

Perspective, opinion and commentary

# Generations, ideology and intersectionality in “Floarea de foc” [“Flower of Fire”] magazine

Carmen CIORNEA <sup>1</sup>

**Citation:** Ciornea C. (2023). Generations, ideology and intersectionality in “Floarea de foc” [“Flower of Fire”] magazine. *Network Intelligence Studies*, Year (volume) XI, Issue (22), 147-157

Received: 06 October 2023

Revised: 8 November 2023

Published: 10 November 2023



**Copyright:** © 2023 by the authors. Published by *Network Intelligence Studies*.

This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

**Abstract:** The present work aims to explore the potential of the generational operator to reform the history of the written press in interwar Romania, taking as a starting point the magazine *Floarea de foc* [*Flower of Fire*], published under the direction of the director Sandu Tudor, with great interruptions, in the period 1932-1936. More precisely, we will analyze how Sandu Tudor and the collaborators of his publication, prominent members of the young interwar generation, use this as a biographical and methodological notion. Our goal is to answer the following questions: How important was the dynamic of generations in the cultural and ideological space for Sandu Tudor and what kind of narrative did this dynamic generate in his magazine *Floarea de foc* [*Flower of Fire*]? How did Sandu Tudor and the collaborators of his magazine relate to their own generation of critics, poets and prose writers? What is the place and role of the generation as a critical narrative tool in the texts published in *Floarea de foc* [*Flower of Fire*], compared to other Romanian literary publications? And in general, what alternative scenarios of the history of the written press in interwar Romania could be discovered through a correlation of the intrinsic data collected, mainly, from the discourse analysis of the articles in the interwar press (on a semantic, syntactic, narrative level), with the information extrinsic (ideology, sociogram, social fields) provided, for the most part, from the investigation of the documents drawn up by the Security Service, found today in the files of the CNSAS Archive?

**Keywords:** ideologizing identities; the interwar young generation; the "Floarea de foc" ["Flower of fire"] magazine; Sandu Tudor; the interwar press;

---

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Theology - "Ovidius" University of Constanta

## WORKING HYPOTHESIS

Taking on the role of investigating an issue related to the Romanian interwar situation places the researcher in a dilemma. Most likely, the attempt to find possible answers to the working hypotheses included in the present study will arouse suspicion, given the heated polemics and the passions that the debate on this topic still creates. Therefore, the method and the means of work add to the presumption of impartiality, dissociation, the core of entire research endeavor. The interpretation of information implies the formulation of personal opinions. However, we emphasize the articles focus on research and not on the polemics of the current cultural landscape. The present study aims to be an analysis free of charges of intent and arguments relating to any identity idiosyncrasies, an analysis in which the preeminence of honesty and intellectual responsibility will be preserved as fundamental principles.

In Romanian literary historiography, the issue of generations is generally disconnected from the social context, the notion being used mainly as a chronological operator and designating an object of study (generations of writers and critics). That is why the generational engagement of various Romanian writers and critics is usually understood in terms of affinities and solidarities, while extra-literary factors, which determine these affinities and the homogeneous, often homosocial structure of a literary generation, are excluded from critical reflection.

However, nowadays, when the very notion of periodization is subject to deconstruction, the role of literary tools is no longer, or should not be, to divide the literary ecosystem into successive "slices". The need for interdisciplinary integration of the notion of generation was signaled by Eric Hayot as early as 2011, the critic putting under the microscope in his article "Against Periodization; or, On Institutional Time" its potential to become a "transperiodic concept" (Hayot, 2011), so that in 2014 Astrid Erll's claim underlines, beyond any equivocation, the potential of the generation concept to keep pace with world literature studies and with the new mappings: "Generation deserves to be put on the agenda of the 'new' literary history." (Erll, 2014).

Considering this context, the paper aims to provide a qualitative analysis of how the positioning according to political power generated ideologizing identities within a significant part of the publications from the interwar press. The focus is on the position occupied by the magazine *Floarea de foc* [*Flower of Fire*] in the ideological and cultural landscape of interwar publishing, with the aim of diagnosing how

the publication under the management of Sandu Tudor positioned itself against the ideological and cultural imperatives of the time. It was decided to use an interdisciplinary perspective, the intrinsic data collected, mainly, from the discourse analysis (at the semantic, syntactic, narrative level) of the articles from the interwar press being correlated with the extrinsic information (ideology, sociogram, social fields) provided, in the greatest part of the investigation are the documents drawn up by the Secret Police, available today in the files of the CNSAS Archive.

## IDEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE. "FLOAREA DE FOC" ["FLOWER OF FIRE"] MAGAZINE IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERWAR PUBLICATIONS

What was the situation of periodicals at the time of the appearance of *Floarea de foc* [*Flower of Fire*] magazine in the publishing arena? Consulting the Romanian Periodical Publications work, published under the auspices of the Romanian Academy Library, provides some answers. Were we to capture the salient characteristic of the publishing landscape in the period in which the magazine that constitutes our subject was printed, it would be *maximum expansion*. The number of periodicals between 1931-1935 exceeded the limit of six thousand titles (Desa, 2012, pg. 5). There has not been a more prolific period in the entire history of the Romanian press than the one between 1931-1935. We can find the explanations, on the one hand, in the process of democratization, and, at the same time, in overcoming the economic crisis from 1929-1933.

A simple perusing of Desa's volume (Desa, 2012) gives the image of a stunning mosaic. This moment of the press takes you through pages with a literary, political, economic but also strictly specialized character, while following the printing presses of these periodicals invites you to a journey starting from the capital (which, however, retains its numerical supremacy), large or provincial cities and, finally, even in the border villages. Predictably, the upward quantitative flow brought great concessions in terms of quality, many of the publications being edited by people without experience in the field: tradesmen, tenants, students, merchants, teachers, priests, etc.

The fast pace of the interwar society's transformations, the effervescence of the cultural space corroborated, however, with the turmoil of the political class and the multiple ideological pressures determined a sinusoidal evolution of the press, so that, as quickly as they appeared, the various

periodicals disappeared from the publishing scene just as quickly: "952 periodicals published in this period are new titles, while continuations and reappearances reached only the level of 559. Among the new titles, many had an ephemeral appearance" (Desa, 2012, pg. 6).

The struggle for survival leads these periodicals to adopt heterogeneous strategies: either to merge with others (obviously more solid one) or to ask for space in the pages of another publication. *Floarea de foc* [Flower of Fire] also resorted to such a strategy, in the sense that in the last year of its appearance (1936, starting with the 8<sup>th</sup> number), they were printed as the Sunday supplement of the *Credința* [The Faith] newspaper. No less true is the fact that many of these periodicals slipped into politics, changing their profile in this way saving them from discontinuation, even if the price paid was not small, in terms of deontology, the respective parties, which provided the financial support end by controlling, in fact, the contents of the publication.

### **Political parties and their propaganda in interwar Romania (1932-1933)**

The files from the CNSAS Archive gave us the opportunity to restore the palette of the propaganda ways of the political parties in Romania in 1932-1933, the period when the journalist Sandu Tudor was already at the helm of his own magazine: *Floarea de foc* [Flower of Fire]. We believe that you cannot prove that a periodical is free from any interference from the ideological and propagandistic interests of one party or another, without understanding the ideological landscape in which the respective periodical was created, the focus in the sections that follow.

One of the strongest organizations in the political scene was the National-Liberal Party, led by I.G. Duca, a party that, since its foundation, claimed to be based on the ideas propagated by liberal parties abroad, that is, on the economic doctrine based on the popular "laissez-faire" principle - an economic doctrine that appeared in France in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, whose peak development in Western Europe was reached in 19<sup>th</sup> century, principle which postulated the free competition and free exchange, as the state interference in the economy was considered inappropriate (CNSAS, 004011, f. 22).

Over time, the idea that the state should not intervene in the economic process through customs barriers evolved, in the sense of restricting this economic freedom, giving birth to the doctrine of neoliberalism. The fundamental principle of this neoliberalism was of an individualistic conception, that is, referencing the individual. In pre-war Romania, the National-Liberal Party (NLP)

estimated the allocation of land ownership to the peasants and the popular vote, objectives that represented a counterweight to the Conservative Party's program. After the war, the Conservative Party disappeared, which led to the integration of the doctrine into that of the NLP, hence its transformation into a right-wing party. The NLP aimed to harmonize all social classes, with agriculture and industry becoming a priority.

The political body under the leadership of I.G. Duca, according to his own statements, had the following concepts as his program: nationalism, democracy, order, progress, social and moral harmony between the inhabitants of the Romanian provinces (CNSAS, 004011, ff. 22-23). The liberals' propaganda publications were *Viitorul* [The Future], edited in Romanian, and *L'Independence Roumaine* [Romanian Independence], in French, both printed in Bucharest (CNSAS, 004011, f. 23).

Two dissident formations had emerged from the NLP: the first was the NLP, under the leadership of Gheorghe Brătianu, which had come into being in 1930, the reason for the split, as it appeared in the public space, being constitutional - "[Gheorghe Brătianu] claims that he alone propagates the doctrine of the old national-liberal party" (CNSAS, 004011, f. 23) - and, secondly, the Liberal-Democrat Party (LDP) whose president was Ioan Theodor Florescu, who had chosen, for personal reasons, to found his own party. As verified by the documents in the records of the Secret Police, the propaganda body of Gheorghe Brătianu's NLP was the *Mișcarea* [The Movement] newspaper, printed in Bucharest (CNSAS, 004011, f. 23).

Marshal Alexandru Averescu was at the helm of the People's Party. In the year 1917, the ruling parties, due to the hardships and shortcomings suffered by the people, had lost their credibility and, apodictically, their popularity. Adding to this already complicated situation were the influences coming from the social transformations in Russia, the adopted solution to avoid slipping into communism was the creation of a new political body to which the dissatisfied masses could be channeled. These were the reasons that led the marshal to transform the People's League (the original name) into the new political body - the People's Party, which provided in its program: agrarian, electoral and administrative reforms, considered necessary to ensure social order in the state. Obviously, through these initiatives, aimed at raising the standard of living and improve the state of mind of the peasants, significant changes had occurred in terms of its reception, especially among the peasantry, a social group that the People's Party sought to transform into a balancing factor in the state. (CNSAS,

008848, vol. 110, pp. 45-46) *Îndreptarea [The Guide]*, a newspaper printed in Bucharest, ensured the large-scale dissemination of the doctrine of the People's Party. (CNSAS, 004011, f. 24)

From the split of the People's Party, two dissidences formed: the National Agrarian Party, led by Octavian Goga, who only partially shared the political vision of the old general Alexandru Averescu, the program and directives of his party being propagated through the newspaper *Țara noastră [Our Country]* (CNSAS, 011821, f. 6) and the Agrarian League, the latter having more of a professional association profile, under the leadership of the former Minister of Agriculture, Constantin Garoflid (CNSAS, 004011, f. 24).

Another important party was the National Peasant Party (NPP), led by Iuliu Maniu, which had come into existence in 1926, through the merger of the National Party of Transylvania (as president Iuliu Maniu) with the Peasant Party (headed by Ion Mihalache). The national-peasant doctrine had agrarian policy as its guideline, and from an administrative point of view, the principle of administrative decentralization. The NPP was based on a single social class, arguing that following the allocation of land ownership to the peasants, they who now owned more products than those required to ensure their own consumption, could also become an economic factor. Two newspapers ensured the impact of their political actions among the masses: *Dreptatea [The Righteousness]*, which appeared in Bucharest, and *Patria [The Homeland]*, in Cluj (CNSAS, 004011, f. 25).

The split of the NPP led to the formation of the Peasant Party, led by Nicolae Lupu (who supported, from an economic and financial point of view, the idea of inflation) and the Democratic Peasant Party, under the leadership of Constantin Stere, which in 1930, for reasons of nature personal, acted for the split. The propaganda body of the Peasant Party had been *Aurora [The Aurora]*, which had in the meanwhile disappeared from the publishing landscape. Another splinter of the NPP was the Radical Peasant Party, led by Grigore Iunian, founded in 1932, whose economic doctrine was the restoration and conversion of agricultural debts. According to archival resources, the Democratic Peasant Party will merge with the Radical Peasant Party in 1933, the new political formation taking the name of the Democratic Peasant Party, with Grigore Iunian remaining the president.

Professor Nicolae Iorga oversaw the National Democratic Party, a party founded by him and Professor A.C. Cuza in the year 1910. Predictably, the professor stood up against revolutions that destroyed before they knew how to create, believing

in gradual, slow cultural evolution, which takes time to assimilate everything it gains. The same mentality is found in the nationalist doctrine that did not believe in reforms and written laws, proposing the education of the people as the way that would have the value of any legal form. Iorga took advantage "of the misery of the poor elements of the city, whom he believes to be the most miserable of all." (CNSAS, 004011, f. 25) and rejected the idea of a class party postulating national morality and the spirit of political solidarity for minorities in Romania. *Neamul românesc [The Romanian Nation]*, printed in Bucharest, was the representative in the press of the National Democratic Party (CNSAS, 004011, f. 26).

The Conservative Party was founded in 1929 by Grigore Filipescu, although the history of the development of this political formation was somewhat more complicated. In fact, 1929 was the time when Grigore Filipescu founded the Vlad Țepeș League (CNSAS, 004011, f. 52-63, f. 64), whose purpose was to fight against political parties to make possible deep and radical reforms, which the parties were powerless to complete. Three years later, the Vlad Țepeș League will take the name of the Conservative Party, demanding perfect order in the country, respect for the right to property, the resurgence of agriculture, etc. In other words, Grigore Filipescu was (or at least wanted to be) a fervent detractor of the inflationist idea. *Epoca [The Epoch]* was the propaganda newspaper of the Conservative Party (CNSAS, 004011, f. 26).

Professor A.C. Cuza led the Christian National Defense League (CNDL), which had been established in 1923, in Iași. From a doctrinal point of view, the nationalism supported by CNDL is based on the concept that humanity is made up of distinct nations, each with a specific cultural profile and civilizing role. Regarding the division of social classes, at the base of the hierarchy was the productive class, where there were mainly peasants, then industrialists and merchants, the ruling class represented by scholars, technicians, etc. (CNSAS, 013653, vol. 1, f. 7). They did not support the class struggle, considering it useless: "this struggle thwarts any useful work of all" (CNSAS, 004011, f. 26). The struggles in which the CNDL engaged were with the political parties, which they accused of bringing the country to the brink of poverty and into a state of complete disorganization, with the Communist Party occupying a leading place in their hierarchy among the organizations considered harmful (CNSAS, 008848, vol. 110, f. 45).

It is note worthy the way CNDL members interpreted the notion of Christian, an aspect that completes the picture from the perspective of the

Secrete Police, the archive files via CNSAS offering us the following: The Christian doctrine of the League states that the Jews are a nation without land, live like parasites, from the exploitation of productive labor and to the detriment of the classes and culture of all nations, hindering their development. It predicts the elimination of the Jews from Romania, by legal means, so that they can fulfill their mission elsewhere, where they will have to work the land like all other peoples (CNSAS, 004011, ff. 26-27). *Apărarea Națională* [The National Defense] was the widely circulated newspaper through which A.C. Cuza's propagated his political views in the public space.

The political group founded by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu was a spin off from the CNDL, and was born in 1927 (Ciornea, 2017 A, 92-107, 226-267). In fact, the "Archangel Michael" Legion had assumed the mission of abolishing the political parties, simultaneously with the proclamation of the dictatorship of the Romanians in Romania (CNSAS, 008848, vol. 110, f. 45). Bringing to accountability the usurers and embezzlers of public money, introducing discipline and honor in all institutions, caring for invalids, widows and war orphans were also the mainstays of party doctrine (Ciornea, 2017 A, 297-107, 226-267). *Garda de fier* [The Iron Guard] was, in fact, a branch, a militant organization whose purpose was to attract the masses to form a united front against communism (CNSAS, 012056, ff. 12-13, f. 54).

The Agrarian Union, led by Constantin Argetoianu, had come into existence in 1932, adopting the economic doctrine that supported the liquidation of the economic liability by canceling the debts. *Pământul* [The Land] was their propaganda newspaper, a publication printed in the capital.

In 1932, *Bloc Cetățenesc* [The Citizens' Block] appears, founded and led by professor Grigore Forțu. In the terminology of the Department of State Security agents, the description of this political organization was: [*Bloc Cetățenesc*] envisages the idea of dictatorship outside the political parties, calls for the introduction of the death penalty for embezzlers of public money, is anti-Semitic and fumbles to unite with other nationalist organizations, preferably *Garda de fier*. (...) Its propaganda body is the newspaper *Drum Nou* [New Road] (CNSAS, 004011, f. 28).

The Socialist-Democratic Party (SDP) was a class party that, as the title also shows, represented the workers, the fight of Ion Mirescu, the president, being directed against the bourgeois-capitalist class that he sought to remove from the state's leadership positions, their place to be replaced by the working class. Socialism presupposes a collectivist-social

conception, the unit of reference being society. The demagogic note dominated the pages of their propaganda body - *Lumea nouă* [The New World] the SDP using this name as to achieving economic and political equality as well as genuine freedom (CNSAS, 004011, f. 28).

In the view of the Independent Socialist Party (ISP), socialism and humanitarianism had once been synonymous. The idea was not original, the communist echoes being obvious. In the same spirit, they pledged to the electorate to remove the conflicts that existed between social factors, "under a regime of social justice" (CNSAS, 004011, f. 29), which, they promised, would make mankind happy. In 1933, during a Congress held in the capital, it was decided to merge the SDP with the ISP, creating the Socialist Party.

The Socialist Nationalist Party (SNP) came with an anti-communist speech, being the supporter of the monarchical state. According to the information in the files of the Directorate of Police and General Safety [Direcția Poliției și Siguranței Generale], it had "anti-Semitism and socialism as its basic doctrine. From a legislative point of view, it envisages the idea of two chambers: the Political Chamber and the Professional Chamber. Romanian citizens of foreign nationality defend their interests in the professional chamber." (CNSAS, 004011, f. 29). Like the *Bloc Cetățenesc* and the followers of the Socialist Nationalist Party advocated the introduction of the death penalty for crimes: espionage, attempt against national security, theft of public money, assassination, arson, etc.

The Peasant Workers' Bloc, of the same communist shade, was perceived differently by the Secret Police agents, which had a main goal of overthrowing the bourgeois-capitalist regime, a goal in the name of which any means could be used, even the forbidden ones. Anti-monarchical, the party proposed the collectivization of rural and urban properties (CNSAS, 004011, f. 29),

Other parties in the development phase or with a less significant electoral force were: the Hungarian Party (president Gabriel Bethlen), which protected the rights of the Hungarian minority in Romania, the Jewish Party, the Ukrainian Party, the Plowmen's Party, the Tradesmen's Party, the Anti-usury League, Urban Sanitation (CNSAS, 004011, f. 30) and the German Party (led by Hans Otto Roth), which supported the rights of the German minority. From a doctrinal point of view, this party claims that it does not strive for territorial autonomy, in the sense of having claims on state sovereignty, but strives for cultural self-determination rights and full freedom of movement from an economic point of view. By cultural self-determination it is meant the

right to establish schools and other cultural institutions and to maintain them through the special donations of the compatriots, collected with the help of the administrative apparatus of the state (CNSAS, 004011, f. 30).

All these parties representing various minorities had specific press bodies. Seen from the perspective of propaganda publications, the political parties offered a unique spectacle. The importance, in the sense of impact, electoral success, popularity, was in full agreement with the circulation and scope of the publication that disseminated his doctrine in the public space. Paying particular attention to the totalitarian accents of the various political formations, it is appropriate, however, to point out that the realm of the interwar press provides numerous information likely to certify the fact that ethnic barriers, in most cases, were abolished: In Transylvania, tradesmen's newspapers and magazines appeared in bilingual or often trilingual editions. All cohabiting nationalities printed periodicals. There were 187 Hungarian, 100 German, 33 Jewish, 29 Slavic, five Armenian, four Greek, three Turkish, and two Albanian publications (Desa, 2012, pg. 6).

#### ***Floarea de foc [Flower of Fire] in the interwar publishing landscape: convergences and divergences***

As mentioned above, the highly heterogeneous publishing landscape saw an acute need for people from all walks of life, to make themselves heard, to bring their concerns, aspirations, dissatisfactions, or accomplishments, etc. in the world of the printed word, a phenomenon that is also presented, with irony, by the director of *Floarea de foc [Flower of Fire]* magazine, Sandu Tudor: “Magazines of high schools in the capital and the province appear continuously. The primary school students - organizing themselves as a warlike generation - will produce a sheet of ideological polemic, in which they will talk about the disastrous and desiccated action of the "old" high school students. Kindergarten students prepare the publication of a magazine - in advance. Alas, alas, —we are old!” (Tudor, 1932:10, 4)”

The configuration of convergences and divergences is not related to the amazingly heterogeneous reception of the term by which the young interwar generation was identified: spirituality. *Floarea de foc [Flower of Fire]*, by the collaborators of the director Sandu Tudor, even before the time of its foundation, Mircea Vulcănescu, Paul Sterian, Petru Manoliu - the wing of orthodox thinkers of the new generation, broadcasted the neo-traditionalist path they were walking.

Also among the publications that fledged, not always on converging paths, for spirituality perceived from a metaphysical, orthodox, autochthonism and at the same time universalist perspective, we mention the following magazines: *Gândirea [The Thinking]*, *Ideea europeană [The European Idea]*, *Ideea creștină [The Christian Idea]*, *Vreamea [The Times]*, *Tiparnița literară [The Literary Printing Press]*, *Revista universitară [University Journal]*, *Acțiune și reacțiune [Action and Reaction]*, *România literară [The Free Romania]*, *Fapta, Azi [The Act, Today]*, *Discobolul [The Diskobolos]*, *Dreapta [The Right]*, *Axa [The Axis]*, *Bobi [Bobi]*, *Familia [The Family]*, *Plai [Field]*, *Frize [Frize]*, etc.

*Gândirea* with the arrival of Nichifor Crainic had managed to coagulate the representative figures of the new spirituality. *Ideea europeană* was an important philosophical publication, printed in the period 1918-1939. *Ideea creștină* published by the Federation of Christian Student Associations in Romania, which despite its ephemeral presence (it only had two issues: April 1926 and June 1926) facilitates the meeting with Sandu Tudor both in his position as a mystical poet (“Vecernica” - published poem in no. 1, April 1926) but also as a Christian thinker (“Towards a New Orthodoxy” - no. 2, June 1926). *Vreamea* is gradually becoming an exclusive forum for the young people of the '27 generation. *Tiparnița literară* is where Petru Comarnescu organized the investigation on the theme of the new spirituality. *Revista universitară* was a magazine headed by professor Dimitrie Gusti. *România literară* was a publication that gained its notoriety through the collaboration of prestigious names among which we mention: Liviu Rebreanu, Camil Petrescu, Tudor Arghezi, Mihail Sebastian, Ion I. Cantacuzino, Cicerone Theodorescu, Andrei Tudor, Emil Gulian, Eugen Ionescu.

*Fapta, Azi* a monthly magazine of literature, art and ideology in which Tristan Tzara, G. M. Zamfirescu, George-Dorul Dumitrescu, Mircea Eliade, Zaharia Stancu, Mihail Sebastian, Nicu Crevedia, Petru Comarnescu, Radu Boureanu, Mac Constantinescu, Petre Dinu, Petre Pandrea collaborated, C.C. Negoită, Haig Acterian contributed.

*Discobolul* published texts by Mircea Eliade, Arșavir Acterian, Eugen Ionescu, Emil Cioran, Petru Manoliu, Horia Stamatu, Emil Botta, Petre Boldur, the editors being Dan Petrașincu, Ieronim Sârbu, Mihai Șerban, Horia Liman).

It also needs to be pointed out the newspaper that had been a real school for them, the reputation of publicists with sharp pens being built, for the most part, on the collaboration with the *Cuvântul [The Word]* newspaper owned by professor Nae Ionescu,

then the *Curentul* [The Current] newspaper of Pamfil Șeicaru's which had a large circulation daily, *Calendarul* [The Calendar] of Nichifor Crainic, *Ultima ora* [The Last Hour], *Viitorul* [The Future], *Rampa* [The Ramp] or *Dreptatea* [The Justice]—which had a conservative direction.

The convergence of the young publicists was on spiritual concerns. "The "White Lily" Manifesto" clarified the differences between the *thinking group* and the *existentialist philosopher*, Nae Ionescu. The *Kalende* magazine's investigation elucidated another side of the divergences among the young generation, the definition being announced by this publication since the programmatic article. Reserves and resistances were also shown in the investigations of *Tiparița literară* and *Vremea*, respectively, the prominent personalities of the time, who, in turn, were directors of various periodicals, among which (without claims of exhaustiveness) we mention: *Sburătorul* [The Flyer] (Eugen Lovinescu), *Universul literar* [The Literary Universe] (Camil Petrescu), *Viața românească* [Romanian Life] (Mihai Ralea), *Adevărul literar* [Literary Truth] and *Capricorn* (George Călinescu), *Convorbiri literare* [Literary Conversations] (Constantin Rădulescu-Motru), *Bilete de papagal* [Parrot Tickets] (Tudor Arghezi), *Cuget liber* [Free Thought] (Nicolae Iorga), etc.

In December 1932, the enthusiastic author of the "Spiritual Itinerary" (Eliade, 1932, December 25) recorded the failures of his generation thus: "*I think that this generation is the first in Romania that can say without exaggeration that they risked their skin for a truth. There were heroic generations before us who created this country and enlarged its borders: the generation of the Union, the generation of liberalism, the generation of war. But all these generations had an external goal: the country, the nation, the state... Young people no longer have, nor can, nor must have such ideals... This is how the success of Orthodoxy in 1927-1928, a movement that failed pitifully, is explained (historicizing dogmatism, neo-Byzantinism, excessive decorativeness, autochthonism at all costs, reducing Christianity from a cosmic vision of humanity to a historical phase, etc.). If experience and direct living are the first characteristics of the young generation - its corollary is humanism*".

But whether they represented rationally or culturally speculated spirituality, or the acceptance of it as inner life, respectively spiritual life, one thing was certain: the new generation refused to simply fit into the inherited cultural forms, stood up against placing Romanian culture in the position of a minor culture, and searched with a passionate fervor for the specific, the identity criterion. Here was also the

coincidence, the convergence of the young generation. Spirituality was claimed not only by those who represented neo-traditionalism, of a *thinking* or *experientialist* nature, whose message was also propelled by the conferences of heterogeneous associations with a cultural character (ASCR, *Gândirea*, *Poesis*, *Ideea europeană*, *Societatea de estetică* [Aesthetics Society], *Forum*, *Criterion*), but and by the young people who made a virulent opposition to them (an eloquent example is the investigation in *Kalende* magazine).

In the article "Explication of our time" (Tudor, 1932, January 6), published in the very first issue of *Floarea de foc* [Flower of Fire] magazine, the director Sandu Tudor indicated the titles of the public conferences, with a deliberately heterogeneous theme: "The «Forum» intellectual group will present a cycle of conferences entitled "Explanation of Our Time" at the Carol I Foundation. The conferences will be held eight times on Thursday at 6 p.m. and four times on Tuesday evening at 9 p.m. Thursday, January 14, at 6 p.m.: "Centers of World Interest" (Petru Comarnescu). Tuesday, January 19, 9 p.m.: "The Car" (engineer Sergiu Condrea). Thursday, January 21, 6 p.m.: "Sportul" (I. Cantacuzino). Tuesday, January 26, 9 p.m.: "The Show" (Haig Acterian). Thursday, January 28, 6 p.m.: "Essay and literature" (Șerban Cioculescu). Tuesday, February 2, 9 p.m.: "Towards a new humanism in art" (A.D. Broșteanu). Thursday, February 4, 6 p.m.: "Between the individual and the collective" (Mihail Sebastian). Tuesday, February 9, 9 p.m.: "Collectiveness and press" (Mircea Grigorescu). Thursday, February 11, 6 p.m.: "Crisis of the soul" (I. Jianu). Thursday, February 18, 6 p.m.: "Towards a new economic medievalism" (Mircea Vulcănescu). Thursday, February 25, 6 p.m.: "Communism and reaction" (M. Polihroniade). Thursday, March 3, 6 p.m.: "Between the Orient and the Occident" (Mircea Eliade)."

In this way, Sandu Tudor reiterates the theme of the young generation, the listing of the names of the 11 lecturers of the Forum (a forerunner of the *Criterion*, when the young intellectuals who sat under the sign of spirituality reached a peak) being edifying.

Lastly, the divergences on account of spirituality among the young people found in the new generation were already in public circulation, 1932 being the moment of bifurcation, marking the non-spiritual era, but, nevertheless, the camp of those who saw values through a metaphysical, mystical lens, orthodox, experientialist, autochthonist and simultaneously universalist, was more numerous and, as the history of Romanian culture and

civilization certifies, their ascendancy is confirmed not only by the numerical criterion.

### PROGRAM ARTICLE

The year 1932 marked an enthusiastic debut for Sandu Tudor. Their attempts, the projects of the young generation which, as we have seen, had changed the frameworks of populism and sowerism and had opposed the static ex cathedra discourse, the dynamics of symposia and open conferences, required an evolution, a transition from the publications in which they had been schooled not only in of the press - we are referring here especially to *Cuvântul* of the theologian Nae Ionescu and the *Gândire* of the theologian Nichifor Crainic - to the status of the leaders of their own magazines. This would be fulfilled for the young generation through Sandu Tudor, the one who occupied among them the place of the orthodox existentialist who was looking for a special path in the new spirituality opened by the common mentors: the path of hesychia.

Mircea Eliade wrote about all these explorations and emotions of the beginning in his *Memoirs* (Eliade, 1991, pg. 163): "I often met with Stelian Mateescu, Paul Sterian, Mircea Vulcănescu and Sandu Tudor. We were planning together a religious philosophy magazine, for which Sandu Tudor had found the title *Duh și slovă* [*Spirit and Letter*]. The magazine was supposed to replace and continue the two notebooks from "Logos" that Nae Ionescu had published, in French, with the collaboration of several Russian theologians, refugees in Germany and Paris. [...] Mircea Vulcănescu and Sandu Tudor thought it was our duty to resume this initiative, publishing a magazine in Romanian and addressing especially the youth. [...] But *Duh și slovă* never appeared again".

The evocation of this failed project dates to 1928. About all this perseverance and effervescent search to find solutions to the multiple difficulties raised by the launch of a magazine was also mentioned by Paul Costin Deleanu in the publication that finally offered them the satisfaction of a fulfilled dream: "Between the foundation attempt from "*Duh și Slovă*" and the current "*Floarea de foc*" [*Flower of Fire*] there was constant sadness for us, the few who were waiting for the first. [...] The persistence of a Sandu Tudor was not lacking. Because of this perseverance we have today *Floarea de foc* [*Flower of Fire*]. But there is a big difference between what was supposed to be then and what is now. If then there was only one guard, campaigning for the same common ground, – today, at the call of the director

here, more came. It is a unique show, the one that the magazine will offer." (Deleanu, 1932, January 6) "Prologue for this hour", the title of the program article (Tudor, 1932, January 6 A), beyond the special resonance of the first term, which recalls the author's preference for the word of the old biblical texts and chronicles, announces the deep connection to current issues - "this hour" - to the spirituality that (as it was understood from the answer formulated in the investigation in *Tiparița literară*) Sandu Tudor placed it core of the permanence of the Patristic Tradition.

The definition of spirituality, the convergent point, the identity brand, in which mystics and rationalists were also found, was formulated (could it be otherwise?) even in terms present in the cultic act, being nothing more than a permanent search, a difficult and winding path towards spiritual meanings, demanding not only rationally: "What unites us, so different at the first impression, is not some combining, some reckoning suspected in advance by the foreheads that look at us. What unites us has nothing to do with the matches made by our separate minds, it is nothing that we concocted in a hurry, it cannot in any way be supported or started from something "ad hoc" that is conceitedly called "my" conception, philosophy" (Tudor, 1932, January 6 A).

The young interwar generation, experientialist, refused to settle comfortably in cultural, ideational, institutional forms of the forerunners, imperatively expressing their courage to build their own image, their distinct path, leaving behind positivism, scientism, the rationalistic corsets of the past age: "We hesitate to leave the well-trodden path of attempts to combine our own thoughts, in so-called "syntheses". The futility of this "happening" is immense. This path leads either to wild and endless squirming or to a strange surrogate at first sight, a satisfying, dulling cure for mental and external disturbances. This path, in any sense we would travel it will reach a dead end. We don't want to work unnecessarily, matching high thoughts from the multitude of abstract truths that we carry with us, limited to the understanding and power of everyone. (Tudor, 1932, January 6 A, 1)"

In the opinion of the director of the magazine *Floarea de foc* [*Flower of Fire*], the important thing was to restore the appetite for important questions, sharply distinguishing himself from the festive installation in high certainty - the path of the rationalists. In his program article, Sandu Tudor supported the pre-eminence of the search (an obvious echo of Nae Ionescu's experientialism), preferring the position of the questioner, of the perpetual seeker who sees in access to the Truth the

redeeming solution: "Because of this scorching heat that haunts us, we also huddled together. We muster all the effort of our understanding and strength, realizing that salvation will not come to us out of nothing, but from what we have been given to have under our feet, to keep in our hearts, to carry above the crest, from this we will be able to draw the direction of life. The blossoming flame that we bring on the outstretched palm has nothing to do with the individual price of our imperfection. This burst of blaze at first sight may be insignificant to others, but to us it has something of the core of that precise and objective Truth, able to open an unseen window through which the eye can look into the night." (Tudor, 1932, January 6 A, 1).

In *Floarea de foc* [*Flower of Fire*] - the metaphor of intense living under which the young generation adopted - it became possible to live in absolute universality, in the Holy Spirit, through asceticism and mystical life. The dynamic pursued was not one-sided, in the sense of the individual effort for cultural edification, for the logical, flatly rational discovery of external reality. The young people who set up a grandstand-magazine of polarized ideas around their new spirituality, through the person of the director Sandu Tudor, sensed an inner renewal: "We are haunted by the fiery passion of the renewing Spirit. We are called to a new vision that wants to be beautiful and clear. Under the shadow of this fiery vision that goes before us through the wilderness, we will pass through anarchy and death, seeking to find our way and no other." (Tudor, 1932, January 6 A, 1)

The young people, who had gone through the experiences of the world organization Young Men's Christian Association, Federation of Christian Student Associations from Romania, Christian Student Association from Bucharest, thinkers and existentialists, some with studies in France (see Mircea Vulcănescu and Paul Sterian who immediately after graduating went to Paris for doctoral studies), others in India (Mircea Eliade), others in the Holy Mount Athos (Sandu Tudor), claimed the cosmic dimension of humanity, opposing the historical becoming as a sterile phenomenality, the annulment of fruitful dialogue word-Logos, of the eviction of the signs of the living Tradition on which the harmonious character of existence was built: "This foresight, this icon of the spirit, strictly necessary to be able to move in life, to live, I said that some consider to invent it themselves, at random, without any sense of harmony, according to the circumstances and requirements of life. Others who have learned the wider meaning and cosmic vision of man, receive this framework as a gift enclosed in the living tradition that is humanity

since forever. This means that they understood the need to appropriate themselves to a dogmatic of life." (Tudor, 1932, January 6 A, 1)

The eviction of dogmatic consciousness threw man into the abyss, he lacked the tools necessary for the archetypal being, being in which the new spiritualist direction of the young generation was located: "The turmoil of the spirit, the passion of the Spirit revived again in us, the people of this earth, with such a meaningful past, must be raised to shine far and wide" (Tudor, 1932, January 6 A, 1) Hence, the issue of a declaration of war against all those who reduce the attribute of divine omniscience to accidental, coincidence or chance. The national messianism, the echo of the thinker ethos, the struggle for the luminous edification of the nation's spiritual image, was thus expressed: "The age of those deniers who, in their short-sightedness or ill-will, have always relied on the prejudice that this people had and does not have any real momentum, no real revolt, from which to understand the zeal for the snowy heights of thought, has passed towards the dawn in which the northern light of the Spirit shines." (Tudor, 1932, January 6 A, 1)

Therefore, the direction of the magazine was naturally placed in the neo-traditionalist direction in which the members of the younger generation had already manifested themselves, as soon as they had entered the publishing arena, from the director who now assumed the manifesto article to the editors who, without a doubt, had supported the fulfillment of this ambitious project. Their fight aimed at promoting the ideas through which the profile of the living intellectual had already crystallized: spirituality, experientialism, orthodoxy, universalism, and autochthonism, which connoted the idea of placing their beloved reader on a spiritual path, the indicators being directed towards the Living Truth.

## CONCLUSIONS

*Floarea de foc* [*Flower of Fire*] had announced the non-traditionalist direction aimed at discovering the natural purpose of life, the world and the historical flow, the eschatological program rooted in the Apostolic Tradition of the Orthodox Church. The search for meanings takes place in heterogeneous ways, the magazine of director Sandu Tudor addressing extremely diverse topics, such as: literary journalism (Romanian and foreign), religious, philosophical, cultural, artistic, ethical, sociological, political, educational, historical, information and entertainment. The heterogeneity of the subjects, however, did not put the publication under the sign of eclecticism, the guiding line being given by the

orthodox position, the rigor of the principles of Christian philosophy remaining a constant of the journalistic discourse, both director and of the editors of the magazine *Floarea de foc* [*Flower of Fire*], from the first to at the last number.

The polemical situation in the interwar journalistic context was symptomatic of the neo-traditionalist vs. modernism, hence the debate of the publication's collaborators (led by their director), against rationalists and modernists, for example (the investigation of the Kalende magazine occasioned a clarification of how spirituality in the mystical sense was considered anachronistic and anti-European by the intellectualist group, modernist, urban, rational around that publication).

For example, Lucian Blaga's new situation in relation to the issue of the new spirituality and his delimitation from the *thinking* doctrine gives rise to extensive studies of Blaga's philosophical work entering the public debate, through the magazine founded by the orthodox journalist Sandu Tudor. Thus, Mircea Vulcănescu proves his stature as a Christian philosopher in the study "Logos and Eros", published in the feuilleton, where he treats the specifics of Christian philosophy both from an Eastern and a Western perspective (Vulcănescu, 1932, March 12, pg. 2-3), while the younger Paul Costin Deleanu will print in the form of open letters an analysis, passed through the filter of Eastern patristic philosophy, of the volume *Eonul dogmatic* [Dogmatic Aeon] signed by the same Lucian Blaga. (Deleanu, 1932, February 6).

The young generation coagulated around the *Floarea de foc* [*Flower of Fire*] magazine was represented by some of its elites: Mircea Vulcănescu, Mircea Eliade, Paul Sterian, Eugen Ionescu, Emil Cioran, Horia Stamatu, Petru Manoliu, George Racoveanu, Paul Costin Deleanu, Arșevir and Haig Acterian, Toma Vladescu, Al. C. Constantinescu, Cicerone Theodorescu, Ilarie Dobridor, Petru Comarnescu, Zaharia Stancu, Constantin Clonaru, Anton Holban, just to name a few. Of course, the dynamic has changed over time, some becoming directors of their own publications, other collaborators of magazines with a more solid organization (meaning a better financial position). In fact, the last year of its appearance (1936) came after the scandal *Criterion* vs. *Credința*, valuable collaborators - Mircea Vulcănescu, Eugen Ionescu, Emil Cioran - will no longer publish their articles in the pages of the magazine run by their former friend, Sandu Tudor. What has not changed, however, is the relationship of the creativity of the writers who chose to express their ideas in the *Floarea de foc* [*Flower of Fire*] to the religious roots of Romanian culture.

As for the propaganda potential of the publication, we will refer to the perspective of the Secret Police as a guide on the subject. That the subject Sandu Tudor was always under the scrutiny of the police and the Directorate of General Security (Securitatea) was proven by the numerous files in the CNSAS Archive related to this subject (Ciornea, 2017 A, pp. 92-93). In the file number 013495, volume 2, from the criminal file, only four issues of the magazine *Floarea de foc* [*Flower of Fire*] are included - all from the first year of Sandu Tudor's publication, 1932 (CNSAS, 013495).

This fact shows that in the eyes of the secret police agents the magazine was classified as a periodical with a literary character (Ciornea, 2017 A, pp.28-29).

Or, to manage to defy the leveling influences of the socio-political context (with obvious ideological accents), to manage to preserve the thematic content of your publication directed with predilection towards subjects drawn from Romanian and universal cultural life, to manage to evaluate in a correct manner the path of maintaining simplicity, which was indicated by aspects of Tradition, to succeed in acting under the imperatives of a consciousness centered in the mystery of God's creation in order to constitute a platform of cultural-artistic expression at the highest level - these are trials through which moral stature is verified, spiritual, intellectual and professional of the press man Sandu Tudor.

## REFERENCE LIST

- [1] Ciornea, C. (2017 A) *Sandu Tudor și asociațiile studențești creștine din România interbelică*, București: Eikon
- [2] Ciornea, C. (2017 B) „«Floarea de Foc» («Flower of Fire») – Sandu Tudor's Newspaper.” *Management Intercultural* 38: 85-95.
- [3] Ciornea, C. (2023) Identități ideologizante în presa din România interbelică. Revista „Floarea de foc” în lectura Serviciului Siguranței Generale. *Journal of Humanistic and Social Studies* 14/2: 17-30.
- [4] CNSAS, Documentary fund, File no. 004011.
- [5] CNSAS, Documentary fund, File no. 008848, vol. 110.
- [6] CNSAS, Documentary fund, File no. 011821
- [7] CNSAS, Documentary fund, File no. 012056.
- [8] CNSAS, Documentary fund, File no. 013653, vol. 1
- [9] CNSAS, Criminal fund, File no. 013495, vol. 2.
- [10] Deleanu, P.C. (1932, February 6) Răspuns la

- Eonul dogmatic. Scrisoare deschisă domnului Lucian Blaga. *Floarea de foc*. p.2.
- [11] Deleanu, P.C. (1932, January 6) Adeziune. *Floarea de foc*. p. 2.
- [12] Desa, I. S. (2012) Notă introductivă, *Publicațiile Periodice Românești, Tom. V, 1931-1935*, București: Editura Academiei Române
- [13] Eliade, M. (1932, December 25) Tendințele tinerei generații. *Vremea*, p. 4
- [14] Eliade, M. (1991). *Memorii. Promisiunile echinocțiului (1907-1960)*, vol. I, București: Humanitas
- [15] Erll, A (2014). „Generation in Literary History: Three Constellations of Generationality, Genealogy, and Memory”, *New Literary History*, 45/3: 385-409.
- [16] Hayot, E (2011) Against Periodization; or, On Institutional Time, *New Literary History*, 42 (4), Autumn, 739-756.
- [17] Tudor, S. (1932, January 6A) Prolog pentru ceasul acesta. *Floarea de foc*, p.1.
- [18] Tudor, S. (1932, January 6B) Explicația timpului nostru. *Floarea de foc*, p. 4.
- [19] Tudor, S. (1932, March 12) Curier. *Floarea de foc*. p. 4.
- [20] Vulcănescu, M. (1932, March 12) Logos și Eros, *Floarea de foc*, p. 2-3.