

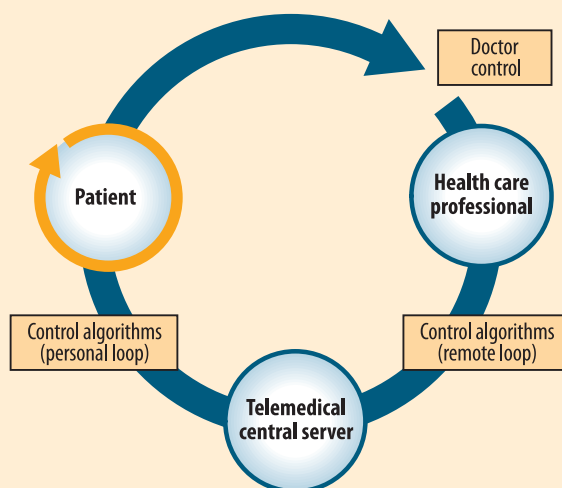
Historical Perspective

From pancreatic extracts to artificial pancreas: history, science and controversies about the discovery of the pancreatic antidiabetic hormone VI: Nicolae C. Paulescu: light and darkness

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Race and eugenics in inter-war Romania

Social Darwinism is a term introduced for various late-nineteenth century ideologies which exploited ideas of “survival of the fittest”. It is also associated with ideas of struggle between national or racial groups. The theory was chiefly exploited by Herbert Spencer who adapted Darwinian ideas to his own ethical theories.¹ He argued that it was natural, normal and proper, for the strong to thrive at the expense of the weak. The first use of Social Darwinism was in Joseph Fisher’s 1877 article on “The history of landholding in Ireland”, published in the *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*. Some ex-

treme Social Darwinists claim that it is morally incorrect to assist those weaker than one self, since that would be promoting the survival and possible reproduction of someone who is fundamentally unfit. Many negative reactions to Darwinism come from the confusion of Darwinism as a scientific theory, describing a range of concepts of evolutionism or development, with Social Darwinism as an ethical theory. In reality, the two have very little in common. Main notable figures of Social Darwinism, in addition to Spencer, have been Thomas Malthus and Francis Galton, the founder of eugenics.

The word *eugenics* was coined in 1883 by the English scientist Francis Galton, a cousin of Charles Darwin, to promote the ideal of perfecting the human race by encouraging the procreation of the social Darwinian fit and discouraging that of the unfit. In Galton’s own words, “perfecting the human race by getting rid of its ‘unde-

sirables’ while multiplying its ‘desirables’”.² As a social movement, eugenics was widely popular in the early decades of the 20th century. By the end of World War II, eugenics had been largely abandoned. Eugenics was practiced around the world and promoted by governments, influential institutions and individuals. Eugenics was supported by Alexander Graham Bell, Margaret Sanger, H.G. Wells, Woodrow Wilson, Theodore Roosevelt, Emile Zola, George Bernard Shaw, Winston Churchill, John Maynard Keynes, John Harvey Kellogg, and Linus Pauling, among many others. Eugenics became an academic discipline at universities. Three International Eugenics Conferences were held in 1912 (London), 1921 and 1932 (New York).

G.K. Chesterton was an early critic of eugenics in his book “Eugenics and Other Evils”. The scientific reputation of eugenics declined in the 1930s when Ernst

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Rudin used eugenics as a justification for the racial policies of Nazi Germany. Nevertheless, the second largest eugenics program was created by the social democrats in Sweden, and continued until 1975.³ Most infamous proponent and practitioner of eugenics was Adolf Hitler, who incorporated eugenics in *Mein Kampf*, and emulated eugenics legislation for the sterilization of “defectives”, that had been pioneered in the United States of America.

Social Darwinist theories had an impact on Central European nationalism. Biological debates on race and ethnicity influenced the idea of national superiority in Central Europe in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century. The new concept of nation integrated geography, historical destiny, and biological terms. Antropometric parameters and the composition of the blood became important somatological characteristics contributing to the idea of nation, inseparable from racial anatomy.⁴

One of most productive researcher in this field is Dr. Marius Turda, a native Romanian, founder of the international Working Group on the History of Race and Eugenics, and Deputy Director of the Centre for Health, Medicine and Society, based at the School of Arts and Humanities, Oxford Brookes University.

Dr. Marius Turda is the founder and actual Director of the Working Group on the History of Race and Eugenics (HRE), based at the School of Arts and Humanities, Oxford Brookes University. Dr. Tudor Georgescu is the actual Research Coordinator.

The aim of HRE is to build a network of international scholars working in the broad area of eugenics and race that transcends national boundaries, while staying connected to political developments concerning racial and gender equality in the 21st century.

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In 1842, Ander Retzius used the ratio width to length (cephalic index, CI) to make the difference between dolico-

cephalic and braquicephalic crania. The French anthropologist Eugène Pittard (1867-1962) made the observation, in 1919, that Romanians from the Old Kingdom were dolicocephalic, but Romanians from Bukovina and Transylvania were braquicephalic.⁵ Following these lines, the Roumanian Victor Papilian (1888-1956) made the proposal of the special cranial characteristics of Romanians from Transylvania when compared with Romanians from the Old Kingdom and Hungarians in Transylvania.⁶ Ion Chelcea (1902-1991) reported five different types of Romanian crania, suggesting the existence of a special Dacian type, preferentially depicted in the Western Mountains of Transylvania.⁷

Iordache Facaoaru, eugenicist and racial anthropologist, accepted six criteria for racial classification: height, cranial, facial and nasal indexes, eye and hair colours. Based on these criteria, he identified four principle races: Alpine, Dinaric, Mediterranean and Nordic; and five secondary races: Dalic, East-European, Oriental, West-Asian and Indian. The main objective of racial anthropology, as Facaoaru proposal, is to establish the right to leadership for those individuals belonging to the category of superior race. Following his classification, Swedesh will occupy the first place, while Roumanians will be sixth, and Hungarians will be fitted in one of the last positions. The Western provinces, Bukovina, Transylvania and the Banat displayed the highest level; the Eastern provinces, Moldavia, Bessarabia, and Transnistria will follow, with an intermediate level; the Southern provinces, Oltenia, Muntenia and Dobrudja, will occupy the last place. Superior racial qualities will be observed within the urban, highly educated, and wealthy people. These anthropological parameters in association with the question of national identity and racial supremacy facilitated the way to racism and anti-semitic options.

Eugenic sterilization was introduced in Romania by the gynaecologist Constantin Andronescu, who suggested the pre-nuptial health certificate and the sterilization of feeble-minded and mentally ill patients

already in 1912.⁸ The economic crises and political instability of the late 1920s influenced the attraction by the medical profession and social reformers towards the eugenic sterilization. In inter-war Romania, the interest for eugenic sterilization was stimulated by the fear of degeneration of the Roman nation. Supporters of eugenic sterilization thought they attempted to protect the society from social and biological degeneration.

In 1925, Iuliu Moldovan, eugenicist and founder of the School of Hygiene and Public Health in Cluj, published “Igiena natiunii: Eugenia”.⁹ A new law was introduced in 1930, as the result of putting into practice the ideas of social hygiene expressed by Moldovan, appointed as sub-secretary of the Department of Work, Health and Social Protection. Eugenics became a common practice for state interventions to prevent defective individuals from procreating. Sexual sterilization was justified to improve the biological qualities of future generations. The fight against degeneration would be instrumented through stopping the reproduction of degenerates and encouraging the fertility of superior individuals. Sterilization would be carried out only if the patient has been examined by at least two doctors (one of them for mental illness), who declare the risk of producing degenerate offspring.

On the occasion of the XI Congress of Neurology, Psychiatry, Psychology and Endocrinology, that took place in 1931 (Constantin Parhon, the founder of the Romanian School of Endocrinology, was the President), Mares Cahane, a psychiatrist, addressed the issue of therapeutic sterilization of the hereditary feeble-minded using as conditions that the patient should have been interned for at least 5 years in a mental hospital, the advice of a commission of specialists, and the family consent. For some groups of patients, like schizophrenics, sterilization and castration should be compulsory. In other European countries, laws allowing sterilization were also dictated (Switzerland, 1928; Denmark, 1929; Germany, 1933; Norway, 1934; Finland, 1935).

Various experts opposed to eugenic sterilization. Eugen Rils, a sociologist,

and Ion Vasilescu-Bucium were two of them. Other authors were reluctant to accept eugenic sterilization, due to lack of sufficient medical knowledge. Grigore Odobescu, argued that the main need was to educate the country and the nation, as the most effective eugenic policy. Instead of biological eugenic policies, Odobescu insisted in educational, social, and agricultural reforms.

In 1935, G. Banu declared abortion, segregation, and prophylactic sterilization, as effective eugenic measures. The sterilization of imbeciles, idiots, epileptics, criminals, and psychotics, as well as individuals suffering from syphilis, tuberculosis, and leprosy allowed the conservation and improvement of the race.

In short, in the 1920s and 1930s eugenic sterilization was basically considered as medical praxis, focused on individuals suffering from physical and mental illnesses. Afterwards, it will be identified with Romanian racial nationalism. The goal of eugenic sterilization was the creation of a new nation through biological regeneration.⁸

Anti-Semitism in the inter-war period in Romania

The first legal measures against the Hebrews in Romania went back to the 15th century, when the prince Vlad (*Vlad the Empalator*, whose figure would lead to the legend of the count Dracula) ordered to pursue the Jewish merchants. Bernard Lazare, a French journalist, wrote in 1902¹⁰ that during the 14th century many Hebrews had emigrated from Hungary to Poland, and to the Romanian principality of Valaquia, expelled of their country by the King Luis I of Hungary.

The idea of State-Nation arose in 1648, with the Peace Treaties of Westphalia that put an end to the Thirty Years' War in the Holy Roman Empire, and to the Eighty Years' War between Spain and the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands. The Treaties initiated a new political and territorial order in central Europe based on the concept of state sovereignty. In the 19th century the nationalist movements won followers in

Europe and Asia. The process of national construction was accompanied by the development of a populist, anti-urban, anti-Semitic and xenophobic speech.

To the religious prejudices against the Hebrews based in the idea that the Jews had killed Jesus, xenophobic prejudices were added. The Jews were considered a stateless town, enemy of the nation. In the 19th century the anti-Semitism becomes more virulent, and connected with the emergence of the European nationalisms. In Romania, the anti-Semitism spread above all from the second half of the 19th century, in parallel to the development of the Romanian nationalism and the Jewish immigration to the country. The Jews escaped to Romania from Habsburgs's monarchy and from the Russia of the Czar, where they were harshly persecuted.

In 1878, the Congress of Berlin decided the recognition of the independence of Romania under the condition of emancipation of the country's Jews. This imposition created an anti-Jewish environment, enhanced by the peasant's revolts of 1888 and 1907. Prominent politicians argued that the integration of Jews in Romanian society will jeopardize the State's Romanian national character. In 1895, Alexandru C. Cuza (1857-1947), Professor of Law at Iasi University, founded the Liga Antisemita Universală.

From the second half of the 19th century, the authorities started a process of "rumanization" to preserve the "Romanian national character". Whereas the occidentals were willing to accept the influences that came from the West, the traditionalists, instead, attacked all foreign influences, defining themselves against "the other", against the foreigner. In this sense, the Romanian nationalists were convinced that there existed two enemies of their country. The first one, the outside enemy, was constituted by large powers as Turkey, Austria and Russia, which threatened the "integrity" of the Romanian nation. The inside enemy was composed by the foreign minorities that inhabited in Romania, especially Greeks and Jews. Greeks were relatively integrated in Romanian life, because they were

orthodox Christians. The Jews, instead, had their own religion, that rendered assimilation difficult in a deeply Christian country as Romania. The Jews were seen as a threat against the Christian religion. A lot of Romanians also consider the Jews to be revolutionary Bolsheviks, since after the Russian Revolution of 1917 a great number of Jews had emigrated to Romania. The anti-Semitism soon spread throughout all layers of Romanian society without exception.

Consequently, the Jews were considered a triple threat: religious, ethnic and political. We should recall that the eugenic movements of the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century were inspired by Gobineau's "Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races" (1853-1855), and by Herder's theory, which stated that some ethnic groups were biologically inferior.

Marius Turda has written that "The medical doctors who embraced eugenics believed that the genetic qualities of the nation had a direct impact on the social and political development of the modern state. Furthermore, they believed that a biologically based identification with the nation, with one's racial characteristics, would be a prerequisite for preserving the differences between the Romanian majority and national minorities (...). The Jews became 'undesirable', both politically and medically. Degeneration was one of the arguments used most consistently in stigmatising the Jews and opposing them to the 'healthy' Romanians (...). Romanian doctors thus envisioned a national community based upon the exclusion of all those deemed to be 'alien', 'hereditary ill', or 'anti-social'. The Romanian national community itself was categorised in accordance with racial criteria. These criteria included not only ideas of 'racial purity', but also biological measures against Jews".¹¹

The Romanian press called the Jews "usurers, purveyors of adulterated alcohol, spies and blood suckers. Instead of the neutral word 'evreu' (Jew), the derogatory 'jidă' (Yid) gained currency".¹² In 1910, Cuza and the historian Nicolae Iorga (1871-1940) established the National-

istic Democratic Party, with a clear anti-emancipationist program. The hostility against Jews increased after the incorporation of large number of them into Greater Romania, in territories of Transylvania, Bessarabia, Northern Bucovina, and part of Dobruja.

In March 1923 the government proclaimed a new constitution. It offered Romanian nationality to the minorities of the country, including the Jews.¹³ This new law inspired a campaign of protests. A hostile attitude against the Jews was also present. Prominent Romanian writers and intellectuals also showed hostility to Jews (Vasile Conta, Vasile Alecsandri, Mihai Eminescu, and Ioan Slavice, among them).¹⁴

On March 4, 1923, Cuza, who was a member of the Parliament, without interruption, since 1911, created the Liga Apararii National Crestine (League of National Christian Defence; LANC). Five important protagonists of the Romanian intellectual sphere were co-founders of LANC:

- Prof. Ion Catuneanu (taught Law at Cluj University).
- Prof. Ion Gavanescu (taught Pedagogy at Iasi University).
- Prof. Corneliu Sumuleanu (taught Chemistry at Iasi University).
- Prof. Constantin Tomescu (taught Theology at Chesina University).
- Prof. N.C. Paulescu (taught Physiology at Bucharest University).

The President of this organization was A.C. Cuza. The LANC had its roots in the Christian National Union created a year before by Cuza and Paulescu. The LANC asked the withdrawal of the nationality and the rights of the Jews, as well as the appropriation of their lands and commerce. LANC called for a *numerus clausus* to stop the admissions of Jews into universities, to expel those Jews that had arrived after 1914, and banning Jews from the army and public offices. The party chose as symbol the flag of Romania, with a swastika in the centre.

Cuza wrote: "In general, the swastika is the distinctive sign of the Aryan race, particularly of its Thracian branch, from which we descend. The oldest swastika

signs were found on our soil... Being here since ancient times, the swastika therefore is, in the first place, ours, Romanian by its descendant from the Thracian Aryans... The swastika is our national emblem. The cross is the emblem of our faith, just as it is with all Christian peoples. It is only together that the swastika and the cross display our entire being, our body and soul. We are Aryans and Christians".¹⁴

While commonly associated with Nazi Germany, the swastika was used for more than 5,000 years as a symbol of prosperity and good fortune, before it became the official emblem of the Nazi Party. The word is derived from the Sanskrit svastika, meaning "conducive to well-being", and thus had an Indian/Aryan origin. The swastika became a sacred symbol in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Mithraism. It also appeared in artifacts found from prehistoric cultures of Europe, as well as in early Christian and Byzantine art. In the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century the völkisch nationalist movements in Germany identified the swastika as a symbol of "Aryan identity" and German nationalist pride. In August 1920, Hitler decided to adopt the Swastika as the official insignia of the German Nazi Party (NSDAP) at the Salzburg Congress. It symbolized "the mission of the struggle for the victory of the Aryan man", and racial purity.¹⁵

Because of the radical racism depicted by LANC, Nicolae Iorga, former associate of Cuza broke with him. Iorga argued that Jews needed to be displaced gradually and peacefully from all sectors of social life.

In 1927, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu (1899-1938), a law student and former disciple of Cuza, and other dissidents of the LANC, abandoned the organization and created the ultranationalist, anti-Semitic, and fascist movement and politically party, named *Legiunea Arhanghelului Mihai* (Legion of the Archangel Michael), eventually known, after 1930, as *Garda de Fier* (The Iron Guard). An earlier supporter of the movement was Nichifor Crainic (theologian, poet, writer, politician), main theoretician of the

Christian Orthodox anti-Semitic trend. The prominent philosopher and journalist Nae Ionescu, affiliated with The Iron Guard, attracted to the movement a new generation of intellectuals. One of them was Mircea Eliade, later on life a prestigious Professor at the Faculty of Theology, Chicago University. The Legion had a religious ideological structure; and had its mass base among the peasantry and the students. The Legionaires traditionally referred to Codreanu as *Capitanul* (The Captain), and he held absolute authority over the organization until his death. Following Codreanu's instructions, the Legion carried out assassinations of politicians it viewed as corrupt, including Premier Ion G. Duca, and its former associate Mihai Stelescu. Codreanu advocated Romania's adherence to a military and political alliance with Nazi Germany.

In 1935, Cuza founded the Partidul National Crestin (National Christian Party). A renowned poet from Transylvania, Octavian Goga (1881-1938), joined Cuza in this political initiative. The new party claimed against the harmful infiltration of Jews in Romanian cultural life, ethnic purity, and religious belief.

The Iron Guard movement reached its greater political influence in the 1937 election, when it signed an electoral pact with the National Peasants' Party. The Guard received 15.5% of the votes, meaning the third political option, with 60 members in the Parliament. King Carol II introduced his own fascist dictatorship, after attempts to form a national government. Carol ordered the suppression of The Iron Guard and had Codreanu arrested. On the charge that he had slandered Iorga, he was sentenced to six months in jail. On November 30, 1938, it was announced that Codreanu had been shot after trying to flee custody the previous night. Much later it was revealed that in addition to other thirteen dissidents, Codreanu had been executed by the Gendarmerie. Their bodies were dissolved in acid, and placed under seven tons of concrete.

Horia Sima took over The Iron Guard's leadership. The Iron Guard eventually

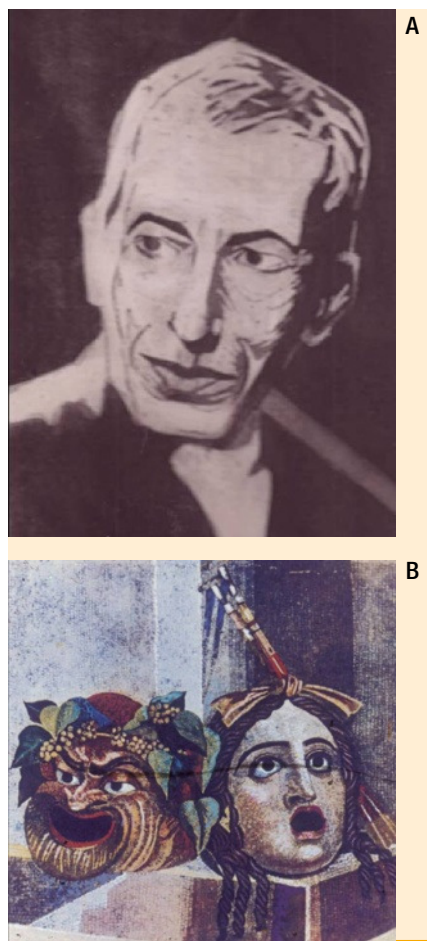


Figure 1. A) N.C. Paulescu (1869-1931).
B) Jano

came to power in 1940-1941, proclaiming the fascist National Legionary State in partnership with *Conducator* Ion Antonescu. This was a result of Carol's downfall, by the Second Vienna Award, through which Romania had lost Northern Transylvania to Hungary. On November 25, the discovery of Codreanu and associates' remains caused the Legionaries to engage in a reprisal against the new regime's political prisoners, detained in the same spots. On the next night 64 inmates were shot. New executions took place on the 27th and 28th November, including prominent victims like Iorga and Virgil Madgearu (*Jilava Masacre*). Codreanu was posthumously exonerated of all charges by a Legionary tribunal. His exhumation was a grandiose ceremony, in which Luftwaffe planes dropped wreathes on Codreanu's open tomb.

Antonescu repressed and dissolved The Iron Guard in 1941. The Iron Guard has become infamous for their participation in the Holocaust. According to the Final Report of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, between 280,000 and 380,000 Jews died during the Romanian Holocaust during World War II.¹⁶ Romania was at that moment under the dictatorship of General Antonescu, who had formed an alliance with Nazi Germany.

IDF 2003, Paris: To pay homage to N.C. Paulescu?

In 2002, the Academy of Sciences of Romania, the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD), and the International Federation of Diabetes (IDF), decided to organize several events to pay homage to Nicolae C. Paulescu (figure 1). One of them was an open international competition regarding recent original developments on insulin research.

A ceremony was scheduled for August 27, 2003. The act would consist in the inauguration of a commemorative plate (figure 2) in the Hôtel-Dieu State Hospital (in Paris), and the unveiling of the busts of Paulescu and his mentor Étienne Lancereaux, with whom the Romanian doctor worked in the Department of Internal Medicine at the Hôtel-Dieu Hospital. An international jury presided by Professor Zvi Laron (Israel) had unanimously decided to give the Paulescu Award to Geremia Bolli, Professor at the University of Perugia (Italy), among four internationally renowned investigators. Professor Bolli would present the *N.C. Paulescu Memorial Lecture* at the end of the scheduled ceremony. However, all the events were cancelled, as a consequence of the following circumstances.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center (SWC), an international Jewish human rights organization, sent a letter¹⁷ to the French Minister of Health, Jean-François Mattei, and to the Romanian Ambassador in Paris. In the letter, dated 22 August 2003, the SWC urged the Minister to cancel the celebration, arguing that Paulescu had been an antisemite, and that he had published



Figure 2. A copy of the plate dedicated to Lancereaux and Paulescu (Institute of Diabetes, Nutrition and Metabolic Disease "N. Paulescu", Bucharest)

various texts inciting to the hatred against the Jews. An article, signed by Nicolas Weill, published in the newspaper *Le Monde* on August 26¹⁸ mentioned the titles of two of these publications: "The Judeo-Masonic conspiracy against the Romanian nation" and "The Jews and the alcoholism" (figure 3).

The Simon Wiesenthal Center (SWC), with headquarters in Los Angeles, California, was established in 1977. It is an international Jewish human rights organization confronting anti-Semitism, hate and terrorism, promoting human right and dignity, standing with Israel, defending the safety of Jews worldwide, and teaching the lessons of the Holocaust for future generations.

The Centre is accredited as a non-governmental organization (NGO) at the United Nations, the UNESCO, and the Council of Europe.

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On September 29, 2003, the Romanian Academy, through his President, Professor Eugene Simoin, and her Vicepresident, Professor Maya Simonescu, claimed against the decision of cancelling the tribute to Paulescu (figure 4).

In October 2003, Prof. Gérard Slama, Director of the Diabetes Unit at the Hôtel-Dieu, published a letter in the *Lancet*,¹⁹ finishing with these words: "Although they did not hesitate to immediately can-

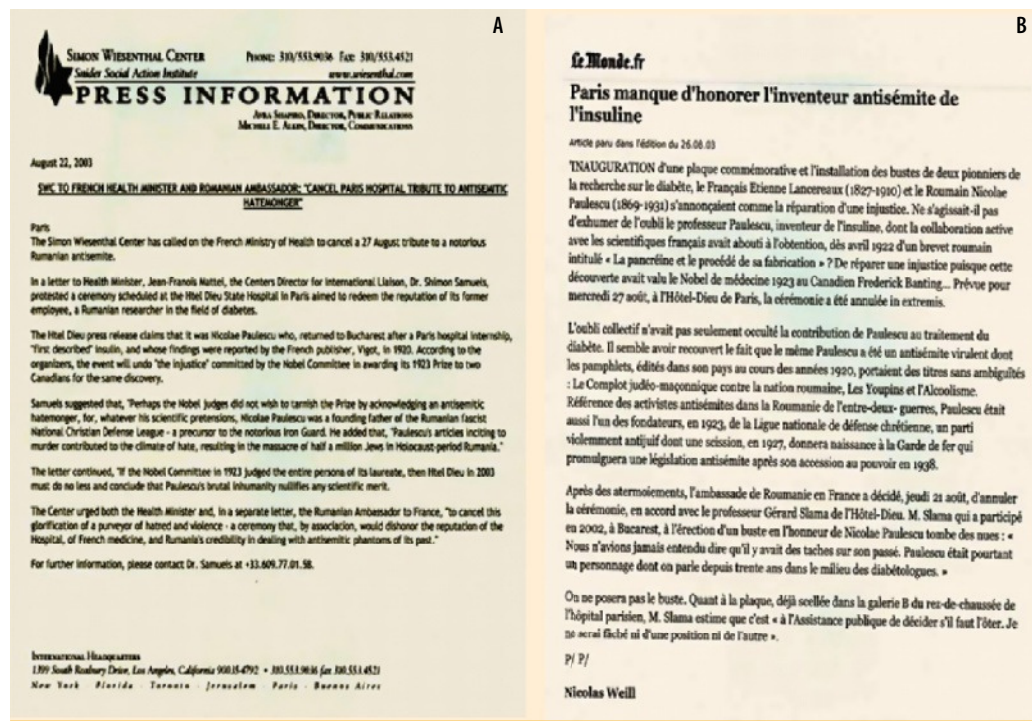


Figure 3. A) Press release of SWC. **B)** Editorial by Nicolas Weill

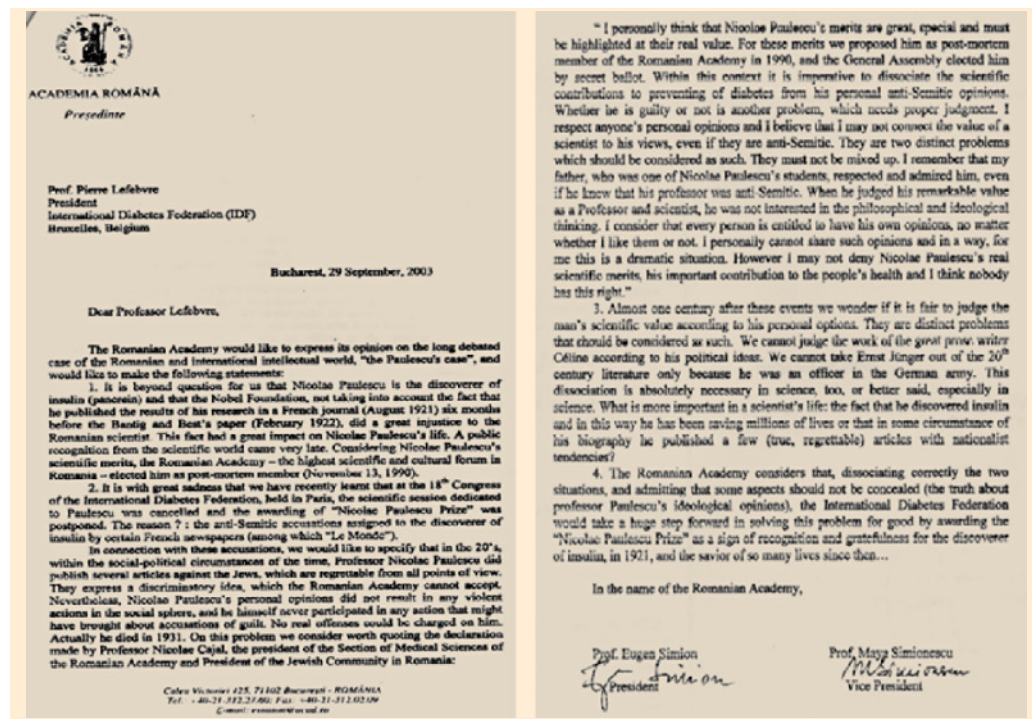


Figure 4. Claim of the Romanian Academy against the decision to cancel the homage to Nicolae C. Paulescu

cel the ceremony, it seems to me that the Romanian authorities are extremely reluctant to publicly recognise and condemn Paulescu's past. That the Romanians themselves, or at least some of them, were unaware of this issue when they inaugurated in 2002, with great pageantry, the

Paulescu Institute and placed a statue of him at the University of Bucharest is improbable. One might ask if, by its conspiracy of silence, Romania has tried to manipulate international public opinion by hiding its anti-Semitic past behind a public veil".

Two months later, George Alberti and Pierre Lefebvre (IDF) published another letter²⁰ in the *Lancet*, in reference to Slama's letter (figure 5). They stated that: "The IDF is now collecting the appropriate writings of Paulescu. These will be scrutinised by an independent

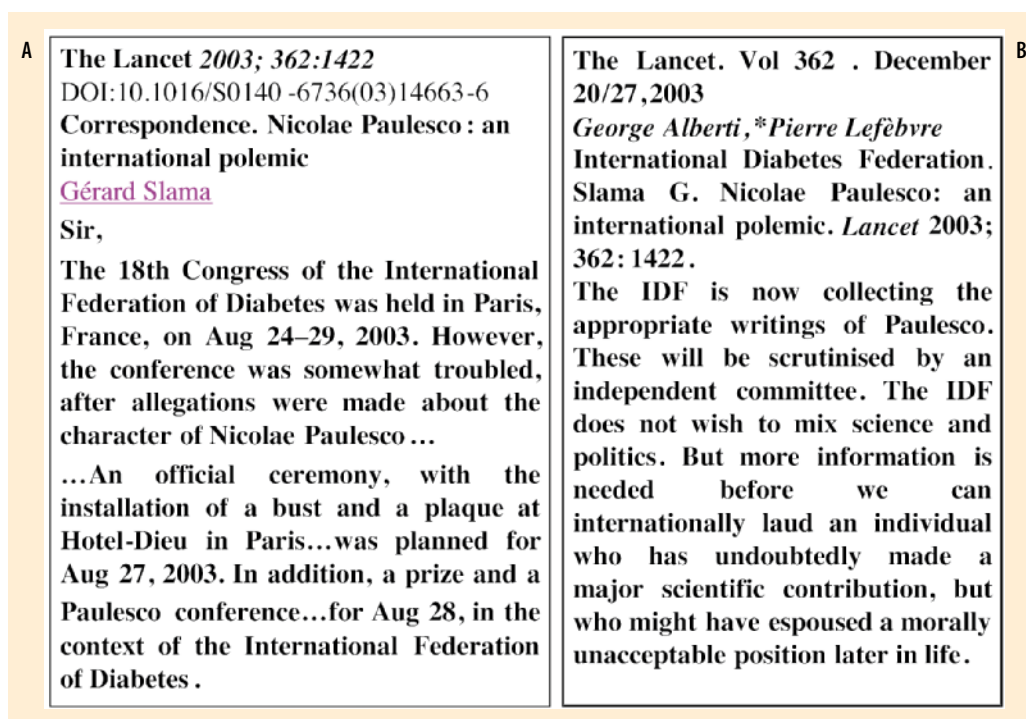


Figure 5. Letters to the *Lancet*: (A) by G. Slama; (B) by G. Alberti and P. Lefèbvre (2003)

committee. The IDF does not wish to mix science and politics. But more information is needed before we can internationally laud an individual who has undoubtedly made a major scientific contribution, but who might have espoused a morally unacceptable position later in life”.

Symposium in Delphi, 2005, on the occasion of the 41st Annual EASD Meeting, and related circumstances

Drs. Christos S. Bartsocas and Spyros G. Marketos (Co-chairmen), Sir George Alberti, Jon Alivisatos, Stefano Geroulanos, Jorn Nerup, and Sotiris Raptis organized an International Symposium of Experts in Delphi, on September 8, 2005, “Who Discovered Insulin?”, with the aim to determine the contributions in the discovery of the insulin and its principal protagonists (figure 6).

The general sense of the interventions (Drs. Alberto de Leiva, Spain; Torsten Deckert, Denmark; Constantin Ionescu-Tirgoviste, Romania) coincided that the scientific rigour and the chronology of the facts and published documents demonstrated that the official organisms had

not sufficiently recognised Paulescu’s work. Dr. John Dupré, Canada, focused on the earlier clinical experiences in Toronto. Dr. Paolo Pozzilli, Italy, reviewed the role of the Nobel Prize Committee. In the closing conference, Zvi Laron, born in Romania and Professor Emeritus of Tel Aviv’s University, denounced Paulescu’s anti-Semitic past. Drs. Pierre Lefèbvre, Belgium, and Jay Skyler provided a brief summing up. At the end of the meeting, the organizers of the event, feeling embarrassed after the Laron’s intervention, omitted to elaborate and to publicize any official declaration on the contents of the symposium. A Jury vote by the general assembly of experts (announced in the program) was not delivered.

In the same year, 2005, the Executive Board of the International Diabetes Federation decided that “The International Diabetes Federation would not be associated with Nicolae Paulescu and there would be no Paulescu Lecture at World Diabetes Congresses should such a request be received”.

Three years later, Prof. Z. Laron would publish the article “Nicolae C. Paulescu: scientist and politician” (*Israel Medical Association Journal*, 2008), in which he

SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME	
Thursday, September 8, 2005	
Third Session 17.00 – 20.00	WHO DISCOVERED INSULIN: A DEBATE
Chairmen:	Jon Nerup (Denmark) and Christos S. Bartsocas (Greece)
Setting the stage	
The sweet mystery syndrome: who discovered insulin? Fotios Dilekios (Greece)	
Pancreine, similar pancreatic extract than <i>Arivinsulin</i> , was discovered first. Purification of the pancreatic extract allowed the successful treatment of human diabetes Alberto de Leiva (Spain)	
Who discovered insulin? Torsten Deckert (Denmark)	
In support of Nicolae Paulescu	
Discovery of insulin – N. Paulescu, 31 August 1921; Clinical utilization of insulin – Banting, Collip, Macleod, Best, January 1922 Constantin Ionescu-Tirgoviste (Romania)	
Nicolae Constantin Paulescu: Mr. Hyde and Dr. Jekyll Zvi Laron (Israel)	
In support of the Toronto Group	
The preparation, experimental and clinical applications, of insulin, in Toronto, Canada John Dupré (Canada)	
Was credit given to all the right persons? (The role of the Nobel Prize Committee)	
Title pending Paolo Pozzilli (Italy)	
Summing up	
Prosecutor: Pierre Lefèbvre (Belgium) Defender: Jay Skyler (USA)	
Jury Vote	

Figure 6. The scientific programme of the EASD Symposium: Who Discovered Insulin? Delphi, September 2005

drew his opinion about the scientific and a politic portrait of Paulescu (figure 7). He concluded that “...He may be acknowledged for his scientific work, but unquestionably should not be feted and honored. Quite the contrary –he should be unequivocally censured for his contri-

The question of who discovered insulin is controversial. One of the scientists working on pancreas extracts was Nicolae Paulescu, the so-called forgotten man. In addition to his scientific research he was also active in politics. He was the father of the virulent antisemitic fascist movement "Garda de Fer" in Romania; he raved against the "Jewish peril," claimed in his writings that the Jews are a genetically degenerate people trying to cheat and poison the Romanian people by alcoholism, and more. His name came up in 2003 when Romanian diabetologists initiated a move to honor him. But voices rose in protest, claiming that persons who incite hatred, support persecution and genocide and distort science as their political tools cannot be accepted or rewarded. The protesters won.

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Figure 7. An extract of Laron's article

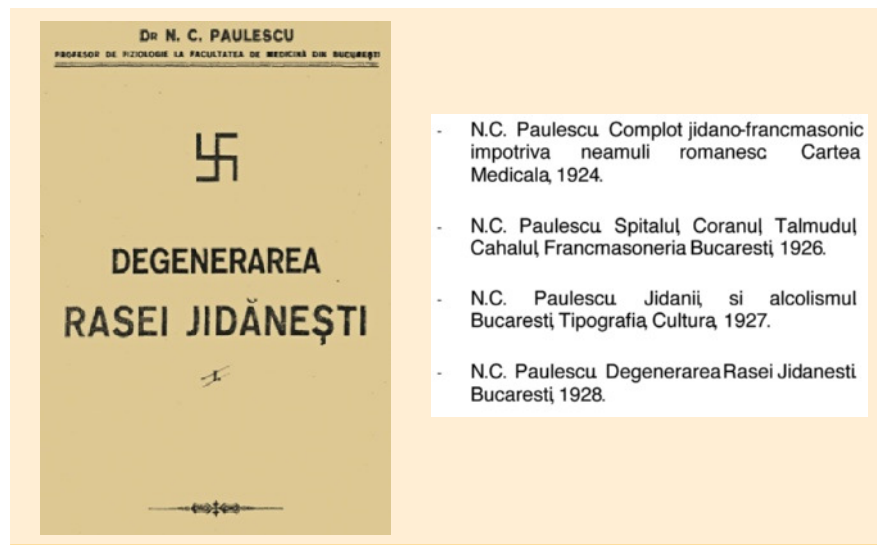


Figure 8. Some of Paulescu's anti-Semitic texts

bution to the dark pages of Romanian history".²¹

Paulescu's anti-Semitic views

Nicolae Paulescu was in many respects a creationist. He believed in divine creation. He used to say: "The scientist cannot just say 'Credo in Deum' (I believe in God). He must clearly affirm 'Scio Deum esse' (I know God exists)". He opposed against spontaneous generation (at that time a new evolutionary idea), according to which chemical elements had combined spontaneously to generate the first primitive life-forms. He fought also against Darwinism, pointing out that the hereditary changes within a type only lead to a variety within that type. He accepted natural selection, but working as a conservative agent, acting against any trend towards a radically different spe-

cies, acting against "the degeneration of species".

An Eastern Orthodox believer, once said: "God is both the initial cause and the final scope of all that exists; true science can only lead to deciphering in nature the signs of the divine will and reason, meeting the Living God, Jesus Christ".

As seen in figure 8, Paulescu wrote several anti-Semitic texts: "Fisiologia filozofica-Talmudul, Cahalul, Francmasoneria" (1913), "Fisiologia filozofica-Sinagoga i biserica fa de pacificarea omenirii" (1923), "Complot jidano-francmasonic împotriva neamului Românesc" (1924), "Talmucirea apocalipsului, soarta viitoare a jid nimii", "Jidani, si alcoolismul" (1927), "Degenerarea rasei jidanesti" (1928).

In these texts he speaks in both religious and nationalistic terms, expressing

anti-Semitic and anti-Masonic views.²² His outpouring of anti-Semitic pamphlets was considerable: "The degenerates are incapable to understand the word of God and by this its vices are incurable. This is the state of spirit in which the Jews are found, that are all degenerates, nothing but tools of the Devil for tortured the Humanity".²³ Paulescu stated that Jews were degenerated because their brain weighed much less than Arian brains. In his book "Jidani si alcoolismul" (The Jews and the alcoholism) he accuses the Jews to use the alcohol to try to exterminate the Romanian nation.²⁴

The roots of Paulescu's anti-Semitism are related to his Orthodox Christian radicalism and his fervent nationalism. According to Francisco Veiga,²⁵ Paulescu was influenced by Roger Gougenot des Mousseaux (1805-1876), an anti-Semitic French writer, and by Jacob Brafmann (1825-1879), a converted Jew, who had published "The Book of the Kahal" in Russia, in 1869, with the support of the Russian government. Brafmann accused the Jews to murder Christian children in order to use their blood in rituals.²⁶ Brafmann also wrote that the Jews had created an organization, the Kahal, with the aim to dominate the world.²⁷ This idea was also sustained by the anti-Semitic document, "The protocols of the Elders of Zion". Paulescu was convinced that the Jews were a degenerate race that wanted to destroy the Romanian nation. He was an associate of A.C. Cuza, and wrote extensively for the latter's newspaper *Apararea Nationala*. Ultrnationalists as Nichifor Crainic and Corneliu Zelea Codreanu recognized Paulescu as their mentor.

Nicolae Cajal and the Paulescu's affair

The facts of Paris unchained a lit debate on the political figure of Paulescu. Nicolae Cajal, President of the Federation of the Jewish Communities in Romania, and Member of the Romanian Academy of Sciences, defended the recognition of Paulescu's scientific work, stating that there is a need to distinguish between individuals' private views and their scientific merit:

"In judging Nicolae Paulescu's case, it is necessary to emphasize from the beginning that we are dealing with some particular issues. First of all, one cannot disregard the importance of the discovery of insulin for the world history of the Romanian science. Personally, I believe that Nicolae Paulescu's merits are great, are special, and must be fully revealed. This background set, a dissociation is necessary between his scientific contributions to combating diabetes and his anti-Semite private views. Whether he is guilty or not is another issue and, consequently, we ought to judge it as such. I respect every one's personal options and believed I am not entitled to associate a scientist's value with his or her conceptions, anti-Semite though they may be. These are distinct issues and should be considered as such. They cannot be mixed. I remember that my father, who was a student of Nicolae Paulescu, respected and admired him, although he knew he was an anti-Semite. When judging his remarkable value as professor and a scientist, he did not care about his philosophical or ideological conception. I believe that each and every person is entitled to his or her own conceptions, whether I like them or not. Personally, I do not share these views—I couldn't—, and, in a way, this situation is quite dramatic for me. But this doesn't give me the right to deny Nicolae Paulescu's genuine scientific merits, his very special contribution to people's health. And I think that no one has this right."

ISRO-Press Newsletter Excerpts. Newsletter 287. Sunday, August 31, 2003.²⁸

Final remarks

Anti-Semitism was shared by large segments of the inter-war Romanian population. Although we ought to criticize Paulescu for his political views, we cannot deny his scientific merits. As Nicolae Cajal said, a dissociation is necessary between his scientific contributions to combating diabetes and his anti-Semitic private views.

In December 2003, Geremia Bolli (first Nicolae C. Paulescu Prize awarded) addressed a letter to Prof. Nicolae Hancu

(University Cluj-Napoca), President of the Romanian Diabetes Association, containing the following paragraph: "It has been only in November 2003 that I understood the real contribution of Nicolae Paulescu to the discovery of insulin after reading his original paper (...) kindly donated to me by Prof. Pierre Lefèbvre from Liège, the city where Paulescu's paper was printed on August 31, 1921. It is clear that in November 1920, Paulescu already made the perfect experiment where he injected a dog with diabetes secondary to pancreatectomy"²⁹ (bold lettering by the manuscript author). ■

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