

DICTIONARY OF THE ROMANIAN WRITERS

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ARGUMENT

When in 1975 we initiated collaboration with the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House in order to edit in Cluj the *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers* we did not foresee neither the length of this process nor the many difficulties we had to face later. Apart from Marian Popa's *Dictionary of Contemporary Romanian Literature* (1971, 2nd edition 1977) and the pioneering work of the late-Mihail Straje for the *Dictionary of Pseudonyms* (1975), sources of information about Romanian writers were scarce and outdated. The *Concise Dictionary of Romanian Writers* (1978) was followed by *Romanian Literature. Chronological Dictionary* (edited by the "George Călinescu" Institute of History and Literary Theory and coordinated by I. C. Chițimia and Al. Dima); the *Dictionary of Romanian Literature. Writers, Periodicals, Trends* (coordinated by Dim. Păcurariu); *Contemporary Young Writers* by Mircea Iorgulescu (a *sui generis* dictionary, too) and the remarkable work of the Institute of Linguistics, Literary History and Folklore in Iași, the *Dictionary of Romanian Literature from the Beginnings to 1900* (1979). We must also mention the *Lexicon of Hungarian Literature in Romania*, published in 1981 and a series of works on foreign literature: *Dictionary of English Literature* (1970), *Italian Literature. Chronological Dictionary* (1974), *American Literature. Chronological Dictionary* (1977), *Greek and Latin Writers* (1978), *French Writers* (1978), *Foreign Writers* (1981), *The Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Italian Literature* (1982) edited by famous scholars such as Ana Cartianu, Nina Façon, Ioan Aurel Preda, Dan Grigorescu, N. I. Barbu, Adelina Piatkovski, Angela Ioan, Doina Condea-Derer, etc. It is not necessary to prove the use of such instruments of documentation. A mature culture must have many dictionaries, various from the point of view of material and criteria of selection, dictionaries of its literature and of universal literature. The target of these dictionaries is also important: the general public, eager to inform themselves, the different levels of scholars, warned readers, specialists interested first of all in the novelty (originality) of the proposed critical analysis. This is one of the reasons why dictionaries of Romanian literature in circulation do not overlap, they differ in their intention, typology and structure. At

the same time, it is only by joint efforts that we will succeed to complete a thesaurus of our literature which contains everything, indifferent of value and hierarchy.

The Dictionary of the Romanian Writers (DRW) does not repeat any of the former dictionaries in Romanian culture, it is the only dictionary of writers (not of "literature" with its institutions, trends, periodicals, groups), as the title shows. It is the only dictionary which encompasses writers from the beginning to the present, the greatest number of writers ever registered in our literary lexicography works. DRW follows an ideal tendency of completeness which it tries to accomplish in a future version on the front of Romanian literature. The essential difference between this dictionary and former ones is the selection of names from the general cultural phenomenon, a circumscription of the notion of *writer*. Such a notion has to be constructed for older epochs. For example, to what an extent was a scholar also a creator, taking into account the realities of literary language, the laicisation of culture, the incipient structures of the epic and lyric genre, etc, before the appearance of professional conscience? This is a controversial issue; it must be related to the *historical* stages of assertion of the aesthetic. Without aiming for an *ad-hoc* theorization we think that an ideal reading of the DRW reveals our view of the category of writer (from the 17th and 18th centuries up to the 19th century when it became gradually individualised).

This is why we think we have included everything that belongs to the realm of aesthetic reality (intentionality or virtuality), in the case of the old and premodern period. Similarly, the various facets of the last century were carefully analysed, with the same criterion of literature in mind, avoiding authors of religious, pedagogical and anthropological writings, translators and editors of series, disclosing thus the "personality" of national literary creation in the modern period. Readers who are interested in the whole cultural-literary phenomenon, should use the *Dictionary of Romanian Literature from the Beginnings to 1900*. Regarding folklorists, we selected great personalities who had contingencies with the dynamics of literature and have influenced it. (We had in mind that there is a very good *Dictionary of Folklorists*, 1979, edited by Iordan Datcu and Sabina C. Stroescu.) Regarding the first half of the 20th century, the main difficulty is the scarcity of bibliographic tools and of reliable references for checking the possible absence of more or less important writers. We have made an axiological selection in this stage of our work too. We do not exclude the possibility of a future *revision* given that the year 1900 is the borderline which marks the appearance of the most varied interpretive controversies. We opted for the distinction of the element of creation which is defining for writers from the general-cultural one in the case of this epoch too. If we included the names of some famous scholars (men of letters, mostly) such as Sextil Pușcariu, Al. Rosetti, Iorgu Iordan and others, we did this to the extent their memorialistic works belong to the so-called "borderline" literary genres. In addition, we took into account the memories of certain "occasional

writers" as Lovinescu calls them. We have also included works of translators, with the conviction that there is an "art of translation" which presupposes not only "scholarly merit" and "craftsmen's scruple" but also "risky testing of congeniality" (Al. Paleologu).

The problem of selection becomes almost insoluble from the second half of the 20th century. As there is a process in crystallisation, the present epoch is in a changing reality the doubtless values of which coexist with personalities in process of assertion or with other personalities, suppressed, alienated or distorted in an often dramatic historical context of creating a new literature. It is difficult to decide what the criterion for option is in the present state of our work. The historical-critiological criterion remains active but it must take into account the necessities of a new work, more lengthy and functional. Contemporary literature justly claims a larger space in the general dictionaries of Romanian writers. Four decades of hard work, a great diversity of works and interesting, innovating personalities are extremely important in the evolution of literature. However, we should not think that all that has been written during this time will resist in its effervescent, unsettled, insufficiently differentiated form. But the beginning of the placement of some major values, that is, critical selection has become possible and the books consecrated to contemporaneity prove this. We included a great number of contemporary writers, even compared to other epochs. In our attempt of analysing literary production between 1944 and 1982, we also incorporated the latest "wave" of some very young poets, writers and critics who asserted themselves at the beginning of the ninth decade. The DRW tries to avoid extravagancies of literary criticism and it does not want to overturn already established opinions on authors; however, it also tries to avoid clichés and commonplaces, working out an "average" of interpretation on the general basis of already existing critical opinions.

The team of collaborators has more than six hundred members. Along famous critics there are young researchers, exponents of a large cultural area: Cluj, București, Timișoara, Iași, Oradea, Tîrgu Mureș, Baia Mare. For a decade we made efforts to harmonise the style of work and methodology of this team formed of diverse individuals and to create an archive of the DRW, based on direct inquiries in most cases.

We think that DRW (which is a source of information for readers of the 21th century) offers in its present form an image of Romanian literary creation worthy of international interest. Its translation in certain international languages would enhance the better knowledge of Romanian literature worldwide, because our laconic, timid and often erroneous presence in great literary lexicons far from represents us on an actual scale.

(1982)

POSTSCRIPT -after ten years-

Ten years have passed since the writing of the above *preface*. Time was relentless with us. From the submission of the manuscript (1983) there were various and perfidious methods of delay and attempts to hinder the appearance of the dictionary. For the sake of readers who are not familiar with the “system” of publication under the communist regime of Ceaușescu, we must mention that manuscripts had to pass a series of unpredictable obstacles until they received the ominous stamp of “permission for printing”. Even then one could not be sure that the manuscript would not be withdrawn from print at the last minute or some “superior” order of “postponing” would not be issued or that “someone above” would not ask for “modifications”. Such cases occurred at the first or second draft, in pages and sheets under production, when an indiscreet eye “discovered” some suspicious elements in the text and “reported” it to the “forums”. Finally, neither Odid the other stamp, “permission for distribution” guarantee the publication of the manuscript. There were many cases when already published volumes were garnished and stored “somewhere” because it had been considered inopportune to send them to bookshops, or they were simply given to pulping. Finally, the delivery of the book calmed the author, even if an occult, never explained order to withdraw the publication from the market could still have been issued or, if the copies were all sold, there could be an interdiction against the publication. We could state many examples, but we are interested now in the fate of the manuscript of DRW in its Kafkaian route. The route was never the same, rather, it differed from case to case. Ours was really uncommon. We will present the main stages of this “route” chronologically, from 1983 (the submission of the manuscript) until 1987, when the last act of an unprecedented tragicomedy took place (we hoped it was the last act). We will note the efforts of coordinators to save the book. In a text from January 1990 published by *România literară* and the notes of this “file” of literary history one can read the whole history of this issue. Readers can understand thus the social-historical and political context which explains why a work commenced two decades ago and the lack of which was acutely felt in our culture appears with such a delay, even though it was done by a team of literary historians and critics full of energy and enthusiasm.

In the period between our imposed parting and our finding ourselves together again the team of editors suffered important losses: some collaborators passed away (Monica Lazăr, Anton Cosma, Mircea Scarlat, Ioana Em. Petrescu, Livia Grămadă, Al. Piru. We pay them our respects. Others have left the country: Dan Culcer (France), Dinu Flămând (France), Gelu Ionescu (Germany), M. Iorgulescu (France), Ion Marcoș (England), Călin A. Mihăilescu (Canada), Elena Tacciu (Israel). Some of our colleagues are temporarily abroad on different missions and in different cultural-didactic functions: Șt. Borbely (US), Al.

Ţălinescu (France), Doina Curtipăceanu (Italy), Liviu Papadima (Austria), Liviu Petrescu (US), Ion Pop (France). In the 1983 variant some of the articles were written by critics who had left the country; their articles were tacitly signed by other collaborators, trustworthy friends of the real authors (whose permission has been asked) and willing to assume the risk of such an operation (articles by Gelu Ionescu were signed by Ioan Vartic, those by Călin A. Mihăilescu were signed by Liviu Papadima, because all others left after the suppression of the dictionary). These signatures have been restored now. We will not detail another issue, the quasi-paralysation of certain energies necessary for the completion of the dictionary. Some collaborators have almost entirely been preoccupied by politics or administrative functions in the last few years. The redoing of the immense material of the two volumes (A-L; M-Z) prepared before 1989 was therefore problematic.

In principle, we planned from January 1990 the quick publication of the work as such, as a document-book, in the form in which it was submitted to publication. It could have been symptomatic (from a sociological point of view, too) for the conditions of editing a book in the period of dictatorship. In addition, it would also be a proof of the honesty of these uncompromising texts dealing with the historical-aesthetic dimension rather than the conjunctural one. The meaning of its appearance could then have been a moral revenge on institutions and persons (many of them!) involved in the history of banning books. Objective and subjective factors have too much delayed this first solution, until the growing economic difficulties and the dispersal of coordinators made it impracticable. It was clear in 1991 that the *tale quale* edition of the first volume (recuperated in its second proof, before the destruction of the matter) and of the second one, still in typewritten form at the publishing house was no more possible: the publication of the document-book would have been justified immediately after the events in December 1989 but not after two years: the disparity of information stopped at the 1982 stage was too much. The absence of writers from the diaspora, once imposed draconically would not have been justified; similarly, the absence of writers eliminated from the Dictionary by the orders (and caprices) of the late Council of Socialist Culture and Education and the absence of writers after 1982. Consequently we decide to divide the material of the DRW in four volumes and a fifth one for *Addenda et Corrigenda* and *Indices*: writers whom we have unintentionally forgotten to include, information which was impossible to gather during the time we had at our disposal and other accidental errors.

We must mention Romanian writers from the former Moldavian Socialist Republic (Moldavian Republic today), Ukraine, the former Yugoslavia and Romanian writers generally, indifferent of the place where they are (outside Romania). The DRW registers only those Basarabian and Bucovinian writers who began their careers before 1940 and resumed their literary activity in Romania. This limitation imposed on us before 1989 had no sense any more. The brief time

we have at our disposal and the unwillingness of some of the Basarabian critics who were asked to collaborate obliges us to treat those five decades of Romanian literature in the specific context of the USSR in the Addenda and, *mutatis mutandis*, this holds good for Romanian writers in the former Yugoslavia too, who belong, naturally, to the literary history and specific political context of their country but who also have a place in a dictionary like DRW as they write in Romanian language. Regarding Aromanian writers, most of them, including the very first ones, are included in DRW, though the difficulties in information compelled us to limit their number. The fifth volume will therefore deal with these supplements necessary for the completion of the image of Romanian creative efforts.

At the same time, 1989 was adopted as a limit (excepting the dates of passing away) for including authors. It is completely motivated from a historical-literary perspective as well as from the point of view of our real possibilities. As we have shown above, our forces are not the same as in 1982; moreover, the indifference of some of the collaborators involved in other fields of activity and unwilling to help in the reconstruction of this book was a hard lesson for us while working on the first volume.

The Dictionary is still valuable on account of the solidity of information and its unconjunctural critical interpretations. Nevertheless, modifications were necessary. They are of the following types:

- We did not eliminate names from the glossary of the Dictionary. Additions include three categories of writers: diaspora writers, the generation of the 1980s and, finally, writers who have been abusively eliminated by the "forums" and, evidently, included again. We must stress that DRW is not an exhaustive work, therefore it does not contain all writers of decades of Romanian literature (indifferent of their value). A thesaurus-dictionary remains a task to be completed by our followers. The new names introduced do not cover all that has been written outside the borders of the country or that has been written between 1982 and 1989. It was practically impossible to gather data and information about certain Romanian writers in the West and most of Basarabian writers.

- Biographic information was completed with new data. We could not find out the exact periods and the places of detention for some of the writers who were submitted to communist political oppression, though we made a general appeal in the periodical *Memoria*. We could not reconstruct the functions of some writers involved in the communist system and apparatus and the exact period of their office-holding, because we were compelled to eliminate them from the first version. Similarly, we could not introduce the precise date when some writers left the country and the exact evolution of their work. Also, we did not have precise data about literary awards because of the lack of an evidence at the Writers' Association. However, the hiatus refers only to the 1983-1984 period. Apart from the awarding of "special prizes" juries did not come together after 1985 and first

nights were not organised as the life of the Association was progressively paralysed after 1986 (the last Council of leadership convened in July 1986).

- Bibliographic information was completed up to the year 1989. Critical references were also completed, though selectively, up to the same chronological limit.

- Regarding the critical-analytical commentary of the work, we preserved the text unchanged; "retouches" were of purely aesthetic type. We did not modify conjuncturally the place of works and writers in the literary hierarchy, as we never did. We did not adopt a polemic tone with the past, for we considered that the Dictionary registers works critically and works will meet the judgement of posterity, literary history being the only supreme "court".

- Consequently, we did not reduce the space reserved for some writers who compromised themselves by manifestly collaborating with the communist regime. We preserved unchanged the dimensions of the Dictionary, from the stage of its projection. We increased the space dedicated to writers whose work was not yet complete in 1982, so their place in the hierarchy of contemporary writers could have changed. In such cases we sometimes rewrote the critical appraisal in the light of an ulterior evolution after 1982. Similarly, in case of important writers who completed their work with significant creations, we added paragraphs consecrated to these. When the author of the article could no longer join our efforts of actualising the text, this was continued by another member of the editorial team; the contributions were marked separately.

We hope that we offer the readers an honest and balanced work, characterised by professionalism and love for Romanian literature.

Cluj, October 1992

FILE

Dictionary of the Romanian Writers Pieces for a History of Censorship

The pieces enclosed in this file are all that has been preserved of our many applications cited in *Pro Memoria*, a text which closes the story of our attempts to publish the *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers* before 1989 by summarising events, though not in an exhaustive way. It is not vanity, revenge or an excess of pedantry which prompts us to publish these texts, but we would like to present readers with some confessions and preserve them against oblivion. The history of censorship must be written once, and these pieces will prove to be a useful material. On the other hand, we owe future readers this indirect explanation: it will help them evaluate the difficulties of creating something within the space of Romanian culture and make them properly understand the limits of our book.

Finally, being literary historians compels us to be sensible to documents and their perennial eloquence.

It should be clear that we did not try to hide anything. Some will perhaps wonder why we have used the clichés of the “timber language” and they object to it. Our answer is simple: we believed in the possibility of the publication of this book and firmly protested to all forums when it was necessary, pointing to the responsibility of those who banned the book. We could have had these volumes published ten years ago and perhaps completed and improved them.

We must also add that the *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers* could no longer be mentioned in the press after 1985, only in allusions. The coordinators tried to relieve the book or at least save it from complete oblivion, even after sending the *Pro Memoria* (which was published only in 1990, in *România Literară*).

We complete these documents with explanatory remarks to ease the decyphering and understanding of allusions and implications as well as the way we got to know those texts which were not initially intended for us.

Text nr1.

REPORT

on the *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers*

coordinated by Professor Dr Mircea Zăciu, Dr. A. Sasu and Dr. M. Papahagi
Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House¹

The *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers* is the most complete work of our lexicography on Romanian writers in all epochs. It contains approximately 1500 writers - poets, novelists, playwrights, critics, literary historians, translators from all literary epochs and all regions inhabited by Romanians. Contemporary literature is of great importance, with the various representatives of all literary genres and generations. The authors did not have in view authors writing in the language of co-inhabiting nationalities, hence the title of the work, *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers* instead of *Dictionary of Writers in Romania*.

Commencing from the Concise Dictionary of Romanian Writers (which contained only 130 writers, from the beginning to the present), this dictionary

¹ This report was edited by Marta Bittel, instructor at the Council of Socialist Culture and Education (CSCE), as part of her tasks. In spite of the observations, the text was meant to support the publication of the dictionary. We indirectly knew the content of this document at that time. We must mention that Marta Bittel was always on behalf of the editors, trying to help in all ways to publish the book. Thanks to her we knew the content of documents (sometimes by direct reading) and tried to ward off their effects. Finally, various texts of this file were shown to us after 1989 by Marta Bittel whom we would like to thank this way. As in all cases, we preserve the original orthography and “grammar” of the text.

follows the suggestions of literary press regarding the structure of a "thesaurus-dictionary" of Romanian writers.

Articles are formed in three separate parts: a biographic synthesis, criticism and bibliography.

The *biographic synthesis* generally contains the following data: the date and place of birth, date and place of death, the status of the writer (poet, prose-writer, playwright, critic, translator, etc.), data about his family, studies, professional and social activity, literary activity. It ends with a synthetic appreciation of the work.

Criticism takes into consideration the whole work of the writer. It contains data which allows one to include the writer in his epoch and the broader context of the history of Romanian literature. Interpretation takes into consideration the critical opinions expressed in the bibliography of speciality but does not reject new points of view, introducing possible nuances and suggesting new ways of reading.

The *bibliography* contains two subdivisions: the first contains the works of the author, in chronological order, the second section, that of criticism, contains a selection of articles published in volumes and/or the most important periodicals.

The authors, almost 60 of them, are professors, researchers, critics and literary historians from major centres of the country: București, Cluj, Iași, Timișoara, Tîrgu Mureș. University centres and writers' association were also involved in the work. Besides famous authors such as Al. Piru, Paul Cornea, Eugen Stăniș, Nicolae Manolescu, Mircea Iorgulescu, Mircea Martin, Petru Poantă, Liviu Petrescu, etc, a great number of young professors and young people writing in the literary press were involved. Besides books the Dictionary is based on a wide documentary inquiry conducted with living writers in the past five years.

The judicious observations formulated in connection with concise dictionaries regarding the selection and the importance given to one or the other writer were taken into account; the data from biographic syntheses and bibliography were corrected or completed.

The work is planned to be published in two volumes. The first volume (letters A-L) is prepared for printing, it was included in the plan approved for 1984; the second volume (letters M-Z) is in the final stage of work, it was included in the plan project for 1985.

The first volume contains 693 names of writers². It was approved by the Scientific Council of the Linguistic and Literary History Institute in Cluj which appreciates the structure, the scientific and interpretive-methodologic content and the suitability of the publication because it fills a gap in Romanian culture. The manuscript was read at the Board of Literature and Publications. Consequently, the work was improved by strengthening its objective, scientific way of presenting the

² The number was subsequently modified.

works of writers. Some sociologising characterisations, sententious appreciations and polemic nuances were eliminated, similarly, certain roughnesses in language and the subjective tone, while some formulations were adopted to ensure the political accuracy of texts.

A new analysis of the *Dictionary* made by the leaders of the Directorate led to the conclusion that the selection and the importance given to each writer is judiciously settled, the treatment of the subject is serious, in a correct, comprehensive and objective manner, appreciations are based on a concrete analysis of the content and value of literary works. On account of these features and the enormous informative, archive and bibliographic material the dictionary fills a gap in Romanian culture, proving its usefulness.

As the Dictionary is the work of a whole collectivity, there are some inconsequences in it. Also, there are some problems of principles.

1. It is specified in the presentation of biographic data if a writer is member of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party and the deputy of the Great National Assembly. We think that it is unnecessary to specify these functions.

2. Data about the names of writers are given, in case they are known by their pseudonyms or their names have been changed. E.g. Ov. S. Crohmălniceanu (Moise Cahn), Radu Cosașu (Oscar Rohrilich)³, Andrei Ciurunga (Robert Eisenbraun), Laurențiu Fulga (Laurențiu Ionescu), Ion Ianoși (Janos Steinberger), Anghel Dumbrăveanu (Anghel Bacșiș), Elvira Bogdan (Maria Moldoveanu), Cora Irineu (Elena D. Friedman, who became Irineu when the family officially changed their names in 1918), etc. Approximately 100 writers are in this situation.⁴

3. The Dictionary contains articles referring to certain famous writers, who settled abroad after 1944: Ștefan Baciu, Lucian Boz, Emil Cioran, Al. Ciorănescu, Mircea Eliade, I.A. Herescu⁵, Eugen Ionescu. We suggest that only some of these names should be included, such as Mircea Eliade, Emil Cioran, Al. Ciorănescu and Eugen Ionescu.⁶

4. In case of writers who participated in rightwing movements during the interwar period (Nichifor Crainic, Radu Gyr, Radu Dragnea, Vasile Băncilă) there must be more categorical critical delimitations⁷.

5. Another issue which requires the revising of commentaries is that in the case of great creators like Lucian Blaga, Mircea Eliade, Dan Botta, Emil Cioran,

³ Sic!

⁴ There is a note on the margin of this last remark, belonging perhaps to Elena Docsănescu: "What is suggested? What is the international practice?"

⁵ Sic!

⁶ In passage nr. 3. the words "abroad" were added in handwritten form; the names of Mircea Eliade and Eugen Ionescu were underlined (which might mean the approval of their mentioning), while there are question marks after the names of Emil Cioran and Al. Ciorănescu.

⁷ The word "delimitations" was underlined by hand.

present in the Dictionary with their literary work, their idealist⁸ philosophical conception is avoided.

6. There is a great number of minor or less known writers in the Dictionary, for example: Georgeta Antonescu, George Boitor, George Boldea, Horia Bottea, Ion Bujoreanu, Virgil Caraivan, Ștefan Ciobanu, Teodor Codrescu, Ioana Crăciunescu⁹, Ioachim Drăgescu, Gabriel Georgescu, Alexandra Indrieș, Claudiu Isopescu, etc.

7. Due to the great number of authors, the different modes of treatment, there are some inequalities and inconsequences in the presentation of first rate contemporary writers. Therefore, it is mentioned that Augustin Buzura one of the most important writers, while other writers' place in the hierarchy of values is not specified (Nicolae Breban, Paul Anghel, Eugen Barbu¹⁰, etc.) These aspects as well as some formulations in the text will be resolved with the coordinator of the Dictionary.

We consider that after the revision and improvement of the Dictionary in line with the observations above and the approval of the glossary by the leadership of the Writers' Association, the Dictionary can be published. For a more exact appreciation and reception of the work we suggest that the two volumes should be published concomitantly or at a very short interval one after the other, like the end of 1984 (Volume I) and the beginning of 1985 (Volume II).¹¹

29. 05.1984.
L. Docșănescu/AD/LD¹²

⁸ The word "idealist" is underlined by hand.

⁹ The name is underlined by hand. On the margin of the line there is a handwritten question: "What do you suggest?"

¹⁰ The name is underlined by hand.

¹¹ The last paragraph is crossed out by hand.

¹² In official texts the names of the addressees of the copies are specified by their initials. The signatures of acknowledgement are those of L. Docșănescu and R. Constantinescu.

REPORT
*on the Dictionary of the Romanian Writers*¹³

Without making a comparison with other lexicographic works dedicated to Romanian writers, the dictionary edited by a collective of historians and literary critics under the coordination of Professor Mircea Zăciu (Vol.I: A-L) appears as an amplification and qualitative development of the *Concise Dictionary of Romanian Writers* published in 1978 by almost the same team of authors.

Evidently, the suggestions and critical observations made public at the publication of this concise dictionary have been taken into account.

Therefore the Dictionary of Romanian Writers seems to be a well-grounded work, written in an objective, scientific way, based on thorough documentation and studies and a vision which observes the spirit of Marxist literary historiography.

It contains the authentic values of Romanian writing from the beginnings to the present, which confers the work a unique character, making it extremely useful for specialists but mainly the great public, the young generation, mostly.

Another merit of the dictionary is that the summary includes writers from each epoch and every Romanian province, inclusively creators of values who live outside the country.

Whenever the authors of the Dictionary stick to their principles and exigencies, the result of their work is evident and beneficial. However, deviations from these principles lead to certain inconsequences, which must, in my opinion, be corrected before submitting the work for publishing. This operation is the more important as the inconsequences and subjective appreciations appear with writers after 23 August 1944, which could lead to unpleasant discussions after the publication of the work.

Here are some concrete observations and suggestions:

-some authors who were in the editorial team of the Concise Dictionary, such as Ion Dodu Bălan, Dumitru Micu, Victor Felea, etc. are missing from the list of authors of the Dictionary

¹³ The report was not known to us initially; moreover, its author, Ion Brad, assured Professor Dr M. Zăciu in a private conversation that he "saved" the Dictionary by his text. On the 7 July 1984 there was a discussion at the CSCE where the coordinators of the dictionary, the representatives of the publishing house and of the CSCE participated; here we realised that the tone had changed; the former favourable appreciations were replaced by a great number of objections, taken over by Elana Docsănescu (as we were able to verify shortly after) from the report written by Ion Brad. We "solved" the objections by the *Note on the modifications in the manuscript of the DRW* (see Text nr.4.)

On the same day, thanks to Marta Bittel we could read and transcribe the whole text in the office of N. Gheran, senior editor of the work and devoted friend of the coordinators during the edition of the book.

-the necessity to underline in the Preface¹⁴ the idea that the objective study of the authentic values in the past of our literary past which contributed to the progress of Romanian culture and civilisation as well as the powerful assertion of writing in the last decades was due to the new, scientific spirit introduced by the VII Congress of the Romanian Communist Party.

Due to this spirit it was possible to remove the dogmatic, restrictive and sometimes exclusivist views characteristic to a certain period after 23 August 1944. In this respect it is necessary to introduce a significant quotation from the appreciations of comrade Nicolae Ceauşescu regarding the role of literature in the spiritual life of our nation.

-regarding the inclusion of some translators in the Dictionary, it is not necessary to quote from Al. Palologu, because the idea is self-evident;

-consider that it is unnecessary to give thanks for a single member of the Writers' Association¹⁵, as he is not a literary historian or critic; his help given to the team of authors of the Dictionary is probably one of his tasks.

-in the *General Bibliography*¹⁶, the chapter "Studies of Literary History and Criticism" and the critical references of each writer there is a hint of subjectivism which leads to the omission of titles of works belonging to certain famous literary historians and critics, and the exaggerated quotation of others. Thus, only one or two works are quoted from the numerous works of literary history and criticism published by I.D. Bălan, Pompiliu Marcea, Al. Oprea and Valeriu Râpeanu, works published before the 1970s, almost all works of critics like Mircea Braga, G. Dimisianu or Lucian Raicu are quoted. The chapter entitled "Critical References" of some authors is not updated, it often reflects subjectivism and entirely personal preferences. For example, the unanimously appreciated works of Valeriu Râpeanu about Horia Lovinescu and Ion Luca are missing. The chapter dedicated to Dan Hăulică does not mention articles written about him by Vladimir Streinu, G. Oprescu, Petre Comarnescu, while the name of Teodor Mănescu is mentioned, which is probably a mistake (is it not Teodor Enescu?) I think that the Publishing House has the duty to help the authors of the Dictionary to revise and edit the "Critical References" chapter in an objective way. Similarly, I think that Dorin Tudoran's *Biografia debuturilor* (*The Biography of Debutes*) must not be included in the list of works.

-the long list of contemporary writers of the Dictionary does not include writers and critics such as Ion Andreiţă, Ioana Bantaş, Mihai Bărbulescu, Marta Bărbulescu, Ştefan Berciu, Lidia Bote, Cornel Bizbici, Teofil Buşecan, Corneliu Buzinschi, Bucur Chiriac, Vintilă Corbul, Valentina Curticeanu, Sina Dănciulescu, Nicolae Deleanu, Cezar Drăgoi, Mihai Duşescu, Mihai Elin, Traian Filip, Eugen

¹⁴ The word is underlined by hand.

¹⁵ Laurenţiu Fulga.

¹⁶ The words are underlined by hand.

Frunză, Leonard Gavrilu, Dumitru Ghișe, Călin Gruia, Ionel Hristea, Viorica Huber, Constantin Ignătescu, Dumitru Ignea, Chirata Iorgoveanu, Dumitru Isac, Ion Istrati, Aurel Lambrino, Petre Lascalov;

-I must remark with regret that some of the authors treat in a subjective, even depreciative way the work of some serious critics, poets, playwrights and prosewriters inspired from the exigencies and the orientation of the cultural policy of our party, authors whose works are recognised and have long entered public conscience;

Their characterisation is brief, written from an aestheticising, excessively critical position as compared to that of other writers whose writings are less adherent to the social and political aspects of Romanian realities. For example, Ioan Adam, critic, Al. Andrițoiu, poet, Aurel Baranga, dramatic adviser, Eugen Barbu, writer (I do not understand why the presentation from the *Concise Dictionary* has been changed, it could have been completed where necessary), Ion Dodu Bălan, critic and writer, Dumitru Corbea, poet and prosewriter, Miha Dragomir, poet, Nicolae Dragoș, poet, Mariana Dumitrescu, poet, Petre Ghelmez, poet, Ion Horea, poet, Emil Isac, poet, L. Kalustian, publicist, Ion Lăncrănjan, prosewriter, George Lesnea, poet;

-However, there are some writers, from the younger generation, mostly, whose characterisation is excessively lengthy and their value also exaggerated, based on unconvincing and quotations, inadequate from the point of view of their sense and expression (e.g. M. Cărtărescu, Gabriel Chifu, Virgil Duda, Livius Ciocîrlie (the article dedicated to him is almost as lengthy as the one about Șerban Cioculescu), Ion Iovan, Nora Iuga;

-in the case of some young writers (see Cleopatra Lorinsome young writers (see Cleopatra Lorințiu) it is mentioned that they “do not work anywhere and have dedicated themselves to literature”;

-it is necessary to update the bibliography of works and reference works;

-in the case of the quality of members or deputy members of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, a unitary principle should be adopted and this quality should not be mentioned;

-the name of Ștefan Baciu is among those who left the country because of an incorrect attitude towards the country and our culture: he must be omitted. However, there are some praiseworthy names which must be introduced: Victor Buescu, Luky Galaction Passarelli, Miron Grindea, Dimitrie Lahovary.

-regarding the list of authors in the second volume of the Dictionary I think that it is important to include writers like Mircea Dumitru, Lucia Olteanu, Iosif Naghiu, Dumitru Titus Popa, Ion Petrache, Radu Popescu (the critic), Dorina Rădulescu; writers abroad such as Ion Miloș (Sweden), Mihai Steriade (Belgium), George Uscățescu (Spain), Leon Negruzzi (France) must also be included.

-I do not think that the writer Dorin Tudoran could have a place in the Dictionary, for he has declared his aversion to the evolution of our culture and literature, both nationally and abroad.

14 June 1984¹⁷

/ss/ Ion Brad¹⁸

Text nr.3.

[copy]

[LETTER to Ion Traian Ștefănescu]

București, 10.07.[19]84.

Dear Prime-Vicepresident Comrade,

In May this year you kindly received me in order to talk about the acute problem of the edition of the *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers*, its first volume submitted to the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House in December 1983. After a fruitful discussion we agreed to urge the preparation of the second volume, so that the two volumes of the work should appear concomitantly or within a short period.¹⁹ At the same time, you suggested to ask for another report - besides the one given by the institute of the Publishing House and the Literary Directorate from the Council in Cluj (after the report of comrade instructor Bittel), report asked by the Council from comrade Ion Brad. The report of comrade Ion Brad was handed in June this year, and comr. Docsănescu asked for time to read the whole manuscript. In the meantime, we finished the revision of Volume II which had to be submitted to the publishing house. However, we saw that the report of comr. Ion Brad raised various groundless objections, giving proof of a petty spirit, extremely subjective regarding certain literary sympathies and antipathies and the lack of orientation in the real hierarchy of values which is

¹⁷ The date is handwritten.

¹⁸ Autograph signature.

¹⁹ The insistence of the CCSE to publish the two volumes simultaneously was determined by the fear that after the publication of the first volume Eugen Barbu would create a literary scandal by the periodical led by him (*Săptămîna*). The coordinators accepted, from various reasons the simultaneous publication of the two volumes, although this imposed an almost unbearable rhythm for edition, revision and the unification of the articles of the second volume, tasks which were planned to be carried out according to another graphic. Otherwise, Elena Docsăneanu and Ion Traian Ștefănescu signalled us that the CCSE was willing in fact to publish the DRW, while the "Section" (the Propaganda Section of the CC of the Romanian Communist Party) had reserves regarding the opportunity of its publication. This information proved to be correct. Mihai Dulea was the one who had "reserves"; in short time he was named assistant of Suzana Gâdea at the CCSE, which was part of the usual process of the "rotation of staff" from party functions to state functions.

understandable in the case of a writer who does not have experience in literary history and criticism, does not know the methodological innovations in the field and, staying away from the country for almost ten years, has lost contact with the progressive, ascendent movement of the present creation, remaining prisoner of the clichés and stereotypes of the 1950s. Probably puzzled by the tone of the report, comr. Docsănescu began to read timorously the vast volume, although it had already been read by the instructor of her Board, comr. Bittel. The prolonged reading lasted until 6 July this year, and we insisted that the final discussion should take place on the 7th. We kept in mind some of the justified observations and suggestions of comr. Docsănescu; we also made corrections without delay. However, we could not agree with the fact that many observations view strictly critical appreciations, some of them of nuances, which are the expression of the point of view of the authors and can by no means be imposed administratively. Consequently, we understood that the vagueness and the different subtexts which attempted to modify the critical perspective in case of contemporary writers has another reason: the attempt to delay publication, to get rid of the responsibility of a work which would probably alicit debates and controversies. Practically, it would be better for such a work not to appear at all... We suggested to comr. Docsănescu that we resolve the justified observations immediately and send the manuscript to print, following the possible retouches of formulation, critical style, possible inadvertencies, omissions, vaguenesses. As my suggestion was not accepted and we were not given a clue about the publication of the *Dictionary*, I completely disagree with the procedure of delay (the manuscript of Volume I is at the Council for half a year now) which annuls the work of nearly a decade, a collective work (with 59 collaborators - why are they considered "subjective" instead of the individual readers of the manuscript?), the only work of synthesis meant to celebrate the great festive events in this year.

Dear Comrade Ștefănescu,

It is embarrassing to go into details regarding the set of observations written by comr. Docsănescu which mainly overtake the exaggerated and misplaced observations of the writer Ion Brad. It is embarrassing to talk about this confused reading with its mess of names guessed only to be guilty for this or that "crime", etc. I remark nevertheless that none of the articles dealing with great writers, the consecrated values of our literary history were not brought into discussion. The observations refer to the periphery of literature and a great number of names from the actual present. Is it possible that the fate of a work of such an importance should depend on minor retouches of the image of some fifth or sixth rate authors (in the hierarchy of the articles)?

I appreciate your remark at the Council of the Writers' Association that writers and literary criticism still owe a work of synthesis, a great literary history, etc. to welcome the great jubilee this year. Now, that a collective of 59 members, critics, renowned literary historians, consecrated names in literary criticism and

research today, besides some young researchers and critics, tried to offer a great work of reference which is so much needed by our national culture, it is dismissed, left to the discretion of pettiness and even incompetence, left to die a natural death.

I express hereby my profound bitterness that we were treated this way, that my name, competence and professional authority in a field in which I have given enough proof of a balanced, comprehensive, pondered spirit, did not mean anything when faced with successive deformed, confused readings the competence of which is highly dubious.

We gave proof of great patience and the understanding of some mechanisms and practices of editing our books. We made changes three times after the observations which were considered more or less justified. I consider that the fate of this book is either to be dead or its whole responsibility be entrusted to us, those 59 specialists who sign it. Those who grind the efforts and energy for creating far-reaching works, unprecedented in Romanian culture, are also responsible to future generations. Let national culture, lacking its deserved great syntheses for such a long time, judge who was right.²⁰

Yours sincerely,
/ss/ Mircea Zăciu

Text nr.4.

NOTE

**on the modifications made in the manuscript of the
Dictionary of the Romanian Writers, Vol. I (A-L)
on the suggestion of the Literary Board of the
Council of Socialist Culture and Education²¹**

After the discussions on 7 July 1984 at the CCSE in presence of comr. Elena Docsănescu representing CCSE, of comr. Valeriu Şuteu, Editor-in-Chief, Nicolae Gheran and Gheorghe Pienescu, representing the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House, as well as comr. Professor Dr Mircea Zăciu, Dr

²⁰ We had no answer for this letter.

²¹ Although dated "11 July", the text was written in the office of N. Gheran on 7 July, immediately after the discussion mentioned in it. It is evident that there was no time for the modifications in question; some of them were done afterwards, by "negotiations" with the editors of the Publishing House. We were otherwise convinced that nobody will check anything: "work style" which was so much debated at the meetings of that time traditionally excluded critical spirit and favoured inertia, on the good old principle that the "report" is the "superior form of work"! The text contains underlinings and summary marginal adnotations by Mircea Măciu, most probably, Director of the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House at that time. (We do not show them here.) In the top right corner there is the signature: "Approved / Mircea Măciu."

Aurel Sasu and Lecturer Marian Papahagi, the team of coordinators of the Dictionary of Romanian Writers, general observations as well as concrete objections referring to the manuscript of Volume I were examined in a spirit of responsibility and exigency. (The manuscript was submitted to the Publishing House at the end of 1983; it was at the Literary Board of CCSE for reading and approval from February 1984). The coordinators and editors of the volume analysed all the observations and suggestions and revised the glossary of the first volume and a series of other materials which were not discussed then, but which could have the same type of imperfections as those signalled in certain concrete cases.

I. Regarding the place and importance of some literary creations in the whole of Romanian literature, the following changes were made:

1. The articles on Al. Andrițoiu, Al. Căprariu, Romulus Guga and Horia Lovinescu were rewritten in a detailed form, so that their literary personality could be presented more adequately.

2. The unitary character of the work was strengthened by leaving out excessive appreciations or those which are not validated by contemporary criticism, to improve the value-partition of the writers included in the dictionary and completing informations in approx. 80 articles to strengthen the documentary character of the book and adequately distribute the weight of type of information per author. For example, the articles on G. Bacovia, Camil Baltazar, Ș. Bascovici, N. Batzaria, I. Bălu, V. Băncilă, Gh. Bărgăuanu, S. Bărnăuțiu, I. Botez, O. Botez, Paul Bujor, O. Caledoniu, M. Celarianu, P. Comarnescu, Ov.S. Crohmălniceanu, Emil Isac, N. Labiș, O. Lemnaru, C. Loghin, H. Lovinescu, etc.

3. In the case of some contemporary writers we renounced polemic expressions or those susceptible to minimise the whole of their work, nuancing value-judgements and underlining the militant nature of their work without renouncing to the amendment of aesthetic deficiencies, signalled long ago in our literary criticism, underlining the writings of "resistance" of these authors. E.g. Aurel Baranga, Nicolea Labiș, Ion Dodu Bălan, Mișu Dragomir, Nicolae Dragoș, Mircea Dumitru, Petre Ghelmez, Leon Kalustian, George Lesnea, Emil Isac, Mihail Davidoglu, Paul Anghel, Ion Lăncrănjan, Liviu Călin, etc. In other cases (Ion Horea, Dumitru Corbea, etc.) the revision of articles proved that they presented a fair image of the work of these authors, therefore modifications were not necessary.

4. The space granted to writers has been divided again in order to ensure a more adequate equilibrium in the treatment of the different literary generations active today. This has been done by comprising, eliminating texts or superfluous quotations as well as attenuating some value-judgements (e.g. Gabriel Chifu, Nora Iuga, Cleopatra Lorințiu, Ioana Crăciunescu, Radu F. Alexandru, Constantin Abăluță, Mircea Cărtărescu, Dan Damaschin, Ioana Ieronim, Vasile Dan, Nichita Danilov, Ion Iovan.) It has been found that the articles on Mateiu I. Caragiale (12

pages) and A.E. Baconsky (approx. 5 pages) were correctly written from the point of view of length.

5. An article on the essays of Dumitru Ghișe has been included in the glossary of the first volume. The revision of the glossary of Volume II was also decided, so that the possible omissions of names can be remedied. At the same time, commencing from the conviction that the inclusion of some second-rate authors or authors who have ceased their activity would be harmful for the equilibrium of the work, as it is not an exhaustive dictionary of our literature, we reached the conclusion that names such as Teofil Bușecan, Sina Dănciulescu, Petre Luscalov, Mihai Dușescu, Mihai Elin, Vintilă Corbul, Traian Filip, Eugen Frunză, Dumitru Ignea, Ion Istrati, Bucur Chiriac and others could be omitted from the *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers* without affecting the global image of national culture. Their inclusion would oblige us to introduce tens of other names of minor writers from the previous centuries, who were not taken into account in the present form of the *Dictionary*.

II. We have revised articles referring to a number of writers who are problematic from the point of view of the interpretation of their work and activity as a whole; we detained them if their work was the subject of chapters in literary history or general works (Nichifor Crainic, Radu Gyr, Radu Dragnea, Aron Cotruț, Vasile Băncilă). Ideological and philosophical reserves were strengthened from time to time. The article on Ștefan Baciș has been left out on the suggestion of the Literary Board of the CCSE. We also mention that in spite of several investigations we could not find biobibliographic informations about Victor Buescu, Luki (Inlaction, Miron Grindea and Dimitrie Lahovary. As soon as we can find data referring to these second-rate authors, we can discuss their inclusion in the *Addenda*, which is planned to be published together with the second volume. We ask for the support of CCSE, besides the Foreign Ministry.

III. The presence of minor authors in the DRW (G. Boitor, O. Boitoș, V. Holdea, H. Bottea, C. Fântâneru, I. M. Bujoreanu, V. Caraivan, Șt. Ciobanu, Th. Codreascu, I. Drăgescu and others) has been discussed from time to time. It has been noted that the inclusion was justified for cultural-political reasons (the serious reflection on the literature of Transylvania, mostly) because of the fact that the work of some of these writers was unjustly forgotten and deserves to be reactualised this way. Otherwise, many of them were already re-edited, as there is a process of recuperating the creation of some second-rate authors from the past.

IV. Commencing from the explanation in the *Note on Dictionary of the Romanian Writers*, according to which the multiform reality of Romanian literature compelled us to treat the criterion of typographic space granted to writers loosely, we thought that the quantitative framing of some writers such as F. Aderca, I. Călugaru, N. Davidescu, etc. is correct, given the extent of their work. We remark that the critical acclaim in these articles does not assign these writers a greater value than that consecrated by literary history. In case of Anghel

Demetrescu his old image of Eminescu's denigrator has been corrected; there are proofs that this eminent Professor was one of the most thorough critics of Eminescu, writing against the unwanted effects of the deceptionist post-Eminescian trend. Articles on great writers such as E. Lovinescu, G. Ibrăileanu, G. Călinescu, whose length varies slightly, are edited by renowned critics, famous for their exegesis of these writers: Al. Piru and E. Simion, therefore interventions are not justified in this case.

V. The balanced presentation of the different generations of writers was an aim, the creation of young writers was considered important. The critical examination in the specialist press was taken into account in *all* cases. We did not only preserve all the names included (with slight attenuations; see paragraph I.4 of this report), but also decided to add two articles to the previous list: Denisa Comănescu and Chirata Iorgoveanu.

VI. Regarding the *General Bibliography*, we remark, as in the case of the *Note* on DRW that it contains only general works: literary histories, histories of trends and epochs, literary dictionaries, syntheses, collections of studies, volumes of articles, interviews, etc, and, consequently, monographic works and critical editions are included only in the articles referring to the writers in question (for example, the *Goga* monography by I. D. Bălan, quoted at the *Goga* article, the *Istrati* monography by Al. Oprea, quoted at the articles on Istrati and the N. Iorga and Ion Luca editions edited by V. Râpeanu at the articles on N. Iorga and I. Luca.) The bibliographic section of several articles was revised on the suggestion of the Council, adding certain names (P. Comarnescu, G. Oprea, etc. at the article on Hăulică, V. Râpeanu at the article on H. Lovinescu, Ion Luca, etc.) or avoiding the too frequent occurrence of certain names.

We consider that these modifications are meant to forestall confusions, polemic and subjective group reactions and they must strengthen the objective nature of informations and criticism, which was a priority for coordinators and editors even before. The presence of 59 authors of articles from all university centres, from all generations of critics, historians and literary researchers, the approval of an institute of speciality as well as the subsequent reading of certain approved forums (the Publishing House, the Council of Culture, external referents), the repeated revisions of the text done by the coordinators assure the quality and the proper general orientation of the book. Taking into account that there are similar works in all "neighbouring" literatures, and in our culture there is no ample dictionary of Romanian writers which contains the representative names of all epochs and generations from the beginning of the present (while our more hard-working Hungarian colleagues have already published a complete lexicon of Hungarian writers in Romania), and that the lexicographic works in use (Marian Popa's *Dictionary of Contemporary Romanian Literature*) are subjective, and that there is an acute necessity in the country (to inform highschool professors, students, etc.) and abroad (our representation in foreign encyclopaedic works is

1900), as has been shown in the press several times), the delay of the publication of this work because of minor or bureaucratic reasons, can arouse prejudices against the cultural policy of the country. We consider that almost 10 years' work of documentation, projection and edition of a large team of specialists (university and high school professors, critics, literary historians, scientific researchers, editors of speciality, etc.) is worth being supported by the CCSE in order to urgently publish the first volume according to the editorial plan) and finalising the second one.

Hucurești, 11 July 1984 /ss/ Valeriu Șuteu, /ss/ Nicolae Gheran
/ss/ Gh. Pienescu, /ss/ Mircea Zăciu
/ss/ Aurel Sasu, /ss/ Marian Papahagi²²

Text nr.5.

[LETTER to Ion Brad]

Cluj, 20 September 1984

Dear Comrade Ion Brad,

We write to you as collaborators of Professor Mircea Zăciu in the coordination and scientific revision of the *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers*²³. As you probably know, we worked on the collection of material, the revision of articles, the coordination of data, their completion and unification, for years, without any support: we did this work because we thought that Romanian literature requires adequate instruments of work meant to reveal its dimensions, quality and values. We will not insist on the millions of hours spent to edit this dictionary, or the unselfish nature of our work. It is sufficient to say that in those ten years of compiling the data archive and those six years of editing the work we sacrificed our time, our nerves, personal things, money, etc. in order to complete the dictionary. We appealed to the 60 most renowned critics and literary historians to collaborate - for free, because time will pass until the cashing of the modest rights of author destined to such works - and put aside their own works in order to help us.

We tell you these things because we know your role in hindering the appearance of this dictionary which contains 1400 names from the whole history

²² Autographs.

²³ Mircea Zăciu was not involved in the drafting of the text, which did not stop Ion Brad to complain everybody that Mircea Zăciu "instigated" his collaborators against him. As proof of his good intention he showed the text of his report for everybody who was interested in it (we heard about this from many people, from Ana Blandiana too.)

of Romanian literature from the beginning to the present: the manuscript has approximately 5000 typewritten pages and it was read and re-read by competent collaborators. We asked your opinion which could contribute in principle to the quick publication of the book (by the way, the haste is due to the fact that informations - actual for 1982 - should not become outdated in the moment of publication; you can perhaps imagine what does it mean to maintain 1400 articles up to date, the interpretation and the bibliography). We had a very unpleasant surprise when we saw the copy of your report²⁴ which proves that your point of view, evidently subjective was taken as a reference point by the Literary Board of the Council of Culture for Socialist Education, and conditions the fate of the book. We do not deny the right of expressing views on our work. However, we cannot allow anybody think that his point of view is the only one possible and transform it into a criterion which decides about the competence, honesty and work of a large team of specialists. Objectively²⁵, your report tangled things and made more difficult the publication of the *Dictionary*. We must tell you that we nevertheless examined attentively the objections put forward by the Literary Board of the Council of Culture: a mixed report, written by the coordinators and the Publishing House, presents our conclusions. We also remark that we know about previous reports and can therefore find out the extent to which your opinion was decisive for postponing the publication.

Let us present the aim of this letter. Hoping that it is not in your interest to delay the publication of this honest and unselfish book and you realise how much harm your report did, by practically stopping the publication of the *Dictionary*, we appeal to your conscience as a writer, to inform the Literary Board of the CCSE that you cannot ask that your personal point of view should become the decisive criterion for publishing the volume. This is not a request, but something more. We allow ourselves to believe that if your intervention contributed substantially to the postponement of the publication of an important work of common interest, even if you did not realise the consequences of the sentences included in the report, it is ethical to give you the possibility to dispel a doubt and make possible the publication of the book and let it be discussed publicly, analysed, appreciated or criticised in the press²⁶. It is not censure which must validate the quality of a work of the dimensions and complexity of our dictionary but it is the reader, the critic, the great public and professors after all, who will validate or refute our long effort. We will anyway do anything to defend the book; we assume responsibility for its content because of our love for Romanian literature and culture which is common with all Romanian writers and decent men.

²⁴ See Text nr.2. note 13.

²⁵ This word echoes the one used by Ion Brad in his report.

²⁶ We must say that Ion Brad never did what we asked him.

We hope that we have succeeded in explaining our point of view openly and in a principled way.

/ss/ Marişan Papahagi, /ss/ Aurel Sasu

Text nr.6.

[LETTER to Gheorghe Rădulescu]²⁷

Cluj, 3
October 1984

Dear Comrade Gheorghe Rădulescu,

As coordinators of the *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers* we dare to write you as we know your interest in literature and art, as well as your spirit of justice. Our letter has an apparently personal reason (we would not dare write you about petty things), as it regards the forementioned work which certainly is of broader interest. Please allow us to present the conditions in which this work has been written.

As early as 1975, the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House asked us to edit an ample dictionary which would contain all the Romanian writers, from the beginning to the present. We start from the observation, easy to make at that time (now the situation has improved) that we have no such works; its usefulness was and is still unquestionable. Nevertheless we realised that the difficulties were greater than we expected. There were no archives of biobibliographic data, we could find no information about a great number of writers: reference works usually took over news from one another. We began then to create an archive by our own means, without any official support. We launched a questionnaire and some 1500 writers have answered until now; we conducted research in several public archives and created all the necessary auxiliary instruments. Needless to say that in other countries a whole personnel is employed to do such work, information is deposited in computers, etc. We will pass over the details of this subterranean work which we have done for days and nights, for ten years. In 1978 we published a sample (of 800 pages) of our work: the Concise Dictionary of Romanian Writers, published in 80.000 copies, immediately bought

²⁷ The explanation for writing this letter is simple: Gheorghe (Gogu) Rădulescu was famous in the epoch for supporting writers; he was favourably influenced in his attitude by his wife who was also a writer (Dorina Rădulescu). It seems that his intervention besides Petru Enache, Secretary of Propaganda of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party at that time, had a favourable effect because at the end of 1984 (after Mircea Zăciu protested in a plenary of the Council of the Writers' Union against the suspension of work on the *Dictionary*) he ordered that the typesetting of the book be done.

up from bookshops. It was the first work of a series which had to qualify what was called the "moment of dictionaries" in literary periodicals. We considered it a stage on a long journey. We decided that in spite of the fact that all of us could have published our own books instead, we had to bring to an end what we have started. Between 1977, the year of submitting the first dictionary and 1983, we worked continuously on the new dictionary of Romanian writers (there were at least three or four weekly meetings, after the completion of our didactic work and research and often to the detriment of our own interests and our free time). We took into account the criticism received at the publication of the concise dictionary and also made best use of our competence perfected during the process of work. We repeat: special institutes with documentarists, editors, typists, computers, card indexes, libraries, etc. deal with such works in other countries, whereas we were three private persons who coordinated the work of a great number of collaborators - the writers of articles.

We submitted the first volume of the *Dictionary* to the Publishing House in December 1983, the work being planned for publishing in 1984, its second volume in 1985. We will present some data about our *Dictionary*. It is a monumental work of approximately 5000 pages, edited according to a unitary system of norms by approximately 60 collaborators, all of them famous researchers, critics and literary historians, university and high school teachers, scientific researchers such as Al. Piru, N. Manolescu, E. Simion, M. Martin, M. Iorgulescu, Fl. Manolescu, etc, and some of the most talented young critics. All collaborators (including the three coordinators) had to write a "portion" of 15-40 articles. The work includes 1400 articles, all of them of at least two typewritten pages and maximum 10-12 pages (for the classics of our literature.) In other words, every collaborator read some hundreds of volumes for this work and edited some ten pages. Biographic data are often first-hand information, the authors and coordinators have seen original files and made special investigations for scrupulous information. Every article contains a biobibliographic synthesis, criticism and an exhaustive bibliography of the works, completed with a selected bibliography of critical references. More than one third of a total of approximately 4000 names of Romanian writers in all times were included in our work. If every name would be counted once, even if they appear in more literary dictionaries at the same time, we would obtain a smaller number than that of the writers included in our dictionary. In other words, the glossary of our dictionary the only one which registers names of Romanian writers from the beginning to the present, is bigger than all writers' dictionaries published in this country, together. Dictionaries of this type edited in countries with older traditions, such as France, Italy, England, do not contain such a great number of articles. Perhaps the "frivolous" detail that the manuscript weighs approximately 30 kilos and is more than one metre high suggests the imposing character of the work! This is, of course, a simple quantitative evaluation, but it says something, all the more if we think about the

signatures which do not belong to some ambitious amateurs but the best specialists in the field of our literary research today.

The coordination and scientific revision were not simple: we had to unify 60 different styles and different value judgements, eliminate the inevitable contradictions between articles, smooth the rough edges which are also inevitable, control the whole bibliography, check hundreds of biobibliographic data, carry on correspondence, travel to Bucharest several times. In October, November and December 1983 we worked every day (including Sundays), every free hour, to submit the book in the best conditions. We permanently revised the information, improving it, until the summer of 1984 (the information was updated for 1982, which is a great achievement, because usually there is a five-year distance between the year of publication and the limit of the updated information). We will not speak about the fatigue due to this tiring work, neglecting our own work and our personal lives. Due to the pettiness, the book was not published until today, although it has been read by various forums during April and May and we did the corrections every time they asked us (some of them simply absurd, as all the objections brought by censure!) On 12 July this year we submitted a contestation signed by Mircea Zăciu to comr. Traian Ștefănescu, Prime-Vice-President of CCSE, pointing out that we are at the end of our physic and psychic endurance and asked him to stop the series of reports and approvals and order the printing of the first volume, practically edited at the Publishing House. We did not receive an answer to that letter until now. In fact, till July there is no sign whatsoever of the work being started, although we have already submitted the second volume in the meantime.

We allow ourselves to think that our work and that of the 60 collaborators deserved a better treatment. A first report of the Council of Culture and a second one, a synthesis, practically approved publication. All has been spoilt by an external report by Ion Brad presenting a series of objections which reflected a subjective, strictly personal point of view, which gave evidence of the lack of knowledge of the evolution of contemporary literature in the past 15 years and a complete ignorance of the development of contemporary Romanian criticism. This external report, a simple point of view originating in the hasty and superfluous reading of the first volume of the *Dictionary* became an "official" point of view! The new report of the CCSE took over the new objections which were presented us as decisive. Subsequently, we were informed that the approval of the Writers' Association is a new condition raised for the publication of the book; the leadership submitted the file of the *Dictionary* to the leadership of all the Writers' Associations in the country which was an unprecedented (and abusive) because our work was not "ordered" by the Writers' Association and no previous work needed such "approvals" (not even Marian Popa's dictionary, dedicated to contemporary literature, solely). Perhaps tomorrow they will ask all Romanian writers to read the work, lest some of them will not be pleased! Who is interested, we ask, in the postponement of the publication of such a necessary book edited by specialists,

most of them established and famous? Do the office holders involved in this work really not understand that we are obliged to offer Romanian culture its fundamental books, which will otherwise not be written, and that their fear of responsibility cannot be compared with the interest of a whole literature? Who has the competence to cast doubt on the good faith, honesty and skill of some specialists who voluntarily engaged in this work and were more deprived than privileged for editing this work? We asked ourselves these questions with the outrage of those who though only of the usefulness of their work just to realise that their work is scorned and boycotted by those who should support and finalise it. We cannot renounce the work in this stage: it contains the hard work of many of people. This is why we dared apply to you.

We are convinced that you can judge objectively if our request of quickly publishing the book is justified or not (the Publishing House has long approved it); we are convinced that your spirit of justice will help you appreciate the truthfulness of our intention. On account of our respect for the good functioning of our institutions and the wish to avoid unwanted discussions about the *Dictionary*, we did not submit official memorials edited by us, because we hope that general interest (and not obscure circumstantial calculi) will finally triumph. Hoping this, we address this letter to you which is not a memorial; its private nature is justified by the forementioned reasons. We hope that these lines will find their justification and please receive our deepest gratitude.²⁸

/ss/ Mircea Zaciu, /ss/ Marian Papahagi, /ss/ Aurel Sasu

Text nr.7.

MINUTES
regarding the Dictionary of the Romanian Writers²⁹
closed today, 20 August 1985

I. The stage of work

Volume I is typeset, read by collaborators, coordinators, proof readers and editors, compared with the manuscript; it will be submitted to printing on 26 August, for making the corrections.

Volume II was submitted to the Publishing House, read by the editors, returned with the observations of the coordinators who made 80% of the modifications asked for. The material was given back to the editors with the

²⁸ We received no answer to this letter.

²⁹ We publish this text as proof of the good intentions of the Publishing House, in view of a better understanding of the cultural mechanisms of the epoch, revealed by texts nr. 10, 11 and 12 of the File of the *Dictionary of Romanian Writers*.

objections and observations and they had to forward it to the leadership of the Publishing House and the literary Board of the CCSE.

II. Steps taken

In view of the smoothness of the process of editing and the fact that both volumes will be published at the same time, and there is a great hiatus between the state of the first and the second, the following steps will be taken:

Volume I: Pages II of the first volume will be corrected by the Publishing House in 30 days from receiving the second proof, so that the imprimatur can be given. The coordinators will ensure the proofreading and the imprimatur within 20 days after receiving the corrections made in the Publishing House, whereas the editors will read the volume for the imprimatur in 30 days after receiving the volume from the coordinators. The coordinators will compile the indices for the first volume before the submission of the imprimatur to printing. The Publishing House and the coordinators plan to submit Volume I with the imprimatur to printing no later than 20 December 1985.

Volume II: Letters M-Z, submitted in 801 to the leadership of the Publishing House for the final approval on 26 August 1985, will be read and submitted in parts to the Council of Culture, so that the letter M (or the first series of articles) reach the Literary Board on 10 September and the last series of articles no later than 10 October. The coordinators will submit the remaining 201 of the manuscript, revised and completed according to the observations, until 20 September 1985.

The Publishing House will read the articles at rapid pace; the coordinators oblige themselves to solve the problems raised by objections and observations.

The volume will be copy-edited in ten days (until 20 October).

Taking into account the forementioned dedaliens, the Publishing House and the coordinators will submit Volume II to printing until 20-25 October.

The Publishing House will make the first proofreading of Volume I in 30 days after receiving pages I; the remaining 30 days (legally prescribed for proofreading) will be used for the proofreading by the coordinators and the revision of the first proof by the editors who will submit Pages I to printing after 60 days counted from the coming out of print. The deadlines for Pages II (imprimatur) will be the same as for Volume I, taking into account the legal terms of the printing press.

The Publishing House and the coordinators plan to submit Volume II for printing until the end of 1985.

The forementioned dates are considered maximal by the Publishing House and the coordinators.

The Publishing House will compile the forms of payment for the coordinators when Volume II is copy-edited, and the forms of payment for the authors when Volume II receives the imprimatur. Most of the biobibliographies in

DRW belong to the coordinators³⁰, therefore their fee will be paid according to a list which will be received by the Publishing House in time. The forms of payment for the typewriting of Volume I will also be compiled this month, while the payment for the typewriting of Volume II will be given when Volume II will be submitted.

The Publishing House and the coordinators will inform each other³¹ about the observation of this plan.

Coordinators,

/ss/ Mircea Zăciu, /ss/ Marian Papahagi, /ss/ Aurel Sasu

Publishers,

/ss/ Nicolae Gheran, /ss/ Gh. Pienescu

Text nr.8.

[MEMORIAL to Suzana Gâdea]³²

To the

Council of Culture and Socialist Education, București

Comrade President,

We, the undersigned, Professor Dr Mircea Zăciu, Dr Aurel Sasu, Dr Marian Papahagi, members of the Writers' Association, coordinators of the *Dictionary of Romanian Writers*, will present the reasons of our conviction that the forementioned work was unjustly left out by order of the CCSE from the 1986 editorial plan of the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House.

First of all we would like to remind you that the DRW is a collective work with 60 authors, 1500 informative and critical articles about Romanian writers

³⁰ The assertion refers to the fact that the creation of an ample archive of a thousand of files of contemporary writers was the work of the coordinators, just as the complete rewriting of all the introductory biobibliographic syntheses in order to ensure the unity of editing in those sections in which this was possible.

³¹ This agreement was carried out through a series of letters exchanged by the coordinators and Nicolae Gheran, Editor-in-Chief.

³² The memorial had no echo whatsoever, we wrote it in order to respect hierarchy. More precisely, the various superposed party forums could ask us about the answer of the CCSE, which was directly superordinated to the publishing houses, where we had contacts with the intermediary and executive echelons, the only ones that were important. The fact that Suzana Gâdea did not assume any responsibility and left everything for her assistants (Ion Traian Ștefănescu at the beginning, then Mihai Dulea) who were the *de facto* leaders of the Council of Culture, was of public notoriety.

from the beginnings of our literature to the present. This is the most ample work of this type in Romanian culture, a book which required more than a decade of hard work, a book which demonstrates the variety, richness and quality of Romanian writing. Its first volume was submitted to the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House in 1983, the second volume in 1984, and planned to be published in 1984; the book was analysed at the Publishing House as well as by the Council of Culture. All the observations were taken into account by the coordinators. The first volume of the DRW is in the stage of the second proofreading. The second volume, also submitted to the Publishing House, was discussed by the editors and all the observations were taken into account by the coordinators. The second volume could not be sent to printing until now, although it was included in the 1985 plan, as the Council of Culture has not read it yet.

We express our surprise that, after the long and difficult process of approving the work which obstructed, in our opinion, the normal way of the book, its title does not appear any more in the 1986 editorial plan, a decision which is completely inexplicable and means a reconsideration of the former favourable approval. We think that our unselfish work which was not rewarded, subordinated to a single aim, that of serving Romanian culture to the best of our power, deserved a better treatment from the part of such an important forum as the CCSE. It is regrettable that without any explanation, the DRW is no more part of the editorial plan of this year. Leaving aside our efforts and those of the 60 collaborators (most of them university professors, literary critics, researchers and authors from all cultural centres in the country) and the expenses, we ask ourselves, who will ever take responsibility for the lack of those fundamental works in our culture which could present us as we are, contributing substantially to the correction of the false information which appears in foreign publications because there are no adequate sources? We feel responsible for the real needs of our culture and literature and we cannot accept that our faith, work and sincere wish to edit a necessary and useful book, to the best of our power, is denied and doubted.

The DRW was edited in collaboration with the Publishing House and with the continuous information of and in consultation with the forums which had to approve publication, respecting legal dispositions and its first volume obtained the approval for publication. It represents an important step towards the edition of a dictionary-thesaurus, including everything that is valuable in Romanian literature. The quantity of information which it contains places it among the greatest works of this type all over the world. It offers a dignified image of the history of Romanian literature.

We ask therefore: who is interested in delaying the publication of such a book? Do those who have decided the leaving out of the DRW from the editorial plan realise the contradiction in which they and the Council itself are, withdrawing an approval given after long discussions and detailed analysis, without offering an explanation?

Do they realise that they are implicitly rejecting a part of our work (the second volume), without even opening and reading it?

Taking into account all that has been briefly presented, we ask you, Comrade President, to approve the reexamination of the arbitrary order of leaving this book out of the editorial plan, continuing work in the publishing house on the first volume, as well as the reading of the second volume by the proofreaders of the Council so that, it could be submitted for typesetting in the shortest time. It is our conviction that our request will be judged favourably, in the spirit of equity, justice and responsibility for the destiny of our culture.

Cluj, 25 January 1986

Yours sincerely,
/ss/ Professor Dr Mircea Zaciu
/ss/ Dr Aurel Sasu
/ss/ Dr Marian Papahagi

Text nr.9.

[MEMORIAL to D.R. Popescu]³³

To the Writers' Association in the Socialist Republic of Romania

Comrade President,

Undersigned, Professor Dr Mircea Zaciu, Dr Marian Papahagi, and Dr Aurel Sasu, members of the Writers' Association, coordinators of the *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers*, inform you, as we have done on other occasions (on the meeting of the Council of the Writers' Association in November 1984 and the letter sent you and the Bureau in August 1985) about the present state of the forementioned work.

First of all we remind you that the DRW is a collective work with 60 authors, 1500 informative and critical articles about Romanian writers from the beginnings of our literature to the present. This is the most ample work of this type in Romanian culture, a book which required more than a decade of hard work, a book which demonstrates the variety, richness and quality of Romanian writing. Its

³³ We did not receive an answer to this memorial. The leadership of the Writers' Association and D.R. Popescu, President of the Association at that time, did nothing to relieve the *Dictionary*. Moreover, rumour had it (and this was proved afterwards by the received questionnaires) that the Writers' Association took the initiative of editing a *Who's Who*, coordinated by the writer Romulus Vulpescu. We considered this not yet finalised initiative a sign of hostility all the more so because the President of the Writers' Association ordered his functionaries to deny us access to the archive.

first volume was submitted to the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House in 1983, the second volume in 1984, and planned to be published in 1984; the book was analysed at the Publishing House as well as by the Council of Culture. All the observations were taken into account by the coordinators. The first volume of the DRW is in the stage of the second proofreading. The second volume, also submitted to the Publishing House, was discussed by the editors and all the observations were taken into account by the coordinators. The second volume could not be sent to printing until now, although it was included in the 1985 plan, as the Council of Culture has not read it yet. We asked the Publishing House for explanations several times and we were informed that although the Publishing House and the leadership wish to continue the work in which they had invested important sums of money and which would bring considerable benefits, decision in this issue cannot be taken on this level. Therefore we addressed a memorial to comrade Petru Enache, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party in January this year, without receiving an answer to it.

We express our surprise that, after the long and difficult process of approving the work which obstructed, in our opinion, the normal way of the book, its title does not appear any more in the 1986 editorial plan, a decision which is completely inexplicable and means a reconsideration of the former favourable approval. We think that our unselfish work which was not rewarded, subordinated to a single aim, that of serving Romanian culture to the best of our power, deserved a better treatment from the part of such an important forum as the CCSE. It is regrettable that without any explanation, the DRW is not any longer a part of the editorial plan of this year. Leaving aside our efforts and those of the 60 collaborators (most of them university professors, literary critics, researchers and authors from all cultural centres in the country) and the expenses, we ask ourselves, who will ever take responsibility for the lack of those fundamental works in our culture which could present us as we are, contributing substantially to the correction of the false information which appear in foreign publications because there are no adequate sources? We feel responsible for the real needs of our culture and literature and we cannot accept that our faith, work and sincere wish to edit a necessary and useful book, to the best of our power, is denied and doubted. We also think that the Writers' Association should not be indifferent to the fate of such a book which serves the interests of the whole community.

The DRW was edited in collaboration with the Publishing House and with the continuous information of and in consultation with the forums which had to approve publication, respecting legal dispositions and its first volume obtained the approval for publication. It represents an important step towards the edition of a dictionary-thesaurus, including everything that is valuable in Romanian literature. The quantity of information which it contains places it among the greatest works of this type all over the world. It offers a dignified image of the history of Romanian literature.

We ask therefore: who is interested in delaying the publication of such a book? Do those who have decided the omission of the DRW from the editorial plan realise the contradiction in which they and the Council itself are, withdrawing an approval given after long discussions and detailed analysis, without offering an explanation? Do they realise that they are implicitly rejecting a part of our work (the second volume), without even opening and reading it?

Taking into account all that has been said until now, we ask you, comrade president, to support us so that this book which interests in fact the whole Association, can appear. We appeal to your help, besides the authorised forums in order to clarify the situation of the DRW, so that the arbitrary measure of leaving it out of the editorial plan be re-examined in the shortest time, work on the first volume be resumed and the second volume be read by the proofreaders of the CCSE in an operative and responsible way so that it can be sent to typesetting and pagination. Please present the authorised forums our conviction that the legitimate request of publishing the DW will be regarded favourably, in the spirit of equity, justice and responsibility for the destiny of Romanian culture.

We express our sincere thanks,

Cluj, 29 March 1986

/ss/ Professor Dr Mircea Zăciu

/ss/ Dr Aurel Sasu

/ss/ Dr Marian Papahagi

Text nr.10.

[copy]

[ADDRESS to the Council of Culture and Socialist Education]

[stamp of the registry]

nr.861.

[19]86 [month] III [day] 31

To the
Council of Culture and Socialist Education
For the attention of comr. Director Radu Constantinescu

We revert to our address nr.156, dated 21 January 1986, regarding the *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers*, asking you to communicate your decision.

We enclose a copy of the letter.

Director
/ss/ Mircea Măciu

[heading]

THE SCIENTIFIC AND ENCYCLOPAEDIC PUBLISHING HOUSE

NOTE

regarding the Dictionary of the Romanian Writers³⁴

The *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers* was included, among other titles, in the plan dedicated to encyclopaedic works of national interest, devised years ago under the direct supervision of the central organs of party and state. In order to avoid the arbitrary, remarked previously at the compilation of similar works, signed by a single author, the coordinators were advised to form a team of university professors, critics, literary historians from the Capital and other parts. Before the the articles were contracted, a glossary has been compiled, based on previously published dictionaries, Romanian bibliographies from the past and those of today; the most important specialist periodicals were also studied.

Afterwards, a value selection has been done, starting from the requirements of the analytical pograms in schools and university, and of speciality information. This glossary contains approximately 1400 names of Romanian writers, from the beginning to the present, which is remarkable as compared to other works of the same type. Similarly, the glossary was conceived and compiled after an ample documentation; a thousand contemporary writers were consulted.

In the next stage, the articles which were planned to be included in the *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers* were ordered from more than 60 collaborators in Bucharest, Cluj, Timișoara, Tirgu Mureș, Oradea, Baia Mare. The documentation, the glossary, the ordering, compilation, the checking and coordination of the whole material required a work over ten years, the outcome of which is two-volume work with 4500 pages.

The first volume was included in the 1984 thematic and economic plan and work on it started in the same year, after the approval of the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House and of the CCSE.

The manuscript was read and edited by four editors (N. Gheran, Gh. Picnescu, Gabriel Danțiș and Rodica Pandeale), controlled by the Editor-in-Chief (Valeriu Șuteu) and the Director of the Publishing House (Mircea Măciu). All the observations of the Publishing House were discussed and solved, with the authors. Elena Docsănescu and Marta Bittel did the first reading. The leadership of CCSE (comr. Prime-Vice-President Ion Traian Ștefănescu) gave Volume I for a second reading to comr. Ion Brad, writer, member of the CC of the Romanian Communist Party. The volume was considered a valuable scientific work, extremely useful in

³⁴ This last attempt to ask for the support of the Publishing House was followed by the opposite opinion, (Mihai Dulca, the new Vice-President of the CCSE compelled the leadership of the Publishing House to adopt it), as we can see from the following documents (see texts nr. 11 and 12.)

the context of speciality literature; there were also recommendations to certain modifications which were promptly completed in the manuscript. Thus the work of 60 authors, most of them members of the RCP and the Writers' Association, and coordinated by three university professors, also communists, with an acknowledged professional and scientific activity, it was also checked by eight comrades from the Publishing House and the CCSE and the forementioned external reviewer.

The first volume (A-K)³⁵ was typewritten at the Dacia Publishing House, revised by the authors, proof-readers and the editors, which was another occasion of improving the text, in the light of political and scientific exigencies (the majority had in view the generalisation of the norms of editing, ensuring the stylistic seriousness). At the same time, the whole team of authors, coordinators and editors was mobilised for the finishing of Volume II (L-Z)³⁶, because the decision of the CCSE (comr. Prime-Vice-President Ion Traian Ștefănescu) was that the two volumes should be published concomitantly. This decision implied the transfer of the work to the 1985 editorial plan.

The acceleration of the rhythm of editing Volume II and the economic situation of the editorial production determined the Publishing House to solicit, in 1985, the successive printing of the two volumes. The *Dictionary* totalised a nominal of 5 million lei, the appreciated benefits were approximately 800,000 lei. The non-accomplishment of the indices of the economic plan threatened to affect the incomes of the whole team: the incomes were diminished with 25%, for three months. Our viewpoint was that the independent distribution of the two volumes (100 lei/ copy instead of 200 at the same time) would be easier and more convenient for the readers. The answer was negative, the Publishing House decide to publish the two volumes at the same time.

Volume II was completed by the authors, coordinators and editors in the autumn of 1985. The speciality board of CCSE did not accept the manuscript for control until "new dispositions".

The Publishing House has recently drawn up the carry-forward list from 1985 to 1986, asked by the Editorial Centre, so that it can be approved by the CCSE and they realised that the *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers* is among the eliminated titles. Until the elucidation of the implications of such a decision (relations with a large team of collaborators who worked on a book of national interest; the publication of dictionaries of Romanian writers in neighbouring countries - the Popular Republic of Poland and the Popular Republic of Czechoslovakia - which obliges us to provide updated information in the field; the economic repercussions on benefits and economic parameters in general, the incomes of the editorial team, etc.), the Publishing House asked the Centre to allow

³⁵ A-L, in fact.

³⁶ M-Z, in fact.

them to keep the matter. (The fact that printing costs already amount to 125,000 lei cannot be neglected.) We also ask for the payment of the demurrage for the typesetting. These costs must be approved by an instance superior to the Publishing House.

We ask you to reach a decision in the forementioned issues.

Director,
/ss/ Mircea Măciu

Text nr.11.

[ADDRESS to Mihai Dulea]³⁷

Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House
Piața Scînteii nr.1 *București 33* code 71341
Tel.176020

[stamp of the registry]
Scientific and Encyclopaedic.
Publishing House
[out] nr. 1289
1986 [month]V [day]21
[handwritten] approved,
/ss/ Mihai Dulea

10 June 1986

To the
Council of Culture and Socialist Education
Comrade Vice-President Mihai Dulea

³⁷ We think that this document presents all the cultural mechanisms of the epoch: we suggest the reader to observe the “white” tone of the demand for cassation of the work, the period of 20 days between the writing of the text and its approval, and the “denunciation”, most of all, made by the intermediary forum, the Book Centre, C. Trandafir, that is, which clearly shows (for the posterity?) that the indication that the Publishing House was the one who asked for the cassation of the work with the invocation of “normal risk” (meant to save the financial responsibility of those who were involved) started from Mihai Dulea. The text must be read in comparison with the preceding and following one in order to understand that the life of editors was not easy either: stuck between hammer and anvil, they had to pay for all the damage. The manoeuvre made by Mihai Dulea is recognised in the Minutes written on 15 August 1992 (not included in this file) and the infringement of the rights of those who compiled the *Dictionary* is also signalled. Indeed, according to Order nr. 53/1962 of the Ministry of Culture and Education, they would have the right to cash the 50% of the minimum price, even if the book is not published, the only proof being the pages with the imprimatur (page 3.) The Minutes can be found in the archive of the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House and that of the coordinators of the DRW.

The *Dictionary of Romanian Writers* was typeset and is in the stage of the second proofreading, at the Polygraphic Insitution in Cluj.

As the *Dictionary* was not approved for the 1986 plan and, consequently, there is no justification for keeping the matter which implies supplementary punishments - we ask you to approve the cassation of the work and the total cost, 134,679 lei be considered as normal risk of the Publishing House.

[stamp of the Publishing House]

Director,
/ss/ Mircea Măciu

Editor-in-Chief,
/ss/ Valeriu Şuteu

[handwritten]

Comrade Vice-President Mihai Dulea,

The present address was written by the Publishing House, according to your indications, therefore we ask you to give your approval. The costs of the polygraphic work were checked by the authorised forums and approved for payment.

26.06.1986.

C. Trandafir

Text nr.12.

[LETTER to Mircea Zaciú]

Envelope with heading
Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House
Piaţa Scînteii nr.1 *Bucureşti 33* code 71341
Socialist Republic of Romania
[postal specifications]
Receipt
R nr.566 Bucureşti 33

[date]

Bucureşti 33/ Of 5/ 22.5.86.16

[addressee, address]

Professor
Mircea Zaciú

str. Bisericii Ortodoxe nr.12.
3400 Cluj

[heading]
Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House
Piața Scînteii nr.1 *București 33* code 71341
Tel. 176010 - 176020

[stamp of registry]
[out] nr.1305
1986 [month] V [day] 22

Dear comrade Professor Mircea Zăciu,

We were asked by the printing press to solve the case of the corrections in the *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers*, otherwise they will pulp the material. Please submit the proofs nr I and Iito our Publishing House in Cluj, so that we can send it to Bucharest³⁸. We also ask you to announce the other two coordinators (Dr Marian Papahagi and Dr Aurel Sasu as well.)

Yours sincerely,

[stamp of the Publishing House]
Director,
/ss/ Mircea Măciu

Editor-in-Chief,
/ss/ Valeriu Șuteu

³⁸ The stratagem was really painful and, besides the hypocrite and rude attempt to lay the blame on the coordinators for not publishing the book, it also hid the attempt of the Publishing House to withdraw all the proofreading copies from the coordinators so that every trace of the *Dictionary* shall disappear. We did not fulfil this request, this is why the *Dictionary* still exists: the only manuscript of the first volume which contained corrections and modifications made by the coordinators for the stylistic and structural unity of biobibliographies, was not given back to us; both the Publishing House and the printing press denied that they possess it. We discovered only in 1991 that the manuscript was at the Publishing House. (See the note to text. nr.11).

[LETTER to Mircea Măciu]³⁹

Comrade Director,

We express our bewilderment because of your letter nr 1305/22.05.1986. in which you presented the issue of “solving the case” of the *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers* as though the pulping of the material in the printing press was due to our not submitting the proofs.

We will not remind you of the work of editing this book which we consider of national importance. However, we must say that work at the printing press has stopped because the CCSE did not approve the resuming of normal work. Both proofs were submitted to the Publishing House: the second proof could not have been done without the first proof: we remind you that two editors of the Publishing House left Cluj in April, taking a copy of the second proof with him. Moreover, 4 or 5 copies of the first volume of DRW from the printing press were requested by the Publishing House. Consequently, our work which has the status of literary property, circulates in confidential form which could lead to serious moral and material prejudices.

We inform you, as in all previous letters, that the only acceptable perspective in this issue must be based on the fact that our book was edited and submitted to the printing press with the approval of all authorised forums, the CCSE and the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House; because of completely arbitrary reasons it is still not printed, after a year, and nobody assumes the responsibility to finish the work. Besides the costs and materials for which people should feel responsible, the effort and sacrifice of 60 authors were “invested”. Their only fault is that they wished to give national culture a work of great significance, presenting Romanian literature in a new light and not to waste their energy and time.

The bureaucratic stratagems by which they try to make us responsible for the pulping of the material and not publishing the book arouse our indignation and perplexity. The printing press did not ask for the solution of corrections, as your letter claims, but the solution of the situation of the work as such and this is natural

³⁹ This is the letter of the coordinators as a reaction to the request included in text nr. 12. After this letter the relations between the coordinators and the Publishing House were broken, and were continued only after 1989. The re-publication of the DRW was offered to the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House after some discussions with Dinu Grama and Nicolae Gheran, the Director and the Editor-in-Chief. The Publishing House showed concern for the coordinators, helping them to publish the *Dictionary*. The coordinators contacted a more performant Publishing House, the Publishing House of the Romanian Cultural Foundation in order to publish the book in better conditions. The coordinators are thankful for the understanding of the leadership of the Publishing House.

since, with an astonishing indifference, nobody from the Publishing House or the CCSE communicated anything regarding the continuation of printing and we were not allowed to submit the pages with imprimatur for publication. We expected that such a prestigious institution as the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House which supported from the very beginning the idea of such a work, understanding its necessity and knowing every page of it, would not hide behind such procedures and shall treat openly the issue of printing this dictionary, with the responsibility required by a book necessary for our national culture.

Yours sincerely,
/ss/ Mircea Zaciú, /ss/ Aurel Sasu, /ss/ Marian Papahagi

Text nr.14.

[MEMORIAL to Nicolae Ceauşescu]⁴⁰

To the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party

Comrade Mr Secretary General,

The undersigned, Mircea Zaciú, University Professor, Marian Papahagi, Lecturer and Aurel Sasu, Main Researcher, members of the Writers' Association, kindly ask you to read the following lines about a work of national interest, coordinated by us. It is the *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers*, an ample work of 5000 pages, edited (with our coordination) by 60 authors, critics and literary historians, professors and researchers all over the country. It contains approximately 1500 articles about Romanian writers, from the beginning of our literature to the present. We edited this book with the approval of the CCSE: it was included in the editorial plan of the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House, and the plan of the Secretary of the CC of the Romanian Communist Party; we wished to enrich our culture with a necessary work, to give classical and modern Romanian literature and the various spiritual values created in our country in the age of socialism, mostly in the last two decades, a dignified lexicographic presentation. We thought that we would participate to the collective effort of the whole nation of bringing Romania to new peaks of culture and civilisation. We must mention that not many European countries, even those with greater tradition, have a work of such dimensions and besides its role in education and information its publication would substantially contribute to the correction of the false or biased information about our literature in works published abroad.

⁴⁰ Beyond the "wooden language" of the text, the benevolent reader should be able to read the despair due to the several useless attempts which culminated in the memorial addressed to Nicolae Ceauşescu. The effect of the memorial can be followed in text nr.16.

Editing was started in 1975 and the work was tested with the publication, in 1978, of a concise dictionary of Romanian writers which was successful (more than 80,000 copies were sold during a year), discussed on the level of competent forums (the Publishing House, the CCSE), analysed and permanently revised, submitted to the Publishing House in 1983 (and work on the second volume was began). The typesetting and the second proofreading were done. When comrade Mihai Dulea was appointed Vice-President of the CCSE, the *Dictionary* was stopped, although it had all the necessary approvals; the second volume was not even skimmed through (although the Publishing House found it suitable for printing) and, in spite of the fact that the Council of Culture approved the printing of the first volume, the typographic process was stopped and order was given a few days ago to pulp it in the printing press, that is, to destroy the volume, without any discussions with the authors and coordinators, without caring for the invested money (hundreds of thousands of lei), without any consideration for the ten-year work of 60 authors, most of them famous and, what is even more serious, without caring for the fact that Romanian culture will be deprived of a work whose necessity and importance in patriotic education is evident.

Dear comrade Secretary General, we had in mind the idea of the best of Romanian culture and its development, in our writings and deeds. We are in the uncomfortable situation of witnessing the publication, in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, of works dedicated to Romanian literature. We have now such a book, better than that of many other cultures, and it is being thrown away as a useless thing.

We appeal to you, knowing your high appreciation of the spiritual values of Romanian culture. We ask you to intervene so that this book shall have free access; its publication is in line with the coordinates drawn by the Party Programme and other party documents for our culture as well as with your permanent call for the edition of fundamental works in our culture.

Cluj, 29 May 1986

With sincere respect,
/ss/ Mircea Zaci, University Professor, Cluj University
/ss/ Marian Papahagi, Lecturer, Cluj University
/ss/ Aurel Sasu, Main Researcher, Cluj University

Text nr.15.

[MEMORIAL to Petru Enache]⁴¹

⁴¹ Petru Enache, Secretary of the CC of the Romanian Communist Party seemed somehow to support the publication of the *Dictionary*. (See Text nr.6, note 1.)

Dear Comrade Secretary,

The undersigned, Mircea Zăciu, Marian Papahagi, and Aurel Sasu, university Professors, members of the Writers' Association, appeal to you, asking you to receive us in an audience concerning the Dictionary of Romanian Writers, coordinated by us.

The work was edited by a team of 60 authors, over ten years, included in the 1984 editorial plan of the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House and among the reference titles approved by the Secretary of the CC of the RCP; its first volume has been submitted to printing and the second one has been finished. A series of misunderstandings, revealed by us in due time, have hindered the normal course of edition for two years now.

We ask you to allow us to present personally the criteria and the results reached in editing the *Dictionary* whose dimensions make it one of the most valuable works of this type.

We thank you in advance for the attention given to our request,

Yours respectfully,

/ss/ Mircea Zăciu, /ss/ Marian Papahagi, /ss/ Aurel Sasu

Cluj, 9 June 1986

Text nr.16.

[LETTER to Mircea Zăciu]⁴²

11221; 31374

To the
Propaganda and Press Section of the CC of the RCP

We return the memories addressed by Mircea Zăciu, Cluj, to comrade secretary Petru Enche, along with a copy of our answer to him.

⁴² The text has no date. It was probably written after our address to Nicolae Ceaușescu (see text nr.14.) not after the memorial to Petru Enache. The Orwellian element of the whole situation is the fact that this answer was never sent to the addressee; it was only meant to prove (whom?) that the "requests" and "grievances" of the working people were treated democratically (even if they are men of culture!) The logic of the text is aberrant: the DRW is first accused that... it is not a dictionary, because it is some sort of "literary history" (which, even if it was true, it would be a crime, wouldn't it?) The reasoning deviates accusingly, mentioning the "extremely wide selection" (all previous criticism by the same forum, the CCSE, mentioned the omission of some authors from the Dictionary and not the too wide selection!). It concludes then that the work cannot be published because of the scarcity of paper, which is a purely economic reason, obviously.

Vice-President
/ss/ Mihai Dulca
3 copies/MM

31221; 31374

To
University Professor Mr Mircea Zăciu
str. Bisericii Ortodoxe nr.12.
3400, Cluj

Regarding the issues raised by your letter addressed to the party leadership about the edition of the *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers*, we communicate the following:

In the form in which it was finalised and submitted to the Publishing House, the work is not a "Dictionary" in the usual meaning of the word, a work which contains information about authors and specific data about their life and activity; it is, rather, a sort of literary history, including micro-monographs of authors, critical appreciations regarding their work and their contribution to the development and consolidation of Romanian literary heritage.

Given this structure, as well as an extremely wide selection of authors presented, a selection which is not always done according to exigent criterions of value and content, the volume amounted to a great number of pages which would mean a great consumption of paper, with the recommended circulation. As we have difficulties with paper supplies, your work cannot be printed.

Vice-President
/ss/ Mihai Dulca
4 copies/RC/MM⁴³

Text nr.17.

[LETTER to Florea Ghiță]⁴⁴

Dear Comrade Florea Ghiță,

⁴³ Radu Constantinescu, Mircea Măciu: the initials mark the persons who would have received the text for acknowledgement.

⁴⁴ The text remained without an answer. Petru Enache died in the meantime and Florea Ghiță was not so sure that he wanted to support the publication of DRW;

Almost half a year has passed since, on 9 August 1986, together with my collaborators, Marian Papahagi and Aurel Sasu, had an audience with you. We were promised then that we would be called again in September to discuss before an ad-hoc committee the urgent necessity of the publication of the *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers*. We were even told that it would be possible to avoid such a discussion if two or three famous and perfectly objective specialists would give their approval for resuming the printing of the work, on your explicit request. As you know, the first volume of the *Dictionary* was in the stage of second proof from December 1985, when in January 1986, the work was omitted of the editorial plan after the abusive and arbitrary dispositions of the Vice-President of CCSE, Mihai Dulea, then it was ceased without reading the whole text, on the level of CCSE. All our approaches of the authorised forums, the Publishing House, the CCSE, the Writers' Association and the Propaganda Section of the CC of the RCP remained, in the months after 1986, *without answer*. In June 1986 we asked for an audience with comr. Secretary Petru Enache, a request without an answer, too. In July, the same year, we raised the issue of the desperate situation of the *Dictionary* at the meeting of the Council of the leadership of the Writers' Association, in your presence and that of the Vice-President of the CCSE. It was our intention to make it public. We presented all logical arguments, of good will, and the philological, civic, patriotic, political ones which plead for resuming the printing of our work. After this intervention you suggested us to have a discussion at the Section, which took place on 9 August 1986. We wished to have a dialogue with a specialist who can recognize the value of the *Dictionary* and the fact that it is an honest work, built on modern historical-literary and aesthetic principles, a work which does not contain anything that would be contrary to the policy of state and party, on the contrary, through its pleading for the values of national literature and culture, it is part of the act of defending and imposing Romanian spirituality in the world.

We told you in the discussion on 9 August 1986 that we agree that famous specialists should read the work⁴⁵ in order to state *in principle* that it can and must be published as it is. We also pointed out that any critical, aesthetic, etc. observation belongs to discussions after publication, to contemporary criticism.

⁴⁵ The suggestion was made by Florea Ghiță at the audience on 9 August 1986. The jury in question never assembled. Nevertheless it is possible that Florea Ghiță wished to find out how things were: we deduce this from a text (reproduced in the following) included in the DRW file. It is a manuscript of 6 numbered pages, without a date and signature, written probably by Marta Bittel, and reorganised by cuts and the last five paragraphs added afterwards by somebody else, probably Elena Docsănescu. The observation left to the title also belongs to her: "Let's have a discussion, comr. Bittel". This text which is relatively neutral and objective in relating the changes of the DRW, adopts in its second part the explanations given by M. Dulea (see text nr.16) to justify the interdiction of the DRW; it is probably a draft of an answer to the possible requests of Florea Ghiță. We reproduce the text in the Appendix, marking by < > the omissions (done by a second person, in most cases) and completing the shortened words (or mentioning the indecipherable or incorrectly spelled ones) by [].

Translator's note: For an easier reading, we omit in translation the graphic signs mentioned above.)

There is no serious motive which would legitimise the arbitrary stopping of publication!

Although these issues could have been ascertained in a few weeks (not to say days), five months passed without our work being even discussed. I feel compelled to express my regret and wonder that things have stopped at this point. In fact, they did not stop. "Punitive" measures were taken against the three coordinators, beyond the fate of the *Dictionary*: our offers made to more publishing houses were rejected under this pretext or another. Works of my colleagues, Marian Papahagi and Aurel Sasu, were left out of editorial plans without any reason. If I must accept that a tactic of exclusion from literature was adopted against me, it seems revolting that these "strategies" are extended on the coordinators of the *Dictionary*, too! After a ten-year effort of finalising an unprecedented work in Romanian literature and at the end of a year (1986), tired of unsuccessful attempts to persuade the authorised forums about an elementary, human, ethical, literary act of justice, I feel obliged to look for other ways of defending my mocked work and my human dignity as a writer who placed all his efforts in the service of contemporary Romanian culture.

Endurance has its limits too. From 1984 I have been at the mercy of some cultural functionaries who, completely uninterested and even against the major interests of this country and its people, try to destroy the values of a literature built in the last forty years with an unprecedented abnegation. Besides the many destructive actions I remind you of the suppressing of the editorial series "Restituiri" ("Returns") of the Dacia Publishing House in Cluj. I reminded you of this in August 1986, but nobody gave an explanation for the delay, after 80 titles published during 12 years, with an unequivocal public success and critical appraisal.

If you consider that such acts of hostility meant to destroy me as a man of letters and afterwards, as a man, are justified in a country built on democracy and legality, I have a different opinion. And I will defend it by all means.

Cluj, 7 January 1987

Yours sincerely,
/ss/ Mircea Zăciu

Text nr.18.

PRO MEMORIA⁴⁶

⁴⁶ When we wrote this *Pro memoria* (February 1987) we thought (its title shows it also) that one day it will be read as a document. We did not know that we will have the chance to publish it. The text was published in *România literară*, nr.3, 1990, with a presentation by Mircea Zăciu, entitled *Un sindrom: Dicționarul scriitorilor români* (A Syndrome: The Dictionary of Romanian Writers). We reproduce it in the Appendix.

The undersigned, Mircea Zăciu, University Professor, Marian Papahagi, Lecturer and Aurel Sasu, Main Researcher, members of the Writers' Association, coordinators of the *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers*, present to the authorised forums the situation in which we are after five years of submitting our work to the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House. The book prepared for print, its first volume typeset, was not published until today, in spite of the fact that it was included in the plan of the Secretary of the CC of the RCP, and, of course, in the plan of the Publishing House, and in spite of approvals given after several reports which are in the possession of the CCSE. We did not receive an answer to our repeated interventions, the memorials addressed to the CC of the RCP, the CCSE and the Writers' Association. After an audience with the resort section of the CC they promised us (on 9 August 1986) that the Editorial Commission will come together to analyse the whole issue. As six months passed since the meeting of the Commission should have been taken place and the delay transformed a seemingly provisional state into a final one, we write this *Pro memoria* to remind those in question what is to become of the *Dictionary*, the amount of work invested in it and the significance of its publication. We must say that we do not hope any more that our work will be published; the work invested with honesty was treated with a revolting indifference, the existing official approvals were practically not taken into consideration, therefore the law itself was broken, but in spite of this fact nobody has time to control the truth of our words, and to take a decision which will not be only in favour of some authors harmed in their work and dignity, but in favour of Romanian culture to which we feel our imperious moral obligation to serve as teachers, researchers and writers. We will remind you of the facts, chronologically, in a last attempt to clear up things, to prevent the same mistakes being committed again and to plead not our case first of all, but that of our culture, and this because when a work of these dimensions and of such a great importance is arbitrarily stopped, as has happened with the *Dictionary of Romanian Writers*, culture itself is questioned.

These are the facts: we expose them in the most succinct form possible. It is known that every culture and literature needs works of historical and encyclopaedic nature which would echo its greatness and variety, plead for its existence and value in an international context. This type of work reflects the state

of development of a culture, its dynamics at a given moment, and it is a complex source of information at the same time. Our image in the world cannot be indifferent to us, all the more so as foreign lexicographic works do not mention Romanian literature or else are written about insufficiently, presenting the great personalities of our spirituality in a distorted or unrepresentative way. Taking into account that there were no writers' dictionaries in our country, we edited between 1975-1977 the first dictionary of Romanian writers, required by the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House; this work was edited *according to the norms formulated by this publishing house* the competent forum in the initiation and printing of this type of work, and it was published in 1978. The book was published in 85,000 copies and sold in a very short time, a proof of its necessity for a various public - pupils, professors, students, booksellers and even the everyday reader who wishes to improve his mind.

We created a team with few means, a team which trained itself in a type of work unprecedented in our country; we created with our own efforts, by self-endowment, an almost exhaustive file, and a precious database. We spent years with this, as it meant the questioning of living authors and the relatives of those who disappeared, archive research, etc., time, energy and money, in a word, which we offered with pleasure and even enthusiasm, animated by the idea which we think generous even today. We achieved more than that: we formed and instructed a team of 60 specialists from all generations, famous people but also young researchers from all over the country, and this without spending money from public resources, using only our own resources.

Our intention was to offer our culture the great thesaurus-dictionary of the Romanian writers, containing the actual creators and the greater and lesser writers from the past. This work had to contain approximately 4000 articles in our estimation, and for the intermediary stage (after the publication of the book in 1978, with 130 articles) we estimated 1500 names (articles). In the meantime the book was discussed by the leadership of the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House which approved the the structure of the book, its glossary and categories as well as the global dimensions, including it in the editorial plan. The number of copies (35,000) was fixed, which had to give the Publishing House a benefit of 10 thousand lei. We omit the accelerated rhythm of our work, the complications resulting from the coordination of a team spread all over the country, which had to work in a unified way, in spite of the many financial and bureaucratic difficulties, the difficulties of documentation, etc. In this last chapter it is important to know that we have lacked sources of information: those of biographic and bibliographic research are imperfect, or even chaotic, dispersed, uncertain. We also avoided the immense amount of work invested even in the shortest article, which presupposes sometimes the reading of hundreds of pages, as well as a rigorous work fixed by strict rules. The work of editing took four years (1978-1982). At the end of 1982, the three coordinators received the material and

an exhausting but necessary stage of work followed, the step by step checking of the information included in articles and bibliographies, the unification of style, etc. All the unifiable parts of articles (the first, biographic section and the third bibliographic section), according to the same principles. We corrected, completed or asked the authors to rewrite the critical articles. We specify that articles are 1,5-15 typewritten pages and every volume of the *Dictionary* (I, A-L; II, M-Z) contains 2700 typewritten pages. The multiple readings by the Publishing House (four specialised editors, an editor-in-chief and the director of the Publishing House successively read the book and formulated detailed observations) was followed by approval or the return of articles for rewriting. We rewrote it every time and corrected all that had to be corrected and considered every critical suggestion as help. The updating of the information to 31 December 1982 presupposed a great amount of work on our part and needed a sustained rhythm of work so that at the date of publication the book shall not be behind with one or two years with the biobibliographic information. Immediately after the publication of the first volume we passed on to the unification of the second volume. At the same time, the Publishing House read the book, it was also read by a reviewer of the CCSE, which formulated a series of observations aimed at the coordinators, authors and editors. The first volume of the *Dictionary* was therefore ready to be printed at the beginning of 1984. Nevertheless, nobody wanted to take responsibility for the final signature for the beginning of the typographic work. We were even told that on a superior level there is a strong reserve against the publication of this book. Thus in May 19 we asked for an audience with comrade I.Tr. Ștefănescu, Vice-President of the CCSE at that time, presenting him the situation. We were assured that in spite of all apprehensions and reserves the CCSE wants to publish the *Dictionary* in the shortest time, the two volumes together, with which we agreed. At the same time, he suggested that Volume I be given to an external referent, namely, Ion Brad. As we raised no objections against the work being read by any man of letters (even though he was not a literary historian or critic familiarised with the methodology and techniques of aesthetic analysis, not to mention the risk of a subjective perspective) we agreed to the solution adopted by the former Vice-President of the CCSE. In June 1984, comr. Ion Brad submitted his report to the CCSE with major and minor objection, many of them unjustified, which were immediately adopted by the Literary Board of the CCSE (comr. Elena Docsănescu). After the analysis within the Literary Board, in the presence of the coordinators and the editors, we signed, on 11 July 1984, a *Note* regarding the last modifications in the DRW, a note which we hope is also in the file of the work. On 14 July Professor M. Zăciu asked for a meeting with the Vice-President of the CCSE to show him disapproval of the way in which the referent formulated his objections, many of them proving a false axiological perspective and a flagrant lack of historical-literary knowledge. The Vice-President of the CCSE returned the *Dictionary* for a new revision by the Director of the

Publishing House, M. Măciu. Until the autumn that year the fate of the book was uncertain; the Publishing House and the Literary Board refused to decide about publishing although the final *Note* dated 11 July asked for this. Only after the plenary session of the Writers' Association in November 1984 where M. Zăciu presented the paradoxical situation of the Dictionary and the express indication of comr. Secretary Petru Enache was Volume I typeset at the end of 1984, and the Publishing House began reading the second volume. In the first part of 1985, Volume II was perfected by the Publishing House which gave its approval and had to forward it to the authorised forums from the CCSE. At the same time, the first and second proof of Volume I were done, so that it could appear at the end of 1985 and, simultaneously, the typesetting of Volume II could be done. However, this did not happen. After a few months, the printing press still worked on the second proof, but the Publishing House and the Literary Board of the CCSE disapproved the publication and we have found out that the work was eliminated from the editorial plan. At the beginning of 1986, the Publishing House was told to ask for the cessation of the Dictionary and the destroying of the matter at the printing press.

We began to request the relief of the work, which was stopped when comr. M. Dulea became Vice-President of the CCSE. He took the following steps, without informing us:

- a) stopping typographic work
- b) rejecting Volume II for proofreading at the level of the Literary Board of the CCSE (after Volume II passed the level of the Publishing House and was approved by it)
- c) the systematic rejection of informing us about the reasons of stopping work on the Dictionary
- d) leaving out the book from the 1986 plan (although it was included in the 1983 and 1984 plans)

In the meantime, we were informed that beginning with the first part of 1985 the printing press had sent to Bucharest a number of copies from the proofs of Volume I, for reading, approval and para-approval; due to this violation of our author's royalties all kinds of rumours started, some of them fed by the eternal frictions between writers, gossip and the manipulations of information. It is plausible to think that lots of material was written (perhaps even asked to be written) on the basis of this gossip, against the publication of the volume. This is an unprecedented method: a book approved by superior forums, such as the Publishing House and the CCSE is endangered by gossip launched by the illegal para-legal manipulation of copies of the proofs. We would like to say that we do not consider our book perfect; every beginning is difficult, it has its imperfections. But these possible faults should have been pointed out by criticism, in an open and democratic process of analysis in the press, after the publication of the book, once it was admitted by competent forums that the work is worth publishing!

By his inexplicable measures comr. Mihai Dulea nurtured the market of gossip and made our work of a decade practically be thrown away, waste thousands of lei invested in the typographic process, not to mention the moral and material damages caused to the coordinators and authors. We must specify that we always had the conviction that we are in the service of official institutions, sponsored by them. Thus we employed 60 collaborators and asked them to write tens of pages which meant months and years of intellectual work.

We tried to show the forums the following:

a) we always worked with the Publishing House and under its control, according to plans agreed by it.

b) we did all the modifications asked by the authorised forums and compiled reports on these modifications

c) the work could not be submitted to the printing press before its approval and this approval was a laborious and well-grounded process, not at all superficial, and therefore the withdrawal of approvals given by a forum as important as the CCSE could only be done because a change occurred in the leadership of this state forum, that is, new factors intervened;

d) as nothing has intervened to change the initial approval, the stopping of the work is abusive

e) Volume II, submitted to the CCSE for approval, was practically rejected without even being read;

In this situation we addressed several memorials to the Writers' Association: in July 1985, in March 1986, in July 1986 - all of them without an answer; similarly, we addressed an explanatory memorial to the CC of the RCP (the Propaganda Section) on 23 September 1985, 30 January 1986, 8 April 1986, 11 June 1986 and 9 January 1987, without any answer.

We broke this silence by the intervention of Professor M. Zăciu at the plenary session of the Council of the Writers' Association on 25 July 1986. Comr. M. Dulea sustained that CCSE read the second volume of the Dictionary too. As we have said, this volume was withdrawn by us from the Publishing House in 1985, after we found out that the Literary Board refused to receive it for reading; it had only one typewritten copy and neither the Publishing House nor the CCSE had any copies. Thus comr. M. Dulea got into a contradiction with his own assertion and at the end of the forementioned meeting he did not give any explanation regarding the case of the *Dictionary of Romanian Writers*, nor the reasons for the stopping of this book.

Nevertheless, after the intervention at the plenary of the Council of the Writers' Association, comr. Florea Ghiță, Deputy Chief of the CC of the RCP, proved to be receptive to what we have presented. Therefore, on 9 August 1986 we were invited to an audience with him and presented him our previous memorials. At the end we were promised that the Editorial Commission will discuss in

September 1986 our *litigation* with the Publishing House. We pointed out then that:

a) there is no litigation as no reasons were presented us regarding the stopping of the *Dictionary* and no counterargument was brought in relation with all our objections.

b) we cannot speak about a conflict with the Publishing House which, to our knowledge, always worked together with the coordinators and authors of the work and which itself ordered the *Dictionary*, provided the norms of work (perfected by us), controlled the whole process of compiling the book, from the editing of the glossary (the list of names included in the *Dictionary*) to the repeated revisions, modifications and improvements, including the signature for the imprimatur;

c) the CCSE came into contradiction with itself as it did not explain the reason for forbidding the book, while previously it approved publication and then withdrew the approval in 1985, without the intervention of new objective causes; therefore this is a caprice or an abuse due to completely subjective reasons coinciding with the change of the Vice-President of the CCSE.

Anyway, we underlined all these contradictions in the activity of the CCSE on the forementioned audience and agreed with the convocation of the Editorial Commission, agreed that the role of the Commission would only be to agree or disagree with the publication of the *Dictionary*, the discussion of critical, technical and documentary details belonging exclusively to the press and the public, after publication.

We mention that the meeting of the Editorial Commission, promised for the fall of 1986, did not take place. We received no answer to our letter dated January 1987 regarding this issue. Therefore we will draw a balance.

After ten years of work during which we left aside personal projects, invested energy, money and an unreplacable force of work, our book, necessary for our culture, a book on which we worked with honesty and love for our literature which we must serve, is destroyed by the will of a single man and by the inertia of superior forums to clear the situation. We assert emphatically that our responsibility to publish the *Dictionary* passes on to those who stopped it. As concerns us, we did everything to edit and print it. Finally, we also present the practical consequences of our actions:

1. Professor M. Zăciu was deprived of the leading of the "Returns" series of the Dacia Publishing House, initiated and coordinated by him, for free, for fifteen years. The series which was meant to restore undiscovered, ignored or less known works by Romanian authors in the past, into circulation enriching therefore the Romanian literary heritage and playing a major role in the history of Transylvania here in Cluj, was suppressed without any explanation.

2. The books of Marian Papahagi and Aurel Sasu (included in the editorial plans of the Minerva, Eminescu and Univers Publishing House) were also eliminated from the plans, without any explanation.

3. There were also other hindrances: eliminations from lists of participation of literary conferences and symposiums, the express omission of names in certain public situations, etc.

In other words, the fact of using our right to petition guaranteed by the Constitution of the SRR (Socialist Republic of Romania) and the right of every party member to address himself to the leading forums was also sanctioned.

As we have stated at the beginning of this material, the meaning of these lines is to remind again of all that we have done and to plead for the last time for our case. We strongly believe that we were seriously harmed, morally and materially, by the delay of the publication of this book. Working for the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House, we confided in a state institution: as such, we uncautiously undertook a work that is not paid today. Moreover, administrative measures were taken against us which were abolished in the cultural life of this country once and for all after the 9th Congress of the RCP. Finally, the uncontrolled copies of the *Dictionary* circulate in offices, they are illegally used, with a complete contempt for the copyright which arouses serious moral and professional prejudices against the authors and coordinators.

We still believe that the only remedy of this great injustice is the publication without delay of this book, as it was approved by the authorised forums in 1984.

/ss/ Mircea Zaciu, /ss/ Marian Papahagi, /ss/ Aurel Sasu

Note: This material is destined to the following forums: The Central Committee of the RCP, the CCSE, the Writers' Association and the Academy of the SRR.

APPENDIX

REPORT

on the Dictionary of the Romanian Writers, Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House

The *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers*, volume I, letters A-L, was included in the 1984 thematic plan of the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House, with 80 sheets. The second volume, letters M-Z, with 60 author's sheets was included in the thematic plan on the year 1985.

The work was edited by a collective of approximately 60 literary historians and critics, university professors, researchers from the Capital and the

great cultural centres of the country: Cluj, Iași, Timișoara, Tîrgu Mureș, Baia Mare, Oradea, etc. The DRW is an ample synthesis on Romanian literature from the beginning to the present. The manuscript contains approximately 1400 articles including writers from all periods, from the classics to contemporary writers, from all Romanian provinces including valuable creators who live now abroad (for example, Emil Cioran, Mircea Eliade, Eugen Ionescu.)

The documentary material for the work was gathered by consulting public collections of libraries and archives in Bucharest and other towns, and by a documentary investigation which was answered by approximately 1000 contemporary writers.

The manuscript of Volume I was favourably approved by the Scientific Council of the Faculty of Letters in Cluj; between December 1983 and October 1984 it was read by the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House and the Literary and Publications Board of the CCSE.

On the basis of these readings, a series of observations and recommendations were made, meant to contribute to the improvement of its content. These observations were taken into consideration by the authors and coordinators of the work.

At the suggestion of the leadership of the CCSE (comr. Prime-Vicepresident Ion Traian Ștefănescu), Volume I was given for another reading to comr. Ion Brad, writer, member of the CC of the RCP, who concluded that the DRW (vol. I) is a "solid work, written in an objective, scientific manner, based on thorough studies and documentation, with a vision which is in line with the spirit of Marxist literary historiography".

After finishing Volume I, with the approval of the leadership of the CCSE, this was submitted to publishing in November 1984. At the same time, it was suggested that Volume II should be prepared, so that the two volumes can appear concomitently, and the appreciation and reception of the work would be more exact.

Volume II was finalised by the authors, coordinators and the editors, but it was not accepted for reading by the Literary Board, and it was no longer included in the list of carry-forwards for 1986.

After its omission from the carry-forwards for 1986, an order was issued on 10. 06. 1986 to melt the matter which was at the Poligraphy in Cluj, and consider the total costs, 134.697 lei, as normal editorial risk.

The analysis of this work proves that it is not so more a dictionary in the classical sense of the word, that is, an informative work on this field of creation, but a literary history, containing mainly value-judgements and critical appreciations. The articles of this pseudo-dictionary are marked by an excessive subjectivity and contribute to the delineation of a deformed image on contemporary Romanian literature, as the selection of authors is extremely wide. Thus, besides the classics there are famous contemporary writers and several

authors in the work, some of them non-members of the Writers' Association who only published 1-2 volumes, without proving their distinct artistic personality.

Similarly, the work contains authors who have left the country in the meantime.

Given all these, the leaders of the CCSE considered that the publication of such a work was inopportune, and they did not approve sending the second volume to print. As the printing presses do not have the right to immobilize the lead necessary for the typographic process, the matter of Volume I was melted in June 1986.

The publication of such a work would have come into contradiction with the Decision of the Executive Political Committee of the CC of the RCP which asked for the Treaty of the History of Romanian Literature, which is yet uncompleted.

In order to make use of the documentary material collected by the team of authors of the *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers*, we suggest the following:

- the revision of the whole manuscript of the *Dictionary* and the preservation of those elements which define a real dictionary (information about the life and activity of writers and their work)

- the team of authors

- the forming of a large team of specialists for the edition of the Treaty of the History of Romanian literature, a team which would also encompass researchers, professors, literary critics who collaborated in the edition of the *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers*. This team should make use of their research made until now.

A SYNDROME: THE DICTIONARY OF THE ROMANIAN WRITERS

On 30 December 1987 I received a large envelope posted by my former student Radu G. Teposu who returned me the files with biobibliographic data lent him at the time of his collaboration with the *Dictionary of the Romanian Writers*. He wrote me: "After all these years which taught us that we cannot believe in wonders, I realised that the files given me for documentation are humble objects in my room. After cleaning them of dust for ten years (ten years passed since the project of the *Dictionary* failed) I thought it appropriate to return them in a tender resignation. Although we did not succeed in building that monument, we must not take revenge on documents. They deserve a better fate, let us keep them safely until a new initiative." And, after making an allusion to the beginning of winter (thinking about another season, of course) he ends with a premonition: "Are you waiting for the interpellation of poetic ghosts? Eschatologic atmosphere? Let's see what Christmas brings us!" The letter is dated 14 November 1989, the postal stamp from the Capital dates 16 November. I received it after a month and a half... Where

has it got stuck, it's easy to guess... The arrival of this letter coincides with the friendly invitation of the *România Literară* periodical to reveal the history of the *Dictionary*. We called it DRW, among ourselves. We projected and coordinated it together with Marian Papahagi and Aurel Sasu, collaborating with more than 60 authors, very many young people, critics and literary historians from Cluj, Bucharest, Iași, Timișoara, Sibiu, Tg. Mureș, Oradea. Men of letters know something about this *Dictionary* (the great public even less): it was prohibited and given to pulping by the order of M. Dulea, the frenetic satrap of Romanian letters at that time. As it also happened on a large scale, we thought that this odious clerk from the Casa Scintei who thought of Romanian culture as his own land, was the only one responsible for such an important work as the *Dictionary* (which was not the only book destroyed in these years). A whole network of complicities developed in support of Dulea in which incompetence, stupidity, indolence, cynism, personal quarrels, poltroonery, hypocrisy, envy, etc. also had their part. During the years we followed them with revolt and pain, but also with the detachment of a moralist, in a series of notes written between 1978 and 1987 which I hope we can soon publish, a nightmare, as I wrote in a *sui-generis* "diary" of the *Dictionary*. Together with the official and semi-official pieces these will be, we hope, parts of the file attached to the book.

The history of the *Dictionary* begins in 1975 when we drafted the first form, restrained to "111" Romanian Writers, inaugurating a lexicographic series for the diverse literatures (Latin, French, Russian, English, etc). This was a beginning in a field where we did not have traditions. The book appeared in 1978, but in a modified version: the stamp itself disappeared, as it was not approved by the dabblers from the ideologic Commission of the CC, scared by it as though it would have been a secret, cabalistic number. Suppressing the editorial convention (the number 111 was only a symbol of a series) we exposed ourselves to the aleatory. We were obliged to increase the number of authors included, contemporary authors, mainly, without being able to justify the options and thank for all the ambition. In the *Preface* we gave an explanation for this first selection, the beginning of a pioneering work which had to be continuously amplified, until it becomes a thesaurus-dictionary, registering all the authors in Romanian literature, indifferent of their value. A press campaign directed by the former director of the Literary Board of the CCES, a poet Ț Vasile Nicolescu angry that he was not included in the book, marked the beginning of a troubled atmosphere of bad omens for the future of our team. Avoiding mistrust and other difficulties, we passed on to the next stage, that of compiling an amplified version (1500 writers), remaking the team of collaborators and reshuffling the norms of editing. The DRW wished to be a new work, of great proportions, written with competence and free of servitudes. It is possible that it was exactly this free association (more than 60 collaborators) outside every institutional and official tutorship and without any financial support (not even from the part of the Publishing House which refused to pay even the cost

of the typewriting of thousands of pages) that raised suspicion at the beginning and then the hindrances and the open rejection of certain more or less occult "forums". The history of the DRW will be presented in the following text, I do not want to anticipate or repeat certain aspects. But beyond that which could have been uttered in 1987 on the basis of some undeniable facts, there were the empty promises and secret orders, the reports-delations and hypocritical goodwill, etc. In spite of the insidious and confused net in which we stayed for years, feeling its hostility without understanding where does it come from and who manipulates it, we were obliged to hope.

In an interview for the *Steaua* in 1988 my interlocutor made a benign allusion to the situation of the *Dictionary*. I answered him in that horrible Aesopian language: "You know the story of the shipwreck of the Titanic, a modern, well-equipped, comfortable and useful vessel? Lots of optimist people went on board. But the collision with an iceberg destroyed it instantly. *The top of the ice-monster is known, not those underwater two-thirds of it.*" The phrase underlined by me was eliminated in the Publishing House, by the delicate poet and Editor-in-Chief, who was afraid that I made allusion to Ceaușescu himself (while I referred to Dulea only). The whole text was eliminated then by the censor of the periodical, masked under the idyllic-conspirative name of "proofreader Poiana"... but this is only one of the many examples I could give. Marian Papahagi, Aurel Sasu and other collaborators of the DRW could tell similar stories, all about the suppression of the *memory* of the book after its physical destroying, in an Orwellian manner.

It was a naïve self-defense of our rights when, based on laws and consitutional regulations (broken by those who promulgated them) we repeatedly addressed to the Writers' Association, its President, a *colleague*, as we childishly thought, but also the leadership of the Council of Culture (we were urged by the Publishing House which was afraid that we would jump over hierarchic steps) as well as the Propaganda Section of the CC. Here we received as memories yellow tickets with the registry numbers 5180, 588, 2229, 3738, 1225, 1226 and 3758 from 1985 to 1988, tickets to a sinister lottery, where the cynical Power won always. We did not receive any answer or confirmation of the fact that they received our memorials. I will mention only one of the Kaffkaian scenes which we experienced, that of the last Council of the Writer's Association on 26 July 1986 (after which this association was practically banned). After I presented again the history of our book, I said at the end:

"I tried (...) to endow Romanian culture with a necessary instrument of synthesis, natural in a civilised world, taking into account that we have only one similar work, stopped at the level of the year 1900, and another, subjective work about the present period, also stopped at the level of the last decade and out of circulation by now⁴⁷. Instead, we have the dictionary of Romanian writers edited in

⁴⁷ This is Marian Popa's dictionary, banned from libraries when the author left for Germany in 1984.

the Prague and another, ready for publication, by the Polish, and another one, in process of editing, in Budapest. We wished that our spiritual portrait had not been done by others but that we present the world our own values, that we must not be ashamed at the end of the 20th century that we do not have yet such a lexicographic work, while all other small countries in our neighbourhood or farther away have it! This is our sin, therefore! (...) We ask now desperately, for the last time, that work be resumed on the dictionary. We ask for the support of the Association which is most interested in the publication of such a work! Therefore, we drafted in March a letter to the Leadership of our Association, because we hoped that the Council meeting will take place in April, as it has been promised. As the meeting has not been held and in the meantime the situation of the *Dictionary* became even worse, we wrote another letter in June to the operative leadership trying to remind it of its responsibility for the publication of the book. We submitted these two texts to comr. President D.R. Popescu. After all that we have been through, I am sceptical because of these misunderstandings. I cannot hope any more, as I did at the meeting in November 1984, that my words will reach those who could help and that they will be properly interpreted. I repeat: I do not plead for my own book, but for a general cause, that of our writers and our national culture. The file and the history of this book will one day be revealed to the public. It would be preferable however that the book itself would be put into circulation.

Finally, I owe a word comr. Dulea. In the last year I have been often advised by my colleagues to ask comr. Dulea for an explanation and ask for an audience. I categorically refused to do this, because I did not want to appear as a *petitioner* before the person who took repressive measures against me and my work. I do not *request*, I protest and claim a basic right of Romanian culture in its totality, the right to be free from redogmatisation and absurd bureaucratic pressures. I believe in the principles of democratic socialism, but this implies an increased respect of its functionaries to he who *produces*. Instead of respect I received contempt, experienced anti-cultural and anti-patriotic barbarousness: the suppression of the "*Restituiri*" series at the Dacia Publishing House which I coordinated from 1972 to nr.80, the suppression of the work on the *Dictionary* which meant an effort of ten years, an unselfish and completely unrewarded work. Who benefits from these decisions which seem intolerably barbarous for somebody who worked for Romanian culture and education for more than 30 years and who had hopefully proved his faith and integrity by his books and editorial work? You, comr. Dulea can destroy me as a person, psychically and even physically. You have tried, although unsuccessfully, so far, to rid me of my copyright (remember the episode with the centennial book about Liviu Rebreanu in the "*Restituiri*" series). But no matter how many books you ban and how many writers you mutilate, you cannot destroy Romanian literature, all our books and all those who write them! The vitality of this literature is unimaginable and

unpredictable, to the pleasure of this nation which has passed through all sorts of natural or artificially created impasses and crises, all traps and unhappiness, with his head held high. This vitality will be proved again, saving this nation from all fabricated or invented Rezniceks who persecute him!" (Note: Reznicek is a character in the prose of Radu Cosașiu, who stands for I. Chișinevski and every literary-political satrap after 1944).

Adhesion to this text read at the plenary session of July 1986 (I repeat: the last one which could be held) was manifested in the applause of those more than 90 colleagues, with some exceptions: an elegiac poet-editor who censured the poems of his younger colleagues under the pretext of "saving" them. He confessed publicly that he refuses the solution of inciting to a *violent escalation* of the situation. Anyway, the presidy was silent, Dulea was silent and we were not offered an explanation for the "final solution" for the *Dictionary*.

There was an audience obtained *in extremis*, on an intermediary level, which resulted in vague and empty promises. After six months, in February 1987, we decided to edit a synthesis-text entitled *Pro memoria*, addressed to the future, because we were convinced that it would not have an immediate response, as the preceding ones did not have. We wanted to leave a common, unitary testimony of the whole case. The future came.

I would like to thank *România literară* for offering the publication of our deposition. I will end with the word of Camus: "From the depths of my silence I will protest till the end."

Mircea Zăciu