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**SUMMARY OF THE THESIS**

***The role of the Romanian Diaspora from France in Upholding the European Message of Romania***

***after 1945***

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The Romanian Diaspora has a major importance in the current historiography research, given the fact that the preoccupation for this constantly active group of Romanians has had recent evolutions with an incontestable impact. Thus, from the point of view of historical investigations, it becomes very interesting to redefine the cores of the veritable phenomenon which was the creation of an identity of the Romanian Diaspora, in order to assess the evolution of this group, the relations within this community and with its adoptive countries, as well as the existence of a vision shared by the exile.

The research accomplished on the subject of the Romanian Diaspora from France and its contribution to the European message for Romania has proven to be very complex, given the fact that its ramifications were not entirely clear at the beginning of this endeavour. What is satisfactory is that the premises taken into consideration at the beginning of our thesis have become validated, which provided our analytical and descriptive approach with more coherence.

The existence of such coherence and the extent to which we have managed to paint a complex picture of the contribution of the Romanian elites in exile to the opposition directed against the communist regime and to a democratic future for their country of origin was constantly reliant on the placement of these intellectuals within an appropriate context. Although the thesis is chiefly focused on the period after World War II, the nature of the subject does not allow a strict chronological limitation from this point of view. This is the reason why the introductive chapter plays an essential role in the comprehension of the subject, due to evocation of the principal moments which marked one of the most difficult periods in the history of the European continent. Set against the background of the atrocities of World War II, with more bloodshed than in the *Great War* and characterized by an unprecedented rise of extremist powers, the division of Europe was the event which did not cease to influence all the arguments found in our analysis on the central topic. To identify the real meaning of the implications emerging from the installation of the *Iron Curtain* has proven to be essential for understanding the atmosphere of the times taken into consideration, as well as the feelings of the actors whose points of view were of paramount importance at the time.

As far as Romania is concerned, its tumultuous situation during World War II had a major influence on the evolution of the country on the stage of international relations, which remains obvious to date. Although Romania was no stranger to violence in politics and totalitarian temptations, which had been encountered in this country before on some occasions, the prominence gained by these scourges around the year 1945 began an odious tradition, which manifested itself in all aspects of life. The rise of communism, following the guidelines from Moscow for the group of countries caught under Soviet influence, represented an unimaginable shock for the Romanian society, where intellectuals were a very affected segment.

Knowing the aforementioned facts, it is not surprising that our thesis often refers to the Interwar Period, for multiple reasons: to follow the continuity and discontinuity in the attitude of intellectuals towards political life, to observe the course of the exile and its evolution, to compare the monarchy to the new organization of state, to assess the metamorphosis of the message of the intelligentsia etc. Without these aspects in mind, the explanations concerning the activity of the Romanian Diaspora after 1945 would be deprived of such a necessary comparative basis, and they would not foster the observation of a rich tradition of the target-group situated at the core of this research. Furthermore, our approach encourages the acceptation of thesis of the *two Europes*, placed very often in a state of contradiction, which manifested a series of different social, economic and, most importantly, intellectual ways. Romania did not remain in an aggressive isolation towards western powers, all the more because its reactions amid the turning points within the communist bloc were often to the liking of western leaders. Nevertheless, the degree of its participation in institutional construction on a European and global scale was very poor, especially in the latter case. Having very solid bases for partaking in unification approaches in Europe, with federalist voices, much-embraced western traditions and an active contribution to the European cultural patrimony, Romania felt this strong passage to a totalitarian system as a very violent shock, mainly at the level of intellectuals. The impossibility to take a seat at the table of rulers who decided the common future for a democratic Europe led to failure in many regards, such as the refusal of the Marshall Plan, the Comecon and the Warsaw Pact, to mention just some of the darkest stains on modern Romanian history.

The context being generally known, the analysis of our thesis now focuses on its main actors, the Romanian elites that were part of a numerous, complex and heterogeneous French Diaspora, and with immense creative potential. It was very important to make a clear distinction between the meanings of the term *elites* in the two antagonistic contexts which manifested themselves after 1945, on the two sides of the Iron Curtain. As far as the Diaspora is concerned, all representatives who were included into this category were in keeping with the traditional profile of quality intellectuals, an identical profile to that which benefited from western recognition, while the *new* type of *elites*, corresponding to the interests of communist propaganda, were rejected. The reason for this approach is simple: the capacity of conceiving a modernising message for a Romania enslaved by a totalitarian regime depended on the freedom of thought, the only value that was able to generate a critical direction.

The conflict between the two Europes was also reflected by the dissensions between the two categories of Romanian elites – on the one hand, the pseudo-intellectuals who embraced the plan of communist propaganda and, on the other hand, the very loquacious and credible segment of the Diaspora from France, without a doubt the most active segment of the Romanian exile, in all regards. This does not mean that Romania was abandoned by all its prominent intellectuals, but, as we have demonstrated, the voices opposing the oppressive regime were rare and took major risks when expressing freely. By contrast, France proved once again to be a favourable place for the development of true Romanian culture, as it had been during the previous decades. However, this time it was not about upholding the research of Romanian students, or the diplomatic approaches of politicians of this country, but about preserving the essence of the Romanian intellectual spirit, profoundly attached to the Francophone world, which was looking for welcoming and comprehensive asylum.

The creation of a French core of the Romanian Diaspora did not occur at the same time as the arrival of the communist rule in Bucharest, since the Romanian intellectual presence there had undeniably been a reality before this event. Nevertheless, the nature of this core changed dramatically, in order to tackle the challenges which arose in Romania and to adjust to the continuous abuses from the communists who ruled the country. Compared to other exile centres created in France, the Romanian one had its particularities, due to the undeniable tradition which linked not only the Romanian state to France, but also the two cultures. This is why the attempt at answering the question *Why France?*, as a destination choice for an important number of Eastern intellectuals, was fructuous and increased the fluidity of our argumentation. Thus, the attachment towards the French space of the personalities on whom this research is centred represents a continuation of the tendency of the Romanian intelligentsia to synchronise with the important moments of European history, albeit this time from a France perspective. In this case, the analysis of the speeches which we have identified as insightful for the validation of this premise has shown notable attachment of artists, writers, politicians etc., to the values found at the core of the French Republic.

The same feeling is noticeable from the point of view of using French language, which was an extremely prolific means of communication for the Romanian Diaspora. Without manifesting any real impediments in learning this language, due to tradition in this regard, these intellectuals managed to propagate their message on a very large scale. The French language was however more than a means which these people used to make themselves heard; it was also a very prolific instrument which fostered an abundant literary creation of several representatives of the Romanian exile, comprising a series of works which enunciated a veritable European, anticommunist and reformist message for Romania.

A classification of the Diaspora’s voices has proven to be resourceful, but also sinuous, because of the complexity of many important representatives of this group of generous dimensions. Nevertheless, the application of certain well-established criteria has made it possible to separate the intellectuals envisaged by this research based on their qualifications, preoccupations, political affiliation, or exile period, whichever the case may be. Although all the criteria were entered into the equation at a certain time, the most logical separation was the one which took into account the aspect of professional interest, or the activity of the personalities presented. Undoubtedly, it was also important to observe the chronological evolution of the Diaspora’s core during the 20th century,where the most prominent period of time was the one after 1945, which constitutes, in fact, the core of our research. Returning to the professional criteria, it gave surprising results, which contributed to the originality of our study – this may refer, for example, to the group of Surrealists, who are less known in Romania, but whose francophone activity was fascinating. These initiators of a veritable artistic trend also represent the clear proof of a remarkable tendency encountered in many Romanian intellectuals within the French exile, which is to master the capacity of interacting with their French counterparts, and also to collaborate with them, so as to reach common results. This approach was more widespread in the case of artists, but it was also expressed by anticommunist politicians, an aspect that we have already indicated. Consequently, the openness of the Romanian Diaspora to the French space, but also to other representatives of foreign exiles and to Romanian refugees from other countries than France, was another essential preoccupation for our target group.

One of guidelines of this research has been the identification of the most pertinent biographies which have given a complex vision of the situation of the Romanian Diaspora from France, during quite a generous period of time. Again, the existence of a tradition in this regard is a valuable explanation for justifying the option for exile of the identified intellectuals, but one must take into account the different circumstances which surrounded these choices. Thus, the attachment of Romanian intellectuals to the French heritage had been chiefly expressed since the beginning of the 20th century, when the contribution to the modernization of the Romanian countries came from the part of an entire generation of intellectuals who had been formed in France began to be noticed. The continuation of the same tendency attained a zenith during the Interwar Period, when the liaisons between the two cultures were more obvious than ever before, thus the Europeanization of Romania at that time was accomplished mainly by means of the French model. The latter was assumed, worked and adapted to the different realities of the Romanian Kingdom, by an inspired, open-minded generation, which saw its intellectual potential caught between the claws of an atrocious World War II, and then, of an unexpected new enemy.

This continuity regarding the contacts of the Romanian intelligentsia with the French space lay at the basis of a solid and viable attachment to a culture of European dimensions, which became the first source of modernization of a Romania placed at a dangerous historical crossroads. Moreover, the consequences of the war initiated an appalling era for the intellectual condition in Romania, during which the communists tried to redefine the nature of freedom, the artistic creation and the cultural model of a nation. Thus, the contrast between the adoptive cultures for many Romanians, the one of France, and the new configuration of the political, social and cultural life defined by the driving force in Romania after 1945, was very sharp and a comparison between the two has proven to be essential for the comprehension of the theme of our research. The Fourth Republic marked a recovery of France after the horrors of the war and a veritable definition of human rights in a spirit indicative of French culture, while the totalitarian regime of Bucharest had a totally opposed view. The argumentative thread has demonstrated that no area of the Romanian people’s life was spared of the political control of communists, provoking many individual dramas, as well as a collective one for Romanian intellectuals, and for the entire society. The choice of presenting in parallel the representative aspects of the context after World War II, which characterized Romania and France, has been particularly useful for our research, because in this way, the imperative necessity to opt for exile has become more than obvious in our description of personalities who were representative of the Diaspora.

Taken into account the real dangers that the intellectuals confronted and which threatened their own existence, the option of exile within a culture which had proven its capacity to accept outstanding representatives of countries from Eastern Europe was entirely justified. However, the cruelty and the influence of the communist regime were underestimated by the Diaspora from France, as violent acts were orchestrated there as well, with the help of the secret services of a totalitarian block which had the impression of being almighty before its enemies. For a regime which constructed its authority on the suspicion of others and the conviction that nobody was immune to oppression, the dissidence remained dangerous, even outside the borders, and the abuses went beyond the boundaries of the enclosed frontiers of Romania. This is one more reason for dedicating much space to the analyses of the ancient Security archives of the Romanian state, which have proven to be very resourceful for the comprehension of the seriousness of the communists’ attempts at hunting down the members of the French Diaspora, by also of the need to manipulate them.

Even under such unfavourable auspices, the Romanian exile concentrated in the French capital during the communist period, was capable of synchronising itself with important moments of history during the Cold War. The way in which these intellectuals supported the important democratic events of that period, in a spirit of alliance with the free Europe, proved an impressive capacity of solidarity against a plague which did not hesitate to demonstrate its power. In 1956, 1968 and 1977 – to mention only a few critical moments for the European continent at the time, the prominent voices of the Romanian Diaspora from France reacted with promptitude, reinforcing through their moral authority a western attitude that was strongly opposed to Soviet oppression.

It has to be mentioned that it was such a difficult context, one marked by unpredictability, which gave the most famous names emerging from this active and numerous Diaspora, such as Emil Cioran, Eugen Ionescu and Constantin Brâncuşi, who left an unforgettable imprint on European culture. Moreover, the imaginative activity of Romanian artists and writers in exile did not stop, but, many times, it had a surprising intensity, under the impulse of the French language as a means of propagation. In this case, it is significant that the attachment towards the themes related to Romanian realities was not abandoned, thus the creative activity of the Diaspora can be regarded as a viable continuity of art and free literature of the Romanian people. In our view, this cultural activity was a dignified part of the collection of ideas, manifestations and attitudes which we have regrouped under the name of the *European message* for Romania.

Situated at the core of our research, the existence of this message is undeniable, but its complexity has made it very difficult to define. What remains certain is the fact that every representative of the Romanian exile from France played a role in the configuration of this message, according to their preoccupations, qualifications and involvement in forums of debates. Following a tradition that was expressed in a particularly visible way during the Interwar Period, the European message for Romania included a strong modernising dimension, involving the attachment of Romanians to the course of Western realities. In fact, taken into account that half of Europe was under the watchful eye of communists, pretty much led by Moscow, such a message could not ignore the anticommunist element. Hence, in our opinion, because of the gravity of the intellectual condition in Romania, this anticommunist dimension of the message expressed by the Diaspora from France, caught a dominant segment of the speeches directed towards the future of the Romanian state. The attitudes of the exile towards the oppression conducted by the extreme left were expressed by numerous means, from areas which included arts, literary creation, public speeches, radio broadcasts, political attitudes etc. Of course, we have to take into account the idea that the beginning of the exile period was different in the case of these Romanian intellectuals. Other differences were noticeable in the case of political views, persecutions suffered, or different backgrounds of such personalities.

The coherence of the European message was given by its guidelines, which drew the contours of a strong core, supported by the large majority of first line representatives of the French Diaspora: the democratization of Romania, political pluralism, the respect for human rights and the defence of authentic culture. To this it was added something which results from many remarkable attitudes, namely the need to free Romania from that state of isolation directed against the West, in order for this country to take part in the endeavours of institutional and community construction and to play a role in this innovative process. If in the definition of the European message for Romania, we have identified anticommunism as being essential, it results that the weight of the Diaspora after the Revolution of 1989 became somewhat less significant, but the part of its message concerning European construction played major contribution after that essential moment.

Through the continuity of historical parties, partisans of democracy, which was possible due to the activity of the Diaspora from France, Great Britain and the United States, a segment of the Romanian political tradition was preserved in this regard. Thus, the return of political groups after the Revolution, although strongly disrupted by the rise of the elements of the old regime, was also due to the activity of the former Diaspora, which became clear thanks to the analysis of speeches by Radu Câmpeanu and Alexandru Herlea, to cite only two representative names.

Although political or other differences among the representatives of the Romanian exile from France and their past affiliations had often turned to extremes, solidarity remained a constant feature in the activity of this group, while conflicts did not affect the creation of a message for the future of Romania. The same spirit of collaboration was present in the relations with other centres of the Romanian exile, which resulted from joint actions performed at the time, or whenever the interest of the Diaspora hung in the balance. However, the physical distance, the conflicts in the United States pertaining to the organization of a potential government in exile and the attitude of a certain ambivalent manner of the monarchy at many decisive moments were some of the factors which hindered the coherence of a common message from the part of the Diaspora. It is to be noticed that similar problems and, often, more serious ones, marked the activity of other poles of the exile of nations oppressed by communism, which make the situation of Romanians more comprehensible.

Given the fact that the message of the Diaspora from France was viable and had notable consistence due to the intellectual value of its creators, its propagation has been the essential factor of our research. Here, the abundance of means used to render known the ideas which formed the message was the key for the comprehension of prominence gained over the years by the Diaspora and, especially, by its legitimacy at a European level and within the borders of Romania. The capacity of creating institutions and associations which we have regrouped under the name *forums of debate* was a characteristic of the Romanian exile concentrated in Paris, which allowed it to enhance the quality of its message and its visibility. The preservation of an authentic Romanian cultural heritage was a constant preoccupation within these associations, which reinforced the feeling of solidarity among the intellectuals in exile.

Nevertheless, it was the radio which contributed in a decisive way to the perpetuation of European message for Romania, around the prominent core Lovinescu-Ierunca. Despite the efforts made by communists to expand censorship, nothing could impede the access of this invisible *enemy* into the houses and the collective conscience of Romanians, even within the country. The unmatched determination of the personalities which embraced the microphone of Radio Free Europe amplified an anticommunist feeling that was becoming general within the totalitarian bloc and which had an important contribution to the beginning of the revolutionary wave from 1989.

The arrival of political pluralism did not put an end to the critics from the part of former representatives of the exile, as we have demonstrated, given the fact that Romania’s transition to democracy was a difficult process. However, the essence of the message expressed during half a century by the Diaspora from France was diluted after 1989, amid the relative absence of an anticommunist dimension, which had been its driving force. Thus, the continuity on the French territory of certain associations presented in our thesis ensured solid support for the European integration of Romania, which occurred after a decade of negotiations. Nevertheless, the persistence of an important Romanian community on French soil justifies the existence of such associations, whose cultural character remains as ambitious as before.

The abovementioned facts demonstrate that the most important centre of the Romanian exile – the one from France – had a major contribution to a plethora of plans which played a part in the fight against communist oppression in Romania. It was an example to follow for other members of Diasporas, thanks to the unity which it proved and the determination of the message it expressed. The intellectuals who took part in this endeavour had the merit of understanding the extent to which the propagation of this message had to constantly develop and adapt to changes appearing on a national and international stage. They managed to keep the regime from Bucharest under constant pressure, often inconspicuously and sometimes successfully, thanks to all the connections they had skilfully made. There were many risks entailed when attempting to reach the other side of the Iron Curtain, so as to assist the internal dissidence at the essential moments. This being said, the Romanian Diaspora put into practice a set of actions which had an indisputable contribution to the eradication of Ceauşescu’s regime, to the rebirth of political tradition and, in the end, to the integration of Romania into the European Union.