Handoca, *op. cit.*, p. 19).

<sup>40</sup> Mihail Sebastian, *Journal*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1997.

something to be said on this matter, then let it be said so that the atmosphere of the general accusations is clarified”<sup>41</sup>.

Eliade answered in a letter dated July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1972 with the following explanations: “(...) 1. Among the common friends that we had, Sebastian and myself, there were some were legionary. 2. The newspaper *Cuvântul* [*The Word*], where Sebastian was a redactor, until its prohibition by King Charles, in 1934, became a pro-legionary organ and, at its reappearance, in September 1941, it was considered even the organ of the ‘Iron Guard’. At the time I was in London and I did not send any article. 3. Finally, and especially, we were, Sebastian and myself, the students and the faithful admirers of professor Nae Ionescu, director of the newspaper *The Word* (...) Nae Ionescu was adored and libeled with equal fervor and even today, after 32 years since his death, his name occasions a storm of hatred or exaltation. In a similar manner to mine and many other friends, and students, Sebastian did not distance himself from N.I. when it became the ideologue of the Iron Guard. This faithfulness has brought him many troubles, especially after he has published his novel *De două mii de ani* [*For two thousand years*] with a preface by Nae Ionescu. (...) I was among the rare authors which, in two ample articles published in the journal *Vremea* [*The Time*], not only that I have defended Sebastian, but I also have criticized this preface, showing that the arguments brought by Nae Ionescu could not be justified theologically, as he thought. At my turn, I have been attacked in a fierce manner by the rightwing press”<sup>42</sup>.

After a while, when the accusations seemed to decrease in intensity, “Mircea Eliade File” regains actuality in the ‘80s. Then, Eliade’s writings, inclusively the scientific ones, are without any problems accepted within the country, some beginning to be translated in Romanian. Eliade died in 1986 and his death triggers a wave of enormous emotion. The integral republication of his works is demanded and, within this context, proof that in Romania was the source of the periodic agitation around the name of Eliade, resurfaces also the accusations in the “file”. Adriana Berger, the private secretary of Eliade (in 1984) and the author of a PhD thesis on his prose – *The Time and Space in the Fictional Works of Mircea Eliade* – publishes in the journal *Minimum* from Israel an article undertaking the accusations of fascism and anti-Semite orientation already known. Article retakes the theses of a communication given at the congress organized in America in memoriam for the Romanian scholar. A Scottish researcher, Bryan S. Rennie studied the documents invoked by Adriana Berger, arriving at the conclusion that her accusations are based on forgeries<sup>43</sup>. In August 1991, in the journal *The New Republic* is published an article of Norman Manea translated in journal 22 with the title “The Fortunate Guilt– Mircea Eliade, Fascism and the unfortunate fate of Romania”<sup>44</sup>. The author argues here

<sup>41</sup> Apud Mircea Handoca, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Mircea Handoca, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>44</sup> Norman Manea, *Culpa fericită – Mircea Eliade, fascismul and soarta nefericită a României*, in 22, no. 6, 7 and 8, February – March 1992. The title of the article is an allusion to a note (29 August 1985) from *Journal of Mircea Eliade*: “...without that *felix culpa* I have been still in the country. At best, I would have died of consumption in a prison”.

that "Eliade (...) does not hesitate to identify himself with that generation and even with its political destiny", even though one can quote many writings where Eliade delimits himself, at least after the war, from the Iron Guard and the sinister assassinations made by its members<sup>45</sup>.

In 1991, Leon Volovici publishes at Pergamon Press a book, translated in 1995 by Humanitas Publishing House, in a version revised by the author with the title *Ideologia naționalistă și "Problema Evreiască" în România anilor '30* [*The Nationalist Ideology and the Jewish Question in Romania in the '30s*]. Concerning Eliade, Volovici shows himself objectively enough in his appreciations, quoting several texts that nuance the anti-Semite accusations brought to the scholar: "differing from other intellectuals joining the Guard, Eliade places the accent on other values promoted by the movement such as the Christian spirit, spiritualism, messianic orientation, moral regeneration, the new man – offering the understanding that the anti-Semite characteristic of the Guard is not a central element. In none of his articles exalting the legionary spirit, Eliade does not refer to the obsessive 'question' for the Legion. The only mention (unequivocal, though) of adhesion to its anti-Semite program appears in the mentioned declaration from the publication *Buna Vestire* [*The Annunciation*] ("Why Do I Believe in the Victory of the Legionary Movement")..."<sup>46</sup>, confesses Leon Volovici. Relating to the declaration published by the legionary official publication *The Annunciation*, we must mention, though, that Eliade denied the authorship of the declaration. It seems that it was fabricated in the redaction for a festive issue, and Eliade, a friend of the director of the respective publication, avoided protesting, because he did not want to trigger a public scandal<sup>47</sup>.

Evidently, Volovici maintains his idea that Eliade is an anti-Semite, even if he was merely an anti-Semite by conjuncture: "The position of Mircea Eliade in 'the Jewish question' was placed for a rather long time, under the sign of ambiguity, given the contradictory formulations, which seem motivated by the preoccupation to avoid the used patterns and the clichés, but also by the reluctance to adopt a clear attitude. The anti-Semite orientation, *as much as it was* (my underlining – I.G.), is gradually unveiled, with frequent receding and surprising leaps, without a theoretic approach at length, but one indicating the presence of a doctrine,

<sup>45</sup> The intransigent position of Norman Manea provoked certain reserves among the colleagues in Romania. How relates Norman Manea in the essay entitled *Lectura infidelă* (22, no. 23, 9-15 June 1998, p. 9) in the editorial *Ce înseamnă să fii rasist*, published in *România literară* no. 19, 20 May 1998 is criticized by Nicolae Manolescu due to the "lack of nuances", "the globalization of the accusations", and "the displacement of the accent to an imaginary anti-Semite orientation". Nicolae Manolescu recalls, in the mentioned article, also the attitude of Manea, which could be qualified as a "chauvinism of sufferance" toward the declarations of fraternization with the sufferance of some Jews: "In the spring of 1997, the director of Humanitas Publishing House, which issued the *Journal of Sebastian*, presented, at the Jewish Community in Bucharest, a movingly speech entitled "*Sebastian, mon frère*". A declaration of sympathy toward the Jewish sufferance motivated by the speaker through what he suffered himself under the communist and afterwards". "An analogy – comments Norman Manea – which left no room for a real condemnation of anti-Semite and of Holocaust or a honest analysis of the "fortunate guilt" of some intellectuals such as Eliade, Cioran, Nae Ionescu, Noica" (*Ibidem*).

<sup>46</sup> Leon Volovici, *Ideologia naționalistă și "Problema Evreiască" în România anilor '30*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1995.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Mac Linscott Ricketts, *Mircea Eliade: The Romanian Roots, 1907-1945*, Columbia University Press, East European Monographs, Boulder & Co., New York, 1988.



which was never coherently exposed”<sup>48</sup>. In this passage, Volovici seems to believe that Eliade has an anti-Semite doctrine, but he avoids (why is that?) to transpose it into his articles; pretty unlikely, one may say, especially for a militant who is fully engaged in the legionary movement. A few pages farther, Leon Volovici corrects the idea of an Eliadian anti-Semite doctrine: “similarly to Robert Brasillach, in France, Mircea Eliade does not look for anti-Semite ‘metaphysics’. The fascist sort of mystic, at both authors, does not provoke also an anti-Judaic mystic, but it is merely accompanied by an anti-Semite orientation, *de raison*»<sup>49</sup>.

We notice that the majority of these extremely critical commentaries addressed to Eliade refer, especially, and as we have seen, rather to the person of the scholar than to his work. However, much inventiveness is necessary, in order to discover in Eliade’s scientific writings (or in the literary writings, for that matter) proofs for his anti-Semite orientation or for his pro-Nazism. For this reason, the anti-Semite orientation and pro-Nazism are considered by these researchers rather associated with Eliade’s political orientations during the 30s (and the aim is to prove that, since they were not denied, they are present also later on) than with his philosophical orientations. With one more recent exception, which is the study consecrated to Eliade by Daniel Dubuisson in the volume *Mythologies of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Dumézil, Lévi-Strauss, Eliade).

Dubuisson treats the entire work of Eliade, as historian of religions, in only one key, as an expression of the congenital anti-Semite and Nazi orientations of the Romanian scholar. The titles of the chapters consecrated to Eliade are significant: “3. 1. Fascism and mysticism; 3. 2. The primitive ontology of Mircea Eliade<sup>50</sup>; 3. 3. The eternal return of the anti-Semite perspective; 3.4. The neo-paganism of the *homo religiosus*; 3.5. Metaphysics and politics: Eliade and Heidegger”<sup>51</sup>.

Dubuisson begins his study about Eliade declaring himself in disagreement with an idea expressed by Norman Manea (as we have seen, one of the most irreducible critics of the political orientations presupposed pro-fascist of the scholar), namely that one cannot establish a connection between the right wing political articles, on the one hand, and his erudite writings: “to establish a connection between these researches and his ‘fascist’ period, to cast a look of inquisitor over the ‘suspicious’ details present in his numerous erudite studies, would mean to provide the perfect example of a totalitarian method”<sup>52</sup>, writes Norman Manea.

Daniel Dubuisson seems to assume the risk of a totalitarian method, if at stake is the destruction of that ‘very advantageous form of impunity and good will’<sup>53</sup> of which Eliade benefits, on his view. “Under these circumstances and in

<sup>48</sup> Leon Volovici, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

<sup>49</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 142.

<sup>50</sup> In *Society and Culture*, no. 3 and 4, 1993 is a summary of the writing of Dubuisson who is mentioned in a footnote. The title is (a translation mistake or attempt to manipulate the original text?) “Ontologia antisemită a lui Mircea Eliade” [The Anti-Semite Ontology of Mircea Eliade].

<sup>51</sup> Daniel Dubuisson, *Mythologies du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Dumézil, Lévi-Strauss, Eliade), Presses Universitaires de Lille, Lille, 1993.

<sup>52</sup> Norman Manea, “Mircea Eliade et la garde de fer”, in *Les temps modernes*, no. 549, 1992, pp. 89-115, apud Daniel Dubuisson, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibidem*.



the interest of Eliade's work, any study that attempts to understand it has, before anything else, to consider this question: are the ideas exposed in this work transposing the mystical, anti-Semite and anti-modernist ones defended by the extremist militant before the war, or are distinguished from them, rejecting without ambiguity their dishonoring conclusions?<sup>54</sup> Armed with such a reading pattern, Dubuisson is browsing through the entire Eliadian work, arriving at not so fortunate conclusions for the Romanian scholar. Briefly, Eliade's scientific work is categorized as ambiguous<sup>55</sup>, narcissistic<sup>56</sup> and always oriented toward the dark, irrational, instinctive or prophetic<sup>57</sup> aspect, since his work "adopts a mystic attitude or substitutes unceasingly his own convictions for the necessary conditions for a serious demonstration"<sup>58</sup>. Among the method deficiencies of Eliade's writings, Dubuisson also lists: arbitrary and simplifying options, a total indifference to the historical and ethnographic (sic!) contexts, numerous abusive generalizations and contestable interpretations<sup>59</sup>. The very fact that Eliade practices a hermeneutic approach is, after Dubuisson, condemnable: "The choice of the word 'hermeneutic' to resume the activity of the historian of religions is in this sense revealing. If Eliade did not choose 'exegesis', 'interpretation', 'analysis', 'commentary' or any other word that sends to an approach which is at the same time intellectual and erudite, is because he did not want to found his approach on a defense and illustration of the reason and critical thought"<sup>60</sup>. This latter objection says a lot about the type of reading employed by Dubuisson and which strikingly reminds us of the commentaries of Pavel Apostol (with the difference that they are situated in the 50s). Following these critical exercises, Dubuisson caricaturizes Eliade's lexis and understands to offer his readers the following exercise: "We leave to the reader, after we have offered the basic lexis, the pleasure to imagine for her the most amusing pastiches. But, the reader can be certain, they are easy to be composed, for any substantive can be associated to any epithet"<sup>61</sup>.

Passing over to the presentation of the 'primitive ontology of Mircea Eliade,' Dubuisson starts with a warning to the reader that 'from Eliade one should never expect a minute treatment of the sources or a detailed presentation of the notions'<sup>62</sup> and that "the interest presented by the Eliadian thought does not come thus from the daring theories, from its intrinsic richness or from the doctrinal depth. It rather reside in its exemplary character, because we find here condensed all the defects and all the abuses characteristic for the mystic approaches claiming scientific value"<sup>63</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 222.

<sup>55</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 223.

<sup>56</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 224.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>58</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 226.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>60</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 231.

<sup>61</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 234.

<sup>62</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 237.

<sup>63</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 238.

“The Moldavian soul”<sup>64</sup> (!?) of Eliade being impressed by this irrational aspect of the world, Eliade’s ontology is mixed with a sort of neo-paganism, according to Dubuisson, which refuses the ontological foundations of Judeo-Christianity in favor of a cosmic sacredness of a primitive type, specific to an archaic *homo religiosus*, obsessed with the ‘ontic’<sup>65</sup> element. ‘Amusing’ is, writes Dubuisson, “to ask ourselves if the Eliadian sacred corresponds rather to Parmenide’s being, with the absolute of Vedanta, with the One of the Neo-Platonists or, more prosaically, with the God (which one) from *Timaeus*, with Krishna or with the Christian God”<sup>66</sup>. If we draw the last consequences from the Eliadian position concerning the sacred, we may affirm, Dubuisson underlines that, as Eliade says, in *Le sacré et le profane*, “Christianity is not a religion”<sup>67</sup>. Eliade could be, Dubuisson reiterates, the exponent of a Platonian ontology, but ‘only summary and not quite Orthodox, but also deformed by all the superstitions that have laden neo-Platonism at the end of Antiquity and ulterior, Christianity, along its entire history’<sup>68</sup>.

In what concerns the method, Dubuisson describes the phenomenology of religion as a “re-Platonization” of certain themes of Husserl’s phenomenology, the ontological realism being contrary to the spirit of Husserl.

In the chapter “The Eternal Return of Anti-Semitism” Eliade’s ideas concerning the *terror of history* are amply discussed and qualified as a “metaphysical novel”<sup>69</sup>. The interpretation of the Eliadian views is seriously distorted by Dubuisson, in order to result that Eliade: 1. blames Judaic religion because “it invented history” (!?); 2. accuses the “Judaisation”<sup>70</sup> of cosmic Christianity, etc. Eliade’s conclusion (invented in its entirety by Dubuisson, though) would be that “inventing history, the Jews and then, their followers, the Christians, not only they have introduced an ideology into the world, rather a heresy, which has led people to forgetting the only true valuable sacredness, that manifest in the wonders of Nature and Life, but through these the being of Being was impaired”<sup>71</sup> (sic !).

<sup>64</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 243.

<sup>65</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 244.

<sup>66</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 245.

<sup>67</sup> This pseudo-quote from Eliade illustrates the manner in which Dubuisson operates with the texts which he criticizes. In *Le Sacré et le Profane*, Eliade enumerates three possibilities to approach theoretical the relation between the sacred and the profane: either by postulating a new type of religion, where the profane can become sacred itself, or admitting that “religiousness constitutes an ultimate structure (or fundamental – our note I.G.) of the conscience”, which means that the historical religions may disappear, but religiousness will never vanish, starting from the idea that Christian idea “is not a ‘religion’ and, as a consequence, Christianity thus not need this type of dichotomy of the real”; that, in fact, the Christian does not live in a Cosmos, but in ‘history’ (Mircea Eliade, *Le Sacré et le Profane*, Gallimard, coll. Idées, 1969, pp. 10-11). Dubuisson takes from this paragraph only what serves his thesis, the fact that the idea of religion at Eliade is of neo-pagan type (closed to the ideas of Nietzsche – seen by Dubuisson as an inspiring factor for the Nazi *Weltanschauung*).

<sup>68</sup> Daniel Dubuisson, *op. cit.*, pp. 255-256.

<sup>69</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 270.

<sup>70</sup> This is a play in words that we could qualify as ignoble. The incriminated text of Eliade sounds as following: “The ‘Judaic’ character of the primitive Christianity is equivalent with its ‘historicization’, with the decision of the first theologies to link the history of the Jesus’ sermon and of the emerging Christian Church to the Holy History of the Israel people... The Fathers of the Church have followed the same route: they have ‘Christened’ – we should understand ‘historicized’ – the Asian and Mediterranean symbols, rites myths, relating them to a ‘holy history’” (Mircea Eliade, *Aspects du Mythe*, Editions Gallimard, 1963, p. 209).

<sup>71</sup> Daniel Dubuisson, *op. cit.*, pp. 272-273.

This interpretation which seems to be entirely under the sign of what Ricoeur called "the epoch of suspicion", culminates with the following conclusions: a. "the Jews and the Judaic Christianity bear the responsibility of the creation of the modern world as materialist, de-sacralized universe, subjected to science and technology (...); b. the same, that is, the Jews and their Christian successors, are thus responsively of the anguish, the alienation feeling felt by the modern man (...); c. the third conclusion established by Eliade from his meditation on history is based on an intolerable and inadmissible sophism. The Jews, he says, are the inventors of history and through it, of our modernity, rationale and unsacred, or *shoah* (the Holocaust) is a historical event, modern, rational, scientifically organized and lead; the same Jews are, undoubtedly co-responsible of their own exterminations from the Nazi camps"<sup>72</sup>.

Such a reading among the lines is, in its own way, a masterpiece. If we could simile in front of these conceptual acrobatic approaches, we should remember the passages from the *Provincial Letters* of Pascal, where he ironically undertakes the art of probable opinions and the art of soundly directing the intention: «Reprenons donc ceux que vous m'avez dits, de peur de méprise; car l'équivoque serait ici dangereuse. Il ne faut tuer que bien à propos, et sur bonne opinion probable»<sup>73</sup> ["Let us undertake here what you have told me because I'll like to avoid the misunderstanding: because the equivocal will be here dangerous. We should not kill someone but for a just cause and based on a probably right opinion"].

This is not, of course, to conceal certain aspects of Mircea Eliade's activity, in the above pages, for they would not be convenient for the image of the scholar. Obviously, as results from the arguments above, there was a closeness – that was maybe manifest in a former adhesion, but this is not important, unless for a Stalinist type of file – of Eliade to the legionary movement. But this closeness was not motivated politically or by a visceral anti-Semitism of the scholar (on the contrary, there are numerous proofs that this allegedly "anti-Semitism" is an invention motivated by other interests). A role played also the naivety of Eliade, his search for a perspective of renewal for the Western civilization and especially for the Romanian civilization. Later on, when some attempted to fabricate a file for crime against humanity, Eliade avoided to fully explaining himself giving the impression that he conceal some aspects of his activity which did more harm than good.

One thing should be emphasized, according to Monica Lovinescu: "here are no books of totalitarian tonality in Eliade's works. Aside the case when insisting on the need for the sacred of any human society and to unveil 'the camouflage adopted by the sacred in the unsacred world' would be the inherent signs of ... fascism"<sup>74</sup>. Why doesn't Eliade recognize entirely his relation with Legionarism?,

<sup>72</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 274-275.

<sup>73</sup> Blaise Pascal, *Les Provinciales ou les lettres écrites par Louis de Montalte à un provincial de ses amis et aux RR. PPP. Jésuites*, Editions Baudelaire, Paris, 1966, *Septième lettre*, p. 112.

<sup>74</sup> Monica Lovinescu, "Câteva confuzii", in 22, no. 10, 13-19 March, 1992, p. 13.

we could ask. We can answer invoking a knowledgeable opinion in what concerns fabricating files, that of Monica Lovinescu: "In the West, confessing that you were a communist or even a Stalinist does not bring about any prejudice, on the contrary, the fact is quite well received; for exchange, the fact that one adhered to one form or another of fascism as transitory as it may be, represents an inerasable stain able to stop any intellectual career"<sup>75</sup>. Or, how Lucian Sfez wrote more recently: "The centre extreme condemns everything that it is not familiar to it, in the name of purification. It should better deal with the current forms of totalitarianism"<sup>76</sup>. To have been kept silent was for Eliade (especially during the '50s) a form of intellectual survival and maybe survival *per se*. Now, we have the right to judge things in a more nuanced manner, without denying the facts, but also without interpreting them tendentiously and approximately.

But we can express reserves, of course, toward the method of the '*file*' applied to Eliade, as well as to other important authors (such as Heidegger, Cioran<sup>77</sup> and others), a modern form of a Manichaeism which has no place within the world of culture, the eternal empire of the nuances.

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>76</sup> *Apud* Philippe Cusin, "A doua moarte a lui Cioran", translation and adaptation by Iulian Anghel after *Le Figaro Littéraire*, 24 April 1997, in 22, no. 25, 24-30 June 1997, p. 11.

<sup>77</sup> Also in what concerns Cioran the method of "periodic disclosures". A recent example is that of the polemics awoken in France by the publication of the biography of Patrice Bollon, *Cioran l'hérétique*. Signaling the issuance of this biography in *Le Point* at April 5, 1998, Jean-Paul Enthoven found the occasion to recall the "fascist past" of the author of *The Trouble with Being Born* in a note entitled "The second death of Cioran". Immediately, in a different note, Bernard-Henri Lévy undertakes the suggestion, reminding the embarrassment of Cioran with the occasion of an interview where the interlocutor (that is, B.-H.L.) evoked the same cloudy past of the writer. To these, Edgar Morin answered in an article from *Le Figaro littéraire* that "one cannot imprison someone within his own past, hemming him in his youth when he has evolved" (*apud* Philippe Cusin, *op. cit.*, in 22, no. 25, 24-30 June 1997, p. 10). Let us recall here a note from the "Book-notes" of Cioran: "I am thinking to my 'mistakes' of the past and I cannot regret them. It would mean to trample on my youth, which I would not do at any cost. My past exaltations emanated from my vitality, from my taste for scandal and challenging, from a will to be effective in spite of my nihilism at the time. – The best thing that we can do is to accept our past; or to forget about it, to consider it dead, dead as a doornail" (Cioran, *Cahiers 1957-1972*, Editions Gallimard, 1997, p. 208).

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