Influenţa culturală a Marii Britanii în România la sfârşitul deceniului patru al secolului XX

Abstract:

Throughout the nineteenth century and for much of the interwar period the cultural influence of Great Britain in Romania remained insignificant. The typical “splendid isolation” of England as concerned the continental Europe, and especially its eastern side, held sway, even though from the beginning of the twentieth century, Great Britain became more involved in European affairs as compared to the earlier centuries. The economic problems which plagued France around 1935, had political and military consequences which led to a relative reduction of French presence in Romania. As ever faithful to the principle of European balance, which the Britons applied in their foreign policy for more than three centuries, the British cultural policy attempted to fill the gap left by the relative pulling out of France, thereby proceeding in a manner similar to their behavior in international relations. Romania began to be a country which deserved more and more to be taken into consideration. An important role was played by the “English-Romanian Association” (Asociaţia Anglo-Română), established in 1927, with the goal of developing the British-Romanian relations. In 1928, with the support granted by this association, Nicolae Iorga published the first scholarly Romanian work on the history and culture of England. The same association supported the conferences held in Romania by various British personalities, such as Sir Ronald Storrs, Bruce Lockhart, and Harold Nicolson. While the knowledge of English language was relatively low in the interwar period, in the years preceding the Second World War, an increasing interest for learning this language appeared among Romanian students, a fact which explains the creation of the English Language Literature Chair at Bucharest University in 1936. The introduction of the Romanian language news service in the BBC programs can be deemed as part of the effort of Great Britain to increase its cultural influence in Romania, with the goal of countering the German influence which had become preponderant. Starting out later than France and Germany, the British cultural influence in Romania was weak throughout the interwar period. A certain invigoration of the bilateral cultural relations is discernible from 1936 to 1940. Falling into the German and then into the Soviet sphere of influence after Second World War, Romania could establish indeed strong cultural relations with Great Britain only after the demise of the Communist regime in 1989.

Keywords: *“English-Romanian Society”, British Council, Conferences, Learning English in Romania, Romanian language programs by BBC.*