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Nationalism and orthodoxy: Nichifor Crainic and the political culture of the extreme right in 1930s Romania

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Nationalism and orthodoxy: Nichifor Crainic and the political culture of the extreme right in 1930s Romania

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This article explores the interplay of religion, anti-Semitism, and personal rivalries in building the ultra-nationalist movement in 1930s Romania, using the career of Nichifor Crainic as a case study. As a theologian, Crainic created and taught a synthesis of nationalism and Romanian Orthodoxy which was broadly accepted by most ultra-nationalists in interwar Romania. As a journalist, Crainic directed several newspapers which spearheaded acrimonious attacks on democratic and ultra-nationalist politicians alike. As a politician, he joined and left both Corneliu Zelea Codreanu's Legion of the Archangel Michael and A.C. Cuza's National Christian Defense League before attempting to form his own Christian Workers' Party. Crainic's writings ultimately earned him a place as a minister in two governments and membership of the Romanian Academy. His career reveals an ultra-nationalist movement rife with division and bickering but united around a vaguely defined ideology of religious nationalism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism.

Keywords: Nichifor Crainic; Orthodoxism; nationalism; Romania; fascism

When the government of the National Liberal Party abolished political uniforms in March 1937, the newspaper *Tempo* commented that nine different colored shirts were now illegal. Six of them belonged to ultra-nationalist parties. Law-abiding citizens were no longer allowed to wear black (Romanian Front), blue (National Christian Party), green (Legion of the Archangel Michael), white (Archers, Group H), yellow (People's Party), purple (Swastika of Fire), violet (National Guard), grape (Crusade of Romanianism), or red (communists).[1] Europeans witnessed an unprecedented flourishing of ultra-nationalist political movements during the 1930s, and by the end of the decade right-wing regimes outnumbered democracies across the continent. In addition to similar core ideologies, these movements shared a disdain for parliamentary democracy, communism, cosmopolitanism, ethnic and religious minorities, and international organizations such as the League of Nations. They also organized in similar ways, using street violence, mass meetings, uniforms, salutes, and political jargon to define themselves socially and to assert their power. Alongside those movements which are usually considered fascist were a large number of parties and regimes which embraced ultra-nationalism and which were sympathetic to fascist causes. A number of important monographs have been written on Corneliu Zelea Codreanu's Legion of the Archangel Michael (*Legiunea Arhanghelului Mihail*) and short studies exist on A.C. Cuza's National Christian Defense League (*Liga Apărării Naţionale Creştine* [LANC]), but historians rarely

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remember the many smaller groups which populated the ultra-nationalist milieu (Chioveanu 225–322).

Ultra-nationalist groups were founded and dissolved with remarkable regularity in 1930s Romania. Described by the historian Zigu Ornea as "always adaptable" (249), Nichifor Crainic (1889–1972) joined and left a number of these groups while repeatedly attempting to establish himself as an ideologue who could draw the various ultra-nationalist parties together into a united front. The opportunism which Crainic displayed as he moved from one party to another shows how permeable the boundaries between these groups were at various times. It was not unusual for ultra-nationalist intellectuals such as Crainic to shift their allegiances so often. During the 1930s, the lawyer Teodor Mociulski allied himself first with A.C. Cuza, then with Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, and then with Cuza again, joining the Cult of the Fatherland (*Cultul Patriei*) and the Block of the Nationalist Generation of 1922 (*Blocul Generaţiei Naţionaliste de la 1922*) at the same time. In 1938 he was affiliated with King Carol II's Front of National Rebirth (*Frontul Renaşterii Naţionale* [FRN]) and then ran forced-labor camps and was Procurator General in Odessa under the dictatorship of General Ion Antonescu.[2] Another lawyer, Istrate Micescu, served as a deputy for the Liberal Party three times, in 1920, 1927, and 1931, forming his own Liberal faction in 1925 and then temporarily joining Gheorghe I. Brătianu's dissident National Liberal Party (*Partidul Naţional Liberal-Brătianu*) after 1930. In 1935 Micescu began collaborating with Codreanu's Legion by using student hooligans to gain control of the bar association in Bucharest for his "Association of Romanian Christian Lawyers." The following year he switched his allegiance to the anti-Semitic National Christian Party (*Partidul Naţional Creştin* [PNC]), led by A.C. Cuza and Octavian Goga, before joining the FRN in 1938.[3] Other ultra-nationalists showed more loyalty to their chosen parties, but the mobility of men such as Crainic, Mociulski, and Micescu, and the range of choices available to them, reminds us that the Legion was not the only option for an ultra-nationalist in the 1930s.

A poet, journalist and theologian, Crainic's cultural and religious production had a major influence on Romanian ultra-nationalism. His anti-Western, anti-democratic, and anti-Masonic writings were based on romantic nationalist, xenophobic and ethnic chauvinist ideas which most right-wing groups were able to identify with. In addition to his writings against corruption and Jewish economic power, Crainic preached that the vitality of a nation lay in its culture, by which he meant religion, folk music and customs, and art and literature involving peasant themes. He characterized the nation and national culture as sacred, and suggested using extreme measures to ensure that only Romanian culture flourished in Romania. His credentials as a university professor, a public intellectual who championed autochthonous Romanian culture against Western cosmopolitanism, and an influential publicist whose patronage provided work for many a writer, meant that many ultra-nationalist groups subscribed to his magazines and newspapers and invited him to speak at their gatherings. His journalistic interests were broader than the obsessive anti-Semitism of A.C. Cuza's LANC or the leader-worship of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu's Legion, but both of these groups embraced Crainic at various times. Crainic occupied senior positions within right-wing regimes between 1940 and 1944, and after he was released from prison in the 1960s the Romanian Communist Party used his talents and reputation as an informer and a "reformed" ultra-nationalist to add credibility to its regime.

The existing literature on Crainic is wide but rarely comprehensive. Literary critics analyze his poetry without relating it to his politics (Bădescu; Petrescu), and theologians discuss his mystical theology while ignoring the highly politicized context of theological faculties at the time (Ică; Păcurariu). Others focus on Crainic's contribution to debates

over culture and development while marginalizing the extremist conclusions which he drew about ethnic cleansing and dictatorship (Vrabie; Micu; Hitchins, "Gândirea"). Finally, those historians who do highlight Crainic's ultra-nationalist politics during this period usually do so without analyzing his literary or theological work, which was central to his credibility as an ultra-nationalist intellectual (Ornea; Solonari 26–27). I approach this period of Crainic's life from a biographical standpoint which allows me to relate the various aspects of his professional and political activity between 1932 and 1940 to one another. Crainic's politics changed radically in 1932, when he fervently embraced ultra-nationalism, launched an ultra-nationalist daily newspaper, and took up the chair of History of Modern Religious and Church Literature at the University of Bucharest. The article closes with the abdication of King Carol II in September 1940, which signaled the decisive victory of ultra-nationalist forces in Romania. Crainic continued to exercise a powerful influence on Romanian culture, politics, and theology after this point, but he did so in a radically different context which would require a separate article.

Unlike Crainic's only biographer (Pârvănescu), I draw extensively on archives assembled by the secret police (the *Siguranţa* and the *Securitate*), which provide a perspective on Crainic that differs from that in the first volume of his memoirs, *Zile albe, zile negre* (*Fair Days, Dark Days*). These memoirs were written in 1945–1946 and then edited by Crainic in 1963–1964. In places Crainic distorted his involvement with fascist groups and emphasized patriotic motives for his actions rather than his anti-Semitism or his commitment to ethnic cleansing. Crainic claims to have allied himself with A.C. Cuza only as a first step towards creating the PNC, for example, whereas archival sources show that Crainic was a committed member of the LANC for months before talks began with Goga about forming a new party (*Zile albe*, 285–87). I therefore use *Zile albe* only sparingly, and only when other sources confirm the basic facts of Crainic's account.

Teaching mystical theology (1932–1944)

Rhetoric about the "Christian mission" of the nationalist cause and the "spiritual" character of the Romanian people was central to the ideology of ultra-nationalism in 1930s Romania. As one of the most popular and committed exponents of these ideas, Crainic could speak with authority on religious matters because of his chair in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Bucharest. He had taught Christian literature and mystical theology at Chişinău since 1926, but he did his most profound work as a theologian at Bucharest from 1932 onwards. Crainic defined spirituality as "the subordination of the whole complex of human existence to the spirit which dominates all things. The fragment of our moral existence which has been polished, purified and relentlessly dilated in the flame of the universal spirit" ("Spiritualitate" 310). Throughout the decade, this notion that all things must be subordinated to one undivided whole guided both his teachings on mysticism and his doctrine of purifying the country from ethnically and religious heterogeneous elements.

Crainic's major course at Bucharest was entitled "Mystical Theology," which he taught from 1933 onwards. In it, he presented the mysticism of Pseudo-Dionysius as a movement towards God through purification, illumination and eventual union. He taught fasting, meditation, ecstatic states, hesychast prayer, and the Jesus prayer as techniques used by Orthodox Christians to submit their bodies and desires to the divine will, making room for God to work in and transfigure their minds and souls (*Cursurile de mistică* 176–379). According to Crainic, these were uniquely "Eastern" paths to God which were no longer cherished by the Western churches, giving Romania the ability to

save Europe because of its spirituality ("Transfigurarea"). In 1936, when Nazi Germany was the darling of ultra-nationalist Romanians, Crainic added a course on the medieval German mystics, who he described as being "deeply influenced by Orthodox mysticism" ("Rasă" 62). He taught on Meister Eckhart and his disciples Heinrich Seuse and Johannes Tauler as well as the Flemish mystic John of Ruysbroeck and Thomas à Kempis's *De Imitatione Christi* (*Cursurile de mistică* 409–600). Crainic discussed these writers as both theologians and poets, treating their historical contexts and literary merits alongside their theological systems because for him art and ethnicity could not be separated from religious experience.

Crainic was first hired at Chişinău because of his literary reputation. Throughout the 1930s he avoided specialist theological journals, publishing most of his academic works in *Gândirea*, a popular literary magazine that he edited. Armand Călinescu, the minister of the interior and a bitter opponent of ultra-nationalism in Romania, abolished Crainic's chair of Mystical Theology in 1939. Crainic then transferred to the Chair of Apologetics and Dogmatics, where he supplemented for his old teacher, Irineu Mihălcescu, who had just retired (Păcuraru 129, 268). In this capacity he taught his first course on the theology of aesthetics and culture, which was published the following year as *Nostalgia Paradisului* (*The Nostalgia of Paradise*, 1940). Crainic taught his students to critique secular aesthetic theory by focusing on the moment of artistic inspiration, which he likened to the ecstasies experienced by mystics (129–36, 232–49). Like mystics, artists apparently see beyond the mundane world and their artworks reflect glimpses of "paradise," by which Crainic meant a supreme happiness that is always just out of reach, creating a longing (*dor*) in the human heart for a lost perfection or a future beatitude (344–45). Crainic's course could be seen as an argument for the existence of God based on the transcendent quality of beauty or on religious experience, but he was actually less interested in apologetics than in demonstrating that culture had to be integrated into a religious worldview (15).

Crainic argued that the world is beautiful because it reflects the beauty of its Creator, and that therefore when an artist reflects on creation and allows divine revelation to shape his or her work, "the artist becomes a mouthpiece of Jesus Christ" (404). The contemporary literary critic George Călinescu shrewdly observed that Crainic's attitude towards mystical ecstasies and art as a reflection of the divine was "pure Platonism," but there was more to it than this. As Călinescu also noted, "Nichifor Crainic does not get lost in theological niceties and he passes quickly on to constructing his own system, which is fundamentally a political one" (789–90). This particular way of thinking about art originated in Crainic's writings on autochthonous Romanian culture from the 1920s. Both then and in *Nostalgia Paradisului*, he spoke about the importance of culture to national formation and condemned "imitation" of foreign cultures. Technology and techniques (Gk: *techné*) could be imported, Crainic said, but not culture, which was "a spiritual phenomenon and an expression of one's ethnic personality" (35). The published versions of most of Crainic's courses in Bucharest contain few explicit hints of his extremist politics, but in *Nostalgia Paradisului* he rooted his theology of culture in the territorial and mental world of the nation.

Crainic extended his concern with submitting to world to God into the political realm, arguing that Romanian Orthodoxy should become the basis for conducting politics and running the state. This ultra-nationalist and "Christian" philosophy endeared him to his students, many of whom were involved in the anti-Semitic student movement which had been making headlines since 1922 with its vandalism, violent assaults on Jews, and mass rallies (Livezeanu 245–96). Many theology students in Bucharest were legionaries, and took part in gang violence against non-theological students who lived in the same

dormitories with them.[4] The students refused to cooperate when the dean attempted to prevent his faculty members from teaching politics in the classroom, and in 1934 the minister of education temporarily cut funding to the department on the grounds that it was a breeding-ground for "anarchy."[5]

The Legion of the Archangel Michael (1932–1934)

Nichifor Crainic first entered politics in 1928, as a candidate for the National Peasant Party (*Partidul Naţional Ţărănesc* [PNŢ]), which had formed in 1926 through a union of Ion Mihalache's Peasant Party and Iuliu Maniu's National Party of Transylvania. He was elected as a representative for Neamţ county, a region which consistently voted in favor of whichever party stood the best chance of forming a government (Şerban 80–82; Crainic, *Zile albe* 208–10). The National Peasants achieved a landslide victory, but split in 1930 over disagreements regarding whether to accept Prince Carol (1893–1953) as king following his unexpected return to Romania in June. Maniu resigned as prime minister because he found it impossible to work with the newly crowned monarch, a decision which, as Keith Hitchins remarks, "coincided with … the weakening of parliamentary institutions" that lasted until the end of the interwar period (*Rumania* 416).

Crainic had been a vocal supporter of Carol since the mid-1920s, and he joined the small but important Carolist faction in 1930. By now disillusioned with his first experience of electoral politics, he turned his back on democracy for good. He had already begun to align himself with the French ultra-nationalist current known as "integral nationalism" at this time, attending a centenary celebration of the poet Frédéric Mistral in Paris in 1930 only because he wanted to meet the integral nationalist writer Charles Maurras (Crainic, *Zile albe* 216). In 1931 he lectured on nationalist political themes to student audiences in Bucharest and Cluj, not always making a good impression upon his listeners who had come expecting to hear about literature.[6]

The National Peasants lost power in April 1931, and were replaced by a government of technocrats from minor parties who had the backing of the king and who were led by the famous historian Nicolae Iorga (Hitchins, *Rumania* 416–17). Crainic's next foray into politics was with the daily newspaper *Calendarul* (*The Calendar*, 1932–1934), which immediately began by attacking Iorga's government, accusing it of incompetence and ties to Freemasonry. Financed by Zamfir Christodorescu, an engineer whose money had also supported Nicolae Iorga's *Neamul românesc* (*The Romanian People*, 1906–1940) during the war, *Calendarul* was modeled on two of the most successful Bucharest dailies with center-right leanings – Nae Ionescu's *Cuvântul* (*The Word*, 1924–1938) and Pamfil Şeicaru's *Curentul* (*The Current*, 1928–1944). Crainic had worked at both of these newspapers in the past, and *Calendarul* was a deliberate attempt to outdo his former colleagues (Ornea 244). The newspaper initially addressed itself to a broad-based ultra-nationalist audience, announcing that it would be dedicated to exposing political and economic corruption (Crainic, "Începem"). Crainic had difficulties from the outset. He priced *Calendarul* at 2 lei in order to undercut his rivals, who banded together and convinced newspaper stands to refuse to sell it (Crainic, "Coaliţia"). Crainic responded by convincing legionaries to sell his newspaper in Bucharest, while also gaining the support of LANC students in Iaşi.[7]

In 1932 the anti-Semitic student movement was torn between A.C. Cuza's LANC and Codreanu's Legion. A.C. Cuza had originally founded the LANC as a political party in order to take advantage of the unrest caused by the student strikes of December 1922, and students – Codreanu among them – had long seen Cuza's party as the political

wing of their movement. Corneliu Zelea Codreanu broke away from the LANC in 1927 and formed his own party, but the majority of anti-Semitic students were slow to follow. Codreanu's legionaries took control of the largest student group in Bucharest in 1929, but Cuzists remained strongest in the university city of Iaşi until 1934.[8] The Legion was still a minor party when Crainic formed *Calendarul* in 1932. Nonetheless, it had won a seat in a by-election in Crainic's old seat in Neamţ in 1931, and legionaries were actively engaged in propaganda marches and rallies (Heinen 188–97).

The Legion's major periodical, *Pământul strămoşesc* (*The Ancestral Land*, 1927–1930, 1933), was out of print in 1932, and the movement's only presence in the press was through various regional political broadsheets with very limited print runs.[9] During the Depression years, legionaries preached an anti-corruption message with strong anti-Semitic undertones, as well as promising to transform the country by creating a "new man" through discipline and personal sacrifice. Legionaries staged public rallies in support of *Calendarul* in March 1932, and in June it officially became a legionary newspaper, employing legionaries as editors at Codreanu's request.[10]

Crainic's decision to use *Calendarul* as an organ for legionary propaganda was a major victory for the small party. Legionaries received much-needed press coverage, but more importantly, *Calendarul* carried cultural news such as book and film reviews, women's columns, celebrity gossip, and other elements that the Legion's political broadsheets lacked. It could be read by a much larger audience, who would have bought the newspaper for reasons other than political affiliation. Among other things, *Calendarul* presented itself as a Christian newspaper which many priests subscribed to and supported (Anonymous, "Caminul" 1, "Manifestaţie" 3). Crainic's broad connections within ultra-nationalist and intellectual circles meant that he was generally the person prospective partners approached whenever there was talk of a fusion between the Legion and other ultra-nationalist groups.[11] *Calendarul* intensified the Legion's anti-corruption message and added frequent attacks on Freemasons, particularly against members of Nicolae Iorga's cabinet (Crainic, "Falimentul"). Accurate circulation figures are not available, but it is clear that even while *Calendarul* never became one of the country's largest newspapers, it was certainly read by many people who were not yet members of Codreanu's Legion.[12]

Crainic encouraged many of his younger editors and contributors to join the Legion. These men soon became some of the Legion's most prominent ideologues.[13] In 1933 Crainic himself agreed to run as a candidate for the Legion in the national elections, and made speeches for the Legion in cities around the country.[14] He also drew closer to European fascism in the early 1930s, travelling to both Germany and Italy in 1933–1934, and meeting Mussolini twice to discuss the Legion, anti-Semitism, and Italy's geo-political aspirations in the Balkans.[15] Crainic's journalism now promoted Germany and Italy as models for Romanian society to follow, and promoted closer ties with both nations (*Lupta*).

After violent student unrest and pointed, slanderous attacks on cabinet ministers in *Calendarul*'s pages, the Legion's paramilitary wing, known as the Iron Guard, was declared illegal on 26 March 1932 and *Calendarul* temporarily ceased publication following a police raid on its premises (Heinen 199; Crainic, "Reîncepem!"). The Legion grew dramatically over the coming months, and the historian Armin Heinen notes that although "in mid-1932, the Legion was little more than a regional protest party; in 1933 it was a new formation – self conscious and provoking the traditional political forces" (217). Iorga's government was succeeded in June 1932 by three short-lived National Peasant governments, each of whom proved incapable of working with the king and of overcoming the problems caused by the Depression. A new Liberal government came to power in

November 1933, led by Ion Duca, which was determined to take a firm stance against the Legion (Hitchins, *Rumania* 417–18). Crainic and his colleagues continued writing scandalous articles about senior government and financial figures, and *Calendarul* was suspended again for 15 days in November 1933 before being closed permanently on 1 January 1934 following Duca's assassination by a group of legionaries. Obliged to repay the subscription costs to roughly 8,000 subscribers, Crainic was in debt because of this venture for the next four years (Crainic, "Istoria"). More seriously, he was arrested, together with hundreds of others, after the assassins confessed under torture that *Calendarul* had inspired them to kill Duca (Pârvănescu 68).

Prison breathed new life into the arrested legionaries. Crainic writes that "the engineer Clime took command of the several hundred inmates, combining legionary and military discipline. He formed teams for cooking and cleaning, and divided the day up into periods of instruction, singing, discussions and leisure."[16] The arrested legionaries even produced their own newspaper called *13 Jilava*, to which Crainic contributed (Anonymous, "Poşta"). Whereas prison bonded the legionaries closer together, Crainic became increasingly alienated. There were rumors that he had been severely beaten by the authorities.[17] Later, his fellow inmates accused him of having been a coward while in prison – a serious indictment within an ultra-nationalist culture which privileged heroism and loyalty.[18] He denied any involvement with the Legion during his interrogations and in a letter he wrote from prison to George Brătianu he told the dissident Liberal politician, "*I am not a member of the Iron Guard*. I don't even know the organization, which was entirely in the hands of Corneliu Codreanu. I merely sympathized with the group."[19] He also quarreled with the others over the increasing involvement of Nae Ionescu (1890–1940) in the Legion, which Crainic saw as threatening his self-proclaimed position as the "mentor" of Codreanu and the others (Papanace 24).

There was no talk of cowardice at the time. Fr. Grigore Cristescu (1895–1961), a legionary and Crainic's colleague at the University of Bucharest, taught Crainic's courses while he was away. He used the opportunity to lecture on legionary doctrine and to lead the students in singing legionary hymns.[20] Two hundred and fifty legionary students in theology gathered at the university in Bucharest to support Crainic, and his former colleagues at Chişinău also expressed their solidarity with him.[21] When Crainic returned to work after being released, the lecture theater was filled with the Legion's most prominent leaders.[22] Other prominent politicians also defended the arrested legionaries. Alexandru Averescu, Constantin Argetoianu, Iuliu Maniu, Ion Mihalache, Gheorghe Brătianu, and Alexandru Vaida-Voevod all spoke in favor of the legionaries at their trials. Intent on profiting from the legionaries' actions, King Carol II did not even go to Duca's funeral or visit the prime minister's widow (Heinen 237–40). Octavian Goga (1881–1938), a poet and an anti-Semite who led the National Agrarian Party, made a gift of boots to all of the prisoners. Apparently Goga was seeking to unite his party with Codreanu's at the time and sought Crainic's help as an intermediary (Crainic, *Zile albe*, 261, 280). There was clearly little stigma associated with the assassination, and prison strengthened the public images both of Crainic and of the Legion as a whole.

Gândirea and ethnotheology (1934–1944)

Crainic had edited one of Bucharest's most renowned literary journals, *Gândirea* (*Thought*, 1921–1944), since 1926, gradually shifting the journal's emphasis away from cosmopolitan avant-gardism and towards his own brand of religious nationalism, which came to be known as "Orthodoxism." *Gândirea* was founded as a journal without an

ideology, but by 1931 Crainic could define "gândirism" precisely as "traditionalism, Orthodoxy, autochthonism [and] royalism" ("Gândirism"). Although it had been moving in this direction since the late 1920s, *Gândirea* became markedly more religious and nationalist once Crainic was released from prison. "The real truth is only in God and in the nation's heart," he wrote in the very next issue, giving God credit for bringing him through his recent troubles ("Mărturisire" 209). Crainic increasingly collapsed philosophical positions into political and foreign policy orientations. France was identified with secularization in Crainic's writings, and Germany and Italy with Christianity and the anti-Enlightenment ideas promoted by Oswald Spengler.

Crainic's articles in *Gândirea* during the 1930s concentrated more often than not on mysticism, whether it was that of medieval German mystics, Indian philosophers, Romanian poets, or Petrache Lupu, a shepherd from the village of Maglavit who had prophetic visions. He also published programmatic articles setting the agenda for Orthodoxism, which grouped religious nationalist poets, theologians, philosophers, and literary critics around a common vision of peasants as true Romanians and of Orthodox Christianity as an ideology of the nation-state (Hitchins, "Gândirea"; Micu). Finally, as the decade progressed Crainic wrote more and more about the value of racism, fascism, dictatorship, and alliances with Italy and Germany (Pintea). *Gândirea* was no longer the diverse publication it had been in the 1920s. By the mid-1930s it had become the mouthpiece of the ethnic chauvinism and nationalist theology which Orthodoxism was famous for.

In 1934 Crainic described how the "Titans of Atheism" – Laicism, Positivism, Darwinism and Communism – were attacking the Church through secularization. Crainic said that the modern state was atheistic, but could be turned to good if Christians were to interest themselves in political problems. "If Moscow has organized a state according to the principles of militant atheism and the violence of Marxism," he argued, "Mussolini has created another state on a brilliant, harmonious vision, founded on the eternal principles of Christianity" ("Titanii" 263). Several of *Gândirea*'s long-term contributors now left the periodical as a result of Crainic's increasingly extremist stance, including Radu Dragnea, Sandu Tudor, Cezar Petrescu, and Adrian Maniu (Ică 13). Others, including the young theologian Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae, became regular collaborators for the first time. After the war, Stăniloae became one of Eastern Orthodoxy's most authoritative theologians, speaking about mysticism, ecclesiology, the Trinity, and human relationships in a way which brought the writings of the Church Fathers to bear on contemporary problems. Stăniloae contributed regularly to *Gândirea* during the 1930s and his early thought owed a significant debt to Crainic, who he thought of as a pioneer and a mentor. Under Crainic's influence Stăniloae wrote about the Romanian nation-state as a God-given gift through which people are saved, arguing that Christians had a duty to embrace and defend Romanian territory and culture.[23]

Crainic's most important essays from this period were collected in two highly successful volumes, *Puncte cardinale în haos* (*A Compass amidst Chaos*, 1936) and *Ortodoxie şi etnocraţie* (*Orthodoxy and Ethnocracy*, 1937).[24] The first of these contained his most important writings from the 1920s, in which he argued that both social policy and authentic artistic creation must reflect a national spirituality found in folk culture and the natural world. Crainic's romanticized vision of the Romanian peasantry was known as "traditionalism," and in *Puncte cardinale* he combined his traditionalist articles with more recent works on biological racism, fascism, and mysticism. Above all, in both volumes Crainic argued for "an integrated conception of existence" which incorporated Orthodoxy and nationalism into every sphere of life (*Puncte* 6). *Ortodoxie şi etnocraţie* explained the political and economic implications of this view more clearly. Here

Crainic wrote that the Christian nationalist uses bullets and prayer "with equal sincerity" in order to transform "the law of Christ" into "the law of the State" (168, 172). Crainic argued that the state, secular learning, and social relationships were valuable only insofar as they drew humans closer to God. Always thinking in terms of community, individual decisions to seek God were less important to Crainic than the integration of Christianity into Romanian society as "a supreme rule of life" through which he hoped to "conquer universal filth and the filth of death" (105).

Crainic articulated his blend of nationalism with religion particularly clearly in his attacks on the philosopher Constantin Rădulescu-Motru's *Românism: catehismul unei noi spiritualităţi* (*Romanianism: Catechism of a New Spirituality*, 1936; reprinted in Radulescu-Motru, *Scrieri politice* 439–567). Rădulescu-Motru defined Romanianism as "the spirituality that gives us the means of moving with the times, of modernizing ourselves." He defined it against nationalism because it "does not call on hatred" (472). He also separated it from Crainic's Orthodoxism because Romanianism "cannot move forward while based on Orthodoxism except at the price of abdicating its role as the promoter of progress in the Romanian economic and political order." Although he argued for the establishment of nations on both their "biological and spiritual bases," for him Orthodoxy was something spiritual – higher than the mundane world of folk culture and politics (446, 476–89).

Crainic's initial reaction was to take issue with Rădulescu-Motru's belief that Orthodoxy – note Crainic's slippage between Orthodoxism, a political philosophy, and Orthodoxy, a religion – was irrelevant to temporal affairs ("Românismul"). Crainic then explained that "spirituality has a folded character: it is *theandric*, that is, it is composed of a divine element – the grace or the energy of the Holy Spirit – and a human element in its very best form" ("Mistificarea" 359). Christian spirituality is realized when it is *lived* in the temporal world, which is in turn *transfigured* when Christians infuse it with the grace of God. For Crainic, the secular cannot be separated from the sacred, and Orthodoxy cannot be separated from Romanianness. Although "spirituality is not a product of race … race itself is transfigured from generation to generation by the energy of the divine light" ("Spiritualitate şi românism" 383). Crainic argued that the Romanian national heroes Mircea the Old, Ştefan Vodă, Vasile Lupu and Michael the Brave were all simultaneously heroes of the Orthodox Church, and that therefore nation and church were effectively the same entity.

Crainic was aware of Eastern Orthodoxy's attitude towards nations, which says that the Church is "ecumenical in doctrine, in hierarchy, and in discipline, [but] national in its administration of the ecumenical elements" (Crainic, *Ortodoxie* 173). His nationalism occasionally led him to equate church with nation, however, which is a heresy known as phyletism (Walters). More often, Crainic made the more subtle argument that the church had imbued Romanian folk culture with spiritual values and therefore "transfigured" the nation ("Sensul tradiţiei" 9–10). He expressed this position most clearly in an article from 1943, in which he began from the Orthodox teaching that "human nature is eternally raised up through the sanctifying work of grace." But can collectives such as nations be deified just as individuals are? Crainic answered this question by explaining that "in Orthodox thought, peoples, or nations, are considered as natural entities arising from human activities, entities which, distinguished by blood and speech, are harmonized on the spiritual plane in the supernatural plenitude of the Church of Christ." Nations, he concluded, can be consecrated just as humans are, which presumably means through asceticism and purification ("Transfigurarea" 178).

The chilling implications of Crainic's ethnotheology became clear in his *Programul statului etnocratic* (*Program of the Ethnocratic State*, 1938). The word "ethnocratic"

had been coined by Crainic in 1932, and meant a system of government subordinated to the needs of one ethnic group. According to Crainic, Romanians were intrinsically Orthodox, and so a Romanian ethnocratic state was simultaneously a religious state – "the law of Christ [will be] the law of the state" (24). It was to be a state based on reforms: the spread of education, the opening of credit institutions, the "modernization of housing," and the prohibition of alcohol. As might be expected from a state based on "ethnocratic principles," these reforms extended to defining the population. Crainic proposed massive population transfers with Romania's neighbors, expelling Jews and repatriating Romanians living outside the current borders. Although interwar Romania was a very multiethnic country, no minorities were to be tolerated because "they hold to their own peoples more than to ours," and therefore Crainic assumed that they were necessarily irredentist (12). Minority religions were to be abolished. Uniates would be reincorporated into the Romanian Orthodox Church, and sects would be banned, together with "all secret organizations" (51). Like Plato's *Republic* or Thomas More's *Utopia*, Crainic's ethnocratic state was a place where difference could not be tolerated. But unlike Plato and More, Crainic intended to implement his vision as quickly as possible.

A.C. Cuza and the National Christian Party (1934–1936)

Crainic originally wrote *Programul statului etnocratic* as a proposed constitution for the National Christian Party (PNC), which he formed together with A.C. Cuza and Octavian Goga in July 1935. Later accounts show that prison had irreparably damaged Crainic's relationship with Codreanu, but this was not immediately obvious in 1934. Crainic drifted gradually away from the Legion over the next 12 months. Legionaries held banquets in Crainic's honor in May, but other prominent nationalists also participated.[25] In August, Crainic attempted to form an umbrella organization of anti-Semitic journalists under his own leadership called the "Christian Press Association," displaying his growing independence from the Legion.[26] Legionaries were still attending his public lectures in January 1935, and believed that he would continue to represent the movement's newly formed political party, "Everything for the Fatherland" (*Totul pentru Ţara*).[27] In February he began talks with A.C. Cuza and other LANC leaders but made speeches alongside both legionaries and Cuzists, claiming to support both the Legion and the LANC.[28] Crainic withdrew from the Legion after two weeks of talks with Cuza.

On 17 February 1935, he was sworn into the LANC, together with two other prominent ultra-nationalist publicists, Alexandru Cusin and Toma Vladescu (Anonymous, "Dnii prof"). When legionary students asked why he had left the movement, Crainic replied: "I have never been a member of the Iron Guard." Codreanu immediately broke off all contact with Crainic, accusing him of cowardice, and legionaries began disturbing his speeches by singing legionary hymns and throwing notes on the stage with messages such as "Down with the traitor!"[29] Legionary harassment stopped in June when Codreanu sent around a circular saying that they should not persecute Crainic because the fault was Codreanu's alone – he should have recognized Crainic's lack of character earlier and never let him associate with the Legion to begin with.[30]

Crainic later claimed that he had joined the LANC because he needed an effective political party which could oppose Alexandru Vaida-Voevod's newly formed "Romanian Front" (*Frontul Românesc*), which was gathering support from various marginalized nationalist groups.[31] As a frequently illegal, anti-establishment social movement, the Legion did not have the political flexibility which the LANC had. Whereas successive governments bullied legionaries during election campaigns or else outlawed the

movement entirely, Cuza's party had almost complete freedom of movement. The LANC could challenge the Romanian Front at the polling booths and in parliament in a way that legionaries never could. In 1935 Alexandru Vaida-Voevod (1872–1950) adopted fascist slogans such as the *numerous Valahicus* – a quota on the number of members of an ethnic minority allowed in a given profession – as well as mass rallies and uniformed paramilitary groups who clashed with legionaries and Cuzists on the streets.[32]

By the mid-1930s, a number of respected politicians – among them Istrate Micescu, Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, Virgil Madgearu, Constantin P. Băicioanu, and Silviu Dragomir – found themselves arguing in favor of ethnic nationalism and for the exclusion of non-Romanians from the state bureaucracy and other jobs (Şerban 179–85). Having mainstream politicians such as Vaida-Voevod, who by 1935 had already been prime minister three times, take up anti-Semitic causes showed that the message of the extreme right was becoming normative in Romanian politics, but it also threatened to undermine the revolutionary and "anti-politician" elements of the ultra-nationalist program (Crainic, "În pragul").

Crainic immediately began a speaking tour promoting the LANC, which still had limited electoral support in early 1935, and a number of priests and theologians joined the party on the strength of Crainic's example. During these lectures he spoke about "Christian nationalism," racism, and ethnotheology, attacked democracy, and appropriated leading nineteenth-century literary figures as representatives of twentieth-century nationalism. Crainic's lectures were well attended by uniformed LANC students who cheered and sang Cuzist hymns in his support.[33] Despite the uniforms and the singing, many of these lectures were not officially political rallies. Often he spoke at the invitation of cultural groups such as Astra, religious organizations such as *Oastea Domnului* (The Lord's Army), feminist groups, or student groups at universities. By the mid-1930s it was common for speakers of Crainic's caliber to promote extreme nationalist ideas at such forums.[34] Crainic had lectured on one of the LANC's founding figures, the physiologist Nicolae Paulescu, while teaching at Chişinău, and now he established a "Nicolae Paulescu Institute for Nationalist and Christian Studies," which he described as an attempt to "re-Christianize" the country. The institute only lasted one year, but allowed Crainic to advance ideas such as anti-Masonry, anti-Semitism, and biological racism within an LANC-approved forum (Crainic, *Ortodoxie* 147).

Once he had been sworn in as the vice-president of the LANC, Crainic carried out "inspections" of regional sections of the organization, during which uniformed youth paraded before him in military fashion and he dictated changes which needed to be made at a local level.[35] He also quickly set about forming links with other nationalist groups to create a united front against Vaida-Voevod. The first of these was with the "New Group" (*Grupul Noi*) led by a law student from Cluj named Tiberiu Rebreanu. The New Group was particularly strong in Ardeal, where the LANC had little electoral support, and Crainic promised them relative autonomy in this region once they joined the LANC.[36] His biggest coup was the merger of Octavian Goga's National Agrarian Party (*Partidul Naţional Agrar*) with the LANC in July 1935. Crainic claimed in his memoirs that he initially joined the LANC because of a secret agreement that he had made with Goga beforehand to engineer this merger, though German documents show that Alfred Rosenberg's staff members also helped arrange the alliance and provided financial assistance to the newly-formed National Christian Party (PNC).[37]

To cement the friendship, Goga sponsored A.C. Cuza's candidacy for membership of the Romanian Academy, a prestigious honor guaranteed to appeal to the latter's ego (Crainic, *Zile albe* 285). Cuza and Goga were made joint presidents of the PNC, while

Crainic was given charge of the militant youth section. The new party retained the earlier rhetoric of religion, anti-Semitism and Romanian exclusivism which was the basis of all three men's political platforms. The oath promised: "Humbly raising my thoughts towards God, with faith in Christ, the King and the Nation, I swear in front of the altar that I will keep and carry out . . . the program contained in the Constitution of the National Christian Party . . . in order to realize the national Romanian ideal: Romania for the Romanians. This I swear, so help me God! Amen."[38]

The new arrangement unsettled several of the older leaders within the LANC. Danulescu Costache and Dr. V. Trifu, the leader of the LANC in Muntenia, immediately began talks to negotiate joining Codreanu's movement. Fr. Ioan Popescu-Mozăceni, a former legionary who was popular with the students, and I.V. Emilian, a lawyer who had led the paramilitary "blue shirts" of the LANC youth before the merger, both agitated against Goga, and in October 1935 Crainic moved to exclude them from the party. Emilian soon founded his own party, known as "The Swastika of Fire."[39] Crainic's own position became increasingly uncertain, however, and he attacked his rivals by forming anti-Masonic study circles in early 1936. Octavian Goga had been a Freemason in the past, as had A.C. Cuza's son Gheorghe, who was being groomed to take over his father's position, so anti-Masonry helped Crainic undermine the authority of Goga and Cuza within the PNC, with a certain degree of success.[40] In September 1936 Crainic moved to eliminate Nichifor Robu from the PNC, a lawyer and another of the former LANC's most influential activists. Cuza and Goga responded by expelling Crainic instead, on the grounds that he was stirring up dissent within the party.

Crainic managed to take a significant portion of the PNC students with him when he left.[41] As soon as Crainic had gone, PNC leaders entered into an abortive round of talks with Vaida-Voevod in the hope of negotiating a merger with the Romanian Front (Ornea 258). Factionalism was typical of ultra-nationalist parties in interwar Romania, and ideological differences were less important than patronage circles and power struggles. The rivalry and bickering which divided the PNC from its very beginning show why these groups were never able to mount a united assault on the mainstream political parties through democratic elections.

Newspaper politicking (1936–1938)

Ostracized from both the Legion and the PNC, Crainic set about trying to form his own party. He held meetings with his small group of supporters in the evenings, using the offices of a weekly newspaper which he edited called *Sfarmă Piatră* (*The Rock Crusher*, 1935–1941). His early attempts were called variously the "Ethnocratic Party," the "National Traditionalist Party," and the "Sfarmă Piatră Group," and were aimed at high school and university students while hoping to pilfer members from the Legion or the PNC.[42] At the beginning of October 1936 Crainic approached leaders of the "Block of the Nationalist Generation of 1922" about forming a new party together with them. The Block was led by former Cuzists and had little mass support but was still courted by most of the major nationalist parties during the mid-1930s. Its members were skeptical towards Crainic's overtures but continued halting talks for the next seven months.[43]

By February 1937 Crainic had decided that his new organization should be called the "Christian Workers Party," and tried using small teams of theology students to spearhead his propaganda campaign. The party's ideology was based on his *Program of the Ethnocratic State* and members were organized into units of four people known as "crosses," with 25 crosses constituting a "hundred" and ten hundreds a "thousand," the leader of

which was known as a "commander."[44] There was little original about Crainic's new party. The organization was clearly reminiscent of the Legion's "nests" of 10 to 13 members and Codreanu's use of "commander" as an honorary title (Heinen 130, 193). In addition, Crainic promoted corporatism, a common fascist economic policy which "protected" workers through central planning and mediation between employers' unions and workers' unions (Manoilescu). He used Italian corporatism as his model, making no reference to Romania's leading corporatist theoretician Mihail Manoilescu (1891–1950) and his "National Corporatist League" because the two men were not on friendly terms.[45] Also, whereas Manoilescu's corporatism was a vision of industrialization based on a sophisticated analysis of international and urban–rural trade relations, in which Romania as an agricultural country was consistently out-maneuvered by the industrialized West, Crainic simply hoped to reduce industrial conflict through dictatorial means (Love, 115–40; Crainic, *Ortodoxie*, 220–32).

The party's overtures towards Romanian workers were insipid and patronizing. The message was that so long as workers were "hard working and skilful," there would always be a place for them within the ultra-nationalist movement. Ultra-nationalists were told that not all workers are lazy socialists and that therefore they should embrace the working classes as fellow Romanians. Crainic offered workers his support, with the warning that workers' rights could only be obtained if workers entered into a partnership with industrialists, which was something that only they as nationalists could provide (Vizirescu, "Împacare"; Crainic, "Naţionalismul," "Reintegrarea"). The new party failed to attract much support, and Crainic ended its weekly meetings just before the elections of November 1937 on the grounds that most people were "too busy" to attend.[46]

Most of Crainic's political statements during this period were printed in his weekly newspaper *Sfarmă Piatră*, which he founded in November 1935 while he still wielded some influence within the PNC. Once Crainic broke with Cuza and Goga, however, *Sfarmă Piatră* ran constant articles attacking the PNC, accusing them of financial dealings with Jews, of Masonic connections, and of anti-Romanian policies. The newspaper listed Al. Gregorian as its director, a poet and former editor of *Calendarul* who had followed Crainic into and out of the PNC. It was well known that the newspaper was Crainic's project, however, and he usually wrote the major editorial pieces for each issue.

As was typical of Crainic's journalism, *Sfarmă Piatră*'s language was acrimonious and it regularly attacked writers and other public figures in the name of a vaguely defined "nationalist movement." The writer Mihail Sadoveanu (1880–1961), for example, was the object of many violent polemics in the nationalist press due to his associations with Freemasonry and as the editor of two major democratic newspapers (Ornea 458–65). Another of *Sfarmă Piatră*'s journalists, Ovidiu Papadima, accused some of Romania's leading writers of pornography, occasioning a major debate within Romanian literary circles, and driving Mircea Eliade to sue the Ministry of Education for defamation after it removed him from his honorary university post in the wake of the scandal. The literary historian Zigu Ornea claims that Eliade had been singled out by *Sfarmă Piatră* as a way to attack Nae Ionescu, the latter's mentor and one of Crainic's most bitter rivals within the ultra-nationalist movement (Papadima; Ornea 446–53).

Crainic also made use of his editorial and institutional privileges to lash out at other ultra-nationalists. He carried on a longstanding dispute with Toma Vlădescu, the director of *Bună Vestire* (*The Good News*, 1937–1938, 1940–1941), a pro-legionary daily newspaper, and collaborated briefly with Ilie Rădulescu on another nationalist daily, *Porunca Vremii* (*The Command of the Times*, 1932–1943), before the two men admitted that they were unable to work together.[47] In July 1936, legionaries killed and mutilated one of their

dissidents, Mihail Stelescu, who they claimed had been planning Codreanu's assassination. As a former legionary dissident himself, Crainic responded by condemning murder as un-Christian and attempting to expel the assassins from the university.[48] He later accused one of his legionary colleagues, Fr. Grigore Cristescu, of plagiarism and managed to expel him from the Faculty of Theology at the University of Bucharest.[49] These attacks were part of a general assault on legionaries in the Faculty of Theology led by the newly-appointed Dean, Fr. Ion Popescu-Mălaieşti (1874–1953), who was concerned that legionary students were undermining his authority and not paying attention to their studies.[50]

Royal dictatorship (1938–1940)

Meanwhile, the rhetoric and ideology of most mainstream politicians had been moving further to the right during the mandate of the Liberal Gheorghe Tătărescu between 1934 and 1937. The Liberals were decimated in the elections of November 1937, and the king invited the PNC to form a government through an alliance with leading figures in the National Peasant Party. Goga and Cuza tried to implement numerous anti-Semitic and corporatist reforms, but they failed to agree on a common program with their new allies. The government disintegrated in February 1938, to be replaced by a royal dictatorship (Hitchins, *Rumania* 418–21). Carol's new prime minister, Armand Călinescu, led a comprehensive assault on rival parties, attacking the Legion in particular. Codreanu was arrested, tried twice, and then murdered by his prison guards in the middle of the night. In the following months, Codreanu's followers were rounded up and those who were not shot immediately spent months in prison and/or under house arrest (Heinen 333–54). Crainic spoke favourably about Codreanu at his trial, but after his death *Sfarmă Piatră* praised the king's regime and its new movement – the Front of National Rebirth (*Frontul Renaşterii Naţionale*) (Ornea 249). Legionaries shot Călinescu in September 1939, but Carol's regime remained strong until the following summer.

Caught between various rivalries within the nationalist movement, Crainic carved out his own alliances by drawing on his reputation as a religious nationalist. Almost all nationalists recognized the value of Crainic's ideological position and the power of his journalism even though few found themselves able to work together with him for any sustained period of time. His flexibility and the vagueness of the core tenets of his ultra-nationalist program meant that once both the Legion and the PNC were spent as political forces, Crainic was able to embrace King Carol's regime, which was characterized by anti-Semitism, religious nationalism, and militarism. Carol himself had a Jewish mistress, was not particularly religious, and had no military background, but the rise of similar regimes elsewhere in Europe had shown that these elements were likely to ensure the popularity of an authoritarian ruler. Moreover, the relative success of ultra-nationalist parties in the 1937 elections had demonstrated that there was support for such a regime within Romania itself.

Crainic's sycophancy paid dividends during the royal dictatorship. The philosopher Ion Petrovici, a frequent contributor to *Gândirea*, recommended him for membership in the Royal Academy in 1939, and he was elected in May 1940, a month after the University of Vienna announced that it would proclaim him Doctor *Honoris Causa* (Vizirescu, "Nichifor Crainic"; Crainic, *Zile albe*, 307–13). Romania was still resisting German pressure for an alliance with the Central Powers at the beginning of 1940 and there is no evidence that Crainic's doctorate was in any way influenced by Nazi foreign policy aspirations. Nonetheless, after the *Anschluss* of March 1938 the Faculty of Evangelical Theology at the University of Vienna was dominated by men whose anti-Semitism was

becoming more pronounced by the day (Rupnow 92). Culture mattered when forming political alliances. Crainic spoke about Romanian culture in both Germany and Austria when he travelled to receive his award later in 1940, and newspapers in Germany published extracts of his speeches to ethnic German communities in Romanian Transylvania that August.[51] At the Romanian Academy, Crainic took the seat of another anti-Semitic poet, Octavian Goga – who died in 1938, three months after his government had been ousted – and his long-time but by now increasingly estranged friend Lucian Blaga gave the response to his inaugural speech (Crainic, *Elogiul*).

Meanwhile, King Carol lost the support of the major political parties after Romania was forced to cede Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina to Russia in June 1940. He then turned to prominent ultra-nationalists in order to form a new government that included three legionary ministers and Crainic as minister of propaganda. In a radio speech that month, Crainic affirmed that "the last epoch lived under the democratic formula; the new epoch under that of integral nationalism, whose political expression and organ is the one-party state" ("Solidaritatea"). This dismissal of democracy and the celebration of a new epoch, "integral nationalism," and dictatorship had all been key elements of Crainic's political ideology throughout the past decade and were now the basis of the new regime. Crainic had never been wealthy, but after only one week in government he began building himself two expensive apartments in Bucharest, leading other ultra-nationalists to suspect him of corruption.[52]

After the death of Codreanu and hundreds of other legionaries during the purges of 1938, the Legion now was led by Horia Sima, together with others who had taken refuge in Germany. Sima and his companions resigned from their ministerial posts after only a few days, claiming that they could not work together with the king and disassociating themselves from his regime. The government then collapsed after the Second Vienna Award gave Northern Transylvania to Hungary on 30 August 1940. General Ion Antonescu (1882–1946) assumed power five days later and the king abdicated on 6 September 1940. After extensive negotiations, Romania was transformed into a "National Legionary State" governed by a shaky alliance between Antonescu and the legionaries. The legionary Alexandru Constant took over as minister of propaganda, and Crainic was appointed director of Romanian national radio. He immediately transformed the radio's program, introducing legionary speakers who explained the regime's ideology at least once a day.[53] Crainic remained in this post until the National Legionary State collapsed in January 1941, after which he returned to power as minister of propaganda.

Conclusion

Writing in a festive issue of *Gândirea* dedicated to Crainic in 1940, Nicolae Bălan (1882–1955), the Metropolitan of Ardeal, spoke about how after "the war of national integration" in 1918, Nichifor Crainic "raised the captivating banner of our national duties, bringing to light that which lay fallow in the depths of our national spirit. . .. He showed the important place which Orthodoxy has in Romanian spirituality and what respect and attention must be given to it by anyone who truly loves his people" (196). Bălan's summation of Crainic's life emphasized the intimate connection which ultra-nationalists saw between religion and nation. Orthodoxy, according to Crainic, needed to permeate all aspects of social life and, like the penitent Christian seeking God, the Romanian nation needed to be purified before it could assume its rightful place as a leader in Europe. The sophistication with which Crainic preached this message earned him the admiration of a wide range of ultra-nationalists who otherwise wanted little to do with the belligerent theologian.

That prominent churchmen such as Bălan would praise Crainic in the pages of *Gândirea* demonstrates how important Crainic's message was not only to the ultra-nationalist movement, but also to the Romanian Orthodox Church. Crainic's willingness to confuse the church with the nation gave the church special privileges under right-wing regimes but it also restricted its ability to minister to non-Romanian ethnic groups. Numerous priests read and distributed *Calendarul*, and Crainic's university chair allowed him to train a whole generation of future priests and theologians. Many of his students were active in the Legion, and several of his colleagues were also prominent ultra-nationalists. Regardless of tactical or personal differences, thanks to Crainic most politicians and activists on the right accepted that the church and the nation reflected one and the same corporate entity which it was their duty to promote, defend and purify.

Crainic's involvement in nationalist politics extended beyond his ideological writings. He was active in Codreanu's Legion of the Archangel Michael and A.C. Cuza's National Christian Defense League, as well as attempting to form his own political party and several nationalist umbrella groups. Within these parties Crainic spoke at public rallies, managed various sections of the organizations, ran for public office, attended political banquets and negotiated mergers with other groups. More important than all of these activities, however, were Crainic's journalistic writings. Newspapers promoted Crainic's own political platform while slandering his enemies without mercy. Whereas *Gândirea* usually communicated its ultra-nationalist message in a reasonably polite and academic tone, *Calendarul* and *Sfarmă Piatră* acrimoniously attacked democrats and ultra-nationalists alike. The bitter conflicts which characterized Crainic's political career during the 1930s show how divided the ultra-nationalist movement was, and highlight the importance of personal ambitions rather than purely ideological disputes in determining the success or failure of any given party.

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Notes

1. National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives, Bucharest, Romania (Henceforth: CNSAS), Fond documentar D.012694, vol. 1, f. 108.
2. CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Robu, Dosar P.000324, vol. 8, f. 150, 153.
3. CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Robu, Dosar P.000324, vol. 7, f. 383, vol. 9, f. 1–33.
4. Romanian National Archives – Municipality of Bucharest (Henceforth: AN – Bucureşti), Fond Universitatea din Bucureşti, Rectorat, Dosar 11/1932, f. 32–33, 40.
5. CNSAS, Fond Cristescu Grigore, I.258626, f. 88; Fond documentar D.012694, vol. 8, f. 5.
6. CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Crainic, Dosar P.013206, vol. 2, f. 337, 338.
7. Ibid., vol. 2, f. 343.
8. CNSAS, Fond Robu Nichifor, P. 000324, vol. 8, f. 134–38; CNSAS, Fond Mironovici Radu, P.014005, vol. 11, f. 46–72.
9. For example, *Biruinţa* (Covurlui, 1930–1933), *Garda de Fer* (Brăila, 1932), and *Garda Moldovei* (Iaşi, 1931–1933). Several more regional papers appeared later in the year, including *Garda* (Brăila, 1932), *Garda* (Muscel, 1932–1933), *Garda Bucovinei* (Rădăuţi, 1932–1933), *Garda Jiului* (Dolj, 1932–1933), *Garda Prahovei* (Ploieşti, 1932–1933), and *Garda Râmnicului* (Râmnicul Sarat, 1932–1933).
10. CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Crainic, Dosar P.013206, vol. 2, f. 346, 362, 364.

11. *Siguranţa* agents reported that during 1933 Crainic was involved in negotiations of this nature with the LANC, Cultul Patriei and Blocul Cetăţenesc. CNSAS, Fond Codreanu Corneliu, P. 011784, vol. 14, f. 276; CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Crainic, Dosar P.013206, vol. 2, f. 394, 402, 469.
12. Crainic claims that "in only several months *Calendarul* had left *Cuvântul* and *Curentul* far behind, becoming the newspaper with the third largest print run in the country" (*Zile albe*, 232). The literary historian Zigu Ornea disputes this, however, writing that *Calendarul* "could not go beyond 10,000 copies . . . [and] could not equal the performances of Şeicaru (*Curentul*) and Nae Ionescu (*Cuvântul*)" (244). Neither man cites his sources. *Calendarul*'s balance sheet from 12 Feb 1934 may give us some clue as to the reality. It records 492,510 lei in sales from Bucharest and 1,671,553.75 lei in sales from the provinces. The time period is unclear, but probably refers to the financial year 1933. Assuming that *Calendarul* received 1.25 lei for every newspaper sold (the stand price was 2 lei), this adds up to 1,732,251 copies – an average of 4,949 copies for each of the 350 days it was printed that year. "Raport de expertiză" 12 Feb 1934. CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Crainic, Dosar P.013206, vol. 1, f. 34.
13. *Calendarul* writers who became legionaries in 1932–1933 thanks to Crainic's influence include Mihail Polihroniade, Dragoş Protopopescu, Ioan Victor Voejen, Nicolae V. Iliescu and Nicolae Crevedia. Others, such as Toma Vladescu, Al. Gregorian, Alexandru Cusin and Gib Mihaescu remained convinced ultra-nationalists but avoided aligning themselves with the Legion. Crainic, *Zile albe*, 237; Heinen 169.
14. Ornea 42; CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Crainic, Dosar P.013206, vol. 2, f. 379, 381, 383, 389, 483.
15. Crainic, *Zile albe*, 240–42; Heinen 224, 231; CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Crainic, Dosar P.013206, vol. 3, f. 50.
16. Crainic, *Zile albe*, 257. This is confirmed by police reports from the period. CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Crainic, Dosar P.013206, vol. 3, f. 8.
17. Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, "Însemnari" 19 Feb. 1934. CNSAS, Fond Codreanu Corneliu, P. 011784, vol. 13, f. 121.
18. Crainic, "Memoriul"; Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, "Circulara", 2 Jun. 1935. CNSAS, Fond Codreanu Corneliu, P. 011784, vol. 19, f. 13.
19. Crainic, "To Brătianu" 133; CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Crainic, Dosar P.013206, vol. 1, f. 9–11.
20. Crainic, *Zile albe* 283; CNSAS, Fond Cristescu Grigore, I.258626, f. 13.
21. CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Crainic, Dosar P.013206, vol. 3, f. 4, 6, 9.
22. "Nota" 25 Apr. 1934. Ibid., f. 21.
23. Stăniloae, "Opera teologică," *Ortodoxie*, *Naţiune*.
24. On their critical reception, see Schifirneţ 470–82.
25. CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Crainic, Dosar P.013206, vol. 3, f. 23–40.
26. Ibid., vol. 3, f. 49.
27. Ibid., vol. 3, f. 61, 71.
28. Ibid., vol. 3, f. 73–75.
29. Ibid., vol. 3, f. 83, 87, 91, 97–98.
30. Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, "Circulara", 2 Jun. 1935. CNSAS, Fond Codreanu Corneliu, P. 011784, vol. 19, f. 13.
31. CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Crainic, Dosar P.013206, vol.3, f. 136–38; Fond documentar D.012694, vol. 12, f. 10.
32. Heinen 249; CNSAS, Fond Partidul Frontul Românesc, 1936, D.010866, f. 31–37.
33. CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Crainic, Dosar P.013206, vol.3, f. 73–188. Romanian National Archives – Central (Henceforth: ANIC), Fond Direcţia Generala a Poliţiei, Dosar 107/1935, f. 2; Fond Ministerul de Interne - Diverse, Dosar 10/1935, f. 56–60.
34. AN – Braşov, Fond Desp. Astra, f. 6–18; Anonymous, "Informaţii," "Creştinismul."
35. Anonymous, "Dl prof N. Crainic"; CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Crainic, Dosar P.013206, vol.3, f. 148–88.
36. CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Crainic, Dosar P.013206, vol. 2, f. 192; vol. 3, f. 108–11.
37. Crainic, *Zile albe*, 286; Hillgruber 45; Haynes 18. Crainic himself recognized the German connection at the time. "D. Nichifor Crainic denunţa."
38. CNSAS, Fond Robu Nichifor, P. 000324, vol. 5, f. 123.
39. ANIC, Fond Direcţia Generala a Poliţiei, Dosar 107/1935, f. 132–137, 149; Fond Ministerul de Interne – Diverse, Dosar 3/1936, f. 126; CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Crainic, Dosar P.013206, vol. 2, f. 43–44.

40. CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Crainic, Dosar P.013206, vol. 2, f. 50, 65–67; vol. 3, f. 191–92, 213–14. Anonymous, "Lamuririle"; Brudaşcu 100–02.
41. CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Crainic, Dosar P.013206, vol. 2, f. 63, 75; vol. 3, f. 222.
42. Ibid., vol. 2, f. 59, 63, 79.
43. Ibid., vol. 2, f. 71; ANIC, Fond Direcţia Generala a Poliţiei, Dosar 146/1937, f. 1.
44. CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Crainic, Dosar P.013206, vol. 3, f. 255–58, 275.
45. Ibid., vol. 2, f. 36, 365.
46. Ibid., vol. 3, f. 287–88.
47. CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Crainic, Dosar P.013206, vol. 2, f. 97, 109–10.
48. Ibid., vol. 2, f. 55; Heinen 260, 281; Crainic, *Zile albe*, 284.
49. CNSAS, Fond Cristescu Grigore, Dosar I.258626, f. 61, 106.
50. ANIC, Fond Ministerul de Interne - Diverse, Dosar 10/1936, f. 103–05.
51. CNSAS, Fond Nichifor Crainic, Dosar P.013206, vol. 2, f. 169, 189.
52. Ibid., vol. 2, f. 184–185.
53. CNSAS, Fond Dobre Ion, Dosar I.233726, vol. 1, f. 15–19; Muşeţeanu, vol. 2, 93, 136, 137, 152, 164, 205–07, 256, 260, 313; Denize, vol. I, part 2, 141–81.

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