

# *Sburătorul* after *Sburătorul*: Survivors of E. Lovinescu's Literary Circle after 1947\*

Ligia Tudurachi

'Sextil Pușcariu' Institute of Linguistics and Literary History, Romanian Academy  
ligia.tudurachi@academia-cj.ro

## SYNOPSIS

In this article we examine the careers of writers associated with the *Sburătorul* group (1918–1943), a literary circle formed on the basis of common tastes and aesthetic sensibilities, and present an analysis of its impact on them. A rather significant number of these writers submitted to the post-war ideology, agreeing to produce a literature that supported it. Others were imprisoned, and their work was banned. Others still were forced to end their artistic careers and accept various other literary work to earn a living (translation, children's literature). Whether or not they made a 'pact' with the political regime, ultimately all were forced to sacrifice their careers. Irrespective of which line of action they took, they would never be able to capitalise on the literary preparation they had received during the interwar period as members of the *Sburătorul* group, nor on the writer's life they had committed themselves to as a result of this experience. At the same time, however, the fact that *Sburătorul* was not simply a literary group but, thanks to its vast membership (more than 100 loyal members), a kind of micro-society allows us to make general observations about the modes in which the 'drama' of literature played out under totalitarianism.

## KEYWORDS

*Sburătorul*; ideological literature; totalitarianism; totalitarian constraints; children's literature.

## DOI

<https://doi.org/10.14712/23366680.2021.3.5>

E. Lovinescu is one of the most important Romanian literary critics and intellectuals (author of *The History of Contemporary Romanian Literature* in 6 volumes, 1926–1929, and *The History of Modern Romanian Civilization* in 3 volumes, 1924–1925). In 1919, having been left out of the academic system and forced to assume a lifelong Latin chair at a high school in Bucharest, Lovinescu founded the literary community *Sburătorul*. While marginal, *Sburătorul* would go on to become an important institution with

---

\* This article is a revised version of a text previously published in Romanian: *Conversia literaturii române după 1947. Supraviețuitorii de la Sburătorul* (Conversion of Romanian literature after 1947. Survivors from *Sburătorul*). In: *Caietele Sextil Pușcariu* 4. Scriptori / Argonaut, Cluj-Napoca 2019, pp. 503–512.



more than 100 participating writers, competing with other literary communities that had garnered official recognition and that played a central role in the cultural sphere. The *Sburătorul* group officially stopped meeting when Lovinescu died in 1943, and while there were several sporadic attempts to maintain group activities without him, none were successful. *Sburătorul* brought together literary figures that would make up the new generation of the 1940s, including writers of all ages in the early stages of their careers (in 1943, most of them had not yet reached the age of 40). They were therefore an untapped resource when the communist regime came to power a few years later and the ‘Obsessive Decade’<sup>1</sup> began.

What interests me here is how the community established by Lovinescu, which was massive and energetic, survived the change of political regimes in 1947, and how it adapted to the radically new conditions shaping writers’ lives and careers, as well as the transformation of the entire system of literary institutions. Examining a literary group like *Sburătorul* has the advantage of offering a perspective on the means of survival under communism of a community that, during the interwar period, had identified itself with literature as an autonomous space, with an insistence on aesthetic values and with ideological commitments comparable to those of modernism.

Analyses of collective literary survival in the case of the Romanian avant-garde can be found in published works by Liviu Rotman (2004), Dan Gulea (2007), and a collected volume by Stelian Tănase (2008). The approach taken by these authors primarily focuses on the survival of the Jewish writers group. It does not, however, deal with the role played by the literary community in adapting to the new regime. This is the perspective I intend to adopt in studying the case of the *Sburătorul* circle. There are a number of literary personalities associated with the Lovinescu circle that I will not deal with here, as they tend to represent a very different group dynamic than the one I wish to analyse.

That so few studies of the *Sburătorul* community have been made to date can be explained by its eclecticism (it had over 100 members, covering a wide variety of poetics and political orientations), which accounts for a certain tendency to regard the group simply as an example of the literary trends that characterise the interwar period, rather than as a proper literary community. There is also a tendency to ignore the survival of the most representative writers from the group. Their ongoing work in literature was considered to be of minor interest, or it was analysed simply in terms of their individual careers. In both cases, the truth seems to me to be quite the opposite. The long lifespan of the *Sburătorul* community — more than 20 years, 1919–1943 — is exceptional for a literary group, so that the writers who frequented *Sburătorul*, without recourse to a common literary poetics, tended instead to form a common consciousness regarding the literary act itself that was based, first and foremost, on communal life. Their efforts to survive during the communist period therefore reveal how this consciousness changed under the constraints of the regime, and, conversely, the extent to which a sense of solidarity influenced their efforts. In this way, it is possible to build a complex picture of the ways a literary community

---

1 The expression refers to events in the political and literary context during the 1950s, so that one may speak of a ‘literature of the “Obsessive Decade”’ (see note 2).

reacts to political constraints, as well as a comprehensive understanding of its collective survival strategies.

Even before 1947, many members of the group have died. In the 1930s, these included Bogdan Amaru (1936), Anton Holban, Al. Sahia and Bebs Delavrancea (1937), and Caton Theodorian (1939). Lovinescu's death was followed by that of Liviu Rebreanu (1944), Alice Soare (1945), Mihail Sebastian (1945), Pompiliu Constantinescu (1946), Ramiro Ortiz (1947), Dinu Nicodin (1948), Mircea Damian (1948), Octav Șuluțiu (1949), Carol Ardeleanu (1949), N.D. Cocea (1949), and Gheorghe Brăescu (1949). This period also coincided with the installation of the new political regime (1944–1947)<sup>2</sup> which only deepened the precarious situation of the literary circle. In 1946, the newspaper *Contemporanul* ("The Contemporary"), which had recently been placed under the direction of Nicolae Moraru, sought to discredit Lovinescu, publishing articles by Ion Vitner and Paul Georgescu — which were prominent communist ideologists — that declared him an enemy of the people. One year later, the same newspaper attacked Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu on the grounds of her association with Lovinescu and the *Sburătorul* circle. The new political regime exerted its authority by pursuing the writers of the Lovinescu circle, singling them out according to the identity that had defined them until 1947.

## 1. SBURĂTORUL IN THE 1950S AND 1960S

The post-war careers of members of the *Sburătorul* circle fall into different categories. Very few went into exile. These include only Monica Lovinescu, who emigrated to Paris in 1947, and Dan Petrașincu, who, after spending a brief period in Italy in 1949, definitively left Romania in 1951.

Others were imprisoned. After eight months of illegal detention, Constant Tonegaru was sentenced to two years at the infamous Aiud prison<sup>3</sup>, along with several writers from the far right. He died in 1952, only a few months after his release. Nico-

- 
- 2 Regarding Romanian communism, it is distinguished between two periods, different both from a political point of view, and from the point of view of the literary policies that were associated with them. The interval 1947–1963 is the 'red' period in the true sense of the word. At that time, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej was at the head of the Romanian Communist Party, which had established a Stalinist regime. It is the time when the worst anti-national actions took place: the extermination of the political and intellectual elite, indoctrination of the population, imposition of a unique model of thinking and behavior, distant from tradition, and application of ideological theses disseminated by the Kremlin. The second interval, 1964–1989, overlaps with the regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu. After Stalin's death, Romania went through a moment of liberalisation, aiming to distance itself from the Bolshevik regime. Anti-Soviet sentiment was encouraged. While in reality, it had not abandoned communism, an attitude of *tabula rasa* was adopted concerning the propaganda literature of the 'red' decade, which came to be known as the 'Obsessive Decade'. The Party became more subtle in its approach to social control, adopting a diversity of strategies.
  - 3 Aiud prison was one of the harshest prisons in Communist Romania. Following a decree of September 1948, it came to serve (along with Pitești Penitentiary) as the main facility for the detainment of political prisoners.



lae Carandino was tried in 1947 in the PNȚCD (Christian Democratic National Peasants' Party) trial and sentenced to six years in prison, but he went on to serve nine years and was forced on his release to live in Bărăgan until 1962. Vladimir Streinu, fired from his job as a teacher in 1947 for harbouring anti-communist beliefs, was reinstated in 1955 as a researcher at the Romanian Academy. He was arrested again in 1959 and sentenced to seven years in prison before being once more rehabilitated and employed as a researcher at the Folklore Institute. One year before his death, in 1970, he was appointed Director of the University publishing house and professor in the Faculty of Letters at the University of Bucharest. Nicolae Davidescu was arrested in 1948 and sentenced to five years in prison for anti-Semitism, dying shortly before serving his sentence.

Others still were temporarily marginalised, including Radu Albala, Tudor Vianu, Șerban Cioculescu, and Isac Peltz. Vianu, for example, was Romania's ambassador to Belgrade in 1946–1947, so close to left-wing circles immediately after the Second World War. In 1948–1953, however, he found it increasingly difficult to maintain his position at the University of Bucharest. After 1953, he would again be allowed to hold positions of authority: he became the head of the Department of Universal Literature at the University of Bucharest (1958–1963), then full member of the Romanian Academy (1955), Director of the Academy Library (1958–1964), Secretary General of the National Commission for UNESCO (1958), and was awarded the State Prize (1963). Likewise, Cioculescu, after being banned from publishing and removed from all public positions from 1947 to 1963, was rehabilitated, appointed professor of literature at the University of Bucharest (1965–1974), director of the Academy Library, and was granted honorary membership in the Romanian Academy in 1965 and full membership in 1974.

Many, like Lucia Demetrius, Ion Călușăru, Ioana Postelnicu, Sanda Movilă, Felix Aderca, Dimitrie Stelaru, Isac Ludo, Virgiliu Monda, Mihail Șerban, Damian Stănoiu, Cella Serghi, and Cella Delavrancea, chose to save their careers and conform to the ideological restrictions and values of the new regime.

For the most part, however, members of the *Sburătorul* circle would go on to obtain recognition and hold positions within the *nomenclatura* of the new regime. In 1948, Ury Benador became a member of the first steering committee of the Writers' Union of Romania (USR) and secretary of the State Jewish Theater (1948–1955). The same year, Victor Eftimiu became a member of the Romanian Academy. Camil Petrescu was decorated in 1953 with the Romanian Order of Labour, First Class. In the years immediately following 1944, Camil Baltazar was made inspector general in the Ministry of Arts, and starting in 1952, head of propaganda at the Ministry of Food Industry. Eugen Jebeleanu received the State Prize in 1952, and in 1955 became a member of the Romanian Academy. He was later made President of the Front of Socialist Unity (1968) and deputy in the Great National Assembly (1969), and was awarded the Order of the Hero of Socialist Labour (1972). Vlaicu Bârna became editor-in-chief at the State Publishing House for Literature and Art (ESPLA), advisor at Romanian Broadcasting, and USSR Secretary. Pericle Martinescu was press secretary at the Press Department of the Ministry of Information until 1952. Cicerone Theodorescu was editor-in-chief of monthly literary magazine *Viața românească* ('The Romanian Life') and vice-president of the USSR from 1948 to 1953. In 1945, Ion Călușăru was appointed editor of the news-

paper *Scânteia* ('The Spark'), and in 1951 he received the State Prize for his novel *Oțel și pâine* ('Steel and Bread'). The list goes on.

One may further distinguish among the various different attitudes towards writing literature in the post-war period. In the 1950s and 1960s, some of the writers who came out of the *Sburătorul* circle did not write at all, including Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu, Ion Barbu, I. Valerian, George Murnu, Sorana Țopa, Mia Frollo, Alexandru Cazaban, and Nicolae Davidescu. Many others wrote proletarian literature: Sanda Movilă, Mihai Moșandrei, Camil Baltazar, Vlaicu Bârna, Eugen Jebeleanu, Cella Serghi, Mihail Șerban, Isac Ludo, Ion Călugăru, Damian Stănoiu, and Ioana Postelnicu. And there were those who resorted to various literary subterfuges in order to survive. Some worked as translators, such as Mihail Sorbul, Camil Baltazar, Tudor Vianu, Isac Peltz, Ticu Archip, Ion Biberi, Ion Călugăru, Sarina Cassvan, Ludovic Dauș, Nicolae Carandino, and Alexandru Cazaban. Others wrote children's literature, including Felix Aderca, Virgil Carianopol, Neagu Rădulescu, Mihail Celarianu, Damian Stănoiu, Cicerone Theodorescu, Sarina Cassvan, and Mărgărita Miller-Verghy. Even a prose writer like Ioana Postelnicu, who would later (after 1952) publish a great quantity of proletarian literature, with enthusiasm and conviction, had a hiatus just after 1943 with the publication of *Beznă* ('Darkness'), and resumed by writing books for children, such as *Povestea lui Tonta Feriga* ('The story of Tom Feriga', 1952), *Pădurea Poenari* ('Poenari forest', 1953), *Orașul minunilor* ('City of wonders', 1957), *Șerfi* ('Sheriffs', 1958), and *Adolescenții* ('Adolescents', 1962). Of all of them, Mărgărita Miller-Verghy is the only one who had written children's literature during the interwar period.

To work in children's literature is not only a matter of subterfuge, of course, and the same is true of translation. Some writers who took up these practices did so in service of the regime. This is precisely the case with Ioana Postelnicu, but also Cicerone Theodorescu and Felix Aderca, whose *În valea marelui fluviu* ('Along the Great River's Valley', 1955) appeared in the *Cutezătorii*<sup>4</sup> ('The Brave Ones') collection with the subtitle 'A Tale for Youth'.

## 2. HOW TO TRANSITION FROM ONE TYPE OF LITERATURE TO ANOTHER: SOME PARTICULAR CASES

There are also clear situations of rupture, in which it is worth examining the transition from one genre or style of literature to another. Damian Stănoiu passed from satire of the clerical milieu (a style used also by Brăescu vis-à-vis the military) to the topic of urban life. Neagu Rădulescu, whose prose style resembles that of

4 *Cutezătorii* ('The Brave Ones') was the most well-known (weekly) magazine for children and adolescents in socialist Romania. Published in 1967, along with two other 'pioneer' magazines (*Scînteia pionierului/Spark of the Pioneer* and *Cravata roșie/Red Tie*), the magazine continued to appear until a day before Ceaușescu's fall in December 1989. Its pages informed pioneers about Nicolae Ceaușescu's political activity, but in each issue there was an extraordinary comic book episode. Between 1969 and 1974 there was a monthly scientific 'pair', *Racheta Cutezătorilor* ('The rocket of the brave').



Bacalbaşa<sup>5</sup>, transitioned to sports in the 1950s, namely horse riding in *Napoleon fugă repede* ('Napoleon Ran Fast', 1947), and football in *Un balon râdea în poartă* ('A ball was laughing in the goal', 1968). Mărgărita Miller-Verghy wrote the detective novel *Prințesa în crinolină* ('The Princess in Crinoline', 1946) after spending the interwar period writing in the genre of autobiography. Victor Eftimiu, a novelist and an especially successful playwright in the interwar period, transitioned to poetry. Lucia Demetrius definitively abandoned the prose style she had cultivated in the interwar period in favour of works for theatre. Ion Biberi abandoned fiction in order to devote himself exclusively to the essay form.

But it was quite common for writers simply to adapt the genre they were previously working in, and in the 1950s we also find a number of writers who continued writing in the style or genre they had developed in the interwar period. There are two styles of writing that typify authors of this kind: satirical prose works about Jewish life, and what we might generically call 'circle literature', that is, literature meant only to circulate among the members of a literary society, and is left unpublished.

During the interwar period, Isac Ludo had written prose works about Jewish life, adapting his newspaper articles into fiction, sometimes with very few changes. This is the case with *Ghetouri* ('Ghettos', 1939), for example. His style was caustic, relying heavily on sarcasm and grotesquery. We find him using the same convention in his writings from the 1950s, except that now he presents it as a pamphlet that chronicles events during the period 1919–1944, repurposing his sarcasm and grotesquery as devices for sending up the aristocratic landowner class. The same happens in the novels of Isac Peltz and Ury Benador: the politically charged Jewish themes remain, but the ideological profile of the heroes has changed. They maintain the form and change the matter. The pattern of Peltz's *Calea Văcărești* ('Văcărești road', 1933) and *Actele vorbește!* ('The deed speaks', 1935) later reappear in *Israel însângerat* ('Bloody Israel', 1946), *Vadul fetelor* ('The girls' ford', 1949), and *Max și lumea lui* ('Max and his world', 1957); similarly, Benador's efforts to give literary expression to the 20th century ghetto extend to *Gablonz. Magazin Universal* ('The Gablonz department store', 1961). In all these cases, the ideological framing of the story is presented as a merely complementary aspect of a pre-existing fictitious structure, as if the social status and political beliefs of the characters was just one variable among many, functioning as a simple substitution of secondary elements in an otherwise fixed ensemble.

The second direction I mentioned, 'circle literature', is best represented by such writers as Cella Delavrancea, Cella Serghi, and Ioana Postelnicu. Their fictions are populated by figures from the *Sburătorul* group, projected into an environment of literary sociability in which one can easily identify the characteristics of communal life specific to the Lovinescu group. With Delavrancea, the tendency is to personify this environment as a full-fledged character. As in the case of satirical Jewish prose, the ideological is added here as a sort of appendix. The method developed by Serghi is relevant in terms of the productive value of realist-socialist poetics: that is, of rewrit-

5 Anton Bacalbaşa (1865–1899), known for two volumes of satirical sketches (*From the Barracks*, 1893; *From the Military Life*, 1895), had specialised in a rich and grotesque prose describing military life. He is the author of a memorable character, *Moș Teacă* ('Old man Teacă'), a local version of Colonel Ramollot by Charles Leroy.





ing, practically without interruption, a single text from the interwar period. *Pânza de păianjen* ('Spider web', 1938), for example, was reprinted in five editions during the 1950s and 1960s, each one presenting new changes, consistently augmenting the element of propaganda. The same happens with *Cad zidurile* ('The walls are falling', 1950), rewritten with the title *Mirona* (1965), and finally *Cartea Mironei* ('Mirona's book', 1967).

But perhaps the most explicit example of the way writers of this period sought to recast their older stories in new ideological frameworks can be found in the preface to Ticu Archip's 1949 edition of *Zeul* ('The God'), the second book in the *Soarele negru* ('Black sun') trilogy — the first book, *Oameni* ('People'), had appeared in 1946, and the third was never published. The preface, which Archip addresses to 'my readers, the Workers', gives us the impression that, from the author's point of view, the interwar text already supported the new ideology without any modifications, and all that was necessary was to address it to a new public. Not only does the ideological framework appear here as a mere supplement attached to an already existing text, but the realisation of this supplement is passed on to the sphere of reception, delegated to the reader. The workers are themselves the ones who must fulfil the 'task' of transforming the interwar text into an homage to the new man: 'I have published excerpts from this novel — writes Ticu Archip — since 1935. At that time, I was writing with a different perception from the current one. And for a small number of readers, although the subject includes people we have all known and facts that are not foreign to you. Today, the published book, just like a living being, has not only rights but also duties: it must be a good for all' (Archip 1949, p. 7).

What this little preamble by the novelist compels us to consider is the way in which a complicated construction of the receiving public at *Sburătorul* was skilfully deployed to do the work of negotiating with the new political regime. As has been said before (Tudurachi 2019, pp. 137–158), *Sburătorul* had oscillated between a closed community with a small, specialised audience, and the definition of an inclusive community that is open to new members, aspiring in fact to reunite the entire interwar literature and, as such, to address implicitly the totality of its public. However, it is precisely this game of inclusivity that Ticu Archip takes advantage of to widen the sphere of her readers even more, signalling an evolution that is meant to appear consistent with the old way of doing things, inserting the workers among the readerly public.

This achieves a certain continuity between the interwar period and the 'Obsessive Decade' of the 1950s. More importantly, it maintains, through discreet signals, a unity of the *Sburătorul* group, all the more valuable for the fact that it is no longer the result of a direct communication between writers.

I would also evoke, in the spirit of such subtle indicators of continuity, a kind of confluence of interests in connection to the figure of Nicolae Bălcescu (1819–1852). The 19th century revolutionary writer, as is well known, had become an iconic figure in Stalinist propaganda, appearing in various hagiographic texts published in 1952 on the anniversary of his death. Camil Petrescu, who had previously written a play with the title *Bălcescu* (1948), started working on a series of novels *Om între oameni* ('A man among men'). He published the first two volumes in 1953 and 1957, but never completed the series. When Petrescu died in 1961, Tudor Vianu explained his affinity for the novelist by the fact that Bălcescu served him too as 'a kind of alter-ego'. Vianu



himself had been inspired by the 19th century figure during the 1950s, considering him an ‘artist’ and, starting in 1957, drawing on his prose techniques. Eugen Jebeleanu, who became the leader of the poetic propaganda of Stalinism, wrote a lyrical monograph about Bălcescu (*Bălcescu*, 1952), while Ion Barbu, in 1948, seems to have circulated a circumstantial poem with the title *Bălcescu trăind* (‘Bălcescu Living’), which was first put in service of communist propaganda and finally published in 1956. This confluence of interests around the figure of Bălcescu demonstrates how some members of the Lovinescu group, in an effort to adapt their writing to meet the expectations of the communist regime, carried out this conversion by mediating the same figures. This included some opponents of the regime, such as Ion Barbu, who found in his imaginative reworking of Bălcescu a point of interest that he shared both with temperate converts, such as Camil Petrescu and Vianu,<sup>6</sup> and with forthright supporters of the regime, such as Eugen Jebeleanu. If, on the one hand, these writers helped to transform Bălcescu into an icon of Stalinism, they were motivated, on the other hand, by the fact that their mutual interest in Bălcescu, revolutionary writer of the intellectuals, revived a community ethos reminiscent of the one they had found in the Lovinescu group: a way of life and a vocational model. The ambivalence of their ideological commitments is therefore worth emphasising. While appropriated by the communist ideology and put in the service of propaganda, the cult of Bălcescu exploited, in its substance, the resources of the interwar *Sburătorul* period.

### 3. SBURĂTORUL IN THE 1970S AND 1980S

The early 1970s marks the beginning of the rehabilitation of Lovinescu as a cultural figure, along with recognition of the importance of the *Sburătorul* group for Romanian culture. In 1969, celebrations were held for the half-centenary of the founding of the literary society and magazine.

One is led to believe that it was this evolving cultural context that gave rise to the production of an impressive number of memoirs over the following two decades — more than 40 books. Șerban Cioculescu, Tudor Vianu, Isac Peltz, Camil Baltazar, Ion Petrovici, Ieronim Șerbu, Mihai Moșandrei, Sanda Movilă, Ioana Postelnicu, Mihail Șerban, Mircea Ștefănescu, Cella Delavrancea, Cella Serghi, Pericle Martinescu, Vlaicu Bârna, Virgiliu Monda, I. Valerian, Nicolae Carandino, Simion Stolnicu, and Gheorghe Brăescu all published memoirs and journals. These texts did more than memorialise and consecrate the existence of the *Sburătorul* group during the interwar period. They also served as a substitute for a body of work that were never created. Put simply, there are no successful writers in the list above. Memorialistica therefore

---

<sup>6</sup> Vianu’s article opens with an explicit statement in the series of events on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Bălcescu’s death: ‘The anniversary of Nicolae Bălcescu, the great fighter for the national and democratic cause of the Romanians, from whose death a whole century has elapsed, has produced a series of written and spoken manifestations, articles and studies, conferences and communications, meant to clarify both its role in political struggles and its contribution to the movement of ideas of the age it has gone through’ (Vianu 1954, p. 65).





intervenes here on a background of rupture. It is the solution of a class of writers incapable of producing anything else, who in time have been disqualified as writers and who continue to feel that way. In this return to the past of the literary group, they are searching for themselves, for a time and place when they were writers. It is the form of a consecration from which there can be no further evolution, a form frozen in time. Re-constructing the mythology of the group, however, these memories have nothing to do with personal myths. Completely disappointed in themselves, once more experiencing their failure, they retreat behind the bright and vivid images which cast them as shadows. Memorialistica replaces a writing that has become otherwise impossible.

It is relevant in this sense, for example, that Baltazar defined his memories as a 'moment' in which both 'literary identity' and 'aesthetic identity' had to be abandoned: 'Until the satisfactory vehicle of a new poetic lexicon, I preferred to take leave from my literary identity — which characterised my past — and I abandoned my aesthetic identity — which should characterise my future' (Baltazar 2004, p. 40). Or, a few lines later, as a 'moment' in which writing is actually born of a 'physical repulsion' towards literature: 'Now I read and wake up wondering that there was a time when I was writing. And I indulge in this beginning of total deworming, when you touch me, the one I wrote, as if I were touching someone foreign [...]' (ibid.).

The more the mythology of the group redefines its image and character, the more the figure of the author who recomposes it becomes blurred and, at the limit, the autobiography disappears. Memorialistica does not really lead these writers to a rediscovery of their literary identity, even a past one, but, much less, to reliving a moment in which they had confidence in literature and in the professionalisation of writing. It is the last resort in a reality that, although momentarily released from political coercion, could no longer offer them much.

On the other hand, this memorialist production is completed by a literature that has no power to reinvent itself, but signals the return, by virtue of a certain poetics, of a 'way of making' already known, including the interwar moment. Anachronistic, these texts can only rewrite modernism, without reinterpreting it. It is, in every aspect, an exceedingly tired literature, a self-plagiarisation. I would invoke in this sense the behaviour of Virgil Carianopol, an interesting poet who had flirted with the avant-garde in the interwar period. Carianopol does not return to the innovations of the interwar period, but to the 'celebrity' he had garnered at that time as a writer of 'pastiche verse', with a poem strongly influenced by Camil Baltazar and Ion Barbu. He would be re-labelled as a 'pastiche poet' in the 1970s, this time for his rural melancholy and Oltenian songs.

For all these reasons, *Sburătorul* presents itself through its survivors as a community for which the 'thaw' after 1970 never took place. It is, from this perspective, another 'lost generation', different from that of the *Albatros* group<sup>7</sup>, but a lost generation all the same, and in the fullest sense of the expression. For if the lost generation of

7 The sentence 'lost generation' is used in Romanian culture to designate the poets associated with the magazine *Albatros*, created in 1941 under the leadership of Geo Dumitrescu. Poets in this group were all born between 1910 and 1920 (around 10 years earlier than most writers in *Sburătorul*).



the *Albatros* group had the chance to create and publish their work only later, under other historical conditions, ‘survivors’ of the Lovinescu group — the ‘lost generation’ of *Sburătorul* — lost the very chance of ever being writers. Virtually everyone still alive after the dissolution of the literary society who could have regrouped as the ‘third generation’ of *Sburătorul* (and who arguably should have done so) considered that their only obligation was to live their failure. Regardless of the path they chose during the ‘Obsessive Decade’, whether or not they made a pact with the regime, none of them had the chance to reinvent themselves or build a *vita nova*.

There was, however, one exception, though it is a paradoxical one: Eugen Jebeleanu. After the hieratic poetry he had written in the interwar period on a Barbian model, and after the ‘peace and struggle’ poems he had written in the 1950s, Jebeleanu would reveal himself as a true poet through the abstract humanism of *Surâsul Hiroshimei* (‘The Smile of Hiroshima’, 1958) and *Hanibal* (1972).

## LITERATURE

**Archip, Ticu:** *Prefață la Soarele negru (II).*

*Zeul* [Preface to the black sun (II). God].

Publishing House for Literature and Art, Bucharest 1949.

**Baltazar, Camil:** *Din romanul existenței mele literare*

[From the novel of my literary existence], ed. and pref. by Florentin Popescu. Hasefer, Bucharest 2004.

**Gulea, Dan:** *Domni, tovarăși, camarazi. O evoluție a avangardei române* [Gentlemen, partners and comrades: an evolution of the Romanian avant-garde]. Paralela 45, Bucharest 2007.

**Rotman, Liviu:** *Evreii din România în perioada comunistă* [Jews from Romania during the communist period]. Polirom, Iași 2004.

**Tănase, Stelian:** *Avangarda românească în*

*arhivele Siguranței* [The Romanian avant-garde in the Security archives]. Polirom, Iași 2008.

**Tudurachi, Lîgia:** *Grup sburător. Trăitul și scrisul în cenaclul lui E. Lovinescu* [The Sburătorul group: living and writing in the cenacle of E. Lovinescu]. West University Publishing House, Timișoara 2019.

**Vianu, Tudor:** *Probleme de stil și artă literară* [Problems of style and literary art]. State Publishing House for Literature and Art, Bucharest 1954.