

The Tragedy of the Romanian 'Iron Guard' : Codreanu

By Julius Evola



Julius Evola, in a secret report sent on the 31 August 1938 by an agent of the Ahnenerbe to the Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler on a series of three lectures he gave in Berlin, was accused of 'exerting pressure on the leaders and the officials of the Party and of the State' and of 'developing an activity of propaganda in neighbouring countries'. The 'neighbouring countries' which the report mentions are France and Romania, in the capital city of which, Bucharest, Evola, as we know from his memoirs, met Mircea Eliade, who introduced him to Corneliu Codreanu, the leader of the Iron Guard, a member of

which Eliade then was. This meeting is described in 'Colloquio col Capo delle 'Guardie di Ferro' ('Conversation with the Leader of the 'Iron Guards'), published in *Regime Fascista* on the 22 March 1938, as well as in four other articles which appeared the same year in various other Italian papers ; 'La Tragedia della 'Guardia di Ferro' Romana', itself, appeared in *Roma* (French-speaking readers will be particularly interested to know that, in the French translation of this article, published in the French paper *Totalité* in 1984, some passages related to Codreanu's views on Jews were cut). The one who was called by Adolf Hitler 'the father of European nationalism' made such a great impression on Julius Evola that he evoked him again in 'Il Cammino del Cinabro' (Scheiwiller, Milano, 1963, pp 151-152) and in 'Il Fascismo visto della Destra' ('Fascism seen from the Right'), (Volpe, Roma, 1964, p.32). This meeting took place at Codreanu's headquarters, the 'Green House', the Iron Guard's first 'nest', a few months before he was assassinated, along with thirty of his comrades, in the forest of Tancabesti by henchmen of the political schemers who were in office in Bucharest at that time. Adolf Hitler, when he heard of the event, gave orders for the Reich dignitaries who had received Romanian decorations to give them back to the Romanian government. From then on, to quote Emile Cioran, 'Romania is led by the dead Codreanu'.

THE TRAGEDY OF THE ROMANIAN 'IRON GUARD' : CODREANU



The car is leading us outside the suburbs of the city, on a long, wretched, provincial street, under a grey and rainy sky. It suddenly turns left, enters a countryside path, stops in front of a small villa with sharp outlines, the 'Green House', the centre of the 'Iron Guard'. "We built it with our own hands", the leader of the legionaries who is accompanying us tells us, not without a certain pride. We come in, walk through a sort of guardroom, reach the first floor. Through a group of Legionaries who part comes towards us a young, tall, slender man, with an uncommon expression of nobleness, frankness and energy imprinted on his face : azure grey eyes, open forehead, genuine Roman-Aryan type : and, mixed with virile traits, something contemplative, mystical in the expression. This is Corneliu Codreanu, the leader and founder of the

Romanian 'Iron Guard', the one who is called 'assassin', 'Hitler's henchman', 'anarchist conspirator', by the world press, because, since 1919, he has been challenging Israel, and the forces which are more or less in cahoots with it, at work in the Romanian national life.

Among all the leaders of the national movements we have met during our journeys through Europe, few, or none, have given us so favourable an impression as Codreanu. We have discovered in speaking with him as perfect an agreement of ideas as with few others, and we have met in few the capacity to rise so resolutely from the plane of the contingent and to relate to premises of genuinely spiritual nature a will of political-national renewal. Codreanu himself has not concealed his satisfaction in meeting someone with whom something more than the stereotyped formula 'constructive nationalism' can finally be expressed, a formula which fails to grasp the essence of the Romanian legionary movement.

Our meeting took place at the time of the fall of the Goga cabinet, of the direct intervention of the king, of the promulgation of the new constitution, of the plebiscite. We had heard in detail about the hidden side of this upheaval. Codreanu, in a lucid synthesis, added to our vision on this matter. He had much faith in the future, and even in the imminent victory of his movement. If it had not reacted and shown any opposition, this was for precise tactical reasons : "If there had been regular elections, as Goga had thought, we would have won with an overwhelming majority", Codreanu told us verbatim, "but faced with the alternative of saying yes or no to a fait

accompli such as the constitution, itself inspired by the King, we have refused to accept the fight". He even added : "We have conquered the first line of trenches, then the second, the third, and the adversary, which had shut itself away in a cubby hole, in the security which it offers, fires shots at us, not knowing that we would like nothing better than to come to its help against its real enemy". We must recall again this other sentence by Codreanu, in relation to our question about his standpoint towards the king : "But we are all Monarchists ; it is just that we cannot renounce our mission and make compromises with an outdated and corrupt world".

And, when he wanted to take us back to our inn in his own car, he not considering the sensation this might cause and we even less the warning of our legation, which had told us that anyone who met Codreanu would be expelled from the kingdom in the next 24 hours, taking his leave from us and knowing that we were then going to Berlin and Rome, he said to us : "All those who fight for our cause, I salute and say to them that the Romanian legionarism is and will unconditionally be on their side in the anti-Jewish, anti-democratic, anti-Bolshevik struggle".

The Italian translation of Codreanu's book "The Iron Guard", which had already been heralded in Bucharest, has just been published in the collection Europa Giovane (Casa editrice Nazionale, Roma-Torino, 1938). It is the first part of a work which is simultaneously the autobiography of Codreanu and the history of his struggle and his movement, interwoven in a natural manner with

the exposition of his doctrine and of his nationalistic program. This book can be compared to the first part of "Mein Kampf", without fearing that it might turn out diminished by this comparison. Indeed, it is the very force, and even the very tragedy, of things, which sees to it that the narrative of Codreanu has a particular suggestive power, and we think that any Fascist should become aware, through it, of the tragic and painful vicissitudes of a struggle which, on the Romanian soil, has repeated the struggle of our own anti-democratic and anti-Jewish revolutions. In this way the truth, previously concealed or distorted by a biased press, is at last known, and it becomes clear that those who ignore the factor of the legionary movement, currently repressed but certainly not dead, cannot form an adequate idea of the possible future developments there.

By its very nature, the book of Codreanu does not let itself be summed up. Here, we will only be able to draw the readers' attention to a few general and doctrinal points, which will characterise the nature of Codreanu's movement. As long ago as 1919 or 1920, when he was a young man of around twenty, he rose up against the communist peril in the name of the Romanian nation, not so much with words as with collective action similar to that of our own 'squadristi', battling the revolting workers, replacing the red flags they had mounted on their factories with national ones. A follower of A.C. Cuza, the father of the national Romanian idea and precursor of the anti-Semitic struggle, Codreanu had already managed at that time to see what the victory of communism would really have meant : not a Romania led

by a proletarian Romanian regime but instead its enslavement, the very next day, by 'the filthiest tyranny, the Talmudic, Israelite tyranny'. But Israel does not forgive those who unmask it. As long ago as this Codreanu became the bête noire of the press sponsored by Israel, the object of a fierce smear and hate campaign, launched not only against him, but against the national faith of a whole people. Codreanu writes about that time : "In one year I learned as much about anti-Semitism as would be enough for three mens' lifetimes. For you cannot wound the sacred convictions of a people, what their heart loves and respects, without causing deep pain and shedding the heart's blood. It was 17 years ago, and my heart bleeds yet". Codreanu fought at that time against those who glorified the red International, and his followers would break the printing plants of the Jewish papers, in which the king, the army, and the Church were insulted. But, later, precisely in the name of the king, of the army, and of order, a Romanian press which possessed mastery when it came to chameleonism was to resume the same campaign against Codreanu, covering his movement with hatred and contempt...

Codreanu writes : "I could not define how I entered into the struggle. Probably like a man who, walking the street, with his preoccupations, his needs and his own thoughts, surprised by the fire which is consuming a house, takes off his jacket and rushes to give help to those who are the prey of flames. With the common sense of a young man of twenty or so, this is the only thing I understood in all I was seeing : that we were losing the Fatherland, that we would no longer have the Fatherland, that, with the

unwitting support of the miserable, impoverished and exploited Romanian workers, the Jewish horde would sweep us away. I started with an impulse of my heart, with that instinct of defense which even the least of the worms has, not with the instinct of personal self-preservation, but of defense of the race to which I belong. This is why I have always had the feeling that the whole race rests on our shoulders, the living, and those who died for the Fatherland, and our entire future, and that the race struggles and speaks through us, that the hostile flock, however huge, in relation to this historical entity, is only a handful of human detritus which we will disperse and defeat... The individual in the framework and in the service of his race, the race in the framework and in the service of God and of the laws of the divinity: those who will understand these things will win even though they are alone. Those who will not understand will be defeated".

This was the profession of faith of Codreanu in 1922, at the end of his studies at university. As president of the national association of law students, he defined at the same time the main points of the anti-Semitic campaign in the following terms : "a) identification of the Jewish spirit and mentality which have imperceptibly infiltrated into the way of feeling and of thinking of a considerable part of the Romanians ; b) our detoxification, the elimination of the Judaism which has been introduced into our thinking through school books, through teachers, theatre, cinema ; c) the understanding and the unmasking of the Israelite plans, hidden under many forms. Because we have political parties led by

Romanians, through which Judaism speaks ; Romanian papers, written by Romanians, through which the Jew and his interests speak ; Romanian lecturers, thinking, writing and speaking Hebraically, but in the Romanian language". At the same time, the political, national, social practical problem : the problem of vast Romanian lands literally colonised by populations exclusively Jewish ; the problem of the Jewish control of the vital centres of the largest cities ; the problem of the alarming percentage of Jews in schools, where they often form a clear majority, a percentage amounting to the preparation for a takeover and an invasion of the professional world within the next generation. Finally, a simple action of unmasking : Codreanu points out that, just as in the communist period, the leaders of the so-called Romanian proletarian movement were exclusively Jews, just as, later, as a member of parliament, he did not hesitate to document how most of the members of the government received 'money loans' from the Jewish banks.

At the advent of Mussolini, Codreanu recognised him as a "light bearer, who instils within us hope. He will be for us the proof that the hydra can be defeated. A proof that we can win". He added : "But Mussolini is not anti-Semitic. You rejoice in vain, the Jewish press was murmuring in our ears. I say : the question is not why we rejoice, but why, if he is not anti-Semitic, you worry about his victory and why the Jewish press throughout the world attack him". Codreanu rightly saw that Judaism has managed to dominate the world through Freemasonry and Russia through communism : "Mussolini has destroyed communism and Freemasonry", Codreanu says, "he

implicitly declared war upon Judaism too". The new anti-Semitic change of policy of Fascism has proved Codreanu completely correct. In order to bring the anti-Semitic standpoint of Codreanu fully to light, we must quote the following passage of his book, which shows that his vision was particularly acute : "Those who think that the Jews are poor unfortunates, arrived here by chance, carried by the wind, led by fate, and so on, are mistaken. All the Jews who exist on the face of the earth form a great community, bound by blood and Talmudic religion. They are parts of a truly implacable state, which has laws, plans and leaders who formulate these plans and carry them through. The whole thing is organised in the form of a so-called 'Kehillah'. This is why we are faced, not with isolated Jews, but with a constituted force, the Jewish community. In any of our cities or countries where a given number of Jews are gathered, a Kehillah is immediately set up, that is to say the Jewish community. This Kehillah has its leaders, its own judiciary, and so on. And it is in this small Kehillah, whether at the city or at the national level, that all the plans are formed : how to win the local politicians, the authorities ; how to work one's way into circles where it would be useful to get admitted, for example, among the magistrates, the state employees, the senior officials ; these plans must be carried out to take a certain economic sector away from a Romanian's hands ; how an honest representative of an authority opposed to the Jewish interests could be eliminated ; what plans to apply, when, oppressed, the population rebels and bursts in anti-Semitic movements". Besides, large-scale general plans : "1) they will seek to break the bonds between earth and heaven, doing their

best to spread, on a large scale, atheistic and materialistic theories, degrading the Romanian people, or even just its leaders, to a people separated from God and its dead, they will kill them, not with the spear, but by cutting the roots of their spiritual life ; 2) they will then break the links of the race with the soil, material spring of its wealth, attacking nationalism and any idea of Fatherland and homeland ; determined to succeed, they will seek to seize the press ; 4) they will use any pretext, since in the Romanian people there are dissensions, misunderstandings, and quarrels, to divide them into as many antagonistic parties as possible ; 5) they will seek to monopolise more and more the means of existence of Romanians ; 6) they will systematically drive them to dissoluteness, annihilating family and moral force without forgetting to degrade and daze them through alcoholic drinks and other poisons. And, in truth, anyone who would want to kill and conquer a race could do it by adopting this system ". By all means, from immediately following the world war to the present, Codreanu's movement has sought to fight in every sector this Jewish offensive launched in Romania by the two and a half million Israelites there and by the forces affiliated to or financed by Israel.

The nuisance of political schemers and the necessity of creating a "New man" are other central points of Codreanu's thought. "The type of man who lives nowadays in the Romanian political scene", Codreanu writes, "I have already found in history : under his rule, nations died and states were destroyed". To Codreanu, the greatest national peril lies in the fact that the pure

type of the Dacio-Romanian race has been distorted and defaced and substituted for by the political schemer ; "This moral germ, which no longer possesses any trace of the nobleness of our race, dishonours us and kills us". As long as the political schemer exists, concealed anti-national forces will always find suitable instruments, will always be able to create intrigues which will serve their game. If the Romanian constitution of 1938 has put an end to the system of parties, it is many years ago that Codreanu took a stand so radical as to have said : "The young man who joins a political party is a traitor to his generation and to his race".

It is not a question of new parties or formulae, but of a New Man. It is this view that gave rise to Codreanu's legionarism, which means, above all, a school of life, the locus for the formation of a new type, in which are found "developed at the maximum, all the possibilities of human greatness which were sown by God in the blood of our race". The first legionary organisation founded was called "The Legion of the Archangel Michael", a designation whose choice already reveals the mystical, religious and ascetic side of such a nationalism. The creation of this new type is, according to Codreanu, the main thing, the rest is of secondary importance, and will follow as an inevitable consequence through a natural and irresistible process, it is by this regenerated man that the Jewish problem will be solved, that a new political form will be found, which will awaken that magnetism which is able to carry away crowds, to facilitate every victory, and to lead the race on the way of glory.

A special and characteristic aspect of the Romanian legionary movement is that, in its actual construction in the form of 'nests', its main preoccupation was to create a new common form of life, connected with strict ethical and religious criteria. The fact that Codreanu had imposed the discipline of the fast two days a week could thus come as a surprise to many people, and it is also interesting to know his thoughts on the power of prayer, thoughts which would seem to be appropriate to a person belonging to a religious order rather than to a political leader : "Prayer is decisive element of victory. Wars are won by those who have managed to attract from elsewhere, from the skies, the mysterious forces of the invisible world and to secure their support. These mysterious forces are the souls of the dead, the souls of our ancestors, who once were, like us, linked to our clods, to our furrows, who died for the defense of this land and are still linked today to it by the memory of their lives and by us, their sons, their grandsons, their great grandsons. But, above the souls of the dead, there is God. Once these forces are attracted, they are of considerable power, they defend us, they give us courage, will, all the elements necessary to victory and which make us win. They bring in panic and terror among the enemies, paralyse their activity. In the last analysis, victories do not depend only on material preparation, on the material forces of the belligerents, but on their power to secure the support of spiritual forces. The fairness and the morality of actions and the fervent, insistent call for them in the form of rite and collective prayer attract such forces".

Here is another characteristic passage of Codreanu : " If Christian mysticism and its goal, ecstasy, is the contact of man with god through a leap from human nature to divine nature, national mysticism is nothing other than the contact of man and crowds with the soul of their race through the leap which these forces make from the world of personal and material interests into the outer world of race. Not through the mind, since this anyone can do, but by living with their soul". Another typical aspect of the legionarism of the 'Iron Guards' is a sort of ascetic commitment on the part of their leaders : they must refrain from going to dance halls, cinemas or theatres, avoid any display of wealth or even of mere affluence. A special storm force of 10,000 men, which was called after Moza and Marin, two leaders of the 'Iron Guards' fallen in Spain, had, for its members, almost as in some ancient orders of chivalry, the clause of celibacy, as long as they belonged to this force : since no mundane or family occupation was to be permitted to diminish their capacity to dedicate themselves at any moment to death.

Although he was twice a member of the parliament, Codreanu asserted himself firmly right from the start against democracy ; to quote him verbatim, democracy breaks the unity of the race because it gives rise to factionalism ; it is incapable of continuity in effort and responsibility ; it is incapable of authority, since it lacks the power of sanction and it turns the politician into the slave of his partisans ; it is in the service of high finance ; it makes millions of Jews Romanian citizens. Codreanu asserted on the contrary the principle of social selection and elites. He had a precise intuition of the new politics

of the nations aiming at reconstruction, whose principle is not democracy, nor dictatorship, but a connection between nation and leader as there is between power and actuality, obscure instinct and expression. The leader of these new political forms is not elected by the crowd, but the crowd, the nation, consents to him and recognises in his ideas its own ideas.

The premise is a sort of inner reawakening, which starts in the leader and in the elite. We must quote Codreanu : "It is a new form of leadership of states, never encountered yet. I don't know what designation it will be given, but it is a new form. I think that it is based on this state of mind, this state of high national consciousness which, sooner or later, spreads to the periphery of the national organism. It is a state of inner light. What previously slept in the souls of the people, as racial instinct, is in these moments reflected in their consciousness, creating a state of unanimous illumination, as found only in great religious experiences. This state could be rightly called a state of national oecumenicity. A people as a whole reach self-consciousness, consciousness of its meaning and its destiny in the world. In history, we have met in peoples nothing else than sparks, whereas, from this point of view, we have today permanent national phenomena. In this case, the leader is no longer a 'boss' who 'does what he wants', who rules according to 'his own good pleasure' : he is the expression of this invisible state of mind, the symbol of this state of consciousness. He does not do what he wants, he does what he has to do. And he is guided, not by individual interests, nor by collective ones, but instead by the

interests of the eternal nation, to the consciousness of which the people have attained. In the framework of these interests and only in their framework, personal interests as well as collective ones find the highest degree of normal satisfaction".

That Codreanu then did not exclude that these new forms of nationalism may be compatible with the traditional institutions is proved by his ideas on the monarchical institution, which find expression in the following words : "I reject republicanism. At the head of races, above the elite, there is Monarchy. Not all monarchs have been good. Monarchy, however, has always been good. The individual monarch must not be confused with the institution of Monarchy, the conclusions drawn from this would be false. There can be bad priests, but this does not mean that we can draw the conclusion that the Church must be ended and God stoned to death. There are certainly weak or bad monarchs, but we cannot renounce Monarchy. The race has a line of life. A monarch is great and good, when he stays on this line ; he is petty and bad, to the extent that he moves away from this racial line of life or he opposes it. There are many lines by which a monarch can be tempted. He must set them all aside and follow the line of the race. Here is the law of Monarchy".

If, in the main points, these are the ideas of Codreanu and of his 'Iron Guard', the vicissitudes of his struggle turn out tragically to be almost beyond comprehension, and, until lately, they seemed to be due to some unfortunate misunderstandings. Until lately, we say, because to the extent that the pure democratic regime subsisted in

Romania, with its well-known subservience to all sorts of indirect and masked influences and a monarchical institution which was merely symbolic, it was understandable that a movement such as Codreanu's was hindered by any means and at any cost, one day by means of one formula, the next by the opposite one, for reasons of opportunism, providing that the effect was the same and the dangerous adversary was ousted. These bitter observations by Codreanu are easy to understand : "in 1919, 1920 and 1921, the whole Israelite press stormed the Romanian state unleashing everywhere chaos and exhorting to violence against the regime, the form of government, the Church, the Romanian order, the national idea, patriotism. Now, as if by magic (in 1936), the same press, led exactly by the same people, has turned into a protector of the state order and its laws, and declares itself 'against violence', and we have become the 'enemies of the country', the 'right-wing extremists', 'in the pay and in the service of the enemy of Romanicity', and, before long, we will hear even this : that we are sponsored by the Jews". And Codreanu continues : "We receive on our cheeks and on our Romanian souls sarcasm after sarcasm, slap after slap, to the point of really being in this dreadful situation : the Jews are portrayed as defenders of Romanicity and are shielded from trouble and able to live in tranquillity and affluence, while we, on the contrary, are portrayed as the enemies of Romanicity, and our lives and liberties are threatened as the Romanian authorities hunt us down like hydrophobic dogs. All this I have seen with my own eyes and endured hour in, hour out, and it has embittered me and my comrades to the depths of our souls. To set out to fight for

your country, your soul pure as the tear in the eye ; to fight for years and years in poverty and in concealed but excruciating hunger ; to see yourself, at one point, portrayed as an enemy of your country, persecuted by Romanians, defamed as a recipient of foreign funds ; and to see the Jewish people in complete control of your country, raised to the status of protectors of Romanicity and of the Romanian state, which you, and the youth of the country, are supposedly threatening ; all this is truly terrible to endure". And the readers can realise that these are not just words, by going through the book, in which the whole via crucis of the 'Iron Guard' is documented : arrests, persecutions, trials, smears, violence. Codreanu himself has experienced various trials, but, until now, the charges against him have always been dismissed : in a murder trial - he had killed with his own hands the killers of his comrades - it is remarkable that nineteen thousand three hundred lawyers of the whole country officially offered to defend him.

After the Goga experiment, it seemed that the democratic regime had reached its end in Romania, and that a new authoritarian form of government would arise. Abroad, we do not know much about what went on behind these disruptions. Although the 'Iron Guard' was already disbanded, the fact is that in this new phase of Romanian politics was hidden the continuity of the struggle between Codreanu and forces opposed to his conception of the nation and of the state. The Goga government was supposedly formed on an experimental basis and, at the same time, for a precise tactical reason. By means of Goga's moderate nationalism and anti-Semitism, they

sought to side-track the forces which Codreanu's movement was attracting and was winning more and more, by offering a substitute easy to tame. They realised, however, that, to use the expression of Mussolini regarding the plebiscite proclaimed by Schussnigg, the experiment was dangerous and that the device could escape the hands of those who had prepared it. The Goga regime was not taken as a substitute by people, a substitute which they would have been content with, but people saw it as a sign of a preliminary assent to the full nationalist current : the fact that Goga resolutely opposed Codreanu (and this was one of the reasons for his choice) did not disturb them as much as his program, which opposed nationalism, anti-Semitism, and in fact the entire necessary revision of Romania's international political stance. So that, if the elections announced by Goga had taken place, he would have been most likely swept away by a current stronger than him, though going in the same direction. Acknowledging this peril, the king decided to intervene personally. He put an end to the democratic party system and had a constitution promulgated, in which the main thing was the centralisation of power, directly or indirectly, in the hands of the monarch. An authoritarian revolution from above, based, as we say, on the court instead than on the public arena. Faced with this, the 'Iron Guard', while warning the regime of the consequences of its attitude, voluntarily dissolved the party it had set up, 'All for Fatherland', and silently withdrew, proposing to focus its action essentially on the spiritual plane, to act mainly in a sense of spiritual formation and of a selection of the great number of members who, during the last period and seemingly in

pursuit of the Goga government's ideas, had flocked into Codreanu's ranks. We were in Romania at that time, and the solution that the most serious Romanian elements thought desirable and likely was an overcoming of the former opposition and a collaboration, on a national basis, between the regime and legionarism. This was not only the opinion expressed by the main Romanian theoretician of the state, Manoilescu, or by those who had greatly facilitated the return of the king to the Fatherland, such as Nae Ionescu, but also, the minister Argetoianu, the main inspirer of the new constitution, in a conversation which we had then with him, did not rule out this collaboration, provided that - these were his own words - the 'Iron Guard' renounced its previous methods.

Obviously, we would not deny that, in normal conditions, when its power and importance are intact, Monarchy does not need any dictatorial duplicate in order to properly perform its function. However, this is not how things look in a state where the traditional fides has been replaced by political intrigue, in which the Jewish hydra has wound its tentacles around the greatest vital cores of the nation and multi party electoral democracy has undermined the ethical integrity and the patriotic feeling of vast political strata. In such conditions, there must be a totalitarian renewing movement, something which, as part of a collective movement, will sweep away, create, transform and raise again the whole nation, essentially on the basis of a new state of consciousness and of forces of an ideal and a faith. And the monarchic institution, if it is present, is not brought down by a totalitarian national movement, but, on the contrary, developed and

completed, as shown by the example of Italy. In these terms, the collaboration between the new regime and the national legionary movement of Codreanu would have been both desirable and possible, especially since, as we have seen, Codreanu expressly defended the Monarchic idea and never thought of offering himself to be the new king of Romania - not even his opponents have ever implied this.

The most recent events have shown that these hopes were illusory and have hastened the tragedy. Just after the approval of the new constitution, Codreanu was once again arrested. Why? Because it was recalled after many months that he had once more gravely offended a cabinet minister - something which throughout his career, under the pressure of circumstances, he had in fact never been able to avoid doing. Later, he was accused of plotting against the security of the realm. But the truth is that the arrest of Codreanu took place practically the day after the Anschluss. It is thus extremely likely that it was dictated by the fear that, as a repercussion of the triumph of Austrian National Socialism, the forces of Romanian nationalism, however chastened, would swing back into action. They wanted to push aside, somehow or other, the leader of the latter. The trial ended with a 10-year prison sentence for Codreanu, together with the arrest of a group of subleaders and a lot of people suspected of belonging to the 'Guard' or of supporting it. It was clear to all that the national political situation in Romania was highly exacerbated and far from any sort of stabilisation. They could not but see that, while the previous trials against Codreanu, which had taken place in a time when

the forces which were opposed to him had made the fullest use of the possibilities for corruption inherent in the democratic system, had to end invariably in dismissals, under the new anti-democratic and 'national' constitution a sentence was pronounced, something which amounted to a provocation towards all the forces of national Romanian legionarism, just as present and numerous, though, by now, latent and not easy to identify. And although nothing very precise was known of the new trial, it is clear that this sentence was either too severe, or not severe enough, since, if Codreanu could have been positively convicted of truly plotting against the state, given the animus which had led to the trial, this was the best opportunity to eliminate him definitively, since this crime was punished, in the new constitution, by the death penalty. On the contrary, they had had to limit themselves to 10 years.

What they did not dare to do at that moment, however, they did later, and what could be foreseen inevitably happened. After the first moment of stupefaction, the forces faithful to Codreanu resorted to terrorist methods of retaliation, the 'death battalion' went into action, and a secret 'national tribunal' was set up to judge and strike those who, from the legionary point of view, were the most guilty towards the nation. This upheaval became even more intense after the Prague capitulation and the Munich summit, but, unfortunately, only led to a more and more difficult situation : there were more and more arrests, one act of injustice led to another, recently the rector of Cluj university, particularly hostile to the 'Guard', was killed, two provincial governors were

sentenced to the death penalty, to be carried out by January, by the mysterious Legionary 'national tribunal', we have the feeling of a highly sensitive area, to such an extent that very high-ranking personalities, including a prince of royal blood and General Antonescu, war minister in the Goga government and currently commander of the Second Army Corps, have been removed, banned or arrested. Events have become more and more rapid and, as both sides have become more and more embittered, we come to the last stage of the tragedy. On the 30th November, a laconic official communique announced that Codreanu, together with thirty other legionaries, leading elements of the movement, also arrested, had been killed by the police while trying to escape. Their corpses apparently were buried within three hours, i.e., almost immediately, to prevent any further investigation of the circumstances of their deaths.

The borderline point of tension has thus been reached, the impression aroused by the event throughout Romania, in which Codreanu's supporters number in the millions, is huge, and the state of siege, which was already in force for various reasons, has been broadened to the whole kingdom, so that the Romanian situation appears murky as it has been only in few moments of its national history. We have stated and emphasised that, unless we imagine that Codreanu was completely dishonest - something which anyone who was ever in contact with him for even a matter of minutes, or felt the faith, the enthusiasm and the deep sincerity with which all of his writings were suffused, will immediately rule out - it is impossible to believe that his movement was in any way of

a subversive nature, or that it had aims in any way other than those of national and anti-Semitic reconstruction of the 'fascist' or National Socialist type, respectful of the Monarchic principle. And so? We may legitimately wonder about the forces which have caused, or at least contributed to, the tragedy of the 'Iron Guard'. When Codreanu was arrested for the last time, we were in Paris, and we heard the outbursts of joy which went with the publication of this news in the anti-fascist and Judeo-socialist papers. We are not going too far if we say that, after Czechoslovakia, in the whole of Eastern Central Europe, Romania is the last area, rich in numerous resources, precious both from the economical and the strategic point of view, which is still free from the game of the obscure 'forces' at work in the 'great democracies', in high finance, in Judeo-socialism; and, for such forces, to pursue the short-term myopic interests of a few individuals by means of walking across corpses, even the corpses of noble and generous youngsters, is only a trifle...

Julius EVOLA

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