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Abstract

Since the early 1990s a series of political/literary debates has been agitating Romanian intellectual circles. On the battlefields of these "cultural wars," Romanian intellectuals struggle for the hearts and minds of the reading public, as they argue about how to interpret the country's past, especially the last century, a past that was massively misrepresented by the communist establishment. The debates discussed in this paper focus, in particular, on a number of significant figures in Romanian intellectual life during the 1930s, and their relationship to fascist political forces both inside the country and abroad. Even as they re-evaluate the past, these debates are, at the same time, about the present: about how Romania and the Romanians are perceived by intellectuals, politicians and economic aid agencies in "the West" and about the image that the country has or should want to project abroad. Finally, the debates are also about the future: should Romania strive to be accepted into "Europe," and, if so, at what price?