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A ROMANIAN POLITICAL STORY: THE NATIONALISM OF NICOLAE IORGA REVISITED (1899-1914)*

Georgiana ȚĂRANU**

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Abstract: Nicolae Iorga (1871-1940) was Romania's best-known historian and public intellectual between the two world wars, both at home and abroad. He is seen as the father of Romanian nationalism, as well as the main provider of historical continuity and legitimacy for the new Greater Romania of 1918. The aim of this paper is to argue that Iorga's nationalism has been a political story from the very beginning. It was a politically motivated commitment toward reshaping society, through culture. This political reading contradicts the standard narrative that interprets Iorga as a cultural nationalist who only helped raise national consciousness in the wake and during the First World War. Instead, in the first part of this text, my reading of his political career depicts an intellectual who sought not only to cultivate the nation, but to advance his own political platform (based on the rejection of modernity, antisemitism, and irredentism) and to contribute to the establishment of a single strong territorial state reuniting all Romanians around the Old Kingdom. In the second part of the paper, I move from a short survey of the politics of memory by the main political regimes following Iorga's assassination, namely the military dictatorship of Ion Antonescu and the communist regime, to a discussion of some strategies used in the post-1989 era to condone or obfuscate some beliefs and actions of Iorga by interpreting his nationalism as a cultural one.

Keywords: cultural nationalism, Nicolae Iorga, political nationalism, Romanian nationalism, Greater Romania

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Rezumat: Nicolae Iorga (1871-1940) a fost cel mai cunoscut istoric şi intelectual public al României între cele două războaie mondiale, atât în ţară, cât şi în străinătate. El este văzut ca părintele naţionalismului românesc, precum şi ca principalul furnizor de continuitate istorică şi legitimitate pentru noua Românie Mare a anului 1918. Scopul acestei lucrări este de a susține că naționalismul lui Iorga a fost o poveste politică încă de la început. A fost un angajament motivat politic pentru remodelarea societății, prin cultură. Această lectură politică contrazice naraţiunea standard care îl interpretează pe

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** Georgiana Țăranu, Assistant lecturer, PhD, at the Faculty of History and Political Sciences, "Ovidius" University of Constanta, Romania. E-mail: georgianataranu87@gmail.com

Iorga ca pe un naţionalist cultural care a contribuit doar la creşterea conştiinţei naţionale în timpul şi în urma Primului Război Mondial. În schimb, în prima parte a acestui text, cheia de lectură a carierei sale politice înfăţişează un intelectual care a căutat nu numai să cultive naţiunea, ci să-şi promoveze propria platformă politică (bazată pe respingerea modernităţii, antisemitism şi iredentism) şi să contribuie la constituirea unui singur stat teritorial puternic reunind toţi românii în jurul Vechiului Regat. În cea de-a doua parte a lucrării fac o scurtă trecere în revistă a politicii memoriei lui Iorga în timpul principalelor regimuri politice de după moartea istoricului, respectiv dictatura militară a lui Ion Antonescu şi cea comunistă, mergând către o discuţie a câtorva strategii utilizate după 1989 de a scuza sau omite anumite convingeri sau acţiuni politice ale istoricului prin interpretarea naţionalismul său drept unul cultural.
Cuvinte cheie: naţionalism cultural, naţionalism politic, naţionalism românesc, Nicolae Iorga, România Mare

I. Introduction

This is a study in nationalist politics and deals with Nicolae Iorga (1871-1940), an iconic figure in the Romanian culture, nationalism, and historiography of the twentieth century. He was his country's best-known historian and public intellectual between the two world wars, both at home and abroad. He is seen as the father of Romanian nationalism and one of the most active agents in shaping the national consciousness of his people in the decade leading to the First World War. He typified the historian acting both as nation-builder and as a politician. His popularity reached a climax during the First World War, which brought the establishment (the Liberal Party leader and the monarchy) closer to him. After the national project was accomplished in the form of Greater Romania in 1918, he became the main provider of historical continuity and legitimacy for the new territorial state, while failing to establish himself as a prominent political leader or statesman. His assassination, in 1940, by members of the Romanian fascist *Legionary Movement (*best known as the *Iron Guard)* has gone down in history as one of the most shameful crimes: "the Apostle of the Nation" was murdered by those whom he had schooled into nationalist ideology. No wonder this crime was interpreted by some scholars as a "parricide".[1]

[1] Th. Armon cited in Radu Ioanid, "Nicolae Iorga and Fascism", *Journal of Contemporary History* 27 (1992): 481. See also Robert Adam, *Două veacuri de populism românesc* (Bucureşti: Humanitas, 2018), 215.

The literature on Iorga is paradoxical: surprisingly vast and yet extremely poor in critical studies. The best example of this is the fact that there are only two biographies (Barbu Theodorescu[2], Nicholas M.N. Nagy-Talavera[3]), some biographical essays (Bianca Valota Cavallotti[4], Valeriu Râpeanu[5]), and only a few monographs or studies dedicated to his political activity (Maurice Pearton[6], Petre Țurlea[7], Mihai Opriţescu[8], Mihai Chioveanu[9]). Studies on his nationalist thinking are also few and not coincidentally published by foreign researchers (William O. Oldson[10], Vanhaelemeersch[11]), or by Romanians living abroad (Radu Ioanid[12], Leon Volovici[13]). Overall, in the Romanian historiography there are many texts that keep Iorga out of necessary critical re-evaluations.[14] In part, this situation is owed to the communist period, that still has ramifications to this day.

What stimulated this paper was to see that Iorga's nationalism was and still is interpreted by most of the scholarly literature as a cultural rather than political story. In contrast, the aim of the present research is to argue the other way

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2 Barbu Theodorescu, *N. Iorga* (Bucureşti: Editura Tineretului, 1968).

3 Nicholas M. Nagy-Talavera, *Nicolae Iorga: a biography* (Iaşi: The Center for Romanian Studies, The Romanian Cultural Foundation, 1996).

4 Bianca Valota Cavallotti, *Nicola Iorga* (Napoli: Guida Editori, 1977).

5 Valeriu Râpeanu, *Nicolae Iorga* (Bucureşti: Editura Demiurg, 1994). Valeriu Râpeanu, *Nicolae Iorga (1940-1947)* (Bucureşti: Editura 100+1 GRAMAR, vol. I - 2001, vol. 2 – 2002).

6 Maurice Pearton, "Nicolae Iorga as Historian and Politician", in *Historians as Nation-Builders: Central and South-East Europe*, eds. Dennis Deletant and Harry Hanak (London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, The Macmillan Press, 1988).

7 Petre Țurlea, *Nicolae Iorga în viața politică a României* (Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică, 1991); Petre Țurlea, *Nicolae Iorga între dictatura regală și dictatura legionară* (Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică, 2001); Petre Țurlea, *Nicolae Iorga la Vălenii de Munte* (Bucureşti: România Pur şi Simplu, 2008); Petre Țurlea, *Nicolae Iorga* (Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică, 2016).

8 Mihail Opriţescu, *Partidul Naționalist Democrat condus de Nicolae Iorga (1910-1938)* (Bucureşti: [Neva], 2000).

9 Mihai Chioveanu, „Istoricii şi politica în România interbelică", in *România interbelică. Istorie şi istoriografie*, ed. Ovidiu Pecican (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Limes, 2010), 141-161.

10 William O. Oldson, *The Historical and Nationalistic Thought of Nicolae Iorga* (Boulder (CO)/New York: East European Monographs/Columbia University Press, 1973); William O. Oldson, *A Providential Anti-Semitism: Nationalism and Polity in Nineteenth Century Romania* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1991).

11 Philip Vanhaelemeersch, *A Generation Without Beliefs and the Idea of Experience in Romania (1927-1934)* (Boulder (CO)/New York: East European Monographs/Columbia University Press, 2006).

12 Radu Ioanid, "Nicolae Iorga and Fascism", *Journal of Contemporary History* 27 (1992): 467-492.

13 Leon Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism: the Case of Romanian Intellectuals in the 1930s*, trans. by Charles Kormos (Oxford/New York/Seoul/Tokyo: Pergamon Press, 1991).

14 Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Corneliu Zelea Codreanu: ascensiunea și căderea "Căpitanului"* (Bucureşti: Humanitas, 2017), 24; Roumen Daskalov, "Feud over the Middle Ages: Bulgarian-Romanian Historiographical Debates", in *Entangled Histories of the Balkans. Volume Three: Shared Pasts, Disputed Legacies*, eds. Roumen Daskalov and Alexander Vezenkov (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 278.

around: that the nature of his nationalism was political instead of cultural and had been so from the very beginning. To discern between these two types of nationalism and ascribe Iorga to political nationalism, I employed the distinction put forward by John Hutchinson first in 1987 and then even more effectively in 2013.[15] According to Hutchinson's revised definition, one has to search for the ultimate goal of nationalists to differentiate between the two types: political nationalism focuses on the struggle for political autonomy, while cultural nationalism aims to cultivate the nation, seen as a moral community.[16] With this in mind, the present reading sets out to emphasize that Iorga's cultural goals, namely the moral regeneration of his people, can also be interpreted as a means for political ends. As historian, he developed an influential narrative about how Romanians had exclusive ethnic and historic right to control their territory and shape the society of their own state.[17] But history entailed action, in his view, since the nation needed to be reunited. Thus, Iorga committed himself to nationalist politics and did so on two levels: to build himself a particular political platform and to mobilize popular support for the ideal of political unity of all Romanians from neighboring Transylvania, Bukovina, and Bessarabia with the Old Kingdom.[18] In both cases, Iorga's aim and behavior were political. In this, I drew inspiration from John Breuilly's view of nationalism as a form of politics and political behavior[19].

The following research questions were put forward: In what ways was Iorga's nationalism political instead of cultural? and What were the explanations behind the choice of this common scholarly interpretation? Two directions to answer these questions seemed suitable. First, to look to Iorga's revivalist activities from the early 1900s and explore whether their aim was cultural or political, and second, to look at how his legacy was instrumentalized posthumously, from the

[15] John Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State* (London: Allen&Unwin, London, 1987); John Hutchinson, "Cultural Nationalism", in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism*, ed. John Breuilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 75-96.

[16] On Hutchinson, see also: Eric Taylor Woods, "Cultural Nationalism", in *The SAGE Handbook of Cultural Sociology* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2016): 429-41, http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781473957886.n31. On the cultivation of the nation, see Joep Leerssen, "Nationalism and the cultivation of culture", *Nations and Nationalism* 12 (2006): 559-578, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8129.2006.00253.x (2014).

[17] Oldson, *The Historical and Nationalistic Thought*, 85.

[18] The Old Kingdom refers to Romania between 1881 and 1918, comprised of the former Principalities of Wallachia and Moldova, to which Northern Dobrudja was added in 1878 and Southern Dobruja in 1913.

[19] John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1993).

early years after his death up until the post-communist period. Thus, in the first part of this article, I will first provide the conceptual distinction between cultural and political nationalism, and then reassess Iorga's nationalism by reconsidering some of his pre-war revivalist activities. The second part of the paper will evaluate the way Iorga was used by different regimes or agents of memory to legitimize various actions and explore some possible reasons behind the use of the culturalist interpretation of his nationalism.

II. The Cultural Perspective

II.1. Iorga, the Polymath

It is rather easy to attach to Iorga's nationalism a cultural meaning and it seems to come to one's mind somehow naturally when dealing with such a prolific figure in Romanian culture. Iorga recorded numerous achievements in history, as well as in what we would now call cultural studies, not to mention his omnipresence in public life. He acted as politician, public educator, university professor, journalist, literary critic, writer, playwright, poet, and so on. He was compared to a great gallery of intellectual figures, historians, statesmen, or politicians: the Italian Carducci[20], the Spanish Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz[21], the French Ernest Renan, and even Charles de Gaulle[22], the Greek Spyridon Lambros[23], the Serbian Stojan Novaković[24], the Turkish Mehmed Fuad Köprülü[25], and recently the Catalan Josep Puig i Cadafalch[26]. Peter Burke, the

[20] Ramiro Ortiz, *Italia modernă* (Bucureşti: Editura Ancora, 1927).
[21] Francisco Veiga, *Istoria Gărzii de Fier (1919-1941). Mistica ultranaţionalismului* (Bucureşti: Editura Humanitas, 1993).
[22] Nagy-Talavera, *Nicolae Iorga*.
[23] Effi Gazi, "Theorising and Practising 'Scientific' History in South-Eastern Europe (Nineteenth Century): Spyridon Lambros and Nicolae Iorga", in *Nationalising the Past. Historians as Nation Builders in Modern Europe*, eds. Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 192-208.
[24] Marius Turda, "Historical Writing in the Balkans", in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing, Volume 4: 1800-1945*, eds. Stuart Macintyre, Juan Maiguashca, and Attila Pók (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 353.
[25] Georgiana Ţăranu, "A Historian's Eyes on that 'Admirable Man from Asia Minor': Nicolae Iorga's Understanding of Atatürk and his Regime", in *Türkiye-Romanya İlişkileri: Geçmiş Ve Günümüz Uluslararasi Sempozyumu/ International Symposium On Turkey-Romania Relations: Past And Present*, 4-6 October 2017, Constanta, Papers, vol. II (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2019), 1241-1242.

distinguished historian of culture, included Iorga in his latest work, *The Polymath* (2020), which listed 500 polymaths, understood as "monsters of erudition" who contributed to different disciplines and had been active in the West (understood as Europe and the Americas) in the last six centuries[27]. No wonder Iorga's monopolization of Romania's cultural scene for almost four decades led many scholars to be tempted to categorize his nationalism as cultural. He seemed to fall perfectly into the category put forward by John Hutchinson, composed of those important historians (Eoin MacNeill, František Palacký, Jules Michelet, Mykhailo Hrushevsky) who were "no mere scholars but rather 'myth-making' intellectuals who combine[d] a 'romantic' search for meaning with a scientific zeal to establish this on authoritative foundations".[28] As practitioners of a profession that enjoyed, in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, "a towering intellectual prestige", historians were in a privileged position.[29] In Central and Eastern Europe, where nation-building and statehood were on the agenda in the decades leading up to the First World War, the historian became, in the eyes of his contemporaries, "a political force".[30] As a sincere supporter of the historian's duty towards his country through involvement in public affairs, Iorga capitalized on this force.

He played a major role in winning popular support for the Romanian nation-building project in the years prior to the First World War and during the conflagration. He engaged, as all revivalists throughout Europe, in all sorts of activities and initiatives directed towards the moral regeneration of his people: a summer school, a publishing house, a newspaper and different literary magazines, lending libraries, research institutes at home and abroad, a dramatic group, a women's school, a political party etc. Moreover, as a historian, he did share with cultural nationalists an esentially organicist view of the nation and rewrote the past to create a new narrative for the national destiny, one meant to ensure historical continuity and cultural unity.[31] And yet, I will point to the fact that a whole different reading can also be applied to Iorga's national agenda. My

[26] Lucila Mallart, "Researching the Medieval Past between Catalonia and Romania. Josep Puig i Cadafalch, Nicolae Iorga, and the Transnational Writing of National History (1921-1935)", *Nations and Nationalism* 27 (2019): 148–161.
[27] Peter Burke, *The Polymath* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2020).
[28] Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, 14.
[29] Pearton, "Nicolae Iorga as Historian and Politician", 160.
[30] Robert W. Seton-Watson, *The historian as a political force in Central Europe: An inaugural lecture delivered on 2 November 1922* ([London]: School of Slavonic studies in the University of London, King's College, 1922).
[31] Turda, "Historical Writing in the Balkans", 352, Gazi, "Theorising and Practising".

take is influenced by John Breuilly's understanding of nationalism as a form of politics, namely as opposition politics and uses a recontextualization of Iorga's early revivalist career. Although Breuilly focuses on nationalist movements and their relation to the state, I will try to adapt this framework to the study of a single individual, who played a significant part in Romanian nationalism. I will investigate how Iorga became a central figure in Romanian nationalism (the father of the Nation, the apostle of the Nation) because he operated in a political situation in which nationalist politics became effective.

II.2. Cultural versus Political Nationalism: A Distinction between Means and Ends

So why does cultural nationalism not cover the case of Nicolae Iorga? John Hutchinson initially described two contrasting types of nationalism: an organic and romantic view of the nation as a moral and historical community in opposition to a voluntary, civic, Enlightenment-inspired conception of a political community. In 2013, Hutchinson added a useful clarification: while these two competing visions of the nation can become entangled and often use each other's strategies, one should look at their main concern to better differentiate between cultural and political nationalism.[32] Cultural nationalists will always be interested in creating a strong moral community as the basis of the nation, while a strong territorial state will always be the ultimate aim for political nationalism. This is an important addition and a starting point for providing an answer to this section's research question. Iorga used, indeed, all of the cultural nationalists' tools and means, and he was engaged in many types of cultivation of the nation (as categorized by Leersen[33]), as we already mentioned. Moreover, he constantly underlined the importance of a regenerated moral community, which had to escape from Western imitation, estranged elites, and corrupt practices. But a closer examination should go beyond his discourse and see that Iorga's primary concern was always political[34]. In practice, Iorga combined nationalist ideas with political actions in his own pursuit of power and in his hope that the Romanians would manage to create not only a moral community, but a strong territorial state. This had to do, of course, with the political context in which Iorga and Romania found themselves, in domestic politics and international affairs, respectively.

[32] Hutchinson, "Cultural Nationalism".
[33] Joep Leersen, "Nationalism and the cultivation of culture", *Nations and Nationalism* 12 (2006): 571-2.
[34] Pearton, "Nicolae Iorga as Historian and Politician", 158.

II.3. The Political Context: Romanians Neighboring Romania

Pre-war Romania[35] had gained independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1878, but at a high territorial cost which much frustrated the political establishment: the ceding of three districts of Southern Bessarabia to the Russian Empire. One additional cause of frustration post-1878 events was the increasing external pressure for Jewish emancipation. For the next three decades, Tsarist Russia would represent the new state's most feared neighbor in the eyes of the elites. In 1881, Carol, former prince of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, proclaimed himself King and remained committed to an alliance with Germany until the end of his life, in 1914. As such, in 1883, Romania secretly became part of the Triple Alliance, but distrusted Austria-Hungary both on political and economic grounds[36]. At the time of Iorga's birth, in 1871, his borderland district of Botoşani, the northernmost on the map, was caught between the two competing empires. By 1900, across the borders, over four million Romanians were living under foreign rule without enjoying equal political or cultural rights: over 3 million in Austro-Hungarian Transylvania and Bukovina, and over one million in Russian Bessarabia[37]. The Transylvanian Romanians were the most vocal promoters of their national identity and of their rights. The formation of the Dual Monarchy in 1867 led to the loss of Transylvania's autonomy through Austria's union with Hungary, which further strained relations between the government in Budapest and the Romanians in the following decades. If for many Transylvanian Romanians the initial quest was one of full equality within the imperial polity, their aim ultimately developed into full political autonomy.

Meanwhile, at the turn of the nineteenth century, the primary goal of a small and rather marginal nationalist movement within the Old Kingdom, composed of local patriots and Transylvanian refugees, became the political unity with the Romanians of Transylvania and Bukovina. To a lesser extent, some also looked towards Bessarabia, a province which had been detached from the Principality of Moldova in 1812 and ceded by the Ottomans to Tsarist Russia. The political scene was dominated by the two main parties – the Liberals and the Conservatives – which King Carol I brought alternatively to power, while retaining for himself the conduct of foreign affairs. For the two mainstream

[35] Comprised of the former Principalities of Wallachia and Moldova, to which Northern Dobrudja was added in 1878 and Southern Dobruja in 1913.
[36] Hitchins, *România*, 151-156.
[37] Ibid., 207.

political parties, the Transylvanian question was used as a weapon of political warfare[38]. This policy started to be criticized and labeled as a betrayal of the national cause from the margins by different politicians, activists, or intellectuals in their struggle to gain political capital.

II.4. Nationalist Politics: The Outlet of a Great Mind

Iorga was one of these intellectuals who became increasingly vocal in his criticism of Romanian politics. While he was exceptionally skilled and hard-working, he encountered great hostility from the academic environment (Tocilescu, Urechia) as well as from the literary and political establishment (Titu Maiorescu, B. P. Haşdeu, Take Ionescu)[39]. He thus started to build himself a political platform first through journalism and then through literary criticism as early as 1899, years before being elected a member of parliament (1907) or founding a political party (1910). Of course, Iorga's commitment was formulated, in a typical nationalist fashion, as a double sacred mission. Speaking on behalf of his nation, whose will he felt entitled to represent as a historian, Iorga said that the state had to pursue political unity with all those Romanians living across the borders in Transylvania, Bukovina, Bessarabia. The other mission was as a self-assigned duty: because he was a historian, he felt compelled to enter politics. Like so many other historians who acted as nation-builders, Iorga argued that history and politics were not only compatible, but mutually reinforcing[40].

III. Iorga's Political Nationalism

Iorga's prewar revivalist engagements prepared the ground for his own pursuit of political capital and for the advancement of the nationalists' dearest dream: political unity for all Romanians living across the borders in neighboring Austria-Hungary and Tsarist Russia. While expressed in a cultural shape, this dream had very clear political goals, falling into three main categories: **the rejection of modernity; antisemitism; and irredentism.**

[38] Ibid., 218-219.
[39] Nagy-Talavera, *Nicolae Iorga*, 60-63.
[40] Nicolae Iorga, „Două concepţii istorice (Cuvântare de intrare în Academia Română, 17 mai 1911)", in *Generalităţi cu privire la studiile istorice. Lecţii de deschidere şi cuvântări, 2nd edition* (Bucureşti: [n.p.], 1933); Pearton, "Nicolae Iorga as Historian and Politician".

III.1. Rejection of Modernity Equals Antisemitism

The most important category to which Iorga's political thought belongs is that of the rejection of modernity and the preference for the premodern, pre-urban medieval countryside. This was something "nostalgically and idyllically invoked throughout the century everywhere in Europe".[41] Iorga first manifested it coherently during a short-lived leadership of the weekly publication *Sămănătorul* (Eng: *The Sower*, hence *Sowerism*) between 1905-1906. It became one of his best-known cultural initiatives. Thus, Iorga's thought, expressed through articles and literary criticism, would practically embody "Sowerism" and give it the form of a particular anti-modernist, anti-capitalist, and anti-cosmopolitan traditionalist "current", with a strong antisemitic tone. The intellectuals grouped around the literary and political magazine thus proposed a conservative and quasi-agrarian solution to Romania's perceived cultural alienation caused by the country's rapid adoption of Western models. The Romanian national character was truly to be found in its purest form in the past, in a golden era of spirituality between peasants and their traditional rulers, the Romanian boyars.[42] The "other" was, most often, the Jew, as symbol of the modern society, of the foreignness of the middle class, who dominated the urban landscape in many towns. When applauding a literary work, Iorga searched for a superior ethnic purpose. Thus, he subordinated aesthetics to an ethical and ethnic goal, dismissing the modernist discourse of the main political driving forces, the Liberals and the Conservatives.[43] Behind such a supposedly literary or cultural debate the stake was always political, as Katherine Verdery has eloquently argued.[44]

Another essential point which illustrates that the literary group had political goals is the manner in which Iorga and the "sowerists" split ways. The two sides held incompatible political views precisely on "the national question" of the Romanians in Transylvania. Iorga wanted to continue the struggle for national liberation until the obtainment of political unity within a Greater Romania,

[41] Leerssen, "Nationalism and the cultivation of culture", 193.

[42] Zigu Ornea, *Sămănătorismul, 2nd revised edition* (București: Minerva, 1971); Ioan Stanomir, *Reacțiune și conservatorism: eseu asupra imaginarului politic eminescian* (București: Nemira, 2000); Vanhaelemeersch, *A Generation Without Beliefs*; Keith Hitchins, *România: 1866-1947* (București: Editura Humanitas, 2013).

[43] Sorin Alexandrescu, „Modernism și antimodernism. Din nou, cazul românesc", in *Modernism și antimodernism. Noi perspective interdisciplinare*, ed. Sorin Antohi (București: Cuvântul/Editura Muzeului Literaturii Române, 2008), 131.

[44] Katherine Verdery, "National Ideology and National Character in Interwar Romania", in *National Character and National Ideology in Interwar Eastern Europe*, eds. Ivo Banac and Katherine Verdery (New Haven: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1995), 132.

whereas the "sowerists" preferred at that time Aurel C. Popovici's federalist solution to the problem of nationalities in the form of a Greater Austria[45]. In other words, the divide opposed Iorga's political nationalism to the cultural nationalism of the "sowerists" around Popovici, who wanted to continue cultivating the nation within the empire instead of figuring how to incorporate Transylvania into Romania.

After leaving *Sămănătorul*, Iorga was in search of a new cultural platform through which he could serve his nationalist politics. After failing to join the Conservative Party in March 1906, Iorga embarked on a new political career as a nationalist opposed to the traditional parties and the establishment. Two other initiatives brought him extraordinary popularity: "the struggle for the Romanian language"[46] and the launching of his own newspaper.

On March 13, 1906, students held a protest in front of the National Theater against the staging of a play in French, which ended in violence, arrests, and trials. These events came days after Iorga had kept on urging the elites, through his newspaper articles, to stop such common practices. But it was Iorga's electrifying conference on the very day of the staging that stirred up the students. The outcome of the social unrest eventually led to the closing of the university and the wounding of several people. The "defense" of the Romanian culture against estranged elites and foreign models was now linked with Iorga's nationalist politics. Some already started to call him the "Apostle", while others considered him an instigator[47]. As a result of his capacity to mobilize such popular support, his political career took off.

III.2. Antisemitism Equals Nationalism

Another key initiative for translating Iorga's nationalism into a political language came along with the start of his own newspaper, *Neamul Românesc* (Eng: *The Romanian Kin* or *The Romanian People*), on May 10, 1906. The newspaper would represent Iorga's position on current affairs until his retirement from political and public life, in September 1940, two months before his assassination by the Romanian fascist Iron Guard. The publication was used as a political weapon and a personal daily tribune, a sort of institutionalization of

[45] Ornea, *Sămănătorismul*, 85-86; see also Hitchins, *România*, 213-216; for a highly biased contemporary account favoring Iorga's editorship see: Dan Smântânescu, *Mișcarea sămănătoristă. Studiu istoric-literar* ([S.l.]: "Bucovina", 1933).
[46] Iorga, *O luptă literară. Articole din Sămănătorul*, II (iulie 1905-aprilie 1906) (Vălenii-de-Munte: Neamul Românesc, 1916).
[47] Nagy-Talavera, *Nicolae Iorga*, 122; Țurlea, *Nicolae Iorga în viața politică*, 23-28.

Iorga's sense of mission[48]. His editorials were present in every single issue, written in a militant or poignant, timely, all-encompassing, and unmistakable style. In association with A. C. Cuza, Iorga started publishing in his newspaper many antisemitic articles. Jews were perceived as a "national danger", threatening the nation not only on economic and cultural, but also on political grounds. He even accused them of irredentist intentions toward Austria-Hungary[49]. What is more, during the peasant uprisings of 1907, Iorga put the blame for the events on the Jews, while understating the complex causes of the poor economic conditions among peasantry.[50] Even if he was not as radical as Cuza, Iorga was consistant in this hostility towards the Jews up until 1940. He underwent a period of desistance in the 1920s, after the Paris Peace Conference and the minorities' protection treaty Romania was required to sign. Yet, he relapsed into antisemitism by the late 1930s, fueling the already explosive public opinion between 1937 and 1940.[51] But the period of intense activity aimed at Jews is to be found in the first decades of the twentieth century. As his scholarly reputation was gaining momentum, Iorga became one of the most authoritative voices of the nationalist camp to legitimate the exclusion of the Jews from the national community.[52] Consequently, when he "ended up equating 'true' nationalism with anti-semitism" he gave it an "irresistible panache".[53]

III.3.Nationalism Equals Irredentism: The Cultural League and the Politics Summer School

Two of Iorga's most revered nationalist undertakings of the pre-war years were his activity within the League for the Cultural Unity of all Romanians (the Cultural League) and his initiative to start a summer school at Vălenii de Munte. Both had clear political objectives despite their cultural outlook. While the Cultural League, founded in Bucharest, on January 24, 1891, by Romanian refugees from Transylvania and different political and cultural personalities from the Old Kingdom, became irredentist from around 1907 onwards, the summer school launched by Iorga at Vălenii de Munte emerged as irredentist from the outset. I understand irredentism here as "the belief that part of the nation finds

[48] I here refer to the definition of the verb "to institutionalize" to have the following understanding: "to make something become a permanent or respected part of a society, system, or organization". *The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus*, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/institutionalize, accessed April 12, 2021.
[49] Iorga, *Cuvinte adevărate* (Bucureşti: Institutul Minerva, 1903).
[50] Ioanid, "Nicolae Iorga and Fascism", 473.
[51] Iorga, *Iudaica* (Bucureşti: „Bucovina" I. E. Torouţiu, [1937]).
[52] Ana Bărbulescu, "Nicolae Iorga and the Jews", *Holocaust. Studii şi cercetări* 13 (2020): 219-245.
[53] Oldson, *A Providential Anti-Semitism*, 133.

itself outside the state borders and needs to be not only 'freed,' but 'redeemed' from foreign influence".[54]

The Cultural League appeared first as a reaction against the Magyarization policy of the late quarter of the nineteenth century.[55] The means were cultural (patriotic lectures and gatherings, lending libraries, celebrations of important historic events), but the intended outcome was political. The League's practice of disguising its political objectives in cultural terms was a way to dispel suspicion both at home as well as across the border, in Budapest or Vienna. In fact, irredentism was the main charge brought against the League's members by the Austro-Hungarian authorities. From 1907 onwards, when Iorga was first elected in the Central Committee of the Cultural League, and then became Secretary General (1908), the organization received new impetus. No wonder he started to be surveilled, as was the entire League, by the Austro-Hungarian diplomatic agents and by the Romanian secret police.[56] He used the Cultural League as a new platform for his political nationalism, while also publicizing that he was about to found a large nationalist and democratic party. By way of the Cultural League, Iorga organized libraries, commemorations, conferences, and smuggled Romanian language publications across the borders.[57] He offered scholarships and financial assistance on behalf of the Cultural League to young Romanians émigrés from the neighboring provinces, which led some students in proximity to a more radical type of nationalism.[58] Despite the cultural outlook, Iorga used this organization in a concrete political direction: to challenge Romania's alliance with Austria-Hungary as the main obstacle to political unity with the Transylvanian Romanians.[59] Eventually, in May 1909, after ignoring several warnings, Iorga was prohibited to enter Austrian territories as he was considered to pose a danger to state security.[60] The impact of his nationalist ideas across the borders grew at an alarming pace. By 1913 a secret note inside Vienna's Interior Ministry considered that almost the entire Romanian press

[54] Milou van Hout, "In search of the nation in Fiume: Irredentism, cultural nationalism, borderlands", *Nations and Nationalism* 26 (2020): 660.
[55] Stefano Santoro, *Dall'Impero absburgico alla Grande Romania. Il nazionalismo romeno di Transilvania fra Ottocento e Novecento* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2014).
[56] Cornelia Bodea and Ştefan Vergatti, *Nicolae Iorga în arhivele vieneze şi ale Siguranţei regale (1903-1914)* (Bucureşti: Mica Valahie, 2012).
[57] Nagy-Talavera, *Nicolae Iorga*, 131-132.
[58] See: Onisifor Ghibu's case discussed in Santoro, *Dall'Impero absburgico alla Grande Romania*,72-3.
[59] James P. Niessen, "Romanian Nationalism: An Ideology of Integration and Mobilization", in *Eastern European Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Peter F. Sugar (Washington, DC: American University Press, 1995), 283.
[60] Bodea and Vergatti, *Nicolae Iorga*, 129.

within the Old Kingdom was "in the service of the League," with Iorga being praised as the most influential and charismatic political agitator of the time.[61] The year the First World War broke out, the League finally decided a suggestive and overdue rebranding was needed, changing its name to the *League for the Political Unity of all Romanians*. By then, as Keith Hitchins notes, not too many Transylvanian Romanians had political unity with the Old Kingdom in their mind, except for Iorga and the League.[62]

On the other hand, the start of summer courses at Vălenii de Munte, a small town in the Carpathians, close to the Transylvanian border, in 1908, also had a clear political ambition. Here Iorga established his main residence, founded a publishing house, and organized a one-month long summer school from 1908 to 1940 yearly, except for the wartime period. Up to the First World War, this "cultural citadel" hosted a school of nationalist propaganda each July, with lectures and speeches meant to bolster national sentiments and pride over history, traditions, language, etc. Hundreds, then thousands of students, rural teachers, and priests were pouring across the borders to the frustration of the imperial authorities next door. Romanian secret police agents reported that by closely following what happened each summer at Vălenii de Munte they could find out more about "the next phases of the nationalist movement".[63] By 1912, a journalist from Braşov, in Hungarian-ruled Transylvania, labelled the summer school "the University of the Whole Nation" and "the Mecca of Romanianness".[64] No wonder the same year, as a sign of royal openness to the nationalist cause, Carol, the eldest son of Ferdinand, the Crown Prince, visited the summer school. This was a spectacular leap forward for a King which remained, despite all, on the side of the Central Powers, but who probably wanted to attract public support for the Monarchy.[65]

III.4. Iorga's Political Nationalism in Action

The political parties were not pleased to see the increasing popularity of this initiative, which could have endangered not only Romania's foreign affairs, but also their own position on the political scene.[66] Iorga's nationalism was thus politically dangerous not only because it reclaimed new political boundaries, but

[61] Ibid., 236-7.
[62] Hitchins, *România*, 241.
[63] Țurlea, *Nicolae Iorga*, 50.
[64] Ibid., 100.
[65] Țurlea, *Nicolae Iorga la Vălenii de Munte*, 147-52.
[66] Țurlea, *Nicolae Iorga*, 57-8.

also because he embodied a more national and democratic (read popular) politics, in contrast to the old, traditional political forces. Iorga acted from the bottom up, as an independently elected member of parliament who was above parties. Suffice to say that this action increased Iorga's political capital even more, which sped up the formation of his Nationalist Democratic Party in April 1910. The newly established party was led through a joint presidency with A. C. Cuza. This was the first openly antisemitic political party. We should note that Iorga did not establish a peasant party, although he glorified peasantry, but a nationalist party, which should say a lot per se in terms of political goals. The rejection of modernity, antisemitism, and irredentism were the leaders' core beliefs, as was the need for action. In a letter from 1911 to co-president A. C. Cuza, regarding their partisan affairs, Iorga put it bluntly: he felt an urge to get involved in politics because "to theorize my whole life is not in my nature".[67]

Iorga remained a member of parliament for the rest of his life, with only short pauses. This also touches on another distinction between cultural and political nationalism put forward by John Hutchinson: while the historians and the artists are the agents dedicated to national revivalism, journalists and legislators are those formulating political demands in the name of the nation. Iorga wanted and succeeded to be all in one.

Iorga's popularity reached its climax during the war but then declined. It is important to note that he is not to be found in any liberal form of politics. After a short experience as president of the Chamber of Deputies, between December 1919 and March 1920, he continued his political activity, but was to remain a marginal figure on the extended political scene. As an influential public intellectual, he often expressed distrust of parliamentary democracy and sympathy towards authoritarian solutions. Due to his cultural authority, King Carol II appointed him Prime Minister, to form a government "beyond parties," which lasted only a short while, between April 1931 and June 1932, due to the lack of political support and the economic difficulties of the Great Depression. Even during Carol II's royal dictatorship (February 1938 – September 1940), which left the traditional institutions void of power, Iorga still remained a senator (even President of the Senate for five days) and a member of the Council of the Crown, as cabinet member without portfolio. He opposed the violence and mysticism of the "new nationalism" of the radical right and supported the monarchy as a vector of political stability and traditional authority.

[67] Iorga, *Corespondență I*, ed. Ecaterina Vaum (Bucureşti: Minerva, 1984), 416.

One of the reasons for his isolated political position was the fact that he failed to reconcile his nationalism with the regionalist demands coming from Transylvania. In comparison, in Hutchinson's terms, cultural nationalists would have tended to support decentralization as a way to balance state and community, favoring the latter. Iorga was, on the contrary, pleading for a strong centralized state.

III.5. Legitimizing Greater Romania in the Interwar Period

To all of his political activity, Iorga added, of course, an intense historiographical activity meant to legitimize Greater Romania and the new European status quo. While being interested in the professionalization of history at a theoretical level, Iorga infused his writing with romantic elements and put the nation at the center of his endeavors. What he succeeded to write was "a national history with a transcultural perspective".[68] Nevertheless, he remains the most important provider of legitimacy for Romanian nationalism in terms of historical continuity. His historical writing would serve against competing narratives advanced by revisionist neighbors especially in the interwar period[69], but also during the Second World War and national communism.

Iorga's nationalism had a huge impact on the younger generation of pre-war Romania because of his reputation and of the many ways in which he activated. There is still an ongoing debate concerning the character of this legacy, benign or malignant, or better said the proportion of each. Some scholars see a direct continuity between Iorga's populism and the Iron Guard, while others considered the postwar political and ideological context to have brought about a significant split from early twentieth century nationalism.[70]

Nevertheless, it would be hard to deny the impact he had on the key ideologues of the radical right. In August 1930, Nae Ionescu, a charismatic university professor and journalist who at that time supported the King and wanted to legitimize the new reign, called the new generation of disillusioned young people who opposed the establishment "Iorga's historic class".[71] By 1933, Nae Ionescu had turned into an influential ideologue of the Iron Guard's national regeneration project. Likewise, Nichifor Crainic, the other

[68] Gazi, "Theorising and Practising", 206.
[69] Turda, "Historical Writing in the Balkans", 352.
[70] Oldson, *A Providential Anti-Semitism*, 137-38, 161; Ioanid, "Nicolae Iorga and Fascism", 487; Heinen 1999 [1986], 80-90; Adam, *Două veacuri*, 215.
[71] Nae Ionescu, *Roza vânturilor 1926-1933*, ed. Mircea Eliade (Bucureşti: Cultura Naţională, 1990), 193.

prominent ideologue of the 1930s, promoter of a Christian Orthodox type of palingenetic nationalism[72], recounted in his memoirs that his generation of young nationalists had been "dominated by Iorga's providential spirit", by his "prophetism," exhausted once Greater Romania had emerged.[73] Outside parliament, on the extreme right, the "new" nationalists of the Legionary Movement were gaining popular support with a platform that radicalized everything that pre-war nationalism had stated. The new era of mass politics and the experience of the Great War added some heavy tones to this ultranationalist palingenetic project: religious utopia, mysticism, and the cult of violence. Iorga's clash with his far right "bastard sons," whom he opposed, ended in the assassination of the former by the latter in November 1940. This epitomized in a way the end of the nineteenth century nationalism dying at the hands of radical ultranationalist politics.

IV. Iorga's Complicated Nationalist Legacy: Legitimizing Any Regime

The research question in this section deals with how the success of the cultural nationalism paradigm could be explained in Iorga's case. The preference to discuss Iorga's nationalist activity culturally and not politically can be correlated with the political context and with the politics of memory of the different regimes, as is the case for all figures from a national pantheon in any given country. The cultural outlook presented multiple advantages to the historian's posterity. Not looking to Iorga's political credo or dismissing parts of his actions as bad politics left room for any regime and its agents of memory to embark on a selective rehabilitation of his name. Iorga's work and legacy were so vast and versatile that not many political leaders resisted the temptation to instrumentalize them to build consensus and authorize certain narratives.

IV.1. Ion Antonescu's Military Dictatorship

The first such leader was Ion Antonescu, the military dictator who was heading the government at the time of the historian's murder during the fascist National Legionary State (September 14, 1940, to the end of January 1941) and

[72] Turda, "Conservative Palingenesis and Cultural Modernism in Early Twentieth-century Romania", *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 9, no. 4 (2008): 449-50.
[73] Nichifor Crainic, *Zile albe, zile negre. Memorii I* (Bucureşti: Casa editorială Gândirea, 1991), 148.

who then led Romania until August 23, 1945. Antonescu's military dictatorship distanced itself from the murder after the removal of the Iron Guard from power and became engaged in remembering practices regarding Iorga's legacy. It supported the continuity of some of Iorga's major cultural initiatives, including financially.[74] But what was more important was that the wartime propaganda could thus use Iorga's work in many ways: to legitimize antisemitism through radio broadcasts[75], to engage in historiographical battles against Bulgarian and Hungarian territorial rights over the disputed borderlands, etc.[76] Iorga's fierce anticommunist stance also came in handy at a time when Romania joined Nazi Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union.

IV.2. The Communists Before and After the Takeover

Likewise, Iorga was also used by Antonescu's ideological enemies, the Communists. Even before the totalitarian takeover of Romania, between 1944-1947, during the coalitions dominated by the Communists, there were a few examples of remembrance with respect to Iorga's legacy.[77] The historian's name was tolerated in this period of transition due to his anti-Nazist stance and especially his violent death, serving as a leading example of the legionnaires' cruelty and, overall, of the brutality of Antonescu and the entire old political establishment. After the transformation of the country into the Romanian People's Republic (RPR), on December 30, 1947, Iorga's legacy depended on the regime's outlook and needs: his works were removed from shelves in the first Stalinist decade. It was not until the late 1950s, after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the country, that his works started being recovered. Beginning with the increasingly visible distancing of the Romanian communists from the official Moscow line, during the 1960s, the need for internal legitimacy made Iorga return to academic debate and, since 1965, even to the bookstores. This restitution was then made by the dictator Nicolae Ceauşescu under the sign of autochthonous nationalism, meant to exacerbate the potential of the great personalities of the Romanian culture both internally and externally. Other

[74] The efforts of the military dictatorship in this respect are obvious and well-documented by both Râpeanu (2001) and Țurlea (2001), although neither of the authors interpreted them as proof of the regime's will to instrumentalize Iorga.
[75] Râpeanu, *Nicolae Iorga (1940-1947*), v*ol. I*, 109-11.
[76] Roumen Daskalov, "Feud over the Middle Ages", 295-297. See also Cristina Petrescu, "Historiography of Nation-Building in Communist Romania", in *Historische Nationsforschung im geteilten Europa 1945-1989*, eds. Pavel Kolář and Miloš Řezni□k (Köln: SH-Verlag, 2012), 149-167.
[77] Râpeanu, *Nicolae Iorga (1940-1947*), *vol. II*, 161-2, 174, 213, 290-1, 293.

communist leaders such as Slobodan Milosevic and Enver Hodja did the same with their own national figures.[78] This restitution even reached cult levels where the historian's personality was concerned, as an exercise in exceptionality for the future cult of the political leader.[79] Iorga's editing and exegesis followed the carefully controlled line of the communist regime's demands, following themes much instrumentalized by the dictator against the Soviet Union: the struggle for national sovereignty, the rights of smaller powers in international affairs, etc.

IV.3. The Post-Communist Period

The distancing from the apologetic discourse did not occur in the first decade of the post-communist regime, on the contrary. Most of the authors of texts about Iorga of the 1990s and 2000s were exponents of a "radical continuity" with the old regime (the term was coined by Michael Shafir[80]). Nationalism seemed, again, as Radu Ioanid observed, the only post-Decembrist ideology that the political elites appealed to.[81] In fact, the debate seemed once again to oppose a European-oriented critical discourse to an "illiberal and anti-minority populism of the nationalists".[82] The post-Ceauşescu era was dominated for over two and a half decades by a direct successor to the former Communist Party, being the only such case among the Warsaw Pact countries: The National Salvation Front (FSN),[83] the present day Social Democratic Party (PSD).[84] To hinder opposition from liberal parties, the FSN/PDSR relied on a variety of partners, mostly small ultra-nationalist and neo-communist satellite parties. Only two were important: the far right antisemitic Greater Romania Party (PRM) and

[78] Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Fantasmele salvării. Democrație, naționalism și mit în Europa post-comunistă* (Iași: Polirom, 1999), 91.
[79] Bogdan C. Iacob, "Nicolae Iorga as New Man. Functions of a Teacher Cult", *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Contemporană* XIII (2014): 178-192.
[80] Michael Shafir, "Anti-Semitism in the Postcommunist Era", in *The Tragedy of Romanian Jewry*, ed. Randolph L. Braham (Boulder/New York: The Rosenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies Graduate Center/The City University of New York and Social Science Monographs/Columbia University Press, 1994), 350-5.
[81] Radu Ioanid, "Anti-Semitism and the Treatment of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Romania", in *Anti-Semitism and the Treatment of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Eastern Europe*, ed. Randolph L. Braham (Boulder/New York: Columbia University Press/The Rosenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies Graduate Center/City University of New York and Social Science Monographs, 1994), 173.
[82] Turda, "Historical Writing in the Balkans", 198.
[83] After 1993, renamed as the Party of Romanian Social Democracy (PDSR), and from 2001 onwards as PSD.
[84] Tom Gallagher, "Unsocial Democrats: The PSD's Negative Role in Romania's Democracy", in *Post-Communist Romania at Twenty-Five*, eds. Lavinia Stan and Diance Vancea (Lanham/Boulder/New York/London: Lexington Books, 2015), 171.

the strongly xenophobic and anti-Hungarian Party of Romanian National Unity (PUNR), based in Transylvania.[85] Each party had at least one important editor and/or scholar of Iorga.

IV.4. Holocaust Deniers, Iorga's Admirers

One of the most influential in this camp was the historian Gheorghe Buzatu, coming from the ranks of the far right nationalist PRM. He was an editor of volumes on Iorga since the Communist era and a proponent of the term "iorgology" as a field of inquiry for dedicated scholars of the subject.[86] Initially a member of the FSN/PDSR, then of the PUNR, was also the historian Petre Țurlea, who is to this day the single most prolific scholar of Iorga, author of extensively documented monographies. Both Buzatu and Țurlea were elected members of parliament and held chauvinist and antisemitic views. Deniers of the Romanian part in the Holocaust, both historians and politicians are noted for their fierce antisemitic and anti-Hungarian rhetoric, as well as their attempts to rehabilitate Ion Antonescu, Romania's leader during the Second World War.[87] Buzatu was mostly concerned with Antonescu, but in the works he edited he often attempted to legitimize the military dictatorship invoking the dubious belief that Iorga would have approved the former's wartime decisions.[88]

While underlining that Iorga's initiatives had both a cultural and a political goal, Țurlea's reading can provide a case study in historical omissions: one can hardly find in his works any mention of Iorga's antisemitism or anything less than heroic nationalist writing.[89] Țurlea's stated purpose was to defend the Romanian territorial integrity against external or internal danger, a rather recurring theme in the Romanian nationalist discourse.[90] He pointed to the enemy from within, the "aggressive" Hungarian minority in Harghita and

[85] Gallagher, "A feeble embrace: Romania's engagement with democracy, 1989–94", *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 12, no. 2 (1996): 145-172.
[86] Gheorghe Buzatu, „Efigia celebrităţii", in N. Iorga, *Istoria românilor, X2 – Omagiul succesorilor*, eds. Gheorghe Buzatu and Victor Spinei, second edition (Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică, 2015), 2.
[87] For Buzatu, see Shafir, "Unacademic academics: Holocaust deniers and trivializers in post-Communist Romania", *Nationalities Papers* 42, no. 6 (2014): 942-964; for Țurlea, see Ioanid, "Anti-Semitism and the Treatment", 175.
[88] Buzatu in Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, 214.
[89] Țurlea, *Nicolae Iorga la Vălenii de Munte*, passim; Țurlea, *Nicolae Iorga*.
[90] Marius Turda, "Transylvania Revisited: Public Discourse and Historical Representation in Contemporary Romania", in *Nation-Building and Contested Identities: Romanian and Hungarian Case Studies*, eds. Balázs Trencsényi, Dragoş Petrescu, Cristina Petrescu, Constantin Iordachi, and Zoltán Kántor (Budapest/Iaşi: Regio Books/Polirom, 2001), 197.

Covasna, as well as "the cosmopolitan elitists" supposedly backed from abroad, who engaged in critical assessments of the national pantheon, mainly historian Lucian Boia.[91] Iorga's legacy was once more instrumentalized to serve clear political goals.

Conversely, when Iorga was not used to legitimize the anti-Hungarian or antisemitic views of Romanian politicians or historians in the years 1990-2000[92], his legacy was used in the opposite direction, for the rehabilitation of the interwar far right. For instance, Iorga's so-called "organic rationalism" was used as a key concept by an editor to legitimize an edited collection of texts by Nae Ionescu.[93]

IV.5. The Only Post-1989 Biography: Obfuscating Antisemism

The only biography available in English and the second and last such endeavor after that, of Barbu Theodorescu (1968), was written by the American historian Nicholas M. Nagy-Talavera (1929-2000). While being an extremely solid and far-reaching research that offers a synthesis on the whole life and activity of Iorga, the historical prose is extremely biased. The author dedicated the book to his wish that "in the twenty-first century his [Iorga's] cultural nationalism will be interpreted correctly".[94] The cultural paradigm is present in almost every page. While the author acknowledged how "the preservation of national identity and the nation's welfare" was Iorga's "Supreme Law",[95] he used this commitment as an excuse for his subject's many arguable views: his recurrent ethno-exclusivism and antisemitism, his post-war anti-establishment rhetoric and support for authoritarian solutions, and the admiration towards Fascist Italy. His very sympathetic account of Iorga's cultural nationalism is often contradictory: sometimes he places the cultural nationalist above the historian,[96] therefore putting (nationalist) politics above science, while at other times, Nagy-Talavera admits that, even so, Iorga "was not a real politician", but, first, a historian.[97] One of the least convincing arguments offered in this respect regarded Iorga's alleged abandon of pre-war antisemitism. The author strikingly ignores to account for Iorga's incitement to hatred in 1938-1940, when

[91] Țurlea, *Nicolae Iorga la Vălenii de Munte*, 536.
[92] Tom Gallagher, "Vatra Românească and resurgent nationalism in Romania", *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 15, no. 4 (1992): 587.
[93] Foreword by Dan Smântânescu in Ionescu, *Roza vânturilor*.
[94] Nagy-Talavera, *Nicolae Iorga*, VII.
[95] Ibid., 447.
[96] Ibid., 451.
[97] Ibid., 454.

Romanian anti-Jewish legislation was already in force. Although Iorga denounced both Nazism and the Romanian fascist Iron Guard, he relapsed into antisemitism and brought once more his contribution to an already extremely radicalized political climate. The author's insistence on the cultural nationalism paradigm, while understating his subject's explicit antisemitism and his political (nationalist) aims, seems to indicate that his ultimate effort was to not allow room for an interpretation which could tie Iorga's nationalism to the interwar ideology of the Iron Guard.

Overall, the tendency to obfuscate the subject of antisemitism and discuss instead Iorga's patriotism is still present in academic debates. After all, pre-modernist historian Andrei Pippidi, a corresponding member of the Romanian Academy and Iorga's grandson, was requesting a "defensive criticism" of the historian's political biography, mocking precisely references to antisemitism and fascist sympathies[98].

V. Conclusions

The case of Nicolae Iorga demonstrates how cultural and political nationalism are complementary and sometimes dovetailed. In order to be able to distinguish between the two types, we should follow the primary goal of the agents of nationalism – a moral community or a strong territorial state – as Hutchinson suggested. However, Iorga's case study is not an easy case to assign to one of the two categories. And this is because Iorga made so much use of cultural means. However, to place his nationalism in a cultural context and disrobe him of his (nationalist) politics, good or bad, and of political agency would certainly deform his political biography. Through a political reading of key moments in Iorga's early public life of the pre-1914 period, I wished to provide a different perspective on Iorga's nationalism. All of Iorga's academic works and revivalist efforts were subordinated to his nationalist politics. And nationalism and politics were, of course, one and the same for Iorga. Interestingly, Iorga's legacy was used by ideologically opposed regimes to build consensus and legitimize different political contexts, while in post-communism, scholars continue to downplay his overall politics as a strategy to condone some of his political actions and beliefs, namely his antisemitism.

[98] Andrei Pippidi in N. Iorga, *Generalități cu privire la studiile istorice*, fourth edition, introduction and notes, and comm. by Andrei Pippidi (Iași: Polirom, 1999), 7.

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