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**The Romanian
Legionary Movement**

**An Orthodox Christian Assessment
of Anti-Semitism**

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Russian and East European Studies**

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INTRODUCTION

The Legionary Movement in Romania between the two world wars in this century provides a useful historico-ethical case study of the inter-relations among anti-Semitism, modern nationalism, and Eastern Orthodox Christianity. To be sure, this historical phenomenon is fascinating in its own right, and the burgeoning literature on this subject reflects the interests of historians and social scientists alike. The purpose of this essay, however, is to examine this complex political-cultural movement in the light of the secondary literature and the primary documentary source in order to evaluate it from the perspective of an Orthodox Christian moral theologian.

Thus, the structure of this essay will include separate analyses of the three basic components of Legionary anti-Semitism: (1) the ostensibly Orthodox Christian, or the religious and ethical; (2) the nationalistic; and (3) the specifically anti-Jewish aspects. For each of these themes I shall first survey the secondary historical literature in English, then analyze the contents of the magnum opus of the principal figure in the Legion of St. Michael the Archangel (*Pentru Legionari* by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu), and finally offer an Orthodox ethical assessment of the historical reality.

An historical phenomenon such as the Legionary Movement, which was at once broad in its intellectual origins yet narrowly determined in its vision, complex in its public form yet rather simple in emotive spirit, can not be facilely dissected according to component parts, real or imagined, without suffering serious distortions of its integral ethos. The method employed herein, therefore, must be highly tentative and preliminary to a more integrated, systematic evaluation. I shall endeavor to offer such an evaluation in the epilogue. It should be noted at the outset, however, that the method employed throughout

the essay is less empirical than systematic, less historical than theological. No attempt is made to analyze the phenomenon comprehensively in its historical context. The political, social, and broadly cultural significance of the Legionary Movement is not directly relevant to the more limited parameters of this study, which might be aptly delimited as an *explication de text* using the analytical tools proper to a modern moral theologian firmly rooted in a particular confessional tradition-- namely, the theological worldview, systematic ethical heritage, and historical experience of Eastern Orthodox Christianity, together with a contemporary phenomenological approach to religious experience.

BACKGROUND

The biography of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu provides a backdrop to the movement of which he was the founder and principal architect.¹ Codreanu was born in 1899 in northern Moldavia to a Polish father surnamed Zelinski and a Bavarian-Bukovinan mother (nee Brauner). While his hometown of Iasi claimed a sizable Jewish minority,² the young Codreanu was raised in a fervently Romanian home in which his neo-Romanian father fostered a cult-like romanticism of the Romanian forest (*codru* means "forest" in Romanian), ancient Dacian past, and national unity. Codreanu's formal education in the military school of Manastirea Dealului and the law school at the University of Iasi not only prepared him to become a national political leader but also imbued him with the personal discipline, militant ideology, and hostility toward Jews and communists that would characterize both his nationalistic outlook and the flavor of the movement that he generated.

His initial taste of violence in behalf of his emerging nationalistic ideology occurred in Iasi in 1919-1920 as a student leader of an anti-Bolshevik

strike-breaking group known as the Guard of National Conscience. Before he himself was assassinated in November 1938 by authorities of the military prison in Jilava, Codreanu's political odyssey was far-ranging. It encompassed an attempt in 1920 to organize a short-lived National Christian Socialist Party; collaboration with Alexander Cuza in 1923 in the formation of the League of National Christian Defense; and the establishment, upon leaving prison for the first time in 1923, of the youth-oriented Brotherhoods of the Cross. In 1927, together with Ion Mota and four others, he formed the Legion of St. Michael the Archangel as a mystical political movement of youths and peasants whose aim was to rid Romania of foreigners and foreign influence, to rule over a resurrected union of the Romanian people, soil, and government, and to create a new heroic type of Romanian man. In 1930, a militant "protective" combat wing of the Legion was formed in Bessarabia. Though dubbed the Iron Guard, it remained in force for only three years. Finally, Codreanu presented to the voting populace various electoral parties and political front organizations for the Legion, such as the "Zelea Codreanu Group" in 1931 and the *Totul Pentru Tara*, or "All for the Fatherland", Party in 1936.

Although he insisted since 1924 that dedication, sacrifice, and propaganda rather than violence, guns, and force would secure victory for his cause, Codreanu seemed inextricably caught in a web of personal as well as collective violence. Ironically, after each of these nodal moments of his life, Codreanu was lionized as a righteous folk hero by masses of followers including young idealistic students, peasants, and even Orthodox clergy. And yet the carnage between 1924 and 1939 exacted a far heavier toll from Codreanu and his followers than from their enemies: eleven victims or potential victims by Codreanu and his men compared to 501 Legionnaires killed in various ways by the political

authorities. Both totals would escalate by several hundred between September 1940 and January 1941, the period of the short-lived National Legionary State, which his followers considered a vindication at last of Codreanu's "martyrdom" two years earlier. The Legionnaires under Horia Sima and their political rivals in the coalition government with Marshall Ion Antonescu virtually exchanged murder for murder until the final coup by Antonescu on January 21, 1941, which eventually destroyed every vestige of the Legion in Romania.³

Affectionately nicknamed *Capitanul* ("the Captain") by his many and varied followers, Codreanu was feared and despised by his numerous rivals for the soul of the Romanian people and for control of the government in the 1930s. Ironically, with the exception of the suppressed communists and the centrist factions-- the National Peasant Party of Iuliu Maniu and the Liberal Party led by Ion G. Duca and Gheorge Tatarescu-- all of Codreanu's rivals and their organizations were clearly on the right of the political spectrum. In retrospect, it appears that only the relative scope of the appeal to various social and political pressure groups, together with the relative intensity of Romanian nationalism, anti-Jewish and pro-German sentiments, and tight-fisted control of the state apparatus, differentiated Codreanu and the Legionnaires from the many manifestations of these rivals such as the National Union of Nicolae Iorga, the "Blue Shirts" of the National Christian Party, King Carol II, who finally established his own royalist dictatorship in February 1938, and the military fascism of Marshall Antonescu, whose post-Legionary government ultimately became an official German satellite in June 1941. The rise of Codreanu as a charismatic reactionary leader and the growth of the Legion may be viewed, therefore, as part of a general extreme right-wing trend in Romanian politics in the decade of the 1930s. In that

respect, the anti-Semitism and intense Romanian nationalism of Codreanu and his Legion reflected, rather than resisted, the broad-based national culture of the time.

Precisely what role Codreanu's ostensible Romanian Orthodox Christianity played in his movement remains to be seen. That a sharp contrast obtained between the attitudes and behavior toward Jews of the Romanian Orthodox Church's leadership and that, for example, of the neighboring Bulgarian Orthodox Church should give pause to anyone who would stress the apparently religious sources of the anti-Semitism of Codreanu and his Legion. While the anti-Semitism of Romanian Patriarch Miron Cristea was particularly ignominious,⁴ the exemplary moral witness of the Bulgarian Orthodox hierarchs was perhaps unequalled among all of the states of Eastern Europe that were either allied to or conquered by Nazi Germany. Metropolitan Stefan Shokov of Sofia led the entire Bulgarian Holy Synod from the beginning in their unrelenting opposition to anti-Semitic legislation and practices. In the estimation of one historian, "No other man with comparable influence so opposed the government's anti-Semitic policy."⁵ This openly pro-British bishop had opposed Bulgaria's joining the Axis Powers as a military ally in March 1941, and consequently suffered the calumnies of right-wing extremists. Undaunted in the face of these personal attacks and frequent threats of arrest, Stefan's protests ranged from simple objections to the compulsory wearing of the Star of David by converted Jews to a prophetic letter to King Boris in May 1943, "warning him not to persecute the Jews, lest he himself be persecuted" through the judgement of God!⁶

In the light of the radically different legacy of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, Eastern Orthodox Christianity *per se* was obviously not directly causative of the deeply ingrained anti-Semitism of the Romanian Legionary Movement. Perhaps the unique-

ly Romanian context of Codreanu's religious experience was responsible for his political-cultural outlook. Or perhaps the true source of his anti-Semitism was something altogether different and endemic neither to Eastern Orthodoxy in general nor to *any* of its national expressions. This essay will attempt, in short, to discover that alternative.

RELIGION AND ETHICS

Historical Interpretations

The Legionary Movement arose in an era of social upheaval in Romania, but the cultural context was not as amorphous as one might suppose. That the vast majority of Romanians traditionally have identified with Orthodox Christianity is beyond dispute. Similarly, in the pre-communist Romanian nation-state, the Orthodox Church enjoyed a favored legal status, and even since the proclamation of the Socialist Republic in December 1947, that Church has retained a pre-eminence among religious groups. Not surprisingly, therefore, the secondary literature pertaining to the Legion manifests a presumptuousness in identifying Codreanu and his group as Christian and Orthodox in particular. The tendency in these historical interpretations is to label Codreanu "a Christian mystic and ascetic" and to describe the Legionary doctrine in terms of an irrational Orthodox mysticism and a militant authoritarian ethic also derived largely from Orthodox ecclesial models.⁷ Several studies attempt to explain these terms using concrete examples. This paper will argue, among other things, that these historians demonstrate an unwarranted tendency to attribute to Orthodoxy a disproportionate role in the inspiration of Codreanu and the Legion, when, in fact, any specifically Romanian Orthodox element was, at best, tangential.

Two historians in particular betray a propensity for scholastic distinctions that reject out of hand the self-understanding of the Romanian Orthodox themselves, particularly theologians and the episcopate. Gerald J. Bobango dismisses the "formalistic, ritualistic," and "superficial, rather Byzantine Christianity" fostered by the hierarchy in urban centers in conjunction with the state and points to "*rural* Orthodoxy Christianity" as the real religious source of Codreanu's mysticism. This rural variety, he writes, "was of a more fundamental kind, based on the rhythms of the seasons, the agricultural cycle, and the spiritual values of the earth, family, and kinship group as promoted by the simple teachings of his small village church and a village priest who, when not at his altar, worked in the fields with the rest."²⁸ This dichotomy, though forcibly and falsely imposed on the Romanian Orthodox tradition, may point to a deeper truth that has apparently eluded Bobango. His description of "basic peasant religiosity" is right on target; he errs, however, when he insists on calling this rural phenomenon "Orthodox" and when he exaggerates the "collective entity" of state, church, and nation "in the Orthodox country."²⁹ Such features of the uniquely Romanian Legion may be better understood using another terminology and a more sophisticated methodological apparatus, which I shall present in the Epilogue of this essay.

A more grievous expression of anti-Orthodox bias appears in an otherwise perceptive study by Nicholas M. Nagy-Talavera, on which Bobango apparently has relied heavily. Nagy-Talavera emphasizes the same presumed dichotomy within Romanian Orthodoxy, but exhibits a proclivity for harsh, simplistic value judgements. Declaring the Church "an embellishment of the state apparatus and nothing more" and that the individual Orthodox Christian was given to "a rather mechanical exercise of his religion" with a concurrent lack of interest in "personal ethics," this

historian also extolls the "rural Orthodox Christianity" of the peasants as a way of life and "more than just a form," having little in common with the religion of the hierarchy. In fact, according to Nagy-Talavera, this "Romanian peasant Orthodoxy" not only influenced the ideology of the Legion, but "became synonymous with it."¹⁰ This is high praise indeed for the Legion; but this apparent attempt to honor the "noble peasant," as it were, becomes the foundation for an attack on Orthodoxy, in one mode at least, as a causal agent of fascist anti-Semitism in Romania. In an earlier paragraph the author observes that "the common people were given over to their superstitions."¹¹ Again the problem may be one of semantics. But I propose that this peasant religion must be properly identified and labelled if one hopes to discover the intellectual and institutional origins of the anti-Semitism of the Legion of St. Michael the Archangel.

Historical scholarship pertaining to the Legion has produced a consensus of sorts among non-Orthodox historians from Europe and North America in describing the particular religious and ethical components of Codreanu's Orthodox Christian "mysticism." From a phenomenological perspective, these descriptive categories represent a useful basis for analyzing Codreanu's own work, irrespective of the possibility that at least some of the categories do not reflect anything intrinsically Orthodox or even Christian. The conclusions of Barbu, Roberts, Ronnett, Weber, and Nagy-Talavera suggest two sets of relevant categories, one religio-mystical and the other ethical.¹²

The *religio-mystical typology* consists in the following:

(1) *Necessity of faith in God and in the Church.* Active faith in the sovereignty of God and the workings of divine providence was deemed a prerequisite for the "New Man" that Codreanu strove to develop. Such faith was an explicit condition for

membership in the Legion, and Codreanu encouraged members to attend Church every Sunday and on holy days and to pray regularly.

(2) *Explicit Orthodox religious symbols.* The Legion began formally in 1927 after Codreanu had a religious experience, reportedly by a vision, relating to an icon of St. Michael the Archangel, under whose protective patronage Codreanu placed his organization. Codreanu subsequently established a shrine with a duplicate icon featuring the angel as an avenging warrior of God, which shrine Legionnaires were posted to guard around the clock. Each meeting commenced with a religious invocation. The green shirt that Codreanu adopted as the distinctive uniform of his movement was bedecked with a white cross. Yet it should be noted that the swastika also was quite commonly used as a symbol by Legionnaires.¹³ The ramifications of this curious admixture of symbols will be discussed below.

(3) *Christological mysticism.* Personal identification with the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ was encouraged to such an extent that Codreanu himself explicitly compared the injustice of his final imprisonment to the passion of Christ, and his controversial and disputed successor, Horia Sima, became the object of messianic paeans in 1940. The crucifixion-resurrection motif, however, was applied more reasonably to the destiny of the Romanian nation and to that of each Legionnaire. Ion Mota declared before his death in the Spanish Civil War in 1937, "As God resurrected Christ in order to help the good to victory, so will the Legion triumph too-- even if only by a miracle."¹⁴

(4) *Cult of expiatory suffering.* Christological mysticism apparently blended with the deep sense of group loyalty and personal sacrifice fostered by Codreanu and resulted in what is variously termed a "cult of death," a "mystique of death," or a martyr-complex. The concept of self-sacrifice was not

unique to the Legion, but in fact characterizes most radical political or religious movements. The Legionary version seems to have been a direct outgrowth of the incredible violence perpetrated against the Legion by government authorities and rival groups, the magnitude of which exceeded even the assassinations and brutal murders committed by Legionnaires. The most striking feature of Legionary martyrdom was its conscious expiatory character. Generally eschewing violence, especially during his last imprisonment when he endeavored to make his final peace with God, Codreanu nevertheless accepted occasional acts of vengeance, justifying the violence only through the voluntary sacrifice, or expiatory martyrdom, of the Legionnaires involved. This fervent belief in the necessity of suffering for knowingly doing evil, whatever the political exigencies that required it, in order to "reestablish the balance of absolute Legionary purity"¹⁵ led to the unusual custom of Legionary assassins voluntarily surrendering to the police or political authorities and confessing their guilt!

(5) *Messianic crusading spirit.* Codreanu viewed the divine mission of the Legion, in Weber's insightful phrase, as "a great struggle between good and evil, presented in chiliastic, increasingly apocalyptic accents."¹⁶ The enemies of Romania, above all the "Jewish-communists," were considered the enemies of God, so Codreanu consciously projected an image of the Legion as an assemblage of Crusaders with a holy commission to liberate Romania of its Jews. Weber prefers to identify the Legion as "a revivalist movement with strong religious overtones."¹⁷

The ethical typology that may be gleaned from these secondary sources consists in the following:

(1) *Sectarian outlook with limited regard for outsiders.* Barbu contends that the Legion had a "Manichean vision of the world" that gave rise to "a

sectarian concept of morality"-- "that of a closed group: 'good,' 'right,' 'honest' were terms which it applied to whatever and whomsoever supported its cause."¹⁸ Weber perceives "a very utilitarian and didactic moralism,"¹⁹ but the recipients of ethical actions would necessarily have been confined to those deemed worthy by the Legion-- namely, ethnic Romanians, particularly the lower classes and Legionnaires. A limited form of social justice was urged: discrimination against Romanians was forbidden, regardless of their social class; but "justice" toward the numerous "enemies" catalogued by Codreanu took the form of aggression including personal animosity, physical dispossession, and even violence. Barbu attributes this intense sectarianism to the social origins of the Legionnaires, who represented a socially "marginal" group of erstwhile peasant aspirants to middle class status.²⁰ Weber suggests that psychological rather than sociological factors were decisive: Legionnaires were mostly persistent young idealists who refused to allow their ideals to be equated with arrested adolescence by the larger, mature, but morally lax society.²¹

(2) *Justification of retribution.* Vengeance even to the extent of violence (to be expiated through voluntary suffering, as indicated above) was a key element of the moral code. Dishonesty toward enemies was disallowed, but Codreanu urged like treatment for the behavior of others toward Legionnaires. Retribution in kind, even when "evil," was Codreanu's policy. Thus, self-defense and vengeance took precedence over the Christian ethic of forgiveness and turning the other cheek. But these "necessary evils" were justified through an ethical calculus of intentionality: the Legionnaire was expected to engage in such un-Christian behavior for the sake of his fellows and for the nation, even at the risk of his eternal salvation. The violence and counter-violence that plagued the life of the Legion

finally reached, according to Weber, "a sort of Gotterdammerung" on January 21, 1941, when the post-Codreanu Legionary State suffered its final defeat in a coup by co-ruler Marshall Antonescu.²² By that time, however, according to the virtually unanimous consensus of historians, whatever Christian ethic the Legion claimed was nominal at best.

(3) *Militant group discipline and personal virtues.* That the organizational structure of the Legion was authoritarian and elitist is generally agreed. The local unit, called a "nest" (*cuib*), was designed to promote within its ranks and in the society at large an "aristocracy of virtue" with leaders representing the most virtuous or meritorious members. Codreanu's social ethic, if such a term is appropriate, was the "nest" writ large, the Legionnaires furnishing the natural charismatic leaders of society. The Legion's moral code was therefore designed to foster a militant discipline with primary loyalty directed to the "nest"-- all in order to create the "New Man" that Codreanu envisioned would lead Romania into a messianic age. Codreanu established six "rules" or virtues in which each Legionnaire would be trained: discipline (or absolute obedience and loyalty to the nest leader), work, silence, self-education, mutual aid, and honor.

The Primary Document

In the light of these historians' interpretations, Codreanu's own testament appears variably more crude or more profound in its religious and moral content. *Pentru Legionari* ("For My Legionnaires") was a collection of diary-like entries and mini-treatises that Codreanu assembled and published in April 1936, two and a half years before his murder by government officials.²³ There is no systematic structure to the assembled thoughts and tales aside

from a rough chronological order. Even within the excursi, in which Codreanu outlined his political and religious philosophies, the flow of argument is often uneven. Consequently, for the purpose of this essay, I shall eschew a summary of Codreanu's doctrines in accordance with his own manner of presentation and present them instead in more systematic typologies in order to facilitate an ethical assessment of his thought. Codreanu's religious and ethical doctrines appear as follows. First the religious dimension:

(1) *Faith in God and spiritual orientation.*

"All of us believed in God," Codreanu declared, and "our preoccupations were directed to God and toward contact with our own dead and those of the nation."²⁴ This was the keynote of Codreanu's "mysticism": a fervent belief in the closeness of the Almighty and a kinship with his Romanian ancestors-- a paradoxical experience that entailed the immanence of the transcendent or supernatural. This faith in God energized the Legion and fortified its sense of divine mission and providential care. In particular, Codreanu was convinced of the value and power of the spiritual over the merely material or rational. By denying the presumed need for a detailed, practical "program," "the goddess Reason" was toppled from her usual place in modern societies. "The absolute rule of matter was overthrown," Codreanu explained, "so it could be replaced by the rule of the spirit, of moral values."²⁵

(2) *Explicit Orthodox religious symbols.* On this score, the standard histories are quite correct. In his re-telling of the origins of the Legion, Codreanu painstakingly detailed the role of the icon of St. Michael "that protected us in the Vacaresti prison."²⁶ The mystical flavor of this cult is obvious in Codreanu's remark that the greater the difficulty encountered by the Legion, the more they would "seek the protection of St. Michael the Archangel and the shadow of his sword. He was no

longer for us an image on an icon, but very much alive. There at the icon, we took turns keeping watch, night and day, candle burning."²⁷ Was this an expression of authentic Orthodox piety or of cultic romanticism? Perhaps Codreanu provided the answer when he quoted from the first issue of the first publication of the Legion, *Pamantul Stramosesc* ("The Ancestral Land"). Appearing in direct succession were, first, an excerpt of an article by Ion Mota about the inspiration afforded by the famous icon and by Jesus Christ and, second, an excerpt of an article by Corneliu Georgescu invoking the gods of "ancient Hellas" in order to inspire the Legionary "fighters" to "victory and triumph."²⁸ Athens and Jerusalem together united? More likely Codreanu had Romania and heaven in mind: "Here we were now with the axis of our movement already fixed; one end rooted in the earth of our Fatherland, the other in the heavens: 'The Ancestral Land' and Michael the Archangel."²⁹

(3) *Christological mysticism*. All of Codreanu's references in *Pentru Legionari* to the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ occur in passages where he focused chiefly or exclusively on the Romanian nation. The final aim of the nation was not life or mere animal survival, but "resurrection" in the name of Christ!³⁰ This will be discussed further in the section on nationalism. Suffice it to say here that Codreanu's use of this admittedly explicit christological theme was more in the nature of a literary motif. God had given the Romanians, like other people, a mission, which they had never deserted even when they were forced to take the "Golgotha Way."³¹ Using a similar metaphor, Codreanu expressed a hope in the eventual "resurrection" of Romanians through the redemptive sacrifice of the blood of Legionnaires.³²

(4) *Victory through death*. The last reference to redemptive sacrifice notwithstanding, this theme of death and sacrifice recurs frequently, but not in

the sense of expiatory suffering or personal acts of violence that the historians and Constantin Papanace-- a post-Codreanu leader of one Legionary faction-- claim. In *Pentru Legionari*, Codreanu encouraged the martyrdom, if necessary, of his followers not so much as a form of Christian repentance, but as a practical means toward the political end of victory for the Legion. When Legionnaires could no longer suffer humiliation at the hands of their enemies, they were to retreat to the mountains, from which in classic Romanian style they could later attack or fight back. Always the pragmatist, Codreanu knew that stirring up rebellion among the masses "would result in spreading only misfortune and sorrow." The immediate outlook was bleak indeed: "The blood of all of us will flow."³³ In the long run, however, this blood "could eventually bring this people more good than all the frustrated endeavors of our lifetime." For others among the ranks of the Legion would avenge these deaths: "not being able to win while alive, we will win dying." Rather than following the example of voluntary redemptive suffering provided by Christ, Codreanu urged martyrdom as a spur to the dubious, un-Christian act of vengeance. The "peace of mind and strength" that came to Codreanu and the Legionnaires after they realized the efficacy and practical utility of death was hardly the "peace that passeth all understanding."³⁴

(5) *Messianic crusading spirit.* Codreanu frequently referred to divine "mission" in a variety of contexts including the nation (as alluded to above) as well as the Legion itself. The purpose of the Legion, Codreanu averred, was to create the "New Man" (see below). The messianic crusading zeal that accompanied this mission is evidenced in Codreanu's vow: "Moving forward in a united front, with the help of God and the Romanian people's justice, no matter what destiny awaited us-- that of being vanquished or

that of death-- it would be a blessed one and it would bear fruit for our people."³⁵ Codreanu's emphasis on "enemies" that Western non-Orthodox historians have detected was indeed pronounced, as the discussion about anti-Semitism will indicate. But it should be noted that the crusading spirit that motivated this anti-Semitism was ostensibly religious in character: Codreanu attributed the mission of the Legion directly to God.

The distinctively ethical dimension of Codreanu's ideology may be outlined as follows:

(1) *New Man*. This anthropological concept was the *telos* of Codreanu's fundamentally consequentialist ethic. Actually this vision formed a nexus between his religious and ethical thought and represents a more decisive category than the sectarian morality perceived by the Western historians. To be sure, the latter also typified the ideology of the Legion, but its ground was the "New Man" (*Omul Nou*). The New Man would emerge from the "legionary school" as a heroic model "to do battle and win over the enemies of our Fatherland, his battle and victory having to extend even beyond the material world into the realm of invisible enemies, the powers of evil."³⁶ Blended with this spiritual mysticism was a practical, political *savoir faire*. The New Man would know how to develop specific programs, organize the state, persuade other Romanians, and "solve the Jewish problem." The powers to do so would be "implanted in his soul" by God; in fact, he would be a man "in whom all the possibilities of human grandeur that are implanted by God in the blood of our people be developed to the maximum" (sic).³⁷ Obviously Codreanu painted a confusing picture as to *how* this New Man would be able to acquire the practical knowledge needed in the future messianic era of Romania. The New Man was to be first and foremost a Romanian who drew his heroic virtues and wisdom either indirectly from mystical powers that

God had bestowed upon the Romanian bloodline or directly from his personal God-given abilities. The meaning and role of "soul" here were unspecified, and it is doubtful that Codreanu had the particularly Orthodox Christian concept in mind. Moreover, the precise causal connection between this soul-mysticism and Codreanu's concrete moral code seems unclear, although Codreanu affirmed the necessity for moral struggle in order to develop the "New Man". Codreanu apparently argued that only the "New Man" would be truly virtuous, and since only ethnic Romanians had the potential for becoming "New" in this sense, non-Romanians could not even aspire to moral purity. Thus, the sectarian morality described by the historians was a logical extension of Codreanu's fundamental anthropological-ethical concept.

(2) *Inconsistent view of violence.* Codreanu appears to have been genuinely torn by the immoral prospect of violence as a means toward his self-consciously moral ends. Morality and utility often were at odds, and Codreanu's decisions oscillated between them, sometimes rejecting violence categorically even as the Legion's "moral being was being ripped apart" and sometimes threatening perplexingly to "spread death and mercy" to "all the Jewish wasp nests."³⁸ There was thus an implicit justification for retribution when useful to the attainment of his ends, just as there was an explicit rationale for the utility of death, as discussed above. In neither case, however, did Codreanu offer in *Pentru Legionari* the elaborate moral arguments that some historians have contended were popular within the Legion.³⁹

(3) *Moral perfectionism and ethical norms.* Even a cursory examination of what Codreanu himself termed "the first ethical norms of legionary life" reveals the injustice that Western historians render Codreanu when they over-emphasize the authoritarian character of his moral code, allowing the group context to overshadow the significance of the particular virtues

or "norms."⁴⁰ The explicit purpose of Codreanu's moral code was to "create an atmosphere, a moral medium in which the heroic man can be born and can grow."⁴¹ The vaunted militant group discipline aimed instead at an antinomical balance between the principles of "authority" and "liberty," or the collective and the individual. Love, particularly the love that "our Saviour offered all nations of the world," was the foundation of both principles. Love was defined as "a synthesis of all human qualities," which Christ placed "above all virtues."⁴² Thus, love ought to characterize the "New Man", who was the goal of all ethics; in turn, the collectivity of individual "New Men" would transform Romanian society. Before the "New Man" could "defeat the powers of evil and crush the clique of evil-doers" (note the violent language), he would "first have to overcome *the evil* within himself and within his men."⁴³ Codreanu, therefore, derived his social ethic from a sense of personal moral perfectionism. The "nest" was designed as little more than a moral "work camp," where the *individual* Legionnaire could isolate himself from the outside world with all of its "dangerous winds of cowardice, corruption, licentiousness, and of all the passions which entomb nations and murder individuals."⁴⁴ Having strengthened his moral character, the Legionnaire would then "be sent into the world" to live, fight, work, suffer, and sacrifice in behalf of the Fatherland. The "New Man" that Codreanu envisioned was this perfected, morally strong Romanian who blended his individuality into the greater good of the nation.

Finally, Codreanu specified eight ethical norms as means toward this goal: (1) "moral purity," which included the conquest of "the passions," an unmistakably Orthodox concept referring to irrational emotions that upset a person's inner spiritual harmony; (2) "disinterestedness in battle"-- an ascet-

icism that sacrificed personal bodily comfort for the mission; (3) "enthusiasm," epitomized by the expression of inner feelings in song-- a practice enshrined in Romanian heroic epics; (4) "faith, work, order, hierarchy, discipline"-- a strange conglomeration that pointed toward obedience to authority; (5) "the energy and moral force of our nation"-- a somewhat vague concept; (6) "justice" as taught and promoted by the Legion, hence a sectarian rather than universal version; (7) "deeds"; and (8) "suffering and sacrifice" directed toward the creation of a new Romania.⁴⁵

Ethical Analysis

The Christian, specifically Orthodox, quality of the ideology of Codreanu and his Legion is less than overwhelming. Indeed, the Orthodox Christian component was at most muted, or perhaps one should say transmuted, into something radically different, even antithetical. This conclusion seems unavoidable whether one considers Codreanu's written version of his ideology alone or also allows for the actual religious and ethical practices of the Legion on which most historians concentrate, perhaps excessively, given the essentially ideological thrust of the Legion.

Despite the icon cult and the occasional mention of Christ by name or as ethical exemplar, any overtly Christian content to Codreanu's religious and ethical thought was generally buried beneath a superstructure derived from outside the Orthodox Christian tradition. Curiously, nowhere did he mention the Orthodox Church by name. Lest this fact fail to impress anyone familiar with the osmotic role of that Church in Romanian culture, it should be noted that neither did Codreanu seem to allow the Church any role whatsoever as means *or* end of his "spiritual" vision.⁴⁶

His spiritual style, moreover, was highly charismatic personally and vague and ambiguous in content-- and probably deliberately so. For however often he might have urged his followers to attend church, the truly vital religious institution for Codreanu was his own Legion. Indeed, the Legion amounted to a *para*-Church.

The indications of this overlooked reality are themselves legion. First, the Legion could boast of its own cultic symbolism and practices, particularly the green shirts. The exclusive possessiveness with which Codreanu *et al* regarded *their* icon of St. Michael and the saint himself as patron-protector also betrayed a perversion of the Orthodox theology of icons. Moreover, Codreanu saw nothing anachronistic in combining Christian and pagan Greek symbols whether as literary devices or as material phenomena.

Second, a philosophy of history was expressed through the use of the crucifixion-resurrection theme, which, whatever significance these historical events had for Codreanu (and it seems minimal) was harnessed exclusively in service of a romantic nationalism.

Third, the Legion had its own cult of martyrdom not for the sake of faith in Christ, but for more mundane reasons such as a better Romania. The belief in the value of expiatory sacrifice, which, though not documented in *Pentru Legionari*, was evidenced in the lives of some Legionnaires, *may* have had a christological or biblical basis-- for Codreanu's concept formally paralleled the Old Testament theological concept of expiation. A marked contrast obtains, however, insofar as the sacrificial animals of the Old Testament and the Lamb of God in the New were themselves physically or morally pure from the outset. A transition between Christ's suffering and the expected sacrifice of Legionary assassins might have formed part of Codreanu's conception, but the illogic of this connection suggests that the true

inspiration for the cult of expiatory suffering may lie outside Christian tradition. The functional value of death recognized by Codreanu in his testament was entirely lacking in Christian inspiration.

Fourth, the Legion's "divine mission" was thoroughly secular in scope but religious in implementation. God was the ostensible source of this mission, but its character was acutely divisive and apocalyptic: the "good" Romanians were to be separated from the evil enemy "chaff." The crusading zeal especially against Jews hardly conformed to the Orthodox Christian tradition, which has stressed a saving love that transfigures the world and has consciously rejected the crusading spirit as destructive and immoral, at least since the Fourth Crusade wreaked havoc in Constantinople in 1204 A.D.⁴⁷ Again a merely formal parallel existed between the Legion's crusade mission and those that occurred in the history of Western Christendom.

Fifth, the material goal of the Legion, the "New Man" that Codreanu envisioned, seems a pale imitation of the "new creature" in Christ to which St. Paul points in the New Testament (2 Corinthians 5:17). More importantly, Codreanu may have modeled his anthropological concept after the doctrine of *theosis* ("deification") in the Orthodox tradition. However, instead of any man being able to grow in the image and likeness of God through the synergistic exercise of his will in conformity to God's, in Codreanu's version ethnic Romanians alone were capable of perfecting their natural qualities in the likeness of a mythic-heroic ideal. In lieu of personal relations between God and man, Codreanu posited a political relation between nation and hero. In lieu of ethical virtues as the mode of personal activity whereby any man participates in the "energies" of God, Codreanu proffered ethical norms as means of fortifying the hero for his struggle to

assist Romanians in the construction of a new messianic society-- for Romanians.

Sixth, the organizational unit of the Legion, the "nest," represented a church in miniature and not merely a highly disciplined political club. Its hierarchical structure was akin to the monarchical episcopate; the loyalty expected of the membership took second place to no other institution including the Church; its operative ethic of love was directed primarily toward the Legionnaires themselves and secondarily toward other ethnic Romanians-- a sectarian spirit that regrettably could claim ample precedent in Christian practice, if not theology. From another ecclesiastical perspective, the "nest" was an imitation monastery replete with its own rules of discipline.

Seventh, the Legion developed its own "just war" doctrine, drawing no doubt from Orthodox moral theology and praxis but adapting the justification of violence to its own peculiar political-cultural ends. Political actions such as murder-- immoral by the Christian standard for individuals-- were justifiable in the larger context of the nation, which required them as means to desired "moral" ends. This teleological style seems somewhat similar, coincidentally of course, to the contemporary Protestant Reinhold Niebuhr's ethical dichotomy between moral man and immoral society.⁴⁸ But unlike Niebuhr and more in tune with Orthodox tradition, the resort to political violence was still considered evil or sin for the individuals who engaged in such acts; consequently a penance was mandated, which usually took the form of voluntary surrender to the political authorities and eventual execution. What sharply differentiated the Legionary justification for violence from its Christian antecedent was the unabashed glorification of vengeance and retribution. Whatever Christian content had inspired Codreanu *et*

a/, it had metamorphosed into something quite ugly and self-serving.

Eighth, the Legion had its own general moral code. The references to Christ's love notwithstanding, Codreanu's ethic was a thorough-going consequentialist ethic. He did not regard the ethical norms or virtues that he elucidated as intrinsically valuable or as deriving their value from the authoritative, exemplary life and teachings of Christ. If there were any spiritual origin, it was the direct "implanting" of the virtues in the "soul" by "God." The catalog of virtues was simply useful, albeit necessary, in order to achieve the goal of a new Romanian and a new Romania. This was exemplified in Codreanu's insight that sacrificial death could prove useful in spurring other Legionnaires on to ultimate victory. Thus, the moral perfectionism expected of the individual was merely prologue to the unbounded devotion that would characterize the relations of Legionnaires with one another, and this sectarian ethic was the model for Codreanu's social ethic, which amounted to nothing more than the former writ large.

In short, the religious and ethical dimensions of Codreanu's Legionary ideology were at most vestigially Orthodox Christian. Vaguely theistic and intensely worldly are more accurate terms. He freely borrowed from an Orthodoxy close to hand what he could use or transform in accordance with his unique agenda; in some respects the diffuse Orthodox Christianity *within* the Romanian national experience surfaced perhaps unwittingly in Codreanu's ideology. But his Legion basically represented a rival to the existing Church in both the institutional and ideological senses. By the time he wrote *Pentru Legionarii* in 1936, it was clear that the real or seeming Orthodox Christian aspects of the Legion were mere window dressing for a rather unlikely edifice.

NATIONALISM

Historical Interpretations

The historiography of the Legion addresses the role of nationalism in Legionary ideology in terms of two themes: fascism and the unique Romanian "national character." Before turning to the several historians who offer explanations of Codreanu's nationalism specifically, I shall review the debate pertaining to the first theme and note the few discussions of the second theme.

Those historians who have termed the Legion "fascist" differ in their use both of this term and of the name "Iron Guard" for the Legion itself. Since the militant image conjured up by the latter term is one of the most determinative factors in the identification of fascism in Romania, it is surprising that so many historians have simply presumed its appropriateness as an alternate name for the entire Legion. Bela Vago, for example, notes the different dates of origin for each entity, but dismisses this fact by declaring that "the two were in practice the same from the beginning," while Roberts stresses the identity of the two "in effect."⁴⁷ Others, including Barbu, Nagy-Talavera, A. Deac, T. Georgescu, and Stephen Fischer-Galati, are not even this circumspect and use the names interchangeably.⁴⁸ Both Ronnett and Bobango, however, have carefully noted the historical development of the Iron Guard, and Weber retains the proper designation of Codreanu's movement as the Legion.⁴⁹ Quite simply, the Iron Guard was a sort of "combat" wing of the Legion founded in 1930 in order to "protect" the Legionnaires in their admittedly aggressive forays into "Jewish-communist" Bessarabia. This unit faded in name and function in 1933 when Codreanu opted for a parliamentary approach to political power, but the appellation stuck with

Codreanu's political enemies and became common among those outside Romania who knew of the Legion.

Although Weber and Bobango have demonstrated the folly of describing the self-consciously Romanian Legion-- at least before Codreanu's death-- as a Nazi movement, whether directly in the employ of Hitler or merely a conscious imitation of the German Nazi Party,³² the consensus of Western historians affirms the fascist character of the Legion. Even Bobango resorts to "virulent" and "fascist-like" as adjectives for the nationalism of the Legion, while arguing strenuously in behalf of the uniquely Romanian social and political context that produced the Legion.³³ Four scholars have furnished reasonable analyses of Legionary fascism, although their methods, however sophisticated from the standpoint of the social sciences, are largely deductive.³⁴

First, Roberts describes the Legion as "an authentic Romanian fascist movement," which only paralleled certain traits in the Italian or German models.³⁵ Despite this emphasis on authenticity, Roberts still classifies the Legion as fascist. He lists with some approval the various definitive characteristics of this term such as the "death rattle of monopoly capitalism," anti-Semitism and racial glorification, national chauvinism, and dictatorship plus "hooliganism." But ultimately he prefers to define fascism more broadly as "an irrational reaction against an unsolved problem in the body politic, or, more precisely, in the context of an industrial or industrializing economy." This applies readily to the Legion, as it might to a vast host of political enterprises.

Second, Fischer-Galati has endorsed Roberts' list of commonly accepted characteristics as a singular explanation of the actual sequential development of Romanian fascism.³⁶ Fischer-Galati, however, would place Roberts' second criterion at the end of this chain of "growing significance." Codreanu's

philosophy became "the doctrine of 'pure' Romanian fascism." A populist anti-capitalism "remained a cornerstone" in theory, but Codreanu had to concentrate *temporarily* on the Jew and the peasants' communist enemy in order to win the support of peasants attracted more readily to the National Peasant Party of Iuliu Maniu. By 1934, according to Fischer-Galati, only this anti-Semitism among Roberts' criteria "could be identified as an integral component of Guardist fascism," for their "chauvinism, hooliganism, and notions of dictatorship" were rather ill-defined or not distinctively Legionary. The Legion emerged as a full-fledged fascist movement only in the crucible forged by their numerous enemies in 1937 and thereafter, and by the alluring successes of fascism in Germany, Italy, and Spain. Fischer-Galati may be overemphasizing anti-Semitism as a criterion of fascism in Romania, for Roberts coupled this phenomenon with "racial glorification," a dimension virtually absent from Codreanu's thought, as I shall indicate below.

Third, Barbu defines fascism as "a complex phenomenon," a "type of socio-political movement" with four distinctive features: (1) a collective reaction to "a crisis of social solidarity and identity normally attributed to the decline of the traditional and ethnic characteristics of the community"; (2) "strong tendencies toward an authoritarian and para-military type of organization"; (3) "visible totalitarian elements" insofar as the party represents "an archetype of society as a whole"; (4) emotional, revivalistic, "regressive forms of social organization."⁵⁷ Barbu concludes confidently that among all the political movements and parties in interwar Romania *only* the "Iron Guard" fit this definition of fascism. This is a bold contention in light of the history of Cuza's League of National Christian Defense. Moreover, one suspects that Barbu

may have tailored his four-part definition to fit the history of the Legion.

Finally, Weber's approach is clearly comparative and his method sociological.³⁸ He notes at the outset the social conditions in Romania that differed sharply from the Western European societies where fascism originated and flourished. This forces Weber to modify the widespread view that fascism is "the ideology of a declining bourgeois society."³⁹ Romania was an under-industrialized peasant country with no sizable bourgeoisie, where nationalism was so integral to the national consensus that no party could succeed by attacking anti-nationalists or organized workers. Indeed the Legion's attacks on the bourgeoisie "resembled other fascist movements which never appear as the last weapon of liberal finance capitalism, but rather as its doom." What the Legion shared with the Western fascist movements, in Weber's view, was, first, an "organic view of the nation" that led to a collectivism in favor of the most neglected segments of the nation; and, second, a revolutionary radicalism untempered in Romania, however, by the competitive political maneuvering against leftists in the West that "cast the fascists as the unlikely allies of the forces of order or reaction."⁴⁰ In Romania, Legionary and other brands of fascism differed from their kindred spirits not in their activities or use of slogans, but rather because of this potential for a purer, unencumbered radicalism. Codreanu's "doctrine of radical reform" was essentially a combination of "populism" and "sectarian elitism" dressed in the language of a "social nationalism" opposed to all perceived oppressors, both foreign and domestic.⁴¹ This language also appealed to those supposedly oppressed by the established political order, especially peasants, workers, patriots, and men of goodwill who were offended by the immorality of the system of governance.

The potential usefulness of such cross-cultural social and political typologies notwithstanding, perhaps a more genuine approach to Legionary and Romanian nationalism is one that starts with the Romanian scene itself rather than a *priori* political concepts of which nationalism is at most one component. In this respect several historians introduce their empirical observations about the *unique* Romanian context that produced Codreanu's political philosophy. The key theme in the portrayals of the Romanian "national character" by Nagy-Talavera, Barbu, and Bobango is the so-called *national inferiority complex*. Centuries of colonial domination⁴² and the relatively late achievement of political independence as a nation⁴³ led to low self-esteem as a people. Several additional factors in Romanian society during Codreanu's early years exacerbated these feelings. Nagy-Talavera cites the following:

...the absence of a Romanian middle class, almost complete foreign domination of the economy, the precarious international position of the new state between the giant Russian Empire and the formidable Dual Monarchy (with *irredentas* in both cases), the backwardness of the country, the people's almost Oriental indolence, and the refusal of the upper classes to have anything to do with Romanian values (because that would have meant peasant values).⁴⁴

After 1918, according to this view, not much changed. Bobango suggests only that a phoenix-like Germany and an ambitious Hungary with *irredentas* supplanted the Dual Monarchy on one side, and that the efforts to decrease foreign control over resources and capital were hardly successful; otherwise the picture was about the same.⁴⁵ As often happens in the psychology of nations burdened with such a "complex," many Ro-

manian intellectuals developed what Barbu terms "a strong positive self-reference" in their search for identity, which consisted of reviving the three chief ways by which they had "inflated their self consciousness as a nation" in the past-- namely, "by stressing their latinity, their Christianity and their traditional rural way of life."⁶⁶ Thus, the anti-foreign sentiments that erupted in this period were basically the negative side, or inverse, of this self-assertion.

Bobango and Nagy-Talavera go one step further and indicate that the *anti-foreigner* theme is a major trait in its own right.⁶⁷ Neither a mere projection of the sense of inferiority nor a matter of racism as in Germany, this hostility toward foreigners was a perennial form of nationalistic devotion to the ethnic community that had been "invaded" by Greeks, Armenians, Hungarians, Russians, and especially Jews seeking to exploit the land, the national wealth, and the people.

Closely related to these themes are two others. An *ancestor cult*⁶⁸ blended veneration for heroic forefathers and devotion to the Romanian soil. The semi-mythical *Haiduc*-- a forest-dwelling Robin Hood figure-- loomed large in popular peasant folklore and inspired Romanian peasants in particular to forge mystical links between their own heroic ancestors and the living. The Legion created a powerful rite wherein the names of the honored dead were announced at "nest" meetings, to which someone would respond "Present"! Another cultic practice in the Legion was the bag of native soil that each Legionnaire wore around his neck. This soil came from the historic Romanian battlegrounds where the blood of heroes had mingled through the centuries, thereby producing *pamantul stramosesc* ("earth of our forefathers").⁶⁹ The other theme-- *populism*-- exerted a powerful influence on all Romanian politics and expressions of nationalism, above all Codreanu's Legion. Obviously

rooted in the historical role of Romania's massive peasant majority, *poporanismul* derived its major intellectual thrust from the works of Constantin Stere, a Bessarabian who around 1907 called for a "rural Romanian democracy" that eschewed class struggle or industrialization in favor of a dynamic free peasantry composed of landowners organized in cooperative societies, with minimal urban manufacturing and cottage industries for the winter months. Hand in glove with Stere's economic vision was an anti-foreigner animus directed against any groups that interfered with the national peasant "genius".⁷⁰

Evaluations of Codreanu's nationalism include the concise phrases "religious nationalism," "mystical nationalism," and "misty national rejuvenation."⁷¹ Fischer-Galati represents the consensus of historians in his summary statement: "Codreanu held out national rejuvenation, moral rearmament, and, above all, a national Christian social and moral crusade against all betrayers of what the Legionnaires believed to be the true national historic legacy."⁷² Most observers who comment on Codreanu's peculiar nationalism point to his overarching "fascism" and/or cite the national character traits discussed above: his anti-foreigner posture, ancestor reverence, and populism, as well as another negative thrust against "corrupt" political bureaucrats. This *politicianismul* appealed especially to peasants and unemployed youths who resented the empty promises, useless programs, and self-aggrandizement of the ruling classes and wished "to restore the goodness of a mythical Romanian past and purge the corruption of a real Romanian present."⁷³ *Politicianismul*, however, did not keep Codreanu from forming his own political party (*Totul Pentru Tara*, or "All for the Fatherland") for the parliamentary election in 1936, but this tactic also reveals a moderating tendency of Codreanu's militant radicalism. Bobango prefers in

fact to label Codreanu's movement "an indigenous Right-Radicalism" because of its deference to "traditional" religion and nationalism as well as the populist dream of restructuring the existing order.⁷⁴ The curious blend of religion and nationalism perceived by several historians is epitomized in the following statement by Vasile Marin, a Legionnaire who died alongside Ion Mota in the Spanish Civil War:

Through the national mystique a man is born who will be divorced from the prevailing materialism of the present age-- instead, he will pass through a school of heroism. He will become a man of cardinal virtues, a hero, a priest, an ascetic and a pure, virtuous knight.⁷⁵

This "national mystique," a phrase used by Codreanu himself, also featured another philosophical dimension that only two commentators have reported, one incorrectly. Nagy-Talavera cites "Iron Guardist ideologue" Nichifor Crainic's concept of the nation as "a natural personality" that along with other such nations "participates in the hierarchical order of the Christian spirit." But he erroneously attributes this view to Orthodox Christianity "in practice."⁷⁶ Ronnett is closer to the truth on this subject. He proffers that the "second pillar" of the Legion was "the idea of nationality." Codreanu taught accordingly that "the nations are not products of history and geography, but Divine creations," each with "a mission to fulfill in the world." Ronnett concludes, less persuasively in light of the anti-Semitism of the Legion, that the Legion was not racist, for "all the citizens of Romania who partake of the national spirit" were deemed Romanians-- an ambiguous reference presumably based on Codreanu's nationalist idea.⁷⁷ That this particular idea was influential in the Legion even after Codreanu's death is evidenced

in the reformulation of it by Horia Sima, the *Capitanul's* disputed successor. Sima observed in 1937 that Codreanu had stressed the greater significance of the nation in the sense of the living and the dead over that of the actual national collectivity at any given time. Moreover, a nation could justify its existence only through the creation of its own culture.⁷⁶

Finally, of all of these attempts to explain Codreanu's fanatical Romanian nationalism only one highlights the irony of Codreanu's actual ancestry. Whether or not Codreanu was truly Romanian, Weber muses that "the foreign resonance of his name recalls the frequent phenomenon of nationalist leaders stemming from border regions, like Hitler and Degrelle, or from assimilated national groups, like Szalasi, Gombos, and Iorga."⁷⁷

The Primary Document

A careful scrutiny of *Pentru Legionari* generally confirms the perceptions of those historians who have commented on the peculiarly Romanian features of Codreanu's nationalism. In this examination I shall focus on those philosophical and mystical aspects on which Codreanu himself dwells, deferring discussion of the anti-foreigner theme and the national inferiority complex to the section of this essay on anti-Semitism. Nor will any attempt be made to diagnose symptoms of fascism in Codreanu's thought. The lack of a consensus among the historians even in the simple procedural matter of definition discounts the immediate value of such a concept in this context. Also, the spotlight in the present essay is directed toward Codreanu's nationalism in its own right as a ground of Romanian anti-Semitism rather than as a component in a larger comparative political study.

The overwhelming impression afforded by a few *ad hoc* nationalistic statements and the "mini-treatise" on nationhood is that of a veritable religion of nationalism. In his testament, as only Ronnett and Nagy-Talavera have reported, Codreanu presented a philosophical model for the meanings and roles of nations in history and then applied this system to Romania. Whether his Romanianism truly derived from this intellectual process or whether he originally projected his personal experience as a Romanian onto a general abstract framework as an *ex post facto* rationalization cannot be determined from a study of *Pentru Legionari* alone. In any event, by the time Codreanu wrote his testament in 1936, his thinking on this subject had crystallized to the point that his philosophy of nationalism *per se* and his Romanianism were logically integrated, perhaps inseparable. In particular, three pseudo-religious/ philosophical categories emerge as decisive in his system: soul, land or soil, and *telos*.

The notion of a "Romanian *soul*" parallels that of the "Russian soul" so widespread in the nineteenth century, but the similarity was hardly due to the common Orthodox Christian tradition in the two cultures. Codreanu's idea was religiously grounded insofar as in his theistic version God was posited as the ultimate cause, but the style and content of his argument reveals a greater debt to the Romanian ancestor cult. In an explanation of what he termed "the national mystique," Codreanu used the powerful term "soul" in a vague, mystical way befitting the title:

If Christian mystique aiming at ecstasy is man's contact with God, through a "jump from human nature into the divine one" (Crainic), national mystique is nothing more than *man's contact*, or that of the multitude, with the soul of their people, through a jump

outside of personal preoccupations into the eternal life of the people. Not intellectually, for this could be done by any historian, but *living*, with their souls.[ⓐ]

Entwined within this brief, albeit tortured, statement are the twin components of Codreanu's fundamental idea: the "soul" of a nation is that collectivity which transcends both the individual and time. Codreanu constructed a hierarchy of created orders with the "individual" at the base (but at least afforded some worth in contrast to true fascist ideologies[ⓑ]), the "national objectivity"-- the totality of individuals in a state at any given amount-- at the mid-point, and the authentic "nation" at the pinnacle. The latter Codreanu defined as that "historical entity whose life extends over the centuries, its roots imbedded deep in the mists of time, and with an infinite future."[ⓐ] Only this trans-temporal understanding could thwart the inevitable tendency of a nation perceived in the middle sense alone to sacrifice the future interests of its people to present interests. Thus, the true composition of the Romanian nation, for example, was all Romanians alive at the time, "all the souls of our dead and the tombs of our ancestors," and all who would be born as Romanians in the future![ⓑ] Without making the connection explicit, Codreanu seems at last to have described this national soul concretely as the "spiritual patrimony" that a nation possesses. Included within this category are the nation's (a) concept of God, the world, and human life; (b) its sense of honor in conformity to (a); and (c) its culture, "the domain of arts and thought," "the expression of national genius, of the blood." It is this spiritual patrimony which enables a people to endure through the centuries

as those living at any one time, for "only it carries the stamp of eternity."⁴ For Codreanu, therefore, the Romanian soul was the collective history of the ethnic community as well as the mystical, time-collapsing, perhaps even ontological link between the living and their ancestors and descendants alike.

The concept of the land, or more precisely the *soil*, also was ostensibly religiously grounded in Codreanu's theistic creator-God. Again, however, the imagery that Codreanu employed in support of this principle suggests that the emotive force behind it originated in Romanian folklore and peasant values-- a contribution of *poporanismul* rather than the natural law of the theologians or philosophers. In the mini-treatise on nationhood, Codreanu clearly ranked the "material patrimony" of a nation-- that is, its soil and "riches" (natural resources?)-- second to the "spiritual patrimony" discussed above.⁵ But in his treatise on "the Jewish problem" Codreanu introduced several notions relevant to his mystical nationalism.⁶ The land was "a nation's basis for existence," and, according to God's "territorial law," each people had been assigned "a definite territory to live in, grow in and on which to develop and create its own culture." The claim of a people to its land was therefore "inalienable and infeasible."⁷ Codreanu rationalized this deterministic view of history by invoking a folkloristic simile: "The nation has its roots like those of a tree deep in the country's soil whence it derives its nourishment and life." But this dispassionate reasoning soon gave way to an explicit soil-mysticism, as Codreanu addressed the Romanian context:

We were born in the midst of time on this land together with the oaks and fir trees. We are bound to it only by the bread and existence it furnishes us as we toil on it, but also by all the bones of our ancestors who sleep in its ground. All our parents are here. All our memories, all our war-like glory, all our history here in this land lies buried.☞☞

It is almost as if the Romanian soul were incarnate in the Romanian soil. The soil itself seemed to spring to life when Codreanu reached a crescendo in his prophetic warning to those interlopers on the Romanian land (i.e., the Jews). In such "difficult times for our people, we hear the call of the Romanian soil urging us to battle ...and *woe* to those who shall try to snatch it from us."☞☞

The third crucial category in Codreanu's mystical philosophy of nationalism was the *telos*, the "final aim" of any nation. Here Codreanu proffered a teleological method of evaluating the purposes and actual behavior of nations. This method, of course, represented an application of his consequentialist ethic in general, as explained in the religion and ethics section of this essay. Ironically, his invocation of Christian symbols was most pronounced in this effort to elevate the nation to an exalted status penultimate only to the divine Ultimate-- and then only ostensibly so. Codreanu maintained without hesitation that the final aim of a nation is not mere survival but "the resurrection" of peoples "in the name of the Savior Jesus Christ"!☞☞ Codreanu's use of this profound Christian term was typically vague and ambiguous, even mystical. He argued that "creation" and "culture" were simply means to this end, which he described in pseudo-biblical language as the assembly of all the peoples of the earth together with their rulers in place before the throne of

God.⁹¹ He repeated the earlier concept of the time-transcending nation "which prolongs her existence even beyond this earth,"⁹² and quoted from Revelation 21:23f and 15:4 in support of the role of national entities in the apocalyptic future and the heavenly realm. Otherwise Codreanu supplied no concrete details as to the nature of this *telos*. Similarly with respect to the means associated with this end, Codreanu declared: "To us Romanians, to our people, as to any other people in the world, God has given a mission, a historic destiny."⁹³ In Codreanu's mind, this specific temporal role probably harmonized with the universal *telos* of all nations. In this passage, however, he seems to have invoked the notion of particular missions for nations in order to stress the need for national fidelity "even despite the Golgotha Way" that might befall any nation. Thus, his teleological approach to nations called for *absolute* commitment in pursuit of both the temporal mission and the final "resurrection" of the nation.

Ethical Analysis

The validity of the hypothesis of a Romanian "national inferiority complex" as an explanation of the anti-Semitism of the Legion will be tested in the next section of this essay, but at this point one cannot avoid observing that Codreanu's philosophy of nationalism seems begotten of a national *superiority* compulsion! Rarely have ideologues who sought to maintain at least superficial ties with Christianity, or any exclusive *Weltanschauung*, become so completely absorbed in devotion to the idea and practice of a nationalism that, in effect, admitted of no rival for its affections. In this respect Codreanu himself testified, perhaps inadvertently, to the ultimate divergencies in the Christian and nationalistic visions. When he described "the national mystique"

by way of an analogy to "Christian mystique," Codreanu may have intended the comparison to be more complementary than contradistinctive, but the fruit of his philosophical labors revealed the real contrast. His mystical nationalism might have claimed inspiration from Christian, particularly Orthodox, doctrine, but if this were the case the parallel was merely formal, limited to recognizable terminology and symbols. For Codreanu's nationalism was materially non-Christian; indeed, the content and likely motivation were pagan, as in the original meaning of the Latin source-word (*paganus*)-- "country-dweller." That is, they were firmly rooted in a populism that glorified the Romanian peasantry and the Romanian soil.

The three key pseudo-religious/philosophical categories in Codreanu's nationalism illustrate this duality. The idea of a "Romanian *soul*" certainly did not originate with the *Capitanul*. No less an Orthodox worthy than Andreiu Saguna, Bishop of Transylvania in the mid-nineteenth century, used the same terms as a metaphor for the Orthodox Church in relation to the Romanian "body," or nation *per se*.⁷⁴ But Codreanu's version partook more of ancient Greek symbolism than Byzantine Greek analogies. Soul in Codreanu's lexicon was a platonic essence, an impersonal bond that united all Romanian individuals from all times into a collective entity. Only in that entity did the soul take on personal characteristics, but these, too, were little more than anthropomorphisms. For Codreanu the national soul was at most a disembodied idea, perhaps in the Hegelian rather than Greek sense, and at the very least the soul was the driving force of a nation's history that could only exist, as it were, in the minds of the people in that community. In neither case did soul retain any Christian meaning in the sense of the *embodied* spiritual personality of *individual* persons. Similarly, the time collapsing dimension of the national soul

whereby the Romanian felt a bond with his ancestors and descendants as well as the rest of his living co-nationals probably derived much of its seeming originality from the Christian doctrine of the communion of saints. While retaining the formal structure of the idea, Codreanu simply substituted a pagan content for the Christian original: ethnic Romanians (or any integral nationality), especially the heroic peasant figure as epitomized supposedly by the Legionnaire, for universal Christian saints. As in the case of the Legionary "nest" vis-a-vis the Church as a community, here the nation replaced the Church as the primary, indeed *only*, point of reference and ultimate concern of Codreanu's philosophy of nationalism.

The concept of the land, which degenerated into a cult of the *soil* replete with the symbolic or even magical blood and bones of the dead Romanian heroes, was the literal foundation of the nation's sense of permanence and security in the God-given order of things. This practical secular function, however, remained a partly hidden source of the effluence of sentiments expressed for the dead and for the living who were close to the land-- namely, Codreanu's ancestor cult, soil mysticism, and peasant populism (*poporanismul*). When Codreanu brought his theistic God into the picture, he was basically dressing this same practical secular function in religious trappings. That God had allotted each nation a specific territory was Codreanu's nationalistic version of "sacred space." In lieu of places enshrined by the former or the continuing presence of divine activity either directly or indirectly through holy persons, Codreanu offered fixed national territories sanctified by the blood of heroic figures for the national "mission"-- another mystical notion that may be reduced, with fairness I believe, to "turf" and bloodline.

The two-fold *telos*, or goal, of each nation, according to the *Capitanul*, incorporated Christian terminology, but again this is misleading. The *particular* national missions, though ordained by God, Codreanu never specified, not even in the case of Romania. However, when he posited "resurrection" as the *final* aim of each nation, he resorted to the imagery of New Testament apocalyptic-- concrete details, to be sure, but clearly unrelated to his use of resurrection. The two passages from Revelation that he cited (21:23f and 15:4) do not speak of "resurrection" but express St. John of Patmos' respective visions of the heavenly throng of martyrs and the new heaven and new earth into which the old will be transformed after the Last Judgement. Apparently the compelling reason for Codreanu's selection of these two passages is their explicit mention of "nations" and his need to find scriptural warrant for his *a priori* principle of the eternal nature of nations. Resurrection for Codreanu implied not the reunification after death of the individual's soul and body in the manner of Jesus' resurrection, but rather the simple continuation of life of the nation after death and in some vaguely "spiritual" state. His view of the nations' "heaven," if that term is truly appropriate, was static (the assembly before the throne) and suggestive of a reward for meritorious fulfillment of the nations' missions, whatever these may have been. Nowhere in the nationalistic passages in *Pentru Legionarii* did Codreanu refer to sin or repentance in the life of the nation. It is almost as if the nation need only follow a natural course toward a natural end-- namely, "resurrection" or, in truth, immortality-- with the aid of the natural abilities "implanted in the soul," as Codreanu indicated elsewhere. Thus, it is not surprising that, aside from a disingenuous mention of "the name of the Savior Jesus Christ," the historic resurrection event with all of its soteriological

ramifications had no place in Codreanu's scheme. In effect, his was a metaphorical resurrection without Christ, or, more positively, a new edition of the perennial pagan Greek doctrine of immortality of the soul, but transposed from the individual to the time-transcending nation.

Thus, his teleological approach to nationalism enabled Codreanu to find expression literally for the hope that springs eternal. But it also had sinister implications that the *Capitanul* chose to enact. When he called for *absolute* commitment by the nation to the pursuit of its two-fold *telos*, he laid the foundation for the use of virtually any means to safeguard that pursuit. This applied perforce to the Legion as a vanguard community with the proper nationalistic vision. The darker side of this kind of national self-assertiveness is invariably expressed as hostility toward presumed enemies of the nation. In the Romanian context of the Legion, the darker side of Codreanu's nationalism inevitably turned out to be anti-Semitism.

From an Orthodox moral perspective, Codreanu's mystical nationalism, far from conforming to Orthodox tradition, amounted to at best an essentially separate phenomenon and at worst a perversion of Orthodoxy. Elsewhere, I have suggested that an Orthodox social ethic does allow for the nation as a potentially moral element in the created order, but that nationalism poses a serious moral difficulty owing to the tendency of nationalists of various stripes to place excessive weight on the value of the particular ethnic or racial community at one extreme or on the general civil society that comprises the modern nation-state at the other.⁷⁵ For Christians, the preferred model is the biblical concept of the "people of God," the gathered elect from any and all nations, social classes, etc. In keeping with the messianic spiritual vision of St. Paul-- "In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek" (Galatians 3:28)--

and the use of *ta ethne* ("the nations") throughout the New Testament,⁷⁶ any nationalism such as Codreanu's that glorifies the nation as an end in itself must be categorically rejected as idolatry. If Codreanu sincerely endeavored to maintain intellectual ties with the Orthodox Christian tradition-- and the evidence pertaining to both his religio-moral and nationalistic thought contradicts this assumption-- he was a sectarian extremist who had followed the "ethnos-type trajectory"⁷⁷ beyond the limits of an acceptable Orthodox social ethic. It appears more likely that Codreanu had discarded any genuine sympathies with the Orthodox dogmatic and moral tradition by the time he put his philosophy of nationalism on paper. His nationalism was not merely a component of a larger worldview; it was the sum and substance of his worldview. The Church had been pushed aside; the Orthodox tradition had been cleverly misused; even God-- a theistic entity at most-- received mere lip service. All of these realities simply were invoked and conscripted in the service of Codreanu's true ultimate concern: the Romanian nation. In terms of Paul Tillich's definition of religion as "the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern,"⁷⁸ Codreanu's religion was a "quasi-religion" of nationalism or, more properly, "Romanianism." Codreanu worshipped in truth not at the Romanian Orthodox altar but rather at the altar of the Romanian nation.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Historical Interpretations

For the purposes of this essay, I shall highlight the several aspects of anti-Semitism-- defined provisionally as any categorical anti-Jewish hostility-- that historians have considered in relation to the interwar Romanian scene in general and the Legion in particular.

The historical situation of Jews in Romania has received some attention, although the tendency toward broad generalizations indicates the need for more research. Joseph Rothschild points to the beginning of substantial Jewish emigration to Romania as late as the nineteenth century and the recurrent rivalry between peasants and Jews.¹⁰⁰ Turczynski has surveyed the role of Jews in the emerging Romanian kingdom and notes in particular the social problems posed by the transition from a nation to the "nationality state" of Greater Romania after the First World War. The most portentous of the problems was the sharp increase in the number of Jews in conjunction with the annexation of Bukovina, which stimulated Jewish national consciousness and consequently "sharpened the Romanian-Jewish antagonism." Unrest among ethnic Romanians grew more generally because of the failure of their optimistic expectations for the unification of all Romanians in one kingdom.¹⁰¹ By far the most detailed review of the cultural background is the statistical survey by Nicolas Sylvain.¹⁰² Particularly relevant to the case of Legionary anti-Semitism are several of his statistics based on the 1930 census. Only 4.2% of the Romanian population were Jews, and only 31.8% of this total lived in the countryside, the rest preferring the towns and cities in a state overwhelmingly peasant in social composition. Jews accounted for 25-35% of the townspeople in Moldavia, Bessarabia, and Bukovina (the areas of greatest strength for the Legion), but only 8-10% in Wallachia and Transylvania (where the Legion was much weaker). Sylvain also concludes that Zionism, though "coolly regarded by the Jewish leaders of Old Romania" where Jews "enjoyed relatively prosperous times," became pronounced throughout the provinces and annexed territories, particularly Bessarabia. Here also Bucharest's "policy of forced Rumanization" provoked "the widespread use of Yiddish" as a substitute for the suppressed Russian language.¹⁰³ By no coinci-

dence, it would appear, Bessarabia was the scene of Codreanu's early triumphs with the Iron Guard against the "Judeo-communist" conspirators. That alleged conspiracy, moreover, has been debunked by Fischer-Galati, who concludes that there was no real *conspiracy* nor "any meaningful recognition" of it "in the country at large," although, to be sure, both Jews and non-Jews tended to identify Judaism with communism and socialism.¹⁰³ Another set of relevant statistics, though by no means as comprehensive as Sylvain's, appears in Weber's history of the Legion. He reports that an official press publication in June 1937 revealed a disproportionate Jewish presence in various professions: 80% of textile industry engineers; 51% of doctors in the Army Medical Corps; 70% of journalists. In addition, 43% of university students in 1934 were of foreign origin, and foreign capital "owned two-third of the oil industry, dominated the insurance business, controlled the banks."¹⁰⁴ The confluence of Jewish and other "foreign" (i.e. not ethnic Romanian) economic and professional successes fueled the fires of Romanian nationalism in its anti-foreigner mode.

The theme of Jewish foreignness looms large in the analyses of anti-Semitism by several historians. Nagy-Talavera acknowledges the validity of "the Jewish question" in the interwar period in light of the clear hostility toward the Greater Romanian state expressed by the majority of Jews in the annexed territories.¹⁰⁵ Along with Vago and Weber, he notes the predominance of languages other than Romanian among these Jews and their traditional preferences for Magyarization, communism, Zionism, or German culture.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, their religion, names, dress, and communal solidarity, as Weber observes, separated the Jews from the majority culture both in their own estimation and from the standpoint of the ethnic Romanian peasants, townspeople, and aspiring bour-

geoisie who felt the socio-economic crunch of competition with and success of the Jews.

Anti-Semitism in Romania claims a long history, and most historians have connected it in some way to the perception of Jewish foreignness. Rothschild labels it a xenophobia,¹⁰⁷ while Weber sees more irony here than most of his colleagues: "Unlike their fellows elsewhere, Romanian anti-Semites blamed Jews not for infiltrating the nation but for failing to integrate in it."¹⁰⁸ That this was not quite true in Codreanu's case should be obvious in light of his elaborate philosophy of nationalism with each "nation" assigned its own unique land and mission. Those historians who have chronicled the growth of anti-Semitism collectively show that since the creation of the modern Romanian state Jews had suffered discrimination as "foreigners." Sylvain cites the first constitution of the United Principalities (*Regat*), which isolated the Jews even among the foreigners, stipulating that "only foreigners of the Christian rite may attain the status of Rumanians."¹⁰⁹ Discrimination against Jews received almost universal approval, extending from each successive government headquarters in Bucharest to all segments of Romanian society including the highest leadership of the Orthodox Church.¹¹⁰ Moreover, save for an occasional lull such as occurred immediately after the formation of Greater Romania under watchful Western European eyes, public expressions of anti-Semitism rose in a crescendo during the interwar period until Romania's role as an ally of Hitler in the Second World War led the government of Marshall Ion Antonescu to collaborate in the Holocaust through the resettlement and murder of thousands of Jews in Transnistria. To be sure, most avowed Romanian anti-Semities, including the dictator, never envisioned mass murder or total extermination of the Jewish population and generally resisted German overtures to that effect even before the decisive Battle of Stal-

ingrad in 1943. But the Jews were deemed expendable if push came to shove, and, according to one historian, 43% of the Jewish population in Antonescu's truncated Romania eventually were exterminated.¹¹¹

As for the causes and character of this endemic anti-Semitism, Fischer-Galati uncovers a variety of regional types and intensities,¹¹² but the trend among Western historians centers around socio-economic factors. Turczynski traces anti-Semitism in the *Regat* to Russian influence, but contrasts Romanian economic, social, and political attitudes to the chiefly religious basis of Russian hostility to Jews.¹¹³ Barbu echoes Webers' wry aphoristic remark about the "failure" of Jews to assimilate sufficiently, but adds, "Rumanian anti-Semitism was to a great extent a behavioral symptom characteristic of a non-differentiated society, of a homogeneous and closed traditional community in which a highly differentiated category of people is normally perceived as an out-group." Specifically, the Jews increasingly became identified with the commercial and urban sector, whose way of life clashed with the "traditional peasant community."¹¹⁴ Bobango also stresses the perceived foreignness of the Jews and the belief of many ethnic Romanians that all of the nationality groups within Greater Romania such as the Russians, Greeks, and Magyars as well as the Jews were foreign exploiters of Romania's financial and natural resources. The emotive force of Romanian anti-Semitism, therefore, was neither racial nor religious, but socio-economic.¹¹⁵

Interpretations of Legionary anti-Semitism in particular parallel these categories with some notable exceptions. To the socio-economic explanations of Turczynski, Barbu, and Bobango one may add those of Nagy-Talavera, Fischer-Galati, and Ronnett. Whereas the first group extend their theories by implication to the Legion, the latter make their cases directly. Nagy-Talavera subscribes to Weber's

aphorism when he concludes that for Codreanu and the Legion anti-Semitism "was not a racial nor even a religious problem," for Codreanu "said little or nothing in his writings against the Jewish race or religion as such." Codreanu regarded the Jews as "dangerous" because of the insurmountable problem of assimilation.¹¹⁶ Fischer-Galati underscores this theme and adds that the problem "was to be solved by isolation, boycott, physical violence and the confiscation of wealth, all of which methods had the final purpose of driving the Jews out of Romania" and into Palestine.¹¹⁷ Ronnett reiterates the perceived danger by quoting Ion Banea, one of the Legionary elite: "The Jews...cannot be persecuted on a racial or religious basis-- only on the basis of the danger they represent to the State."¹¹⁸

The persecution so boldly justified in that statement (quoted with approval by Ronnett) has not escaped the notice of historians. Weber and Nagy-Talavera have chronicled the atrocities perpetrated against Jews by Legionnaires led by Horia Sima after 1937 and especially during the short-lived National Legionary State,¹¹⁹ but the latter also avers that given Codreanu's perverse mysticism, "if Codreanu's nationalistic and economic arguments against the Jews were partly justifiable, his anti-Semitism was so extreme as to be considered pathological."¹²⁰ Vago includes a document in his book that purports to be a second-hand account of the opinion expressed by General Zizi Cantacuzino-Granicerul, puppet president of Codreanu's *Totul Pentru Tara* political party, that the only solution to the Jewish question was the *extermination* of one million Romanian Jews.¹²¹ Although he does not pretend that Codreanu shared this view, Vago claims that on a scale of anti-Semitic extremism the most radical political force in interwar Romania was the "Iron Guard" (i.e., the Legion).¹²² Fischer-Galati seems to agree and traces the transformation of the Legion "from an idealistic,

politically immature, Christian, reformist crusade into the brutal, hooliganistic, and fanatical one it became" after King Carol II unleashed his envious minions in the Goga-Cuza government against the Legion early in 1938. Thus, Legionnaires became "hooligans and assassins dedicated to the physical annihilation of their mortal enemies-- Jews, communists, and royalists."¹²³ Given this array of social and political enemies, it is surprising, therefore, that Fischer-Galati chooses to refer simplistically to "the racist" legacy of the Legion-- a judgement that Mosse alone among Western historians approaches.¹²⁴

Finally, the theme of the so-called "Judeo-communist" conspiracy receives varied, mostly scant treatment by historians. Vago demonstrates how Codreanu used the Jew-Communist "formula" as a short-hand for all of Romanian Jewry, particularly those in Bessarabia, and considered the destruction of this peril as "the primary objective" of the Legion.¹²⁵ Fischer-Galati, on the one hand, attributes a renaissance of this theme to Legionnaires' experiences combatting the international forces of "Judeo-Communism" in the Spanish Civil War, but, on the other, he contends that "the association between Jews and Communism was somewhat played down" in Legionary ideology in favor of independent condemnations of communism as an anti-Christian and anti-Romanian heresy.¹²⁶ Bobango, however, explores this phenomenon in the most depth and also associates Codreanu's belief with the bogus theories of a sinister Jewish *world* conspiracy and a similarly pernicious Freemasonry movement.¹²⁷ Precisely how Codreanu, at least, developed the theme of Judeo-Communism remains to be seen.

The Primary Document

In *Pentru Legionari* Codreanu launched almost immediately into the "Judeo-communist" menace and the perennial Romanian ideals of life, one of which was "The solution of the Jewish problem."¹²⁸ In what turned out to be a keynote for his life subsequent to his first year as a student at the University of Iasi in 1919, Codreanu declared, "I learned enough anti-Semitism in one year to last me three lifetimes." This was a confession born of pain that his young nationalist heart experienced vicariously in behalf of his people, pain caused by what he perceived to be "all the hatred and foxy plotting of an enemy race" at "a time of great Romanian hardship" following the First World War.¹²⁹ In these preliminary statements Codreanu effectively previewed the two basic themes in his anti-Semitism as found in two mini-treatises: (1) the problem of unwarranted successes by Jews in a nation-state to which they could never properly belong, and (2) the Judeo-communist conspiracy to take over Romania.

The first theme encompassed what some historians have termed the socio-economic theory for explaining the blossoming of Codreanu's anti-Semitism and the problem of assimilation at its roots. In harsh, often vicious, language Codreanu outlined what he was convinced was the true empirical basis for the "Jewish problem," after acknowledging his intellectual debt to Professor Alexander Cuza.¹³⁰ The number of Jews in Romania was difficult to ascertain, Codreanu cautioned, due to the proliferation of "false" statistics and the proverbial lies of Jews. He believed, without furnishing the evidence, that there were 2 to 2 1/2 million Jews in Romania, a figure far in excess of the 3/4 million recorded in the 1930 census. But even if only one million Jews lived in Romania, Codreanu continued, they would pose a "mortal danger." For the "invasion" of Jews that

began after the Peace of Adrianople in 1829 was tantamount to "infiltration," which Codreanu described variously as "sly," "cowardly," and "perfidious." These cunning, grasping Jews gradually "took over" first the small commerce and industry in Romania and then the larger-scale. They came to exercise control over the towns in the northern half of the country. The continuing "Judaic attack on the Romanian middle class" also meant slavery for several million Romanian peasants "who would work for Jewry."¹³¹ Mixed into these shrill opinions (only sampled here) were ostensibly factual statements, which bear some resemblance to the data collected by scholars like Sylvain and Weber. Codreanu's depiction of the status of Jews was, of course, more propaganda than a cold, objective analysis. But he offered these comments merely as the overture to his main thoughts on the Jewish problem.

That problem actually was an umbrella under which were conveniently gathered four component problems. First, the problem of the Romanian *land*, based on Codreanu's concept of the "territorial law" of God (discussed above in the section on nationalism), arose from the "infringement of Jews" of the natural territory of the ethnic Romanians. Thus, Codreanu disavowed "racial hatred," building his case instead on an ostensibly moral foundation-- namely, outrage at the "colonization" by Jewish trespassers who violated "the laws and the natural order in which all peoples of the world live."¹³² Codreanu inserted into this context some of the most dramatic expressions of his soil-mysticism. Second, the problem of the *cities* stemmed from the significant Jewish presence in these economic, cultural, and political centers of the nation. The cities had become, in Codreanu's estimation, "real islands of compact Jewish populations." Ancient Suceava, for example, had "turned into a dirty Jewish nest." In a more dispassionate moment Codreanu perceived that the

increasing Jewish wealth in the towns constituted a "national menace" because of the concomitant diminution of the ability of ethnic Romanians to increase their own numbers both financial and demographic.¹³³ Third, the problem of the Romanian *school* was predicated on the article of nationalistic faith that whoever controlled the towns controlled the schools at present and would control the nation in the future. Codreanu then supplied a set of statistics for academic enrollment that purported to show that ethnic Romanians were outnumbered by Jews in certain selected schools and universities. Within the National Lycee of Iasi, for example, according to a quotation of Professor Ion Gavanescul of the University of Iasi, the "few Romanian students" represented a "*tolerated* minority." Since "schools are the laboratory in which the culture of a people is molded," the threat to Romanian national culture was obvious to Codreanu, who consequently advocated government-enforced quotas in the universities in particular.¹³⁴ Such a quota system, however, would only be an interim measure, for the final problem could not be solved through a simple redistribution of population. Fourth, the problem of *national culture* was the most serious in the long run. Romanians had no culture of their own, Codreanu stormed, but merely "products of Jewish essence" or "an infection of Judaic culture caricature". The apoplectic incoherence of these phrases notwithstanding, Codreanu apparently based his anger on his concept of the Romanian soul. In fact, in this section of his work he quoted directly from Professor Gavanescul's theory of "ethnic souls", each distilling its "immortal essence" into an "ideal form pre-ordained." The Jews *ipso facto* were "incapable of creating Romanian culture!"¹³⁵ The upshot of Codreanu's analysis of these four components of the larger Jewish problem was his conviction that the Jews not only had not properly acculturated themselves to the

Romanian majority, which in any event they *could not* have done, but were exploiting and victimizing the "native" Romanians.

The other basic theme in Codreanu's anti-Semitism bolstered that conviction. Codreanu harnessed the seeming Judeo-communist connection and wildly rode it into the ground. The specifically Jewish aspect of this imaginary conspiracy against the Romanian nation took the form of a three-pronged attack. The Jewish plans "against the Romanian people" in general entailed measures to take over commerce and political authority by all manner of bribes, printed propaganda, blackmail, and unfair business practices such as under-selling the competition. The Jewish people had organized themselves into "a great collectivity bound together by blood and by the *Talmudic* religion... constituted into a very strict state, having laws, plans, and leaders."¹³⁶ If these remarks were obvious exaggerations of traditional Jewish solidarity, Codreanu's explication of the second prong-- Jewish plans "against the Romanian land"-- was the fruit of a vivid, paranoid imagination. "We face a *Judaic State, an army*," he wrote metaphorically, "that comes into our land to conquer us." But he intended his disclosure of the "truly unique and diabolical plan" as a literal description of the clever but cowardly activities he believed "the great Judaic council" would pursue in order to establish a new state of Palestine from the Baltic Sea to the Romanian shores of the Black Sea. These measures supposedly included the dissemination of "atheistic theories" and attacks on nationalism designed to break "the spiritual ties of Romanians to *heaven* and *earth*"; control of press; the creation of discordant factionalism; control of the means of

livelihood for most Romanians; exhortations to Romanians to engage in licentiousness, thereby destroying the family and the moral fiber of the nation; and sundry "drinks and other poisons." Codreanu claimed sufficient evidence for all of these parts of the Jewish plan in the Jewish press itself.¹³⁷ The third prong in the vast Jewish conspiracy linked the Jews in Codreanu's mind with international communism. The plans "against the student movement" (i.e., students *for* Romanian nationalism) originally involved "maneuvering the workers in the communist movement" against the students. When that failed largely because of lack of interest, the Jews set the government and the politicians against the students by threatening to cut off Jewish financing of campaigns and loans to the government by "Jewish international finance," by controlling a large bloc of votes, and by manipulating the press, "which they control almost entirely."¹³⁸

Codreanu's explanation of this last prong in the conspiracy highlight his tendency to exaggerate Jewish power and influence. In this he shared a view held in common by anti-Semites of all stripes. But his fears in behalf of the reactionary student movement in which he had played a meaningful role reflected his own peculiar situation.

Ethical Analysis

If Codreanu's use of religio-ethical symbols and concepts were a deceptive, calculating, soulless enterprise, and if the content of his nationalistic philosophy exuded an extreme, deeply-felt, mystical romanticism, then the vicious, shrill, paranoid tone of his expressions of anti-Semitism revealed the dark underside of his soul. Having already discounted the genuineness of Codreanu's Orthodoxy, I think it is

accurate to regard his anti-Semitism as the "flip side" of his nationalism. The anti-foreigner component of that nationalism-- epitomized by his hostility toward Jews as unwelcome foreigners-- was the necessary correlative of his fervent, indeed idolatrous worship of the ethnic Romanian, given the socio-economic realities that Codreanu was forced to confront in his homeland. The success of some Jews and other non-Romanians must have deeply offended such an admirer of the Romanian peasantry. Thus, out of a gnawing sense of possible inferiority, Codreanu and the Legion projected onto the Jews above all others their own frustrations, anxiety, and hostility. The Jews were a convenient scapegoat not only because of the popular perception of their foreignness-- a view reinforced by the realities of their geographic concentrations in towns and their socio-economic advances within some professions-- but also in keeping with the long-standing religious hostility by Romanian Christians towards Jews. This second factor furnished a ready-made platform built into the general culture, as it were, although Codreanu curiously never resorted in his *Pentru Legionari* to the usual myths of deicide, ritual murder of Christian children, and the wandering Jew.¹³⁹ Nevertheless, the "national inferiority complex" that some historians have detected in Romanian nationalism surfaced in spectacular fashion in Codreanu's vengefulness toward the Jews.

Theories of "racist" and "Christian" strands in modern anti-Semitism abound in contemporary historiography,¹⁴⁰ but it would appear in the case of Codreanu and the Legion that these were at most tangential to a thorough-going nationalistic anti-Semitism. To be sure, on the one hand, a kind of racism surfaced in Codreanu's remarks about "blood," particularly those pertaining to the natural necessity of segregating peoples in accordance with divinely-decreed territorial assignments and historic

missions. This may have been a chicken-and-egg question for Codreanu, but his use of possible racist terminology more likely stemmed from his romanticizing tendency to extoll the culture of the Romanian peasantry. In other words, he had to find some way of rationalizing the distinctiveness of the dominant social and cultural group. Moreover Codreanu's seeming expressions of racism must be balanced by his overt disavowal of such a philosophy, although his intemperate stereotypical language concerning Jews sometimes betrayed more than simple outrage grounded in the social or economic advantages of a rival nationality group. Only in the context of his mysticism and emotionalism did the theoretical distinction between nationalism and racism in Codreanu's ideology tend to blur.

The absence of *any* Christian theological arguments, on the other hand, for his anti-Semitic stance removed Codreanu from the ranks of Christian anti-Semites in Romania. The only theological basis for his anti-Semitism was the secular, or at best pseudo-theistic, belief in the providential creation of nations with particular historic destinies and one "heavenly" *telos* for all. Even if one chose to connect Codreanu's use of Orthodox Christian symbols directly to his anti-Semitism, the precise causal relations could not be established satisfactorily with the evidence in *Pentru Legionari*, for example. Indeed, it would appear that the only reasonable speculation might center around Codreanu's subtle, cynical, self-serving appeal to the possible anti-Semitic sentiments of the Romanian Orthodox clergy and laymen whom he sought to enlist in the ranks of the Legion. Such a view would be in keeping with his demonstratively pragmatic ethic without dismissing the customary relation between Orthodox Christianity and hostility towards Jews in Romania.

There remains only the problem of how to link Codreanu's nationalism as a quasi-*religion* to his anti-Semitism.

EPILOGUE

A useful, albeit speculative, theoretical framework for evaluating the ideology of Codreanu and the Legion as a system may be provided in the concept of "civil religion." Popularized by American sociologists and theologians, this concept purports to describe the ideology and practice wherein the political process and some set of public or civil values are related "through symbols and rituals to ideals concerning man's ultimate fulfillment" and, conversely, "ultimate reality" is conceived by analogy to the political realm.¹⁴¹ Religious nationalism is one variant of civil religion insofar as the nation "takes on a sovereign and self-transcendent character" and becomes "the object of adoration and glorification."¹⁴² Although the original proponents of the concept of civil religion based it on the American experience, this phenomenon has universal validity. There is no compelling reason that the concept would not be relevant to the Romanian scene. Indeed, Codreanu's nationalistic Legionary ideology surely fits the basic criteria for a civil religion. As a brief illustration, one may cite the supreme value attached to the nation in Codreanu's thought and the conception of "heaven" in nationalistic terms with God as a kind of universal emperor.

Having already analyzed the role of the Legion as a "para-Church" (section on religion and ethics) and as a nationalistic "quasi-religion" (section on nationalism), I shall now propose a schematic outline of the Legion as a civil religion. The seven criteria that follow represent a phenomenological approach to religion and therefore provide a prism through which Codreanu's religion and morality,

nationalism, and anti-Semitism may be viewed together.¹⁴³ Largely impressionistic, these conclusions, as noted at the outset of this paper, represent the reflection of an Orthodox Christian moral theologian and not the comprehensive, empirically-based findings of an historian.

(1) *Champion*. The charismatic founder/leader of the Legion unlike authentic religions with their holy men, prophets, or spiritual teachers, was none other than Codreanu himself! Although he harkened back to the heroic warrior, *Haiduc*, and noble peasant as the prototypical Romanian, the *Capitanul* served that same function among the Legionnaires. His messianic image was only enhanced by the popular belief in his unmerited death, or murder, to be sure.

(2) *Community*. Having already amplified the role of the Legion as a "para-Church," I need only add that the "nest" was intensely exclusive as well as intensive: the predominantly idealistic youthful composition of the group contributed to its sectarian character, which, in turn, fostered a readiness to resort to judgementalism and violence against "enemies."

(3) *Credo*. The central tenets may be summarized as "Romanianism": the belief in the unsurpassed value of the ethnic group or "nation" of Romanians from all times as expressed through the "Romanian soul"-- especially within the native peasantry closely bound to the soil of the divinely-ordained territory.

(4) *Cause*. The purpose of the Legion was two-fold: a) to promote the historic "mission" of the Romanian nation to purify and perfect its culture; and thereby b) to help guide the nation to its "final aim" (*telos*)-- to assume its place in the heavenly assembly of nations.

(5) *Cultus*. The rituals and paraphernalia were a curious amalgam of icons, crosses, swastikas, green shirts, invocations of the dead, clandestine initia-

tion ceremonies, etc.: all designed to provide the Legionnaires with their own ersatz identity separate from the ordinary Romanian and especially from their "enemies."

(6) *Code*. The moral code was a thorough-going consequentialist ethic. Despite the formulation of "ethical norms" and Codreanu's genuine anguish over the immorality of violence, the ends (cause) were so highly valued and the credo so intense that extreme means were justified. Although the reported practice of Legionary assassins of political enemies was to surrender themselves voluntarily for judgement, Codreanu himself showed no compunction in condemning the Jews in language redolent with threats of violence.

(7) *Curse*. Most religions, whether quasi or genuinely theistic, address the problem of theodicy and include in their traditions some kind of myth purporting to explain the cause of "evil" in human existence as well as means of exorcising evil from the experience of the community. The quasi-religions such as Codreanu's civil religion of "Romanianism" shift their focus from evil as a general problem to "evil" in their limited cultural context. Thus, Codreanu sought to explain the supposedly unnatural circumstances of the ethnic Romanians within their "own" country by attacking all "foreigners" and their collaborators among the country's politicians. But he reserved his strongest broadsides for the "Judeo-communists," or Jews for short. The Legionary myth of the fall from grace featured the "foreign" Jewish trespassers as the chief serpent, so to speak, who exploited the vulnerability and naive trust of the Romanian peasantry. These "enemies" conspired to spread their evil throughout the land by taking over the country and enslaving the ethnic Romanians. The seeming historical validity of this bizarre myth was reinforced by other elements of the Legionary civil religion: the militantly sectarian community with its

powerful cultus; the idolatrous nationalist credo, which effectively perverted the First Commandment in the Mosaic decalogue; the narrowly-conceived, self-glorifying cause of a heavenly Romania, which fostered a fanaticism and a pseudo-ethic that justified, even required, violent hostility toward Jewish enemies. In short, Codreanu cursed those whom he believed had cursed the Romanian world.

Thus, the *form* of the Legion was "religious" in terms of *civil* religion, but the material *content* of this "religion" was an extreme nationalism aptly labelled "Romanianism." Codreanu's anti-Semitism, though the most significant negative expression of his nationalism and integral to the Legionary civil religion, was, in the final analysis, a function of the *Capitanul's* "Romanianism."

NOTES

1. For two useful though sharply different surveys of the life of Codreanu and his complex political-cultural movement, see Eugen Weber, "Romania," in Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber (eds.), *The European Right: A Historical Profile* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 501-74, and Gerald J. Bobango, *Religion and Politics: Bishop Valerian Trifa and His Time* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1981), 59-178. Cf. my review article on the Bobango work in *Romanian Sources*, VII-VIII (1981-1982), 26-40.
2. According to the Romanian national census in 1930, the county (*judet*) of Iasi in Moldavia was 14.9% Jewish (or "Mosaic") and only 82% Eastern Orthodox in terms of religion. The only higher concentrations of Jews throughout Romania occurred in the counties of Cernauti in Bukovina (16.9%) and Maramures (21.1%). The percentage of Jews in all of Romania was only 4.2%. See Table VI in Charles Upson Clark, *Racial Aspects of Romania's Case* (n.p. 1941), 42f.
3. These extraordinary figures are reported, for example, in Weber, *op. cit.*, 537f.
4. Relying on the diplomatic reports of Sir R. Hoare, British ambassador to Romania, Bela Vago, *The Shadow of the Swastika: The Rise of Fascism and Anti-Semitism in the Danube Basin, 1936-1939* (Farnborough, U.K.: Saxon House, 1975), has chronicled the Patriarch's anti-Semitic activities. This man of "extreme anti-Semitic views" (49) seemed, in Hoare's estimation, to believe that the Jews sucked the blood of Romanians, economically-speaking, and that "a drastic remedy must be found." Document No. 91 in *ibid*, 298.

A contemporary Jew quoted from *Curentul* a statement by the Patriarch to an Anglo-Jewish delegation: "Don't exploit us Romanians, and don't exploit the other nations whose wealth you seize and appropriate unto yourselves with your ethnical and Talmudical cunning." Israel Cohen, "The Jews in Romania," *The Nineteenth Century and After* (U.K.), CXXIII (March, 1938), 284. Cohen also declared that Jewish properties expropriated in Czernowitz (in Bukovina) "for public utility purposes" were transferred to the Orthodox metropolitanate there. To be sure, the original owners were promised compensation, but in any case the metropolitan did not voice any objections to the act. *Ibid.*, 281. A Jewish historian, however, adds that this same Church official, Metropolitan Tit Simeadria, his erstwhile "infamous" anti-Semitism notwithstanding, intervened successfully with government authorities to stop the deportation of Jews from Czernowitz in the autumn of 1941. Th. Lavi, "The Background to the Rescue of Romanian Jewry During the Period of the Holocaust," in Bela Vago and George L. Mosse (eds.), *Jews and Non-Jews in Eastern Europe 1918-1945* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974), 182.

5. Frederick B. Chary, *The Bulgarian Jews and the Final Solution 1940-1944* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1972), 188. For a bitterly hostile assessment of what she dismisses as the "mock saga" of Metropolitan Stefan's resistance to governmental policy, see Vicki Tamir, *Bulgaria and Her Jews: The History of a Dubious Symbiosis* (New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, Inc., 1979), 202.

6. Chary, *op. cit.*, 149. These heroics seem to have been a natural outgrowth of the man's character. For after the Allies defeated the Axis Powers and the Soviets displaced the pro-German Bulgarian government first with the Fatherland Front and ultimately with

an overtly communist regime, Metropolitan Stefan refused to cast off the prophet's mantle. Early in 1947 he co-authored a book that, according to Marin Pundeff, "Church-State Relations in Bulgaria Under Communism," in Bohdan R. Bociurkiw and John W. Strong (eds.), *Religion and Atheism in the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe* (London: The Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1975), 335, "openly criticized the main tenets of the Communist outlook and equated Communism with Fascism and Nazism as varieties of materialism seeking to destroy Christianity." Within a year, this bishop, targeted for removal by the regime, resigned from his episcopal office in protest against interference by the communists in the internal matters of the Church.

7. E.g., George L. Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 198; Emanuel Turczynski, "The Background of Romanian Fascism," in Peter Sugar (ed.), *Native Fascism in the Successor States 1918-1945* (Santa Barbara, CA: Clio Press, 1971), 111.

8. Bobango, *op. cit.*, 88f. Italics in the original.

9. *Ibid*, 89.

10. Nicholas M. Nagy-Talavera, *The Green Shirts and the Others: A History of Fascism in Hungary and Romania* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1970), 250f.

11. *Ibid.*, 250.

12. Z. Barbu, "Romania," in S. J. Woolf (ed.), *European Fascism* (New York: Random House, 1968), 155-60; Henry L. Roberts, *Romania: Political Problems of an Agrarian State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951), 229f; Alexander E. Ronnett, *Romanian Nationalism: The Legionary Movement*, trans. Vasile C.

Barsan (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1974), 2-4, 9, 18; Weber, *op. cit.*, 532-38; Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, 265-71. Among these, only Ronnett is unabashedly pro-Legion. His pamphlet is essentially an apology.

13. The swastika was common throughout Europe, particularly among right-wing political groups. Codreanu, who sometimes made gifts of swastikas, probably borrowed the symbol most immediately from the League of National Christian Defense, which Codreanu helped to organize in 1923. The L.A.N.C. banner was the Romanian national flag (blue, yellow, and red vertical bars) bordered in black with a black swastika in the center. The founder of L.A.N.C., Professor Alexander C. Cuza, used the swastika before the First World War and certainly before the rise of Hitler's Nazi Party in Germany.

14. Quoted in Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, 266.

15. Constantin Papanace, a close advisor to Codreanu, quoted in Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, 269.

16. Weber, *op. cit.*, 532.

17. *Ibid.*, 534.

18. Barbu, *op. cit.*, 157, 160.

19. Eugen Weber, "The Men of the Archangel," in Walter Laquer and George L. Mosse (eds.), *International Fascism 1920-1945* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966), 106.

20. Barbu *op. cit.*, 162f.

21. Weber, *loc. cit.*, 120-23.

22. *Supra*, n3.

23. English translation: Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, *For My Legionnaires (The Iron Guard)*, trans. Dimitrie Gazdaru (Madrid: Editura "Libertatea," 1976).
Quotations and page references are from this edition.

24. *Ibid.*, 216.

25. *Ibid.*, 213f.

26. *Ibid.*, 211.

27. *Ibid.*, 213.

28. *Ibid.*, 228f.

29. *Ibid.*, 226.

30. *Ibid.*, 315.

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.*, 225f.

33. *Ibid.*, 225.

34. *Ibid.*, 226.

35. *Ibid.*, 212.

36. *Ibid.*, 221.

37. *Ibid.*

38. *Ibid.*, 219, 225.

39. E.g., Weber, "Romania," 533f, summarizes such an elaborate presentation in a post-war work of "exegesis" published by Constantin Papanace.
40. Codreanu, *op. cit.*, 230.
41. *Ibid.*, 222.
42. *Ibid.*, 232f. Codreanu also included at this juncture a full quotation of 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 -- St. Paul's famous passage on Christian love!
43. *Ibid.*, 221.
44. *Ibid.*, 222.
45. *Ibid.*, 231.
46. Codreanu's controversial and disputed successor, Horia Sima, removed some of this vagueness in his reflections on Legionary doctrine. The "New Man" concept signified "a great spiritual revolution in the bosom of the Romanian people." The first principle of the Legionary doctrine was "the primordial truth of life, which is *the* religious idea" (italics in original). This was not merely religious conformity, but entailed the higher meaning of principles "anchored in the Gospel." Finally, only by remaining in "close contact" with the Church would a people, "a divine creation," avoid going astray. Horia Sima, *Histoire du mouvement Legionnaire, I (1919-1937)* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Dacia, n.d.), 61f. The English translations of quoted passages are my own. The original Romanian edition appeared in 1937 after the murder of Codreanu.
47. Periodic episodes of "holy war" such as the suppression of the Old Believers by the Russian Orthodox Patriarchate of Moscow in the seventeenth

century have been quite rare in the Orthodox East and represent nothing more than anomalies.

48. Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study of Ethics and Politics* (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1932), esp. 267-77.

49. Vago, *op. cit.*, 22; Roberts, *op. cit.*, 227.

50. Barbu, *op. cit.*, 149; Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, 250; A Deac and T. Georgescu in Andrei Otetea (ed.), *The History of the Romanian People* (Bucharest: Scientific Publishing House, 1970), 515, 550; Stephen Fischer-Galati, "Fascism in Romania," in Peter Sugar (ed.), *Native Fascism in the Successor States 1918-1945*, 115ff. In a previous version of his essay, however, Fischer-Galati, *Twentieth Century Romania* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 52, does qualify the role of the Iron Guard as the "activist political section" of the Legion. The Otetea volume obviously represents the polemics of the communist regime against pre-war right-wing political movements.

51. Ronnett, *op. cit.*, 32f; Bobango, *op. cit.*, 107f, 116; Weber, "Romania," and *idem*, "The Men of the Archangel," *passim*.

52. Weber, "Romania," 533f; Bobango, *op. cit.*, 113, 117-20. That is not to say that Codreanu, like most Romanian right-wing leaders, did not seek German financial assistance. Moreover, after the murder of Codreanu the government of King Carol II mounted an unprecedented campaign of violence against the Legion, and the latter relied increasingly on German financing and political influence with the Romanian government. Cf. the unsubstantiated charges in Otetea, *op. cit.*, 525, 550, 553, that the "Iron Guard" was a "Nazi agency" that, during the National

Legionary State from September 1940 to January 1941, "closely cooperating with the Gestapo," killed many opponents.

53. Bobango, *op. cit.*, 60. For more details, see the discussion of Codreanu's nationalism below.
54. Again cf. the polemical assumptions in Otetea, *op. cit.*, 515, 553.
55. Roberts, *op. cit.*, 226, 223f.
56. Fischer-Galati, "Fascism in Romania," 113-15.
57. Barbu, *op. cit.*, 148f. Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, 270, explicitly rejects this alleged "totalitarian" element in Codreanu's system, which was rather an "authoritarian" one intended to express the given sentiments of "the masses."
58. Weber, "The Men of the Archangel," *passim*, esp. 10.
59. *Ibid.*, 104.
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Ibid.*, 124.
62. Barbu, *op. cit.*, 146.
63. Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, 247.
64. *Ibid.*, 247f.
65. Bobango, *op. cit.*, 68f.
66. Barbu, *op. cit.*, 147f. To be sure, Barbu next offer his typology of fascism. Cf. *supra*, n49.

67. Bobango, *op. cit.*, 69f; Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, 248.
68. As Bobango, *op. cit.*, 79, names it.
69. Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, 279.
70. Bobango, *op. cit.*, 86f; Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, 249.
71. Respectively, Turczynski, *op. cit.*, 11; Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, 270; Vago, *op. cit.*, 23.
72. Fischer-Galati, "Fascism in Romania," 115.
73. E.g., Bobango, *op. cit.*, 90, 83.
74. *Ibid.*, 85.
75. Quoted in Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, 251.
76. *Ibid.*, 250. See further discussion below.
77. Ronnett, *op. cit.*, 4f.
78. Sima, *op. cit.*, 62f.
79. Weber, "Romania," 517.
80. Codreanu, *op. cit.*, 179f. Nichifor Crainic (1889-1972) is identified by the English-language editor of *Pentru Legionari* as "a journalist, theologian, philosopher." Nagy-Talavera refers to him as an "Iron Guardist ideologue." *Supra*, n64. In either case, Crainic hardly espoused a traditional Orthodox theology.

81. To be sure, Codreanu, *op. cit.*, 312, excoriated the democratic concept of "human rights" for its supposedly exclusive respect for the individual.
82. *Ibid.*, 312.
83. *Ibid.*, 313f.
84. *Ibid.*, 314.
85. *Ibid.*
86. *Ibid.*, 62-64.
87. *Ibid.*, 63
88. *Ibid.*
89. *Ibid.*, 64.
90. *Ibid.*, 315.
91. In none of the New Testament references to the Last Judgement or the resurrection of the dead is there mention of the "rulers" of the nations.
92. Codreanu, *op. cit.*, 315.
93. *Ibid.*
94. Keith Hitchins, "The Sacred Cult of Nationality: Rumanian Intellectuals and the Church in Transylvania, 1834-1869," in Stanley B. Winters and Joseph Held (eds.), *Intellectual and Social Developments in the Hapsburg Monarch to World War I* (Boulder, CO: East European Quarterly, 1975), 147f, 150.
95. Alexander F. C. Webster, "Antinomical Typologies for an Orthodox Christian Social Ethic for the World,

State, and Nation," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, XXVIII, No. 3 (Fall, 1983), 221-54, esp. 246-53.

96. Jesus' parable of the Last Judgement in Matthew 25:31-46 features a final gathering of *nations* and not individuals as the popular imagination suggests. In Acts 17:26 the speech of St. Paul on the areopagus in Athens includes the observation that God has made all the nations, pre-determining their allotted periods and boundaries. But the "great commission" recorded in Matthew 28:19f entails an obligation that the nations to be baptized observe Christ's commands, which, in the Matthean interpretation, meant the Law of the Old Testament given to Israel. Moreover, the consensus of New Testament scholars indicates that the specific use of "nations" in these and other passages was derived from an inclusive rather than exclusive intention: references to the "nations" symbolize the universal mission of the Church and the in-gathering or centripetal force of the gospel of Christ. The fluidity of this biblical usage began to harden, however, in the sub-apostolic and early patristic periods as *ta ethne* ("the nations") gradually resumed its original Greek meaning as the equivalent to the Hebrew term for "foreigners." Since the Church saw herself as "Israel," the "nations" were the unrighteous (Vision of Hermas 1, 4, 2), pagans to be converted (Second Epistle of Clement 13,3), or lawless heathen (Martyrdom of Polycarp 9, 2). See William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (eds.), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 217.

97. *Supra*, n83.

98. Paul Tillich, *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 4.
99. Joseph Rothschild, *East Central Europe Between the Two World Wars* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), 288f, 293.
100. Turczynski, *op. cit.*, 108.
101. Nicolas Sylvain, "Romania," in Peter Meyer, *et al* (eds.), *The Jews in the Soviet Satellites* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1953), 493f. Cf. *supra*, n2.
102. *Ibid.*, 502, 500.
103. Stephen Fischer-Galati, "Fascism, Communism and the Jewish Question in Romania," in Vago and Mosse (eds.), *Jews and Non-Jews in Eastern Europe 1918-1945*, 162.
104. Weber, "Romania," 529.
105. Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, 258.
106. *Ibid.*, 258-59n; Vago, *op. cit.*, 55f; Weber, "The Men of the Archangel," 115; *idem*, "Romania," 530.
107. Rothschild, *op. cit.*, 289.
108. Weber, *loc. cit.*
109. Quoted in Sylvain, *op. cit.*, 495.
110. Cf. *supra*, n4.

111. Cited in Lavi, *op. cit.*, 181. The literature pertaining to the Holocaust in Romania is just beginning to grow. For a detailed, if somewhat superficial, catalog of atrocities chiefly based on a contemporary publication by the United Romanian Jews in America and the *Cartea Neagra* ("The Black Book") documentation published in Bucharest in 1947, see Julius S. Fisher, *Transnistria: The Forgotten Cemetery* (South Brunswick, NJ: T. Yoseloff, 1969). Ironically, both Lavi, *op. cit.*, 178, 184f, and Fischer-Galati, *loc. cit.*, 172, have contributed to the partial rehabilitation of Antonescu as a moderate anti-Semite who probably saved far more Jews from Nazi-inspired terror than the number of those who perished.

112. Fischer-Galati, *loc. cit.*, 158-61. E.g., in Wallachia it was "essentially religious," while in Transylvania it was more a function of anti-Magyarization.

113. Turczynski, *op. cit.*, 104.

114. Barbu, *op. cit.*, 147.

115. Bobango, *op. cit.*, 71.

116. Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, 259.

117. Fischer-Galati, *loc. cit.*, 165.

118. Ronnett, *op. cit.*, 6f.

119. Weber, "Romania," 555, 565; Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, 312-14, 322, 326. The latter, however, relies exclusively on the "eyewitness" report of one Associated Press Reporter for details of the alleged rapes, murders, and vivisections committed during the Legionary "rebellion" on January 21, 1941. Nagy-Tal-

avera surely exaggerates when he claims that whenever a Legionnaire fell, "the bells of Bucharest rang out," and "[w]herever a Legionary fell, a candle was lit" (326). But Bobango, *op. cit.*, 163f, 168-73, has demonstrated, conclusively I believe, that the so-called rebellion against Antonescu was, in fact, a coup by Antonescu against his partners in the National Legionary State, and that the notorious "pogrom" in Bucharest on that day was really the anarchic violence that erupted throughout the capital city. Nevertheless, anti-Semitic violence by the Legion under Sima was widely reported.

120. Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, 260.

121. Document No. 21 in Vago, *op. cit.*, 191.

122. Vago, *op. cit.*, 56.

123. Fischer-Galati, "Fascism in Romanian," 115f, 118.

124. *Ibid.*, 120. Mosse, *op. cit.*, 197f, hedges a bit: Codreanu's "fanatical hatred of Jews" was "not easy to distinguish from racism."

125. Vago, *op. cit.*, 56.

126. Respectively, Fischer-Galati, *loc. cit.*, 116f, and *idem*, "Fascism, Communism, and the Jewish Question in Romania," 165. No less an authority than Sima, *op. cit.*, 58, seems to have confirmed the second contention, for Sima claimed that the Legion originated in Codreanu's perception of the "anarchic communist menace" and the "Jewish peril." Sima also distinguished the three key negative attitudes in the Legionary program as anti-communism, anti-Semitism, and anti-politicianism.

127. Bobango, *op. cit.*, 74-78.
128. Codreanu, *op. cit.*, 4, 7 (in references to his early formative years as a student).
129. *Ibid.*, 26.
130. *Ibid.*, 58.
131. *Ibid.*, 58-60.
132. *Ibid.*, 62f.
133. *Ibid.*, 64-67.
134. *Ibid.*, 67-71.
135. *Ibid.*, 72f.
136. *Ibid.*, 103f.
137. *Ibid.*, 106f. (emphasis his). To be sure, Jewish hostility toward the Romanian state and culture, particularly in the Greater Romania after 1918, has been acknowledged by some historians such as Nagy-Talavera, *op. cit.*, 258f. Moreover, Codreanu, *op. cit.*, 24f, included excerpts of two especially intense polemics against the *Church*, which were published in 1919 in the Jewish journal *Opinia*.
138. Codreanu, *op. cit.*, 107f.
139. For concise summaries of these medieval anti-Semitic myths, see Mosse, *op. cit.*, 113-16.
140. E.g., Mosse, *op. cit.*, 1-3, traces modern racist anti-Semitism to the conflation in the eighteenth century of Enlightenment and evangelical pietistic ideals, particularly the revival of the

classical ideal-type of beauty and of divinely-sanctioned patriotism, respectively. Another interpretation is the study of cultural anti-Semitism in Western Europe by Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700-1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), esp. 246ff. Katz provides fodder for the Weber aphorism by concluding that the decisive factor in the "incubation" of the anti-Semitic movement was the perceived "failure" of Jews to assimilate as a result of the liberal measures of emancipation in the nineteenth century; consequently, many Gentiles became overtly resentful at this mere transformation of social status in lieu of the disappearance of the Jews as a visible, tightly-knit community, and the old, mostly "Christian" stereotypes were revived. If Katz directly blamed "the unadulterated, unmitigated teaching of the Church about the superseding of Judaism by Christianity" as an underlying cause of modern anti-Semitism (264)-- an extremely prejudicial view that does not allow Christianity its own self-understanding as a major "world religion"-- the classic study of the relations between Judaism and the early Church attempts albeit feebly to distribute the guilt for the Judeo-Christian conflict more evenly. See James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: A Study in the Origins of Anti-Semitism* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1961). But even here the Church still emerges as the chief aggressor, although the reverse seems to have been the case at least in the first century A.D., the formative period of Christian experience, subconscious memory, and attitudes toward the world. See, e.g., my essay, "St Paul's Political Advice to the Haughty Gentile Christians in Rome: An Exegesis of Romans 13:1-7," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, XXV, No. 4 (1981), 281. More useful psychological interpretations of Christian religious anti-Semitism than the historical forays by Mosse,

Katz, and Parkes are two analyses of mythical images of the Jew resulting from negative projections or from unfair, unrealistic extrapolations of the Old Testament doctrine of the "election of Israel. See Norman Cohn, "A Case-study in Collective Psychopathology," in *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World-Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966), 256ff, and Richard L. Rubenstein, "Person and Myth in the Judeo-Christian Encounter," in *After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc.), 71.

141. Herbert Richardson, "Civil Religion in Theological Perspective," in Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones (eds.), *American Civil Religion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 161.

142. Donald G. Jones and Russell E. Richey, "The Civil Religion Debate," in *ibid.*, 16.

143. For the idea of seven alliterative phenomenological criteria, I am indebted to Professor Harvey Cox of Harvard University Divinity School. I have modified, however, several of his categories.

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