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COMMENT: In 1941 Baron von Killinger, the German Minister in Bucharest, invited the members of the German colony to the Aro Cinema. He gave a speech on this occasion threatening the members of the Opposition who were working against the continuation of the war against Soviet Russia, and asserting that the members of the Opposition were swine and enemies of Rumania and that they ought to have their necks wrung.

Nobody took direct action against this insult, except General Nicolas Radesou who had been King Ferdinand's A.D.C. and a good friend of Queen Marie. He addressed the following letter to Baron von Killinger. Because of this letter General Radesou was arrested and sent to the internment camp in Targu Jiu, where he remained for 14 months and where he began to collaborate with the Communists, thousands of whom were in the same camp. By his frank attitude, he succeeded in winning the entire confidence of the Communists.

Sir,

I presume that when you decided to publish the speech you made at the Aro, you also thought of the probable reaction to it.

You found it necessary to invite the members of the German colony in Bucharest to the meeting. You undoubtedly had the right to do so.

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You wished your speech to be brought to the knowledge of the public. No reproach can be made to you for this either.

You deemed it necessary, however, to mention in this speech things of great importance, which touch us closely and concern Rumanians exclusively, and you had no right to do so. The aim of this letter is to show what you should not have permitted yourself to say.

The first impression given by your speech is that in your language words have a different meaning from that given to them in the language of other men. There is no other explanation to be found for the fact that a series of offensive words are called "A homage to Rumania". If the heading is to match the text what the newspapers published under that heading ought to have been called "An insult to Rumania" and not "A homage to Rumania".

Another remarkable thing is that you have succeeded in establishing a record not yet reached in diplomatic usage. No case is known of a foreign country's representative taking the liberty of insulting the subjects of the country to which he is accredited, or, worse even, of such a fact remaining without consequences. You had the necessary courage and you were successful, and you gave a brilliant performance of which for the moment you may be proud.

It is my conviction that the disasters undergone by this country are largely due to foreign interference in our affairs, which willy nilly we had to tolerate. Nevertheless I think that the moment for squaring accounts has not yet come. For this reason I, with many others, have long contented myself with brooding over my pain in silence, refraining from answering by any hostile gesture my discontent with those foreigners whom we consider responsible for our sufferings.

Nobody can expect me to maintain this attitude of silence at my own risk, of course -- now when I have lived to see a foreigner received here as a so-called friend taking liberty of insulting us because we desire to save the country from misfortune, and because it seems to him that we might be able to prevent further sacrifice, which he thinks necessary for the sake of his own country.

The facts are so grave that my dignity as a soldier and a patriot will not allow me to remain silent.

I belong to the many Rumanians who in your opinion are guilty of the great crime of believing that our armies ought not to cross the Dniester and whom, because their opinions did not suit you, you called "scoundrelly politicians". I believe therefore that I am entitled to consider myself as personally affected by your elegant description. I should consider myself an utter coward if I did not answer your thoughtless and insolent attack.

A Rumanian patriot, whose heart is torn by the misfortunes overwhelming his country and who tries to point out what he thinks might have averted at least part of these misfortunes, cannot be a scoundrel.

A scoundrel is the foreigner who does not approve of the patriot's attitude, who takes advantage of his privileged position and disregards even the most elementary obligations of hospitality and -- not content with taking the food from our mouths in order to satisfy his own hunger and that of his people -- insults

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the patriot and threatens him, trying in this way to frighten him and to silence the voice of truth.

In your speech you confessed -- and you do not realize how precious a confession this is -- that the produce of this country's soil has been of great use to you, that hundreds and thousands of ships -- in your own words -- have sailed up the Danube; that many thousands of tons of grain and material have been conveyed and delivered to your country. And your thanks for all this consists in insults addressed to us?

What would have happened if in your country the official representative of a foreign country had dared to behave like this? I am certain that you would not like to be in his place.

You think yourself very powerful, Sir, and you misuse your temporary power. Nevertheless it would have done you no harm to remember that the greatest power is in the hands of God and that those who try to bar his way have to take the consequences. Knowing history as I presume you do, you must know that the reign of the proud has never been for very long. One day your pride too may have a fall.

That day, Sir, will be the day of revenge for all those you humiliated, insulted and oppressed.

This is the answer I thought it my duty to give to your speech.

Niculae Rădescu.