

**THE HISTORIAN AND GEOGRAPHER
EMIL DIACONESCU: BETWEEN ACADEMIC
EXCELLENCE, PATRIOTISM
AND ANTI-SEMITIC OUTBURSTS**

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In this paper, we propose a complex (re)evaluation of the life and activity of the historian and geographer Emil Diaconescu, a representative academic figure of the interwar University of Iași, but less known to the uninitiated public, and whose memory was only partially and selectively presented in recent years. Born on October 23, 1889 in Mănăstireni (Unțeni commune, Botoșani county) and dead on October 1, 1978 in Iași, the historian Emil Diaconescu had a very winding and tumultuous biographical roadmap in accordance with the recent history that he crossed. A less revealed distinctive feature of his personality remains the controversial duality of his interwar activity that juxtaposed academic excellence and nationalist - anti-Semitic accents, and then intellectual support for Ion Antonescu's regime. After 1945, he endured the drastic rigors of the communist regime, but from this point of view, we can discern a certain behavioral duality. Thus, under the aspect of the direct relationship with the communist regime, Emil Diaconescu remained one of the few autochthonous figures of the silent resistance until the end, but on the academic dimension he adapted his thematic agenda towards subjects acceptable to the national-communist regime after 1965. This is how he managed to continue his historical studies without sliding into glorifying history or tendentious

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interpretations, but at the price of giving up the unapproved theme of his interwar studies regarding the geopolitics of the Romanian space and the historical-geographical evolution of South-Eastern Europe.



Emil Diaconescu

Source: *Cuget Moldovenesc*, 1940, no. 4-5, p. 41

Emil Diaconescu: becoming and academic excellence

The solid professional training and the constant bibliophile self-denial constituted the foundations of Emil Diaconescu's diversified scientific career and the varied thematic range of his intellectual concerns. Indeed, his academic track record is impressive from this point of view. After graduating the elitist "A. T. Laurian" High School in Botoșani (1909) and History undergraduate studies at the University of Bucharest (1913)¹, Emil Diaconescu temporarily interrupted his scientific activity between 1913-1918 amid the turbulence of those years, taking part in Balkan War II and then to World War I. After World War I, he took his proficiency exam in History and Geography, which allowed him to return, in 1919, this time as a teacher, at Laurian high school³. Here, he began his research work for the elaboration of his doctoral thesis

¹ Ciurea, Naghiu 1978, 689.

² Donisă 2014, 20-21.

³ Maftai 1982, 88; Naghiu 1979, 581.

in History, which he defended at the University of Iași in 1924⁴, on which occasion he also transferred as a teacher of History and Geography to the emblematic “Costache Negruzzi” Boarding High School in Iași⁵. He stayed at “Negruzzi” for two years until 1926 when, on the basis of his outstanding doctorate, he was accepted into the teaching staff of the Faculty of Sciences (Geography Department) as a substitute lecturer in the History of Geography discipline⁶, starting a career academic for 20 years which would be stopped in 1946 after the communists came to power. Once he entered the academic branch, given his multidisciplinary skills, Emil Diaconescu commuted between the Geography section of the Faculty of Sciences and the History section of the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy. Thus, in 1930, he obtained his docent⁷ for the discipline of Historical and Political Geography at the Faculty of Sciences (Geography section)⁸, on the basis of which he was appointed a permanent lecturer/ tenured lecturer of the respective discipline starting on January 1, 1931⁹; he remained within the Geography section until December 5, 1938, when he was moved to the History section (Faculty of Letters and Philosophy)¹⁰.

However, at the insistence of the head of the Geography section, Emil Diaconescu remained to teach classes at the Geography section with the status of an *attache* to the Department of Physical Geography and the Geography of Romania in order to continue teaching the courses on the History of Geography and Historical Geography and Politics; his transfer to the History Department simultaneously with maintaining the accumulation of hours in Geography was approved by the Minister of National Education at that time, the geographer Vintilă Mihăilescu¹¹. Such a situation was quite exceptional in the academic life of the era, but we believe that the situation was also facilitated by the fact that Emil Diaconescu was at that time the Secretary-General of the Ministry of National Education, a position in which he had been appointed on February 20, 1938¹², during the government of Miron Cristea. At the same time, benefiting from his public status, Emil Diaconescu – genius captain in

⁴ Donisă 2014, 27; Maftei 1982, 88.

⁵ Ciurea, Naghiu 1978, 689.

⁶ SJAN Iași 1926, fund 79, file 1119, 55, 251.

⁷ In the interwar period, the *docent* represented the academic status (acquired through the *docent exam*) that allowed a teaching staff to occupy the position of permanent/ tenured reader (associate professor) for a certain discipline for which he had obtained the title of *docent*.

⁸ SJAN Iași 1930, fund 79, file 1300, 136; Vlad, Geacu, Săgeată 1999, 32.

⁹ SJAN Iași 1926-1939, fund 79, file 1156, 208; file 1300, 269; file 1302, 122.

¹⁰ SJAN Iași 1926-1939, fund 79, file 1156, 16; Ciurea, Naghiu 1978, 689.

¹¹ SJAN Iași 1938, fund 79, file 1764, 414, 504.

¹² SJAN Iași 1938, fund 79, file 1760, 308.

the reserve, was exempted from mobilization on the World War II front¹³, although he was in a certain contractual relationship with the army from which he periodically received military salary gradations simultaneously with civil professional gradations¹⁴.

In parallel with his didactic duties, professor Emil Diaconescu intermittently fulfilled the position of school inspector of History in Iași between 1924 and 1928, a position he acquired during the liberal governments of the mid-1920's in the context of his political affiliation at the National Liberal Party (PNL)¹⁵; this fact will cost Emil Diaconescu dearly after the communist regime came to power, as we will see below. As a teacher and school inspector, he developed numerous history textbooks for secondary and high school courses¹⁶, circumscribed by the purpose assigned to the school in the era of consolidation of the Romanian national state and forging of the national identity; all its textbooks were automatically withdrawn from use after the communist education reform of 1948.

The agenda of professor Emil Diaconescu's intellectual concerns was indeed vast. Adjacent to his teaching obligations in the History of Geography discipline, he was concerned, together with his fellow geographer Gheorghe Năstase, with the clarification of some lesser-known aspects of the history of cartography (maps of Moldavia from the 18th-19th centuries)¹⁷, as well as the economic history of transport in the Romanian Countries, being interested in the "reconstruction of the medieval road network in Moldavia, in relation to the major fluvial axes and saddles"¹⁸. After the internship carried out in Paris in 1927¹⁹, where he became familiar with the theses of Western political geography, Emil Diaconescu's leaning towards historical and political geography with the geopolitical touch specific to the era²⁰, will become predominant in his intellectual thinking and will mark his later epistemological grid.

His outstanding concerns with historical geography included a series of remarkable works with strong interdisciplinary accents combining approaches specific to universal history, the history of international relations and political geography, which represented an innovative undertaking in the era. The lithographed course in 1931 regarding the formation of the colonial empires of the European powers constitutes an inaugural piece of colonial history and geography in Romanian

¹³ SĀAN Iași 1935, fund 79, file 1527, 197.

¹⁴ SĀAN Iași 1926-1939, fund 79, file 1156, 208.

¹⁵ Cioflâncă 2014, 12.

¹⁶ BJGAI 2019, 70; "Evenimentul" 2014.

¹⁷ Donisă, Ungureanu 2010, 190.

¹⁸ Donisă, Ungureanu 2010, 184.

¹⁹ Donisă 2014, 30.

²⁰ Ungureanu 2010, 5; Vlad, Geacu, Săgeată 1999, 32.

historiography²¹, representing the course support of the homonymous discipline taught both at the History Faculty and at the Geography Faculty. Regarding the geopolitical approaches, the most representative achievements of Emil Diaconescu took shape in a chrono-thematic trilogy regarding the geopolitical position of the new Romanian state in the context of the evolution of the games of interests of the great powers in the Balkans, respectively: the situation of the Balkan states – Danube until the Russian-Romanian-Turkish war of 1877-1878²², Romania's situation from 1878 to 1914 in the concert of European relations²³ and the stakes of the Turkish straits in the equation of Russian interests during World War I²⁴.

A separate category of the geopolitical interests of Professor Emil Diaconescu concerned the dimension of ethnopolitics, also approached from a utilitarian perspective, aimed at identifying the assets, but also the threats to the Romanian state before and after 1918. To this category belongs even his first work published after joining the University in 1926 (“Granițe etnice și politice în Balcani între 395 și 1453” [“Ethnic and Political Boundaries in the Balkans between 395 and 1453”]) – a large historical ethnopolitical monograph that analyzes the ethnic mosaic in the Balkans and the impact on the dynamics of the areas controlled by the different powers in the Balkan peninsula from the time of the division of the Roman Empire at the end of the reign of Theodosius I (395) until the fall of Constantinople (1453).

Gradually, the ethnopolitical apprehensions of the historian Emil Diaconescu acquired a more pragmatic character in accordance with the fashion of nationalist patriotism of the time, materializing in works on the situation of Romanians from the peripheral areas of the Romanian space in the context of sharpening of the revisionist interests of the neighboring powers during the interwar period²⁵. Against this background, his ethnopolitical analyzes aimed at the political-national evolution of the Romanian space in terms of the collision with the rigors of expansive pan-Slavism. The most relevant ethnopolitical command for the national survival of the Romanians was identified by Professor Diaconescu in relation to the danger of Russian imperialism manifested in a historical succession either in the garb of Russian Orthodox messianism or under the cloak of Soviet communist messianism²⁶, highlighting at the same time the Ukrainian cause as an imperialism dangerous for the

²¹ The paper: Diaconescu 1931.

²² The work: Diaconescu 1930.

²³ The reference paper: Diaconescu 1937.

²⁴ The paper: Diaconescu 1942d.

²⁵ See the following papers: Diaconescu 1940; Diaconescu 1942b.

²⁶ Diaconescu 1943, 14, 22.

Romanian ethos²⁷. A series of Emil Diaconescu's interwar studies were positioned in line with the nationalist theses originating from the matrix of the sower, poporanist and thinker currents, and during World War II they tried to justify a mobilizing Romanian messianism centered on the idea of the historical mission of the Romanian people and of the iconic posture of integral Romanianism²⁸. Most of these interwar ethnopolitical researches were published in historical and cultural journals from Iași ("Cercetări istorice", "Viața românească", "Însemnări ieșene") and from Bessarabia ("Cuget Moldovenesc")²⁹. It should be noted that, for the Iesian journal "Cercetări Istorice", Emil Diaconescu was a real "customer of the house", being the only author who published in the pages of this journal both in the initial series from the interwar period, as well as in the new series resumed after 1970.

Emil Diaconescu: anti-Semitic attitudes and support for the Antonescu regime

Although it would have been expected that his geopolitical approaches were more balanced through the prism of Paul Vidal de la Blache's French possibilism in the margins of which he had trained at the Sorbonne, Emil Diaconescu's ethnopolitical inclinations were convergent with a series of extremist-anti-Semitic personal attitudes, publicly manifested since the 1920s. Illustrative in this regard is the incident in Chernivtsi, in 1926, when the bacalaureate committee of the city's high school, of which Emil Diaconescu was also a member, was accused by the Jewish pupils of undervaluing them in a discriminatory manner in relation to the Romanian pupils, an episode followed by disturbances in the city generated by the dissatisfaction of the underrated pupils³⁰. Following the event, Professor Diaconescu immediately published in Iași a virulently anti-Semitic brochure-appeal for the unmasking of the turbulent elements, which he distributed in Chernivtsi, further agitating local spirits³¹; in the text of the respective call, the author reproaches one of the pupil protesting leaders – David Fallik, for daring to protest as an "insult to the prestige of the Romanian state authority"³². Against this background of escalating tensions, the legionnaire student Nicolae Totu, wanting to "wash away the national honor" invoked by Diaconescu in his appeal, fatally shot the recalcitrant pupil David Fallik, whose funeral was attended by approx. 30,000 people out of the total of 42,500

²⁷ Diaconescu 1942c, 6-7.

²⁸ See the following papers: Diaconescu 1940; Diaconescu 1942a.

²⁹ "Evenimentul" 2014.

³⁰ Livezeanu 1995, 79.

³¹ Clark 2015, 58; Diaconescu 1926, 4; Tucan 2022, 419.

³² Diaconescu 1926, 10.

members of the Jewish community in Chernivtsi³³, and the acquittal of Nicolae Totu at the trial that followed further escalated the inter-ethnic tension in the city and the country³⁴.

Later, during World War II, without being a member or sympathizer of the Iron Guard, Emil Diaconescu aligned himself with the intellectual opportunism of supporting the interest of the Antonescu regime for Transnistria and Odesa³⁵. In this context, he published in the 1940s a series of works dedicated to the history of the Romanian communities in Bessarabia and Transnistria³⁶, works of a certain historiographic value, but which followed exactly the ideological-official commandments of Antonescu government. Moreover, one of these works, namely “Românii din Răsărit – Transnistria” [“Romanians from the East – Transnistria”] was publicly launched in Odessa in 1942 under the auspices of Gheorghe Alexianu, the governor of Transnistria from the Antonescu government³⁷. In the very preface of this work, the author tries to justify the legitimacy of the expansion of the Romanian state up to the Bug, as an argument glorifying the justice of the pro-Hitler policy led by “Marshal Ion Antonescu – ‘the reunifier’ of the country”³⁸.

At the same time, apart from supporting the same topics of interest of Antonescu regime, Emil Diaconescu also presented numerous public conferences in Iași, Chișinău and Odesa³⁹, having as topics “the mission of Romanians in Eastern Europe”, “Romanians from the east of the Dniester” and “imperialism Ukrainian”⁴⁰. He was also among the highly prestigious historians (Gheorghe Brătianu, Constantin C. Giurescu, Silviu Dragomir, Theodor Capidan, Victor Papacostea) who agreed to present a utilitarian history in the press and on the national radio station for the support and propaganda justification of the war effort alongside Nazi Germany⁴¹.

Emil Diaconescu: repression during the communist regime

All these activities of Professor Diaconescu up to August 23, 1944 were sufficient reasons to come under the scrutiny of the purification commissions that

³³ Clark 2015, 59.

³⁴ Livezeanu 1995, 86.

³⁵ Solomon 2018, 347.

³⁶ Among them: Diaconescu 1942b; Diaconescu 1942a; Diaconescu 1942c; Diaconescu 1943.

³⁷ Diaconescu 1942b, 6; Tucan 2022, 419.

³⁸ Diaconescu 1942b, 5-6.

³⁹ Solomon 2018, 348; The conference “The Romanian nation, an unshakable sentinel on the Eastern border of Europe” held in the University Hall of Iași on January 23, 1942 (SĴAN Iași 1942, fund 79, file 2165, 850).

⁴⁰ Solomon 2018, 345.

⁴¹ Nistor 2010-2012, 499.

operated in the University of Iași starting from October 1944 and which decided to remove him from the University in 1946, so that later to be arrested in the period 1952-1954 without being judged and convicted⁴². However, he was later employed as a principal scientific researcher at the Institute of History and Philology in Iași in 1957 without ever being allowed to support didactic activities at the University⁴³. After only two years, however, he will be removed from the History Institute in the summer of 1959 following a professional investigation carried out by a control commission sent by the RPR Academy, a commission led by the academician Andrei Oșetea and which also included the academicians Iorgu Jordan and Ion Nestor⁴⁴. The reason cited for his removal from the Institute was an elusive one related to the need for a better planning of the research topic. What is striking, however, is the fact that immediately after his removal from the Institute, Emil Diaconescu was arrested for the second time and politically sentenced for the next five years between 1959-1964⁴⁵.

His second arrest in 1959 came in the context of the second wave of communist repression unleashed in the Romanian People's Republic (RPR) at the end of the 1950s after the Hungarian uprising of 1956 and after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the RPR in 1958. However, some details are relevant for understanding the context in which his arrest took place. Historian Adrian Cioflâncă recently revealed that the well-known Iesian writer and journalist Aurel Leon was the one who reported Emil Diaconescu to the secret police in 1959 as a former member of the PNL during the interwar period, a report which, according to a 1960 Security report, led to upon his arrest along with other intellectuals from the Iesian academic milieu handed over to the political police by the same Aurel Leon⁴⁶. In a cynicism of life, Aurel Leon was Emil Diaconescu's pupil at the "Costache Negruzzi" Boarding High School in Iași in the years 1924-1926⁴⁷, that is, exactly when Professor Diaconescu became a school inspector with the political support of the PNL during the liberal government, information on which his former disciple from "Negruzzi" knew very well and used it after 35 years against his former teacher. And for the cynicism of fate to be complete, Aurel Leon was the one who wrote the obituary of Emil Diaconescu upon his death in 1978 in the pages of the "Cronica" magazine⁴⁸, painting in the most diaphanous colors his former teacher whom 19 years later he had

⁴² Donisă 2014, 66, 90.

⁴³ BJGAI 2019, 70; "Evenimentul" 2014.

⁴⁴ Boicu 1994, 691.

⁴⁵ Donisă 2014, 101.

⁴⁶ Cioflâncă 2014, 12.

⁴⁷ Leon 1978, 9.

⁴⁸ You can see: "Cronica", An XIII, 40(662), 9, October 6, 1978.

put him in prison... From the evaluation of the available sources, it does not appear whether the two tragic events in Emil Diaconescu's life in 1959 (the removal from the Institute of History, respectively his arrest) had any causal connection between them; that is, it is not clear whether the control of Andrei Oțetea at the Institute "A. D. Xenopol" that led to the dismissal of the historian was generated by the secret police or, if on the contrary, the result of that control independently ordered by the RPR Academy catalyzed the decision of the Security to arrest him.

Emil Diaconescu: rehabilitation in national communism after 1965

After his release in 1964 with the collective pardon of political prisoners⁴⁹, Emil Diaconescu, who was then 75 years old, immediately resumed the scientific research on his own with an aplomb and a determination rarely seen for his age and for his dramatic passiveness. His only concern was the historical research he carried out as a freelance researcher and for which he went daily to libraries and the State Archives until his last days of life to collect the documentary material necessary to write his studies⁵⁰. Basically, from the gate of the Gulag he went directly to the door of the library... His last published work appeared a few months after his death, as it had been submitted to the publisher a few weeks before his death, while the last manuscript in progress remained unpublished (a monograph of Cotnari village)⁵¹.

Despite his exemplary verticality in the relationship with the communist regime, Emil Diaconescu still had to make some discreet concessions in order to be able to publish his works in the new political conditions of the nationalist communism that he found installed in the country upon his release from prison. Thus, the professor quickly intuited that only anchoring his writings in the milestones of national-indigenous history could bring his manuscripts into print, so he directed his scientific concerns towards medieval history subjects that would join or even justify the clichés built by the ideology official after 1965. Anyway, it was not too difficult for him to make this thematic adjustment of his work, since his traditionalist-national views that he had practiced in the interwar period overlapped quite well with some of the historical landmarks that the post-1965 national-communist regime wanted them recovered to support his own national-ideological matrix. Thus, after four years of hard work after his release from political prison, Emil Diaconescu managed to publish in 1968 a first volume about the reign of Alexander the Good, in which he proves an excellent monographic exegesis on a historical figure fully accepted by the ideological establishment of the Ceaușescu regime, the Moldavian

⁴⁹ Donisă 2014, 110.

⁵⁰ Ciurea, Naghiu 1978, 689; Naghiu 1979, 581.

⁵¹ Naghiu 1979, 583.

voivode being included by the official propaganda in the panoply of “good” characters of history who deserved to be recovered. As proof, the author later republished the volume in the last weeks of his life in the form of a second revised and added edition together with Dumitru Matei, who was in charge of promoting the volume at the Military Publishing House in 1979⁵². Also, in his last years, the historian Emil Diaconescu realized that Stephen the Great was also useful and recoverable, so he devoted his penultimate work to the radiography of the beginning of the reign of the famous Moldavian prince⁵³. The neo-medievalist intuition of the author was impeccable, describing the situations in which the great Ștefan-Vodă had to replace the old set of advisers from the Court in a manner that put in a tacit-justifying mirror the changes made by Nicoale Ceaușescu in the old guard around him in the first years of power.

During the 1970s, the senior historian also elaborated museum history articles on the activity of some pioneers of the Romanian museography⁵⁴, which he published in the new series of “Cercetări Istorice”, a situation that hypothesized Emil Diaconescu as the only link of continuity between the old interwar university journal of Ilie Minea and the recent, respectively current, museum journal of the same name. From this point of view, only the veteran historian Ștefan S. Gorovei seems today to be close to the historical performance of Emil Diaconescu, being the only author who constantly keeps the title on the poster of “Cercetări Istorice” since its reappearance in 1970 and up to the current issues of the last years.

However, the university collectives in which Emil Diaconescu was active before his purge from the University were reluctant to resume an extended relationship with him after his release from prison. The new post-war academics of the history and geography faculties of the “Al. I. Cuza” University were reserved in cultivating a relationship with an outcast of the regime, even if partially rehabilitated, for reasons that mainly concerned the professional safety of their own persons. One of the few academics of those times who had the decency to talk to Emil Diaconescu, even if unofficially, was the geographer Alexandru Ungureanu, future corresponding member of the Romanian Academy, recognized for his moderation and socio-professional balance, which he proved a whole life.

Concluding remarks

A brief periodization of the academic biography of Emil Diaconescu clearly captures a chronology conditioned by the political-historical events that marked his personal and professional roadmap. The first period of his youth overlapped with the

⁵² The work in question: Diaconescu, Matei 1979.

⁵³ The paper is: Diaconescu 1977, 277.

⁵⁴ See the following papers: Diaconescu 1970a; Diaconescu 1970b; Diaconescu 1971.

interwar era and was marked by his exemplary academic ascension, but also by anti-Semitic outbursts that indirectly resulted in the death of a man. The second period was the one during World War II, characterized by the intellectual collaboration with Antonescu regime. The third period of his life was the immediate post-war period (1945-1964) in which the professor endured the punitive rigors of the communist regime (successive eliminations from academic environments and two periods of political detention). The fourth stage of his life included the period of rehabilitation after 1964 in which he managed a tacit barter with the political power: the regime allowed him to resume his scientific activities on his own, and in return the historian configured a work theme in according to the agenda approved by the regime.

Analyzing the content of the works signed by Emil Diaconescu (both the interwar and postwar ones) it can be seen that the documentary rigor and the scientific rectitude were a constant in his writings. The information he ran was always accurate and well documented, and the facts described were correctly framed in the analyzed historical context. His anti-Semitic slips from the 1920s are not to be found in his historical works, and the accents of nationalist-protocronist propaganda during the Ceaușescu regime did not infest the content of his writings after 1965. Practically, the scientific veracity of his work was not affected by the context of the times he lived in, or the nationalist excesses of his ideological convictions. Therefore, we can look at the personality and the work of the historian and geographer Emil Diaconescu through a double evaluative lens that highlights that his scientific creation was configured independently of the excessive apprehensions he exercised in certain stages of his life. However, in order to respect the factual truth and to project a complete evaluative picture, we believe that it is necessary to preserve and present both imaging facets in the balance of Professor Diaconescu's evaluation, in a manner similar to the one in which the scientific creation versus the public attitude of Eliade, Cioran or Noica is evaluated today, and other such cultural personalities who went through the exercise of double postures.

What can be observed, however, is the fact that the communist regime did not seek to cover either the anti-Semitic gestures of Emil Diaconescu from the 1920s, nor his geopolitical and ethnopolitical approaches from the 1930s-1940s (although geopolitics was prohibited during communism) nor his intellectual collaboration with Antonescu regime during the war years, because all these elements did not constitute a threat to the communist regime already installed. The communist authorities formally persecuted him only for his political affiliation with the PNL and for his membership in the "bourgeois-landlord" apparatus as a result of the public positions he held, because these former affiliations of his could have become relevant from the perspective of restoration in the event of a reconfiguration of the international political context and could have endangered the local communist regime.

Thus, the case of Emil Diaconescu is part of the wider picture of the punitive approaches and disconnections practiced by the communist political power for which the identification and punishment of anti-Semitic acts and even less the affiliation to some prohibited scientific currents, did not represent a punitive priority of the regime communist⁵⁵, since these facts did not put the regime in real danger. On the other hand, the legitimizing affiliations with alternative potential to the communist power (such as Emil Diaconescu) represented a real danger for the socialist order and, therefore, they were prioritized for identification and suppression. In addition, the communist regime did not actually want, neither before nor after 1965, to bring back to public attention the anti-Semitic phenomenon from before 1945 in order not to add yet another topic to the agenda of the international criticisms that are so numerous and virulent towards the regime. Then, Emil Diaconescu proved to be a useful element for the national ideology promoted by the political regime after 1965, as well as an example that would tacitly justify the good results of the "re-education" of the old bourgeois cultural elite. Even if his intellectual contribution in the 1960s-1970s was no longer one of the type and scope of his collaboration with Antonescu regime, it can be said that Emil Diaconescu was an eponymous figure representative of the category of elements of the old interwar elite attracted to tacit intellectual collaboration with the new national-communist regime in the Socialist Republic of Romania (RSR), based on the tendency of the Ceaușescu regime to recover some of the old ingredients of local nationalism as an argument for public legitimization.

At the same time, the decision-makers of the communist regime thought of all the possible options in relation to this category of eponymous actors. In the case of the change of the communist regime, the heirs of the regime would have had in post-communism all the accusatory levers at hand against a man like Emil Diaconescu in the event that he would have invested his capital of legitimacy in the game of post-communist restoration which could have affected the those who wanted to seize the succession in the new post-communist order. In such a situation, the thesis of his intellectual collaboration with the former communist regime would have been propagated very easily, a thesis that could have been proven by the numerous works that Emil Diaconescu was allowed to publish after 1965.

⁵⁵ Tucan 2022, 411.

ISTORICUL ȘI GEOGRAFUL EMIL DIACONESCU:
ÎNTRE EXCELENȚĂ ACADEMICĂ, PATRIOTISM ȘI RAZNE ANTISEMITE
(REZUMAT)

Istoricul Emil Diaconescu a fost profesor la secțiile de istorie și de geografie de la Universitatea din Iași, unde a predat disciplinele Istorie universală medie și modernă, Istoria geografiei și Geografie istorică și politică în perioada 1926-1946. Pe baza unor surse arhivistice, de presă și din literatură, precum și a unor mărturii orale obținute de la persoane din cercul său relațional, în această lucrare explorăm tumultoasa foaie de parcurs academică a istoricului Emil Diaconescu. Spirit erudit și deopotrivă controversat pentru aprehensiunile sale antisemite și susținerea guvernului Antonescu, profesorul Diaconescu a fost eliminat din Universitate în 1946 și apoi arestat în două rânduri în perioada comunistă pentru afilierea sa politică (liberală), dar și pentru lucrările sale interbelice de geopolitică (știință considerată „fascistă” în epocă). Emil Diaconescu și-a continuat cercetările științifice pe cont propriu după eliberarea din detenție (1964) până la moartea sa (1978), ajustându-și agenda cercetărilor la tematica recuperării istoriei naționale agreată de regimul național-comunist după 1965.

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