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The Stork's Nest

One of the most disputed renewal movements of the 1920s took place at St Stefan's Church in Bucharest, known as the Stork's Nest. The parish priest there was Teodor Popescu. The Stork's Nest had been his father-in-law's church and Popescu became parish priest after the latter's death. His sermons attracted large numbers of people who flocked to hear him preach. Popescu's preaching emphasized the urgency of personal conversion and the idea of justification by faith. Popescu's pamphlet *How to Bring Souls to Christ* (1924) explained that human suffering is a result of sin's impact on the world, and that every one of his readers was a sinner. But sinners need not despair, he wrote, because Jesus Christ died for our sins. 'And so the question is: how will you face the end? Saved or unsaved? Regardless, the Saviour could come again today or tomorrow. Find out. He asks nothing of you except to believe and you'll be saved through grace.'¹ Few other Orthodox preachers of the day talked about a one-time conversion in this way and few insisted that people decide to follow Jesus lest an unexpected death might send them to hell. In fact, Orthodox writers taught that there are two judgements of the dead: one, temporary judgement immediately after death to beatitude or punishment while awaiting the resurrection, and a second, eternal one at the time of Christ's Second Coming.²

Popescu's message found an enthusiastic audience. Among his listeners one evening was the Minister of Denominations, Octavian Goga, who wrote that when he visited the church,

¹ Teodor Popescu, *Cum aducem sufletele la Hristos sau planul de mântuire* (Bucharest: Tip. 'Cultura Neamului Românesc', 1924), 27.

² Gherontie Nicolau, *Starea sufletelor după moarte: Scurtă privire asupra învățăturii Sf. Biserici Ortodoxe de Răsărit despre judecata particulară și răsplata temporală a sufletelor celor adormiți și folosul rugăciunilor bisericii pentru ele* (Chișinău: Imprimeria Statului, 1923); Ioan Mihălcescu, *Catehismul creștinului ortodox* (Cernica: Tipografia Bisericească din Sfânta Mănăstire Cernica, 1924), 25.

To my great surprise, the inside of the holy building was crammed with people from the beginning, a strange assembly made up of people from every walk of life ... The priest's whole body trembled, caught up in the magic of his words. Screwing up his pale, ascetic forehead, his face came back to life, filled with nervous fluid, and two drops of an unusual light shone deep in his eyes like the canvases of [Jusepe de] Ribera. The devoted crowd listened carefully to his analyses and followed the rhythm of his logic with a lively discomposure, leaving the critical spectator with a profound conviction and an incontestable spiritual message.³

Popescu had studied first at the seminary in Curtea de Argeș then at the Central Seminary in Bucharest which was directed by Constantin Nazarie, the author of numerous books attacking Seventh-Day Adventism.⁴ He graduated in 1907 before enrolling in a theology degree at the University of Bucharest. Popescu later wrote that his early sermons focused on 'the law, morals; I would choose a vice such as drunkenness or licentiousness as an example and I would examine it from every angle. People listened and said: "Yes, yes, that's right!" Or I would take a virtue: goodness, love, generosity. "Yes, yes, that's right", people would say, happy to see these things scrutinized in an interesting way.'⁵ Most collections of printed sermons from Orthodox preachers took a similar approach.⁶

Translating religion

It was Popescu's cantor, Dumitru Cornilescu, who changed his theology and preaching. Cornilescu was also a graduate of Bucharest's Central Seminary, studying there while it was directed by Iuliu Scriban.⁷ Cornilescu was a devoted disciple of Scriban, who introduced his students to various Western authors, including Frank Thomas and William James.⁸ 'I was amazed', Cornilescu later

³ Octavian Goga, 'Răzvrățirea de la "Cuibul cu Barză"', *Țara noastră*, 24 January 1923, reprinted in Iosif Țon, *Credința adevărată* (Wheaton, IL: Societatea Misionară Română, 1988), 137–40.

⁴ Nazarie, *Duminica, botezul și ierarhia bisericească*; Constantin Nazarie, *Cinstirea sfințelor icoane și adventiștii* (Bucharest: Tipografia Cărților Bisericești, 1911); Constantin Nazarie, *Combaterea principalelor învățături adventiste* (Bucharest: Tipografia Cărților Bisericești, 1913).

⁵ Teodor Popescu, quoted in Horia Azimioră, *Din viața și lucrarea lui Teodor Popescu* (n.p.: n.p., 1988), 11.

⁶ For example, Cristea, *Colecțiune de predici populare*; Codreanu, *Sămânța de lângă cale*; Iuliu Scriban, *50 de predici populare* (Slobozia: Editura Episcopiei Sloboziei și Călărașilor, 2014).

⁷ Emanuel Conțac, *Cornilescu: Din culisele publicării celei mai citite traduceri a Sfintei Scripturi* (Cluj-Napoca: Logos, 2014), 48.

⁸ Crainic, *Zile albe*, 54.

wrote, 'when I saw so many Christian books, because at the time there were very few in Romania.'⁹ As Gala Galaction commented in 1921, 'in Romania books about religious and Christian topics are as unusual and rare as rain in Egypt'.¹⁰ Cornilescu published his first translation, taken from the writings of Frank Thomas, in *Păstorul ortodox* (*The Orthodox Shepherd*) in 1910. Thomas was a charismatic preacher based in Switzerland, whose writings emphasized evangelism, piety and personal conversion.¹¹ Cornilescu continued translating Thomas's work along with those of the controversial writer and former Russian Orthodox priest Grigorii Spiridonovich Petrov, serializing them in *Revista teologică* (*The Theological Magazine*) during 1912 and 1913.¹² Cornilescu was well respected within the Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC), and even had some of his translations published in the Church's official magazine.¹³ The fact that Scriban encouraged his students to engage with an American psychologist (James), a Swiss Protestant pastor (Thomas) and a defrocked socialist priest (Petrov) shows how varied the influences on early twentieth-century Romanian Orthodoxy were.¹⁴

In 1915, while a student in theology at the University of Bucharest, he collaborated with another student Vasile Radu, who later became a celebrated Orientalist, on translating a massive tome entitled *The Orthodox Church and Canon Law* (1890) by the Serbian bishop and canon lawyer Nikodim Milaš.¹⁵ The translation was overseen by one of Cornilescu's teachers, Irineu Mihălcescu, who also wrote the preface for Cornilescu's translation of Otto Quast's attack on the theory of evolution.¹⁶ Cornilescu also collaborated with Olga Gologan in 1915, an erudite young nun two years his senior who had just established an orphanage that would soon become a flourishing school, in translating a

⁹ Dumitru Cornilescu, *Cum m-am întors la Dumnezeu* (Bucharest: Biserica Evanghelică Română, 2014), 5.

¹⁰ Gala Galaction, 'E bine și așa', *Luptătorul*, 21 July 1921, 1.

¹¹ Luc Weibel, *Croire à Genève: La Salle de la Réformation (XIX-XX^e siècle)* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2006), 136.

¹² Conțac, *Cornilescu*, 50; Dim. I. Cornilescu după Petrow, 'Principiile fundamentale ale civilizației', *Revista teologică* 6, no. 4–5 (1912): 131–7; Dim. I. Cornilescu după F. Thomas, 'Chestiuni vitale', *Revista teologică* 7, no. 1 (1913): 17–27.

¹³ T. P. Păcescu, 'Cine propagă ce este și unde duce teoria despre un Mântuitor personal', *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 May 1922, 34.

¹⁴ Despite his rupture with the Russian Orthodox Church, Petrov's work was actually quite popular in Romania. No less an authority than Nicodim Munteanu translated three of Petrov's books between 1908 and 1918, all of which went through multiple editions. 'Patriarhul Nicodim Munteanu', *Patriarhii României*. Available online: <http://www.patriarh.ro/Nicodim/actpublicistica.php> (accessed 12 August 2019).

¹⁵ Conțac, *Cornilescu*, 50–1, 60 n. 52.

¹⁶ Otto Quast, *Teoria lui Haeckel despre lume*, trans. Dumitru Cornilescu (Craiova: Ramura, n.d.).

devotional calendar containing daily meditations by Frank Thomas.¹⁷ The calendar was praised by Nicolae Bălan and found its way into the hand of Ralu Callimachi, who immediately contacted him about translating the Bible into Romanian.¹⁸ A noblewoman in an unhappy marriage, Ralu Callimachi was a devoted Christian who had become a Baptist while visiting Paris roughly twenty years earlier. She had personal experience translating and distributing the Bible and was known for loaning books from her extensive library of Protestant literature to enthusiastic young priests. Callimachi provided Cornilescu with room and board while he worked. He took his monastic vows during the summer of 1916 – presumably to avoid being conscripted into the army – but he continued to live at Callimachi's mansion at Stâncești at least until he had finished translating the New Testament in 1919.¹⁹

According to Cornilescu's later writings, he yearned for the 'new life' that he had read about in foreign books and was confused that the authors he was reading were so fascinated with the Bible. 'I didn't like the Bible', he wrote, 'I had a translation in front of me that was so bad that I couldn't understand it ... But when I started to read it in another language, I understood it and liked it'.²⁰ Despite his years of theological training, Cornilescu claimed that it was while he was translating the Bible that he first understood universal sinfulness, the idea that sin must be destroyed by hellfire and that Christ died on the cross for the forgiveness of sins. He prayed: 'Lord, I know only this book. You said that it is your Word. I read in it that Christ died for me; I accept forgiveness for myself and if you judge me it won't be my fault because I have believed what it says in your Word.'²¹ Newly converted, Cornilescu began his translation again from scratch, telling himself that 'up until now the translation has been done by *my old self*. I am a *new person* and must have a new translation done by my new self'.²²

There were, of course, other Romanian translations of the Bible available. The most common was the 'Iași Bible' (1874), which was the first to use the Latin alphabet adopted in the early 1860s. Nicolae Nițulescu revised the Iași Bible during the 1890s and the British Bible Society published several editions

¹⁷ Dumitru Cornilescu and Olga Gologan (trans.), *Îndrăzniți! Cetiri biblice și meditațiuni pentru fiecare zi a anului, după F. Thomas* (Bucharest: Tip. Gutenberg, 1915); cited in Conțac, *Cornilescu*, 53 n. 29.

¹⁸ Conțac, *Cornilescu*, 53.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 53–61; P. Chirică, 'Adevăratul scop al "Adevărului creștin"', *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 January 1924, 248.

²⁰ Cornilescu, *Cum m-am întors*, 6.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

²² *Ibid.*, 13.

of Nițulescu's translation between 1906 and 1921, trying to keep up with various changes in orthography.²³ In 1911 the Bible Society commissioned Iuliu Scriban and Nicodim Munteanu to produce a new translation, but both men were increasingly busy with their official functions and were unable to complete the project.²⁴ Munteanu continued working on his translation – mostly from Russian – after retiring to a monastery in 1923. He published a new version of the New Testament (1924) and Psalms (1927), as well as being responsible for twenty-four of the books of the Old Testament that appeared in the Synod Bible of 1936.²⁵ Gala Galaction began his own, more literary, translation in 1921, eventually inviting Vasile Radu to join as his collaborator. Galaction began doing readings of his Bible on the radio in 1923 and published his New Testament in 1927, but the complete translation was not finished until 1937.²⁶

Cornilescu's translation was based on a revised version of Louis Segond's French Bible from 1910.²⁷ Relying entirely on Callimachi's financial support, Cornilescu established the Romanian Evangelical Society under whose auspices he published his New Testament (1920), Psalms (1920) and Old Testament (1921).²⁸ His translation met with a deafening silence from most critics.²⁹ Those who did comment on it were critical but generally positive. Though he later described it as 'tendentious and heretical', Galaction's initial impression was that 'this is and will remain a commendable work, providing worthwhile reading for everyone'.³⁰ The newspaper *Dacia* wrote that 'Cornilescu's New Testament is far superior to any previous translation in Romanian. It has a suppleness and fluency which the others lack entirely ... The language of Cornilescu's translation flows out of the heart of our people'.³¹ His old teacher, Iuliu Scriban, thought it 'very

²³ Conțaș, *Cornilescu*, 38; *Sfânta Scriptură a Vechiului și a Noului Testament* (Bucharest: Societatea de Biblie Britanică, 1921).

²⁴ Conțaș, *Cornilescu*, 37–9.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 99; 'Patriarhul Nicodim Munteanu'.

²⁶ Galaction, *Jurnal*, vol. 3, 112, 301, 309; 'Citiri din Biblia nouă', *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 41, no. 5 (1923): 394; Atanasie Mironescu, 'Noul Testament', *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 46, no. 2 (1928): 169–85.

²⁷ *La Sainte Bible*, trans. Louis Segond (Paris: Alliance Biblique Universelle, 1910); Emanuel Conțaș, 'Influența versiunii Segond asupra versiunii Cornilescu 1921', in *Receptarea Sfintei Scripturi. Între filologie, hermeneutică și traductologie*, ed. Eugen Munteanu (Iași: EUAIC, 2011), 122–45.

²⁸ Cornilescu, 'Ce este cu "Adevărul Creștin"', 99–100; *Noul Testament*, trans. D. Cornilescu (Bucharest: Societatea Evanghelică Română, 1920); *Cartea Psalmilor sau Psaltirea*, trans. D. Cornilescu (Bucharest: Societatea Evanghelică Română, 1920); *Biblia sau Sfânta Scriptură*, trans. D. Cornilescu (Bucharest: Societatea Evanghelică Română, 1921).

²⁹ *Noua revistă bisericească* 3, no. 1–2 (1921): 269, quoted in Conțaș, *Cornilescu*, 72–3.

³⁰ Galaction, *Piatra din capul unghiului*, 83; Galaction, 'E bine și așa', 1.

³¹ Quoted in a letter, J. W. Wiles to J. H. Ritson, 27 November 1920, in Conțaș, *Cornilescu*, 118.

colloquial'.³² In contrast, the Greek Catholic priest and scholar Victor Macaveiu noted that, although Cornilescu's translation was 'very original', it lacked 'that archaic, old hue of the word of God, it is missing what on bronze statues we would call *tarnish* – that which increases the value of the statue'.³³ The popular reception of Cornilescu's Bible was overwhelmingly enthusiastic. It sold out almost immediately and representatives of the British Bible Society who were trying to decide whether to publish Cornilescu's translation themselves heard it praised everywhere they went.³⁴

The only genuinely hostile reviews came from the priests D. Mangâru and Petru Chirică, who attacked Cornilescu's translation on the grounds that his choice of words in describing 'a Sabbath rest' (*o odihnă de Sabat*) in Hebrews 4:9 supported the Seventh-Day Adventist position that Christians should worship on Saturdays.³⁵ In addition to attacking his opponents' knowledge of Greek, Cornilescu's response was that the Adventists erred 'in their twisted interpretation of the text, not in the meaning of the text, which should be preserved as it is and not changed for the sake of it or out of fear of one teaching or another'.³⁶ Possibly anticipating this criticism, in 1920 Cornilescu had already serialized his translations of two pamphlets by English and American authors attacking Adventist doctrines.³⁷ His Bible was popular with Repenters, who began recommending Cornilescu's translation almost immediately.³⁸ Despite various concerns about the precision of Cornilescu's language and over his translation of the Greek word *dikaiosynē* (righteousness) as *neprihănire* (sinlessness) instead of *dreptate* (rectitude), the British Bible Society adopted it as their official Romanian version and released a revised edition in 1924.³⁹

³² Letter, R. Kligor to J. W. Wiles, 21 January 1921, in Conțaș, *Cornilescu*, 121.

³³ Victor Macaveiu, 'Spre o nouă ediție a Scripturii românești', *Cultura creștină* (1921), quoted in Conțaș, *Cornilescu*, 72.

³⁴ Conțaș, *Cornilescu*, 118, 126, 128, 145.

³⁵ D. Mangâru, 'Odiha creștinismului (Contra Adventismului)', *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 July 1921, 123–45; D. Mangâru, 'Adaos la "Odiha creștinismului și răspuns la Domnului D. Cornilescu"', *Noua revistă bisericească*, 15 February 1922, 404–5; Petru Chirică, 'Condițiuni la studiul de combatere al adventismului', *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 41, no. 2 (1922): 114–16. All three articles are quoted in Conțaș, *Cornilescu*, 73.

³⁶ Dumitru Cornilescu, 'Odiha creștinismului', *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 December 1921, 292. Cf. Dumitru Cornilescu, 'Câteva lămuriri în chestiuni de traducere a Bibliei', *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 41, no. 8 (1923): 567–70.

³⁷ R. A. Torrey, 'Trebuie să țină creștinii sabatul?' trans. D. Cornilescu, *Noua revistă bisericească*, January 1920, 146–8; A. J. Pollock, 'Adventismul în fața Scripturii', *Noua revistă bisericească*, June 1920, 40–2. Both are cited in Conțaș, *Cornilescu*, 74–5 n. 93.

³⁸ 'Citiți Noul Testament', *Buna vestire*, January 1921, 8.

³⁹ Conțaș, *Cornilescu*, 79–85.

Preaching revival

After having been 'born again' while translating the Bible, Cornilescu began holding Bible studies with young soldiers who were about to be sent to the front and who wanted to know if they would go to heaven when they died. The group met regularly and Cornilescu taught them Christian songs he had translated. He wrote that the lives of these young men were profoundly changed and that, when they were persecuted for their beliefs by a group of schoolboys throwing rocks, they began to pray and converted their persecutors through prayer.⁴⁰

After finishing the first edition of his Bible, Cornilescu returned to St Stefan's Church in Bucharest. Excited by the power of Cornilescu's message about 'turning to God', Popescu began to preach it until he too was convicted of his sins and 'born again'.⁴¹ 'Like any believer, I would have been ready to say that Jesus died for his ideas', Popescu wrote. 'Never, absolutely never, had I noticed the words in the creed: "And he was crucified for us". Had I noticed I would have thought that the word "us" applied to anyone else just not to me.'⁴² Together they began holding evening Bible studies for men in the parish, postponing teaching women until eventually a group of women occupied the church and demanded to participate in these studies as well.⁴³ Meetings at the Stork's Nest became more and more popular and in 1921 Iuliu Scriban began encouraging his students to visit the church to hear Popescu preach.⁴⁴

When he published his collected sermons Popescu received positive reviews from other renewal-oriented Orthodox publications such as Iosif Trifa's *Lumina satelor*, Vartolomeu Stănescu's *Solidaritatea* and *Renașterea*, and Teodor Păcescu's *Noua revistă bisericească*.⁴⁵ Spiritual change can only come about by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Cornilescu asserted, quoting sermons by Bălan and Stănescu to support his case.⁴⁶ Cornilescu established

⁴⁰ Cornilescu, *Cum m-am întors*, 13–20.

⁴¹ Ibid., 22–3; Teodor Popescu, 'O mărturisire care poate fi unora de folos', *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 August 1923, 124–30. Note that in his account, Popescu does not credit Cornilescu with having taught him the doctrine of justification by faith but claims that he arrived at this conviction on his own through the working of the Holy Spirit.

⁴² Tudor Popescu, *Isus vă chiamă* (Bucharest: n.p., 1939), 19.

⁴³ Dumitru Cornilescu, 'Ceva despre activitatea evanghelizatoare dela "Cuibul cu barză"', *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 June 1923, 91–2.

⁴⁴ Azimioră, *Din viața și lucrarea*, 23.

⁴⁵ C. Diaconescu, 'Iisus va chieamă!' *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 June 1923, 112–13; Azimioră, *Din viața și lucrarea*, 24–5; Manea S. Popescu, 'O recapitulare a discuțiunilor polemice provocate de învățăturile propoveduite la biserica Cuibul cu Barză și o concluzie', *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 June 1923, 103.

⁴⁶ Cornilescu, 'Ce este cu "Adevărul Creștin"', 95, 97.

a regular magazine known as *Adevărul creștin* (*The Christian Truth*), which aroused suspicion among some of his colleagues once Adventist and Brethren preachers began buying and distributing it on the grounds that Cornilescu had ‘come over to our side’.⁴⁷ The opening editorial of *Adevărul creștin* outlined its mission statement as:

[The magazine] knows that humans do not naturally have this life, which is a gift of God obtained through faith in a personal Saviour, whose death atones for our sins, calling us to live in close connection to the One who gave His life for us. Second, it is aimed at the children of God who have passed from death to life, have been born again, and who live bound up with their personal Saviour.⁴⁸

Although he appreciated *Adevărul creștin* and collaborated closely with Cornilescu, Teodor Popescu never published in its pages and claimed to have no connection with Cornilescu’s Romanian Evangelical Society.⁴⁹ Iosif Trifa from the Lord’s Army, on the other hand, actively promoted one of Cornilescu’s books, *The Human Heart: God’s Sanctuary or the Devil’s Workshop* (1922), saying that ‘there are few books in Romanian which can do more for Christ and for the salvation of the souls of our people than this one’.⁵⁰

During the early 1920s Cornilescu also began publishing his own translations of a variety of Protestant books, such as John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, a seventeenth-century Baptist work that pictured the spiritual life as a pilgrimage to heaven that involves sticking to the straight and narrow path while avoiding temptations and false teachings.⁵¹ Other British authors he translated include works by the Brethren preachers Charles Henry Machintosh and George Müller, as well as Charles Challand’s biography of Müller.⁵² Both Machintosh and Müller emphasized that regular study of the Bible needed to be central to the Christian life and both were committed to making the Gospel as accessible as possible by explaining Christian theology in simple language. Cornilescu published translations of books by several American authors associated with the Moody Bible Institute and the YMCA, including James Henry McConkey, Reuben

⁴⁷ Ibid., 99 n. 2; P. Chirică, ‘Adevăratul scop al “Adevărul creștin”’, *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 January 1924, 248–9.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Păcescu, ‘Cine propagă’, 36.

⁴⁹ T. Popescu, ‘O scrisoare a părintelui Teodor Popescu’, *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 May 1922, 63.

⁵⁰ Iosif Trifa, ‘O carte de mare folos sufletesc’, *Lumina satelor*, 11 February 1923, 5.

⁵¹ John Bunyan, *Călătoria creștinului sau calea spre fericirea de veci*, trans. Dumitru Cornilescu (Bucharest: Editura Societății de Cărți Religioase, 1923).

⁵² Charles Challand, *O minune din vremurile noastre: viața și lucrarea lui George Müller*, trans. Dumitru Cornilescu (Bucharest: Societatea Evanghelică Romină, 1922); Alexandru Măianu, *Viața și lucrarea lui Dumitru Cornilescu* (Bucharest: Editura Stephanus, 1995), 73.

Archer Torrey and Samuel Dickey Gordon.⁵³ All were committed preachers and evangelists who emphasized giving up control of one's life into God's hands and cultivating holiness. McConkey helped establish the Africa Inland Mission, Torrey worked closely with Dwight L. Moody and was one of the three editors of the essays collected in *The Fundamentals*, which became the foundational text of American fundamentalism, and Gordon's series of 'Quiet Talks' contained detailed instructions about holy living. Cornilescu also translated works by the Swiss apologist Frédéric Bettex, who argued that the Bible was in agreement with modern science, and the Lutheran theologian Gerhard Hilbert, who encouraged local churches to commit themselves to missionary work in their communities.⁵⁴

Cornilescu collected and translated Protestant hymns as well as books, providing ways for believers at the Stork's Nest to express their faith through song. Most Orthodox songbooks of the period included slow, reflective pieces emphasizing God's might and holiness, humanity's need for mercy, and honouring the Virgin Mary. In a 1928 collection assembled by Gheorghe Cucu, for example, one finds titles such as 'God is with us, understand you peoples and worship', 'Blessed be, Christ our God' and 'You are truly worthy of our praise, Mother of God'.⁵⁵ The songs in Cornilescu's collection were more upbeat and the musical score was written for piano, in comparison with Cucu's songbook, which was arranged for choral singing. Cornilescu's hymns focused on the idea that Jesus saves and requires an individual response from believers as well as on the joy and security to be found in God. His first songbook included hymns such as Charlotte Elliott's 'Just as I am, without one plea, / But that Thy blood was shed for me' (1835), William Doane's 'Safe in the Arms of Jesus' (1868), or Philip Doddridge's 'O happy day that fixed my choice / On Thee, my Saviour and my God!' (1755). In Cornilescu's hands Doddridge's Reformed Calvinism became clearly Arminian: 'Happy day, when I took Jesus as my Saviour! / O how good it seems to me now that I chose Him then'.⁵⁶ Any sense that one's salvation was determined ('fixed') by God beforehand is missing in Cornilescu's translation, being replaced by an overwhelming emphasis on an individual's choice to believe. As is all church music, Cornilescu's hymns were dogmatic confessions

⁵³ James Henry McConkey, *Ce înseamnă viața predată în slujba Domnului*, trans. Dumitru Cornilescu (n.p.: n.p., n.d.); Măianu, *Viața și lucrarea*, 73.

⁵⁴ Gerhard Hilbert, *Exista spirit?* (Bucharest: Libraria Max Kendler, n.d.); Măianu, *Viața și lucrarea*, 73.

⁵⁵ 'Cu noi este Dumnezeu', 'Bine ești cuvântat' and 'Vrednică ești' in Cucu, *Zece cântece religioase*, 8–10, 14–15, 28–31.

⁵⁶ 'Ferice zi ...', in Dumitru Cornilescu, *47 cântări creștinești cu note muzicale* (Bucharest: Societatea Evanghelică Română, 1922), 14.

that people would reflect on every time they sang them. Cornilescu asked to be allowed to renounce his monastic vows in July 1923, and the Church was only too happy to release him.⁵⁷

Heresy charges

Other priests who had been preaching revival wanted to know why the Stork's Nest was flourishing while they were preaching to empty churches.⁵⁸ The answer, they said, was that Popescu and Cornilescu were importing foreign ideas. Nae Ionescu accused Popescu and Cornilescu of threatening the security of the Romanian state by promoting English Protestantism and of subordinating Orthodoxy to the Anglican Church through their (alleged) association with the YMCA.⁵⁹ The two preachers vehemently denied these accusations, claiming that 'ours is a purely Romanian movement and has no other goal than the moral regeneration of our people in the only way possible, today and for all time: by disinterestedly preaching the Gospel of Christ'.⁶⁰ Both sides in this dispute claimed that they were working for the salvation of their country. The highest praise that anyone gave Cornilescu's translation was that it was 'pure Romanian', and reflected the language of the people instead of the wooden language of the Church.⁶¹ Popescu's supporters responded by questioning whether Orthodox priests were truly serving the nation. They accused priests of corruption and of exploiting the poor for their own financial gain: 'What do Christ's shepherds do when confronted with this odious spectacle [of politicianism]?', Dimitrie Nanu wrote. 'Even though the Saviour told them clearly: you cannot serve both God and money, still there are some – many, in fact – who do not wear a cross on their neck or its commands in their hearts, but instead carry the heavy steel key from the bank or cooperative'.⁶² An accomplished poet and translator, Dimitrie Nanu was an outspoken supporter of the Stork's Nest and was also a patron of the Christian Youth Association (ACT) while it was affiliated with the YMCA during the 1920s.⁶³

⁵⁷ ANIC, Fond MCA, Dosar 109/1923, f. 3.

⁵⁸ On Manea Popescu's attempts at evangelism, see 'Evanghelizare ortodoxă', *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 May 1923, 116.

⁵⁹ Un Ortodox (probably N. Ionescu), 'Pentru apărarea ortodoxiei', *Ideea europeană* 4, no. 111 (1923): 2.

⁶⁰ T. Popescu and D. Cornilescu, 'Domnule Director', *Ideea europeană* 4, no. 113 (1923): 2.

⁶¹ Letter, J. W. Wiles to J. H. Ritson, 27 November 1920, in Conțac, *Cornilescu*, 118.

⁶² Nanu, *Iisus vă cheamă*, 6.

⁶³ Ciornea, *Sandu Tudor*, 281.

Both sides also accused each other of being in league with Jews. In 1922 Teodor Păcescu wrote that 'the propaganda of these Protestant sects is a product of World Judaism, which uses any means to provoke diversions and confessional conflicts so that the economic and political dominance of Judaism might be followed by religious dominance'.⁶⁴ Similarly, in 1924 seven members of the Stork's Nest attacked Gala Galaction for his philosemitism: 'He is alone among Romanian writers to have given himself body and soul to the Jews and their interests. He has written the most perverse articles, both before and after he became a priest, confusing the Romanian spirit and sustaining the interests of Masonic Judaism'.⁶⁵

The issue came to a head in December 1923 after Galaction convinced the metropolitan to appoint a couple of other priests to serve alongside Teodor Popescu at St Ștefan's Church. It soon became apparent that Popescu was altering the liturgy, removing prayers asking the Virgin Mary and the saints to 'have mercy on us!' and emphasizing instead that it was Christ alone who has mercy and saves us.⁶⁶ Galaction caused arguments at the Stork's Nest when he invited himself to preach there in December and then finally persuaded the metropolitan to charge Popescu with heresy.⁶⁷ In Orthodox Christianity the liturgy defines how believers relate to God. It binds together everything from the veneration of the saints to the interpretation of Scripture and beliefs about salvation. As the archpriest of Arad, Florea Codreanu wrote in his explanation of the liturgy in 1940, 'Christ the Lord comes to us through the Holy Liturgy, it makes peace between us and God, and it creates bonds of brotherhood among us'.⁶⁸ Irineu Mihălcescu taught that the Church's liturgy evolved directly out of Jesus's breaking of the bread at the Last Supper.⁶⁹

Moreover, the concrete action of changing the liturgy was one of the few ways that Popescu's opponents could clearly prove his heterodoxy. The words of the liturgy were widely available in prayer books and how it should be performed

⁶⁴ T. P. Păcescu, 'Biserica in pragul anului 1922', *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 January 1922, 324.

⁶⁵ Dăncescu Bolintin et al., *Lupta între Dumnezeu și Mamonă: Între predicarea Evangheliei și acatist* (Bucharest: Tipografiile Române Unite, 1924), 6. The signatories of this pamphlet were V. Dăncescu Bolintin, F. Demetrescu Mirea, Th. C. Tomescu, Dumitru M. Pherekyde, Nicolae Flăpescu, Gh. Ceaușescu and Christian Theodora.

⁶⁶ Galaction, *Jurnal*, vol. 3, 151–2.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 153–6; [Gala Galaction], 'Cuvinte de lămurire', *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 41, no. 15 (1923): 1131.

⁶⁸ Codreanu, *Cunoștințe liturgice*, 39.

⁶⁹ Mihălcescu, *Explicarea Sfintei Liturghii*, 7–9; Ioan Mihălcescu, *Rânduiala și tâlcuirea pe scurt a Sfintei Liturghii* (Râmnicul Vâlcea: Tipografia Episcopul Vartolomei, 1935), 5–6.

was clearly spelt out by the Church.⁷⁰ Trapping heretics is difficult, Păcescu noted, because 'sectarians do not attack the teachings of the Orthodox Church directly, but throw themselves over the religious identity (*conștiința religioasă*) of our people and try to subdue them.'⁷¹ What was really at stake, Păcescu claimed, was the national identity of the Romanian people, but what could be proven was that Popescu had changed the liturgy.

Manea S. Popescu, who had gone to the same school as Teodor Popescu, published an open letter to him in March 1922 in the pages of *Noua revistă bisericească* asking him to answer five questions:

- 1) Whether he considers that we owe our salvation to Christ the Savior alone, and that we can obtain it only through faith – our only contribution.
- 2) If he has eliminated the veneration of the Virgin Mary.
- 3) If he permits the veneration of the saints.
- 4) If prayers for the dead are useless.
- 5) Why, after he has renounced several Orthodox beliefs, he remains in the Church and benefits from its wealth.⁷²

The two priests debated these questions in *Noua revistă bisericească* for the next two years. Manea Popescu's questions and Teodor Popescu's responses are instructive because they represent a candid attempt at clarifying the boundaries of Romanian Orthodoxy during a period of institutional and theological renewal.

The disputing parties disagreed on where authority in the Church lay. Dumitru Corniliescu said of himself that 'the whole time I was reading their books, some of which were very good, I was as blind as any blind man'. Păcescu retorted: 'A blind man with a degree in Orthodox theology! ... It appears that Deacon Corniliescu became a monk as a hobby'.⁷³ One thing that the opponents of the Stork's Nest would not allow was the idea that their education was worthless. Manea Popescu attacked Teodor Popescu by demonstrating that Irineu Mihălcescu, who had taught them both, disagreed with the latter's definition of salvation.⁷⁴ Quoting Mihălcescu when confronted with the Bible, Teodor Popescu said, was like a man who 'when attacked by a machine gun defended himself with a pistol'.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Dimitrie Lungulescu, *Manual de practică liturgică* (Bucharest: Tipografiile Române Unite, 1926); Gherontie Nicolau, *Îndrumătorul liturgic* (Bucharest: Tipografia Cărilor Bisericești, 1939).

⁷¹ Teodor P. Păcescu, 'Propaganda neo-protestantă', *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 January 1924, 241.

⁷² Manea S. Popescu, *Noua revistă bisericească*, 15 February 1922.

⁷³ Corniliescu, 'Ce este cu "Adevărul Creștin"', 91–101.

⁷⁴ Manea S. Popescu, 'Problema mântuirii', *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 October 1923, 160.

⁷⁵ T. Popescu, 'Răspuns la răspunsul Părintelui Manea Popescu', *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 May 1922, 65.

When Teodor Popescu refused to discuss the veneration of the saints until he had studied the Bible more closely, Manea Popescu responded, 'Why are you a still a priest and still accredited then? Doesn't it strike you that your answer insults our Faculty of Theology which gave you your accreditation?'⁷⁶ 'In matters of God's truths', Teodor Popescu wrote back, 'I accept only arguments made with Holy Scripture, which is the Word of God, the Word that promises to be eternal.'⁷⁷

Teodor Popescu maintained that when Christians spoke of 'the church' in the sense of Tradition, they meant 'certain people within the church who wrote about certain things and whose writings were accepted by the majority and retained'. Furthermore, 'these people [were] obliged to take note of the Gospel', so, obviously, their writings did not replace the Bible. 'Whoever invokes the authority of the church independent of the authority of the Gospel', Teodor Popescu claimed, 'bases history on the history books; and whoever invokes the authority of the Gospel bases history on the documents.'⁷⁸ 'The Bible is not Protestant', Cornilescu added, so why accuse people who quote it of being Protestants?⁷⁹

Manea Popescu appears to have accepted the idea of citing Scripture to support one's argument because his next contribution was suddenly full of quotes from the Bible.⁸⁰ Gala Galaction, on the other hand, complained that Popescu and Cornilescu's readings of the Bible were naive and simplistic. Galaction was quite happy to use the Church Fathers, ecumenical councils and the Holy Liturgy as authorities alongside the Bible, and to use them to interpret it. 'Most of the time when people wander from the truth it is because of the interpretation of Holy Scripture', Galaction explained, but 'in the church of the Saviour, dogmatic teachings and decisions are in the hands of the episcopal college, that is to say, in the hands of the gathering of the hierarchs. The episcopal college is the treasurer of the knowledge of the church and guards our whole lives in Christ.'⁸¹

Another of their major disagreements lay in their different understandings of salvation. Salvation is 'a gift', according to Teodor Popescu. A Christian draws near to God by reading the Bible and can be assured that 'he has forgiveness and peace with God through the blood of Jesus; based *only and exclusively* on

⁷⁶ Manea Popescu, 'Un ultim răspuns și câteva lămuriri Preotului Teodor Popescu', *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 March 1922, 13.

⁷⁷ Teodor Popescu, 'Poate cineva să spună că e mântuit?' *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 May 1923, 44.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 44.

⁷⁹ Dumitru Cornilescu, 'Tot cu privire la foaia "Adevărul creștin"', *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 October 1923, 163.

⁸⁰ Popescu, 'Problema mântuirii', 159–62.

⁸¹ Galaction, *Piatra din capul unghiului*, 44.

what the Lord has done and continues to do for him, saying “Thanks to him I am saved”.”⁸² ‘That’s not the way things are,’ responded Manea Popescu. Rather, Christians are united with God only through ‘the pouring of the invisible grace of God into the soul through the seven holy mysteries instituted by the Saviour himself’. Moreover, Manea Popescu maintained, ‘salvation is a divine-human act and ... reading the New Testament is a great thing but it is not sufficient for the salvation of one’s soul’.⁸³ Only Protestants believed that ‘the Lord’s chosen, those He has called, are saved “*through grace*”, without any personal merit or contribution’, he said, concluding that therefore the preachers at the Stork’s Nest must be Protestants.⁸⁴ In a book written soon after the Stork’s Nest scandal, Irineu Mihălcescu argued that although humans had fallen from grace the possibility of goodness had not completely died in the human soul. Humanity’s separation from God made it impossible for them to return to their prelapsarian state by themselves – ‘either man must rise to God or God must come down to man’. Like Manea Popescu, Mihălcescu asserted that sanctification requires God’s grace *and* man’s contribution of faith and good works.⁸⁵

Later, Manea Popescu outlined another reason why he did not believe in the idea of a personal Saviour. He wrote,

On the basis of the Gospel and the writings of the holy apostles, our Orthodox Church teaches that the Saviour is the Saviour of everyone and thus of each individual person. It also teaches, again on the basis of the New Testament, that every soul can share in the salvation perfected at Golgotha and in the sanctification that the Holy Spirit brings through the church which Jesus established. He gave the means of salvation to the church (baptism = redemption from original sin) and sanctification through the seven mysteries administered by the hierarchy. The Protestant theory of a personal Saviour does away with these intermediaries and makes the personal Saviour into a direct Saviour.⁸⁶

The doctrine of justification by faith marginalized the role of the Church. If Christ alone saves us, then why do we need priests? ‘This explanation of the problem of salvation is a great danger’, Păcescu concluded, ‘because it does away with all the institutions of Orthodoxy, in particular the hierarchy,

⁸² Teodor Popescu, *Iisus vă cheamă*, quoted in Manea S. Popescu, ‘Din învățăturile celor dela Ciubu cu Barză’, *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 May 1923, 52.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁸⁴ Popescu, ‘Problema mântuirii’, 159.

⁸⁵ Vicovan, *Ioan Irineu Mihălcescu* 141–2.

⁸⁶ Manea Popescu, ‘Ciubul cu Barză’, *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 42, no. 4 (1924): 212.

which is the *mediator* of salvation.⁸⁷ The Church and its priests are crucial to Christianity, Păcescu insisted, because 'if the problem of salvation forms the basis of Christianity, the purpose of the church is none other than the realization of salvation, and the priest is the one who realizes salvation by means of grace and through the teachings available to him, applied through Christian pedagogy'.⁸⁸ Gala Galaction wrote that 'whoever does not believe in the church of Jesus Christ – "I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic church" – does not believe in the Holy Spirit which guides it and thus does not believe in the promises and the power of the Saviour either'.⁸⁹ The Stork's Nest 'is Christian, it is based on the Gospel', Petru Chirică wrote, 'but it does not support the Orthodox Church'.⁹⁰

As Manea Popescu mentioned in his opening letter, rumours had spread that Popescu was teaching people at the Stork's Nest not to venerate the saints. Popescu defended himself by claiming that

regarding the worship of the Holy Virgin Mary and the saints, I remain within the general Orthodox formula, which is: worship God and venerate the saints. Unlike the Catholics, who canonize saints so often and present them to the world as beings that one can do business with and bow down to – and the Protestants, who ignore them entirely – the Orthodox Church has arrived at the happy formula I quoted above.⁹¹

No one was convinced. Moreover, Cornilescu appeared to have replaced the Orthodox saints with another pantheon of heroes. In a letter to *Noua revistă bisericească*, Petru Chirică asked,

What use to me are examples of missionaries in China who – according to D. Cornilescu – died for Christ, when everyone knows that they were Protestants, Adventists, or Catholics, when in the riches of my Orthodoxy I have so many missionaries at hand (John Chrysostom, Basil and Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, St George, St Dumitru, St Nicholas, St Peter and Paul, who also died for Christ).⁹²

⁸⁷ Teodor Păcescu, 'Mișcarea dela biserica Cuibu cu Barză din București', *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 January 1924, 264.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 245.

⁸⁹ Galaction, *Piatra din capul unghiului*, 26.

⁹⁰ Chirica, 'Adevăratul scop', 249.

⁹¹ Tudor Popescu, *Spulberarea Înviniuirilor* (Bucharest: Tipografiile Române Unite, 1924), 10–11.

⁹² Petru Chirică, 'Scrisoare părinților Teodor Popescu și Manea Popescu', *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 May 1923, 88.

Defrocked

The committee of priests appointed to judge Popescu's case tells us something about how close to ecclesiastical centres of power his opponents were. The ten-person committee included Iuliu Scriban, Irineu Mihălcescu, Gala Galaction and Constantin Nazarie, all of whom had been teachers and/or opponents of Popescu and Cornilescu. Other members included P. S. Platon, Atanasie Popescu, D. Georgescu, the dogmatician and canon lawyer Dimitrie Boroianu, the historian Nicolae Popescu and George Gibescu, who had written his undergraduate thesis on the importance of hierarchy in the Church. The committee concluded that 'it is as clear as day that the priest Teodor Popescu does not confess our Orthodox faith'.⁹³

Popescu's reputation by this stage and the state's attitude toward him was clearly summed up in a report by a policeman named 'Agent 1040' from 15 December 1923, which uncritically reproduced all of the accusations against him:

The priest Theodor Popescu, the parish priest of 'The Stork's Nest' church, is a follower of the Protestant religion. The 'British Religious Society' from London (England) has been established for the purpose of preaching these beliefs and conducting religious propaganda. This society has followers in every country and with their help seeks to universalise the Protestant religion. The first follower and fanatical preacher of this religion in Romania was the priest Cornilescu, who had to leave the country because of his preaching and found refuge in Switzerland, where he has settled and taken up citizenship. The second follower is the priest Theodor Popescu, the parish priest of 'The Stork's Nest' church, who has preached the Protestant religion for more than two years, ignoring the existence of the saints, the Holy Virgin Mary, the icons, and the church, believing only in God and Jesus Christ. Moreover, he preaches living a life conformed with Holy Scripture, which is to say that he shows his followers how to live perfect lives.

Thus, his beliefs are very similar to those of the Baptists and in part to those of the Adventists, only that he recognises Sunday as the Christian holy day. In this short time the priest Th. Popescu has won the souls of many believers and has become a saviour to them – as he indeed claims to be – preaching sermons in church. He held public meetings in the Stork's Nest school with the aim

⁹³ A.[rhimandrit Iuliu] S.[criban], 'Chestiunea de la biserica Cuibul cu Barză', *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 41, no. 15 (1923): 1129–30.

of spreading his religious cult, later moving to 5 Sebastopol Street, where he continues to preach his message.

This conversion of large numbers of believers scandalized public opinion and on being made aware of what was taking place at this church, the metropolitan-primate ordered that Th. Popescu be replaced by the priest from the 'Dușumea' church. An incident took place during his first service, however, provoked by the followers of the priest Th. Popescu, for which reason the church was definitively shut down.

In addition, the priest Th. Popescu receives money from the Anglican society, which is clearly demonstrated by the following cases: During one discussion, the priest Th. Popescu stated that he would seek refuge in Switzerland if the authorities suppressed his activities; his only escape being the priest Cornilescu, whom I have shown has close ties with the Anglican society. The priest Th. Popescu printed a number of pamphlets for spreading his beliefs, which he distributes to his followers and which are read in church during services. In addition, he helps any poor person who asks for his help. Some time ago two Belgians who had come to Bucharest became victims of theft. Not having a penny they went to the Anglican school and asked for help from the English women there. When they heard what had happened they sent him to their priest, Th. Popescu, who without hesitating gave them the sum of 3,000 lei, which greatly impressed public opinion. It is therefore quite clear that the above-mentioned priest receives money from the Anglican society for spreading the Protestant religion because his philanthropy could not come from his own modest material situation.⁹⁴

After Teodor Popescu had been defrocked, a number of priests continued to attack the Stork's Nest on the front page of major cosmopolitan newspapers such as *Adevărul* (*The Truth*) and *Dimineața* (*The Morning*), accompanied by occasional polemical replies from Popescu and his supporters.⁹⁵ These newspapers were particularly interested in whether or not Popescu was a 'heretic', a label which Scriban, at the very least, refused to give him, focusing instead on the fact that Popescu's ideas were 'intolerable' to the Orthodox

⁹⁴ ACNSAS, Fond Documentar, Dosar 105254, f. 2.

⁹⁵ Contributions supporting Popescu included D. Nanu, 'Conflictul de la biserica Sf. Ștefan', *Dimineața*, 6 January 1924, 13; Marieta G. Vasilescu, 'Incidentul dela biserica Sf. Ștefan', *Dimineața*, 21 January 1924, 1; Tudor Popescu, 'Mișcarea dela "Cuibul cu Barză"', *Dimineața*, 27 January 1924, 1; Tudor Popescu, 'Mișcarea dela "Cuibul cu Barză"', *Dimineața*, 28 January 1924, 1.

Church.⁹⁶ One contributor after another told the newspapers how sorry they were for Popescu, who had been their friend. They gave him public advice about where he went wrong and how he could mend his ways.⁹⁷ The danger of Cornilescu's brand of Christianity, Păcescu later wrote, is that 'he managed to mask the new Protestant garments in which he had dressed his Orthodox soul and to present himself to his colleagues, refugee theologians from Moldavia, even military chaplains, as Orthodox, as someone who wanted to deepen our Orthodox Christianity'.⁹⁸ Păcescu's observation that Cornilescu's initial success happened in the east is significant, because it came at a time when civil servants from Bucharest – including priests – saw it as their duty to 'civilize' the eastern provinces, dominating them through the imposition of a centralized bureaucracy and by appointing people from Bucharest to positions of influence.⁹⁹

Galaction wrote a lengthy book aimed at Orthodox priests who were confused about where Popescu had erred, and Mihălcescu published a series of articles outlining the Orthodox Church's position on the veneration of the saints.¹⁰⁰ They did not want others to follow Popescu's example. Greek Catholic writers repeated earlier claims that Popescu had connections with the Anglican Church, something that his Orthodox opponents now bitterly denied because of their own increasingly frequent meetings with Anglicans. In turn, the Orthodox polemicists claimed that they knew Anglican priests who were disgusted with Popescu's behaviour.¹⁰¹ Popescu's supporters responded in kind, claiming that he had been defrocked only because the other priests were jealous of his popularity.¹⁰² They published several pamphlets defending Popescu and defaming his detractors.¹⁰³

⁹⁶ Lorin, 'Conflictul de la biserica Sf. Ștefan: Ce ne spune archim. Scriban', *Dimineața*, 3 January 1924, 1; Arhim. Scriban, 'Răfuială pe chestiunea Cuibul cu Barză', *Dimineața*, 24 January 1924, 1. Cf. I.T., 'O încercare de schismă', *Dimineața*, 4 January 1924, 1; Aida Vrioni, 'Incidentul dela biserica Sft. Ștefan', *Dimineața*, 12 January 1924, 1; Vasile Dinescu-Bolintin, 'Incidentul dela biserica "Cuibul cu Barză"', *Dimineața*, 17 January 1924, 1; 'Procesul preotului dela biserica Sf. Ștefan', *Dimineața*, 18 January 1924, 1; N. Batzaria, 'Ereziile', *Adevărul*, 19 January 1924, 1–2.

⁹⁷ Lorin, 'Conflictul de la biserica Cuibul cu Barză: Ce ne spune d. Vasile Dinescu-Bolintin', *Dimineața*, 4 January 1924, 5; Lorin, 'Conflictul de la biserica Sf. Ștefan: Părerile părintelui I. Popescu-Mălăești', *Dimineața*, 5 January 1924, 1; 'Chemarea clerului!', *Dimineața*, 19 January 1924, 1–2; Gala Galaction, 'Gala Galaction are cuvântul!', *Dimineața*, 30 January 1924, 1; G. Galaction, 'Cazul dela biserica "Cuibul cu Barză"', *Dimineața*, 31 January 1924, 1.

⁹⁸ Păcescu, 'Uitându-ne înapoi', 1.

⁹⁹ Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics*.

¹⁰⁰ Galaction, *Piatra din capul unghiului*; Irineu Mihălcescu, 'Clasicitatea creștină și cultul sfinților', *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 42, no. 3 (1924): 145–53; Irineu Mihălcescu, 'Cultul sfinților în fața descoperirii Dumnezeuști', *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 42, no. 4 (1924): 195–201; Irineu Mihălcescu, 'Învațătura bisericii despre cultul sfinților', *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 42, no. 5 (1924): 290–5.

¹⁰¹ 'Cuibul cu Barză și anglicanismul', *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 42, no. 2 (1924): 122.

¹⁰² [Gala Galaction], 'Cuvinte de lămurire', *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 41, no. 15 (1923): 1130.

¹⁰³ Nanu, *Iisus vă cheamă*; D. Nanu, *Lupta între Evanghelie și tipic, între logică și sofism* (Bucharest: Atelierele 'Adeverul', 1924); Popescu, *Spulberarea învinuirilor*; Dinescu Bolintin et al., *Lupta între Dumnezeu și Mamona*.

Though he himself did not attend the Stork's Nest, Cornilescu's former classmate Nichifor Crainic defended Popescu in *Gândirea*, an avant-garde literary magazine he edited. Crainic wrote that Popescu's

preaching addresses a society whose moral conscience long been fast asleep and in which the triumph of sin has become normal. This preacher whips us as one would whip a horse, and his blows are felt in society ... This exceptional willingness to identify his personal life with the doctrine that he preaches is powerful, as is his moral beauty, which raises him above the rest of us and especially above those who are leading his persecution.¹⁰⁴

According to the secret police, Popescu and Crainic remained friends and in 1928 they collaborated on a petition to prevent the singer Josephine Baker from performing in Romania.¹⁰⁵

These exchanges soon degenerated into personal attacks. Manea Popescu claimed that the nationalist and antisemitic Crainic sided with Popescu simply because Galaction was a Marxist and a philosemite. He asserted that Crainic was too stupid to understand theology and too fat to look in the mirror.¹⁰⁶ Galaction claimed that he had been approached by a father whose daughter had been converted by Cornilescu and was planning to marry him. When challenged on this by his superiors, Galaction said that Cornilescu fled to Germany, leaving the girl behind.¹⁰⁷ Cornilescu's biographer, Alexandru Măianu, writes that shortly before leaving the country Cornilescu 'had a conflict with General Rusescu, whose sister frequented Christian meetings. General Rusescu felt insulted by Cornilescu, who told him that he was a sinner because he was not a believer, and the general challenged him to a duel'.¹⁰⁸ Whatever his motives, Cornilescu left the country for Germany several months before Popescu's trial, apparently at the urging of Miron Cristea. Supported first by Ralu Callimachi and then by gifts from congregations he spoke at, he spent time as an itinerant preacher and Bible teacher in England, France, Germany and Switzerland, before finally settling in Switzerland in 1929.¹⁰⁹ Following a request by *Duminica ortodoxă*, in

¹⁰⁴ Nichifor Crainic, 'Cuibul cu Barză', *Gândirea* 3, no. 11 (1924): 259.

¹⁰⁵ ACNSAS, Fond Penal, Dosar 13206, vol. 2, f. 336.

¹⁰⁶ Manea Popescu, 'Cuibul cu Barză', 211–15.

¹⁰⁷ [Galaction], 'Cuvinte de lămurire', 1130.

¹⁰⁸ Alexandru Măianu, *Viața și lucrarea lui Dumitru Cornilescu* (Bucharest: Editura Stephanus, 1995), 84.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 84–104; Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv BAR, E 4264 Bundesamt für Polizei, Dosar 1989/146, vol. 266, f. K 10651, Dumitru Cornilescu, 1933–49. I am grateful to Emanuel Conțac for providing me with Cornilescu's Swiss naturalization documents.

June 1924 the Holy Synod recommended that priests no longer use Cornilescu's Bible on the grounds that 'it does not correspond to the normative canonical text of the Orthodox Church ... [and] is done tendentiously, in a spirit that encourages the reader to arrive at interpretations that are completely opposed to the doctrines of the Orthodox Church'.¹¹⁰ Nonetheless, publications by the Lord's Army continued using it long after Cornilescu had fallen out of favour with the rest of the ROC.¹¹¹

Popescu's place as parish priest at St Ștefan's Church was taken by Father Marin C. Ionescu, who was an occasional contributor to *Noua revistă bisericească*.¹¹² A promising young priest who obtained his doctorate on the topic of 'The Priest and the Harmonizing of Social Classes' (1925), Ionescu became a prominent defender of Romanian nationalism and of Orthodoxy as a Romanian religion.¹¹³ Few prominent churchmen of the inter-war period avoided scandal at one time or another, and in 1933 the Stork's Nest was again upset following accusations by the cantor that Ionescu was mishandling parish funds and was promoting political causes. Parishioners quickly came to his defence and Ionescu remained in his post.¹¹⁴

Tudorists

Popescu's followers continued meeting in private homes and distributed pamphlets and tracts teaching Popescu's message.¹¹⁵ Originally known as the 'Born Agains' (*Noii Renăscuți*), Popescu's movement soon spread to the nearby city of Ploiești, where the parish priest complained to the police that they held meetings at night time 'when everyone needs peace and quiet'.¹¹⁶ It was not always easy to organize their gatherings, and in February 1925 two priests

¹¹⁰ 'Cronica Bisericească Internă', *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 43, no. 4 (1925): 232; quoted in Conțac, *Cornilescu*, 77.

¹¹¹ Conțac, *Cornilescu*, 77 n. 108.

¹¹² Marin C. Ionescu, 'Moș Toader și Adventismul', *Noua revistă bisericească*, 1 May 1921, 67–9.

¹¹³ ACNSAS, Fond Documentar, Dosar 12413, f. 1; Marin C. Ionescu, 'Unii cu Anglicanii! Alții cu Papistașii! Niciunul cu ortodocsii?!', *Glasul Monahilor*, 12 July 1936, 1–2; Mircea Păcurariu, 'Ionescu, Marin', in *Dicționarul teologilor români*. Available online: <http://biserica.org/WhosWho/DTR/I/MarinIonescu.html> (accessed 7 August 2017).

¹¹⁴ Epitropii, Consilierii, și Enoriașii bisericii Sf. Ștefan, 'Cuiubă cu Barză, Mi-e milă de popor: Spulberarea unei calomnii' (Bucharest: Tipografia Astoria, 1933).

¹¹⁵ ANIC, Fond MCA, Dosar 16/1924, ff. 49, 57, and Dosar 167/1925, f. 6; Amzioară, *Din viața și lucrarea*, 40–51.

¹¹⁶ ANIC, Fond MCA, 167/1925, f. 3.

from Bucharest attacked one of their meetings accompanied by forty to fifty people. The police report stated that the building would have been destroyed had the authorities not intervened.¹¹⁷ In November 1925 Popescu admitted to a representative of the British Bible Society that he was still unsure what he meant his community to be. He would not return to the Orthodox Church, he did not feel attracted to any of the major Protestant or Repenter churches, nor did he particularly want to start his own church.¹¹⁸ Popescu's indecision meant that congregations of his followers formed organically, often without any deliberate attempt by Popescu to establish them. Soon communities of 'Tudorists' (Tudoriști) or 'Christians According to the Scriptures' (Creștini după Scriptură), as they were increasingly called, appeared in towns and villages throughout the counties of Ilfov, Ploiești, Brașov, Argeș, Ialomița, Constanța and Tutova. Without trained pastors, these communities depended entirely on lay leadership and on books and songs supplied by Popescu.¹¹⁹ Women originally prayed in Tudorist gatherings, but on Cornilescu's advice Popescu demanded that they remain silent during the church services.¹²⁰ Tudorists also ceased making the sign of the cross or greeting each other with the phrase 'Christ has risen!' at Easter time, signalling their separation from Orthodox forms of piety.¹²¹

As did Repenters, Tudorists referred to each other as 'brother' and 'sister', and usually spread their beliefs through one-on-one conversations. They also began publishing a magazine entitled *Cuvântul Adevărului* (*The Word of the Truth*), which contained short sermons, devotional readings and commentaries on passages of the Bible.¹²² Although it was highly illegal, some Tudorists posted tracts to non-believers through the mail or handed them to passers-by on the streets. Individuals caught doing so were promptly arrested.¹²³

By 1936 Tudorist meetings in Bucharest were standing-room only, with hundreds of people in attendance, but the movement still lacked any official recognition.¹²⁴ In one pamphlet from 1937 the Tudorists described themselves thus:

¹¹⁷ Ibid., ff. 10–11.

¹¹⁸ Memo by Bishop J. H. Greig for Archbishop Davidson, 16 November 1925. Lambeth Palace Library, Douglas 88, ff. 245–9. I am grateful to Emanuel Conțac for sharing these documents with me.

¹¹⁹ Amzioară, *Din viața și lucrarea*, 47, 60.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 44.

¹²¹ ACNSAS, Fond Informativ, Dosar 189663, f. 118.

¹²² Two issues of *Cuvântul Adevărului* from 1937 can be found in ACNSAS, Fond Documentar, Dosar 13408, vol. 5, ff. 135–47.

¹²³ ACNSAS, Fond Informativ, Dosar 189663, ff. 13, 35–46, 53–75.

¹²⁴ Ibid., Dosar 189663, ff. 1–2.

We are Christians. That is what we are called. But because the authorities ask us for a name to differentiate ourselves from other churches and directions, we call ourselves 'Christians According to the Scriptures'. Our goal is to strengthen believers spiritually through sharing the Gospel and through evangelism to bring the Lord Jesus to those who do not know him and who are not born again ... Towards the Orthodox Church and towards the other denominations, according to the instructions of Scripture (Romans 12:18), our attitude is one of peace and of non-interference in their business.¹²⁵

Neither prohibited nor sanctioned by law, Tudorists had trouble with the police throughout the inter-war period. They had their authorization to meet approved or rescinded every few years without warning.¹²⁶ They had to request permission from the Ministry of Denominations to establish meeting houses (*case de rugăciune*) on a case-by-case basis. Approval in one village did not guarantee approval in the next. Preaching without authorization led to the immediate closure of Tudorist meeting houses.¹²⁷ Local policemen remained confused about whether 'Tudorists' and 'Christians According to the Scriptures' were one and the same thing, and wrote to their superiors that Tudorist preachers 'seek to break apart our ancestral religious beliefs, weakening the unity of the state in the process.'¹²⁸ A lay Orthodox movement known as the 'Patriarch Miron Association' lobbied to have the Tudorists banned entirely in 1937, but without success.¹²⁹

In 1939 the government decided to close Tudorist meeting houses entirely so Popescu agreed to merge his Church with the Brethren in Romania.¹³⁰ By this stage the only serious difference between the two groups was that Brethren only baptized adults whereas Tudorists continued baptizing infants as the Orthodox Church did.¹³¹ The Tudorists did not gain much breathing room, however, as when Ion Antonescu took power in 1940 he severely limited religious freedom and the Brethren, together with other Repenter groups, faced the threat of deportation to Transnistria during the Holocaust.¹³² After the Romanian Communist Party came to power, Popescu and other Tudorist preachers such

¹²⁵ *Memoriu cuprinzând arătarea pe scurt a învățăturii și organizației 'Bisericii Creștinilor după Scriptură'* in ACNSAS, Fond Documentar, Dosar 13408, vol. 5, f. 123.

¹²⁶ ACNSAS, Fond Informativ, Dosar 189663, ff. 110–13.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, Dosar 189663, ff. 77–8; ANIC, Fond MCA, Dosar 149/1936, ff. 2, 6, 28, 38, 40, 48.

¹²⁸ ANIC, Fond MCA, Dosar 149/1936, f. 4. Cf. ACNSAS, Fond Informativ, Dosar 189663, f. 85.

¹²⁹ ACNSAS, Fond Informativ, Dosar 189663, ff. 4–5, 9.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 10; Amzioară, *Din viața și lucrarea*, 66–7.

¹³¹ ACNSAS, Fond Documentar, Dosar 13408, vol. 5, f. 122.

¹³² Amzioară, *Din viața și lucrarea*, 70–4; Viorel Achim (ed.), *Politica regimului Antonescu față de cultele neoprotestante: Documente* (Iași: Polirom, 2013).

as Gheorghe Cornilescu and Emil Constantinescu frequently disparaged the Romanian Communist Party in their sermons. They encouraged their followers to have as little as possible to do with the state, including rejecting socialist literature, theatre and cinema.¹³³ The secret police kept these men under strict surveillance, but Tudorist gatherings in Bucharest still regularly attracted crowds of between 1,000 and 1,500 people in 1953.¹³⁴ Popescu's failing health made him less of a threat to the authorities, who preferred to limit the freedom of activity available to Repenters than to close them down entirely.

¹³³ ACNSAS, Fond Informativ, Dosar 259045, vol. 1, ff. 1–2, 5–7.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, ff. 92, 105.