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**NAE IONESCU ON DEMOCRACY, INDIVIDUALITY,
LEADERSHIP AND NATION
PHILOSOPHICAL (RE)SOURCES FOR A RIGHT-
WING IDEOLOGY**

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Nae Ionescu is one of the most influential and controversial Romanian thinkers. The present article explores a less used perspective in studying Nae Ionescu's philosophical, political and journalistic activity: the philosophical roots of his major political ideas. The anti-democratic position of Nae Ionescu was, theoretically explained, by the criticism to Rene Descartes and J.J. Rousseau's ideas. The individual is supposed to be an instrument of history and nation. Any individualizing tendency is allegedly a betrayal to the nation. Moreover, the leader has mystical prerogatives therefore the universal suffrage is not consistent. On its turn, the nation is not defined on the basis of the social contract. Nation is "a community of love and life", in Nae Ionescu's opinion. Nae Ionescu's beliefs largely influenced the right-wing Romanian ideology during the years between First and Second World Wars.

Key Words:

Nae Ionescu, right-wing
ideology, democracy,
individuality,
leadership, nation

The controversial and influential Romanian philosophy professor and well-known journalist, Nae Ionescu, offers an example, albeit a negative one, for transferring philosophical and religious ideas into the political discourse. His philosophical beliefs become, through the public lectures at the University and editorials at "Cuvântul" newspaper, the basis of a radical ideological discourse.

Among his main ideas were: the critical attitude on Descartes' rationalism, nominalism, individualism, and scientism, the idea of "trăire"/ *Erlebnis* / the act of living¹, the realist-static conception on existence, and the return to the Eastern Orthodox spirituality. Thus, the critique of Descartes' rationalism, of nominalism, individualism, and scientism led to the rejection of liberalism, democracy and parliamentarianism; "trăirea"/the act of living, and the realist, static attitude toward existence were reflected into Nae Ionescu's efforts to define the nation, the individuality, the collectivity. The return to Eastern Orthodox spirituality upheld the mystical nationalism promoted by the Romanian thinker.

Main concepts: Rationalism and Democracy

The historical context of the inter-war years was not favorable to democracy as a system of government. After the First World War, the Europeans had high expectations related to the welfare, and, generally, to the improvement of society and of its political leadership. The totalitarian and nationalist ideas found a fertile soil in this wide climate of disappointment and frustrations of the society, and led to the collapse of

most of the European democratic systems. "The apparent failure of ostensibly democratic systems to deliver an increased standard of living to many in employment, the lack of provision for the unemployed, and the failure to maintain the value of pensions for the old or those disabled in war, created an ever-growing army of enfranchised and disenchanted. (...) The disappointments of the immediate post-war period led to the overthrow of democracy in several states in Eastern Europe and to the rise of Mussolini. The post-1929 collapse led to further reverses for democracy in Eastern Europe, and to Hitler's ascendancy in Germany. Even in those states where democracy survived there were great shifts in electoral fortune, sometimes accompanied by demands for strong leadership"².

Strong criticism was raised by intellectuals, philosophers, economists, professors or journalists. Philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev, whose ideas inspired Nae Ionescu, wrote in 1924 that democracy lacked flexibility and consistency, and it was insensitive, skeptical to the will of the masses. Allegedly, democracy ignored the truth and recognized only the power of numbers. Berdyaev commented upon J. J. Rousseau's ideas, considering the French thinker as the *spiritual father of democracy*. At the same time, Nae Ionescu shared the same opinion on Rousseau.

"There are no guarantees that in democracy the will of the masses will aim for righteousness, that will aim for freedom, and not for the radical overthrow of any liberties"³. The Russian thinker commented that at that time, democracy underwent a crisis situation and suffered because of its incapacity to adapt to the contemporary political reality. "Thus there are doubts on the universal suffrage, a mechanical one that considers the human as worthless atom. Solutions are to be found in the corporate representation, and on the returning to the medieval principle of guilds."⁴

At Nae Ionescu, the critique of the democracy includes two major directions: one based on the theoretical de-structuring of the political system of multi-party democracy. The second is based on highlighting the problems of the Romanian inter-war political situation.

In his courses of Logics and Metaphysics, Nae Ionescu criticized the rationalism and the democratic system altogether. During a public lecture, held within the academic year 1929/1930, the professor told his audience that the world was at cross-roads. More specifically, the world had to leave behind rationalism, as obsolete philosophical doctrine, and the basis of Capitalism: "Economically speaking, Capitalism is being suppressed (...). Politically speaking, also, for the simple reason that democracy and constitutionalism became obsolete. Religiously, of course, because everywhere Protestantism staggers, and rationalism dies"⁵.

For Nae Ionescu, the most important philosophical sources of democracy as political theory are two French thinkers: R. Descartes and J. J. Rousseau. In the writings of Descartes, mainly *Regulae ad directionem ingenii*, Nae Ionescu finds the founding elements of theory of democracy in the XX century: the individualism, the egocentric idealism and the mathematical-

rationalist mentality. In the *Social Contract* (*Du Contrat Social*) of Rousseau, Nae Ionescu identifies the “almost complete” blueprint of democracy and its ideological mechanisms⁶.

In his academic courses, Nae Ionescu argues that: 1) democracy is the result of applying *l'esprit des sciences* in investigating the human existence (via Descartes) and 2) democracy considers the society as being the sum of all the individuals that are part of it (via Rousseau).

Descartes was - from Nae Ionescu's standpoint - responsible for the “scientist formula” of that time. The roots of that formula were two important beliefs: Reason was unique as the sunlight, and the mathematical knowledge aimed to become the epistemological foundation of knowledge, generally, “a regulator of human knowledge”⁷. The development of European *Geist* was influenced, according to Nae Ionescu, by those ideas, which were obsolete, in that particular moment of time, and therefore they should have been put aside.

On the other hand, Nae Ionescu referred to the collective will as a fundamental argument for rejecting democracy. The collective will is an approximation of the General Will (*volonté générale*), first enunciated by Rousseau. The collective will was defined by Nae Ionescu as being the sum of free individual wills, the majority criterion being the one that settles it. “It [democracy], a legitimate offspring of modern scientism, was born from the arithmetic evaluation of society. It can not renounce – without contradiction – to the quantitative point of view”, explained the Romanian thinker⁸.

Nae Ionescu's interpretation of the metaphysical concept of collective/General Will which according to Rousseau referred to the desire or interest of people as a whole, led to the idea that democracy is not suitable anymore for his *époque*. This interpretation considers the General Will as a sum of all individual wills. But Rousseau himself rejected that interpretation, admitting that the General Will might not actually be expressed by the majority. By doing so, Rousseau kept intact his ideas related to social bonds/ties (*lien social*) and common interest (*l'intérêt commun*). The General Will was considered sovereign and above individual wills. “Il y a souvent bien de la différence entre la volonté de tous et la volonté générale; celle-ci ne regarde qu'à l'intérêt commun, l'autre regarde à l'intérêt privé, et n'est qu'une somme de volontés particulières: mais ôtez de ces mêmes volontés les plus et les moins qui s'entre-détruisent, reste pour somme des différences la volonté générale.”⁹

This distinction between *la volonté de tous* and *la volonté générale*, explained by a pair of antonyms: particular (private) interest/vs./common interest is essential for understanding Rousseau. According to the interpretations of Rousseau's work, in mathematical terms, *la volonté de tous* is an arithmetical sum, and *la volonté générale* is an integral¹⁰.

Nae Ionescu ignored that distinction and criticized democracy on the grounds of the idea of collective/General Will as a sum of individual wills.

“One may object that this is the old democracy of Rousseau. Of course! But I would be glad if someone could tell me specifically, how this is a democracy that is no longer Rousseau’s, but still is a democracy”, argues the author¹¹.

The refutation of Romanian political parties

In the editorials and columns published in “Cuvântul” newspaper, Nae Ionescu commented upon the social elements that point to the “dissolution” of the democratic regime¹². Nae Ionescu predicted a crisis of the democracy, confirmed, from his point of view by the development of alternative ways of governing (socialism, regionalism, for example)¹³.

The anti-democratic position is illustrated by Nae Ionescu’s criticism of the fundamental institutions of democracy: the political parties, the parliament, the universal suffrage and the Constitution. In a series of editorials published in “Cuvântul” between July 30 and August 3, 1930, Nae Ionescu referred to the crisis of the Romanian political parties, derived from the inconsistency, even lack, of appropriate political platforms: “Our parties live in an incredible programmatic anarchy”¹⁴. Moreover, the absence of an electorate able to exercise its right to vote in a knowledgeable way was considered a further impediment.

To these arguments, Nae Ionescu adds the idea that the time of political parties had passed, therefore they could simply suspend their existence. Eight years later, King Carol II would decree the dissolution of all Romanian political parties. The parliamentary regime is considered to be a “fiction”¹⁵, because – as Nae Ionescu stated – “there are no objective criteria to establish a certain succession of political parties to power”¹⁶.

The political parties as institutions are considered to be false and artificial, due to the fact that they were “transplanted” into Romanian society, from other cultures where they had organically grown up. According to Nae Ionescu, the Western culture was adopted in Romania, following the general belief that “the forms of culture, i.e. of spirituality are to be transferred, hence imported; fundamental misjudgment, proven as such everywhere”¹⁷.

In a fragment from an editorial, published in “Cuvântul”, on March 14, 1930 – *Politica “prizei directe”* (The policy of “direct connection”) – Nae Ionescu defined the Romanian political parties as heterogeneous organizations, with their own internal laws, others than the ones imposed by the political and social reality of the country. The solution of that problem was, in the author’s opinion, the removal of political parties from the governing position and the establishment of a direct connection, with no intermediaries, between the rulers and people.

Exemplary illustrations of individuality, according to Nae Ionescu

In one article on René Descartes, Nae Ionescu argued that he did not believe in the providential thinker, whose activity might change the world. On the contrary, he considered that *Zeitgeist* brought to our conscience the presence of a certain thinker: “The fundamental transformations in the history of mankind rise under the auspices of a great thinker. It is somehow bold and presumptuous to say, without any doubt, that the decisive part in history is the human soul. But it is no less true that the times of profound changes coincide, at their beginning, with the activity of a thinker, who, afterwards, is to become the symbol of that era”¹⁸. Descartes, *the father of modern thinking*, in Nae Ionescu’s opinion, is considered to be the personification of all the soul’s torments that gave birth to the “modern man”.

Thus, the intellectual and moral qualities are not sufficient to produce a special human individual: every person should be considered as a product of his time. Nae Ionescu argues, for example, that it is rather difficult to discover in Descartes’ beliefs something that was not studied by his predecessors, but “in him all these disparate elements, moving chaotically, form a balanced unity, an original synthesis, responsible for the future historical developments”.

At his turn, the political figure is considered to be a merely instrument of history, and by him the people could achieve their objectives. One example is Iuliu Maniu, the leader of the Peasant National Party (Partidul Național Țărănesc, PNȚ). Initially, Nae Ionescu, by the force of his newspaper, “Cuvântul”, supported Maniu when his party was in opposition. After PNȚ won the elections, Iuliu Maniu’s political acts did not meet the expectations of the people, as Nae Ionescu put it¹⁹. In fact, the explanation for Maniu’s hesitation to support the contested heir of the throne of Romania, Prince Carol’s return to Romania was his concern to prevent a major political crisis. In Nae Ionescu’s interpretation, Maniu – the politician, as instrument of history and nation, had to satisfy the will of the people, i.e. to support Carol’s return²⁰.

If the political figure was no more than an instrument of the nation, “a humble slave of history”, the King was seen as the “emanation of the nation”, as having mystical prerogatives. At the beginning of 1930, when Carol had not yet returned to Romania, Nae Ionescu used to criticize all the politicians that considered the Prince to be a common person: “Our attitude was from the beginning different – explained Ionescu. We took into consideration the monarchy and the dynasty. We understood that one of the great advantages of monarchy was that royalty is a mystical institution (...). And the dynasty was intangible and not a subject to our positive judgment, therefore surpassing our daily intrigues and personal

interests”²¹. For Nae Ionescu, Carol II was the King, the successor of the dynasty and, in the same time, the salvation of the nation.

To resume, writing about Descartes, Nae Ionescu rejects the idea of the providential thinker; assessing Iuliu Maniu’s political activity, he rejects the idea of a politician who can change history, i.e. not being a simple instrument of history. On the other hand, on Carol II’s case, he was ready to admit the existence of an exceptional individual, guarantying the future of a nation. One explanation for this attitude is Nae Ionescu’s belief that royalty could surpass the “contractual-mechanist mentality”²² of the democratic state. The dynasty was considered by Nae Ionescu to be the ultimate symbolic defense against the individualism of the liberal doctrine, which threatened the spiritual unity of the nation.

Only a few years later, the King is replaced by the providential political leader. “The theoretician of King Master was dedicating himself to the open advocacy of [Corneliu Zelea] Codreanu’s political aspirations, waving the possibility of replacing the incompetent monarch ruling the country with the ‘head’ or a ‘leader’ coming from people’s ranks.”, explains the historian Florin Ţurcanu²³. According to Nae Ionescu, *the ruler* should leave the place for *the leader*²⁴.

The relation between the individual and collective groups

The relation between the individual and the social group is, in Nae Ionescu’s opinion, an inclusive one: the individual is a part of the nation, the collectivity surpasses the person. In 1930, answering to an open letter published by the newspaper “Epoca”, Nae Ionescu argues that he can not actively take part in the political life. The rationale was that he did not believe in creative possibilities of human determination, as explained in Descartes’ case, but only in the force of social groups: “I believe in institutions, collectivities, in symbols, in organic and anonymous delegation; because I do not believe in immediate reality, in concrete, in contingency, but in essence, intimate mechanisms, and laws, where the true reality lies, unseen, but alive and true”²⁵. In the same article, the author brought into discussion the personal example as an argument: he took seriously his function given to him in the “whole of the nation through which we live and of which we are a part”.

Nae Ionescu pleaded for action and dynamism in politics. “The typically Romanian metaphysical neutrality could have been compensated for by adopting a heroic, combative dynamism. Such dynamism was to have extraordinary cultural effects, on one hand, but on the other it also resulted in catastrophic consequences on the political level, because of the right wing ideological excesses”, argues the Romanian researcher Laura Pavel²⁶.

The individual values should, according to Nae Ionescu, be abandoned for the sake of collective ones. The personal welfare was in direct

connection with the group where the individual lived. That discourse is the antonym of political beliefs, on which the American Constitution was built. *The pursuit of happiness* in Romanian version is the following: “Thus, faced with the collectivity that is called nation or state, we turn things upside down. And instead of saying, like it should be natural, that here the law of nation or state has the greatest importance, we ask for... a greater happiness, a greater individual joy; and we ask for it from the nation or state, as if this is their call – to adapt to the individual needs of every one of us! Forgetting that tomorrow, we could be functioning, according to the same rationale in front of a league of Koch bacilli, exactly in the same way as in front of the famous league of human rights”²⁷.

At the academic level, Nae Ionescu also debated the delicate relation between the individual and collectivity²⁸. Relevant for this case: the series of academic lectures, entitled “Logica colectivelor” (The logic of collective bodies), taught by Nae Ionescu at the University of Bucharest during 1934/1935 and 1935/1936 academic years. The first lecture is dedicated to the importance of collective body in natural sciences; the second and the third focus on the importance of collective body in the life of individuals and nation.

The “political” collectivity is defined by its main goal – to contribute to the national destiny, by bringing together the estates of the nation. The individual has to be a part of this destiny, although “the general formula of the collective body is somehow independent from the action of its individuals”²⁹.

This relation between the individual and the collective body is not a balanced one. The individual has some personal features which can prevent him from actively participating in the leadership of his collectivity. Nae Ionescu explained: 1) the personal judgment of the individual can not be used in problems of the collective body; 2) there are some situations where the individual is overcome and he can not state his opinion; 3) the normality of the individual is considered in relation with the collective body. Nae Ionescu’s conclusion is that not all the individuals belong to a collective body in the same way. “Ideally, we should say that as an individual grows inside a collective body, its laws are in a certain way the limits of his freedom and of his possibilities to think and act”. The examples chosen by the thinker are taken from physics – something which may affect the argument’s validity: one can not infer on the basis of the analogy between human behavior and gas molecules³⁰.

Nae Ionescu considered that the individual might take decisions for the group in certain limits, established by his life experience and his previous actions. Thus, for individuals, there are levels of commitment to the community life, which automatically impose specific areas of competence. In politics, for example, individuals may participate if they possess a given level of understanding of the reality, and of the ‘concrete’ (seen as opposed to abstraction or general). This term is present in the

majority of Nae Ionescu's lectures and articles, but is not clearly explained anywhere.

One example given by the author is the peasant who can decide about mending a bridge, but not about the election of a Member of Parliament: "Why? For the simple reason that the problem of members of Parliament is not a concrete problem for him. He is not entitled to decide in this matter"³¹. Nae Ionescu's target is the political system based on majority (i.e. democracy), in which all the individuals are asked to decide in a domain of which they have little knowledge: "When they add up, all the individuals are considered equals, everyone's vote, everyone's opinion is equal"; "Within a nation, not everyone participates in politics, as this is not a function to be fulfilled by all individuals."

Which would be in these circumstances the practical way to elect the representative of national will? Nae Ionescu proposes two political solutions: i) the reign of *droit divine*; ii) the providential leader, ("căpetenia", in original) who is part of the nation, and stands for the collectivity. It is clear that - if the lecture was correctly shorthanded³² - Nae Ionescu's beliefs were similar to the Iron Guard's ideas. After supporting without hesitation Carol II, in 1935 Nae Ionescu equals the royalty with the political leader, representative of the national will.

The same problem of the relation between the individual and the collective body is discussed in the lectures held by Nae Ionescu in the prison of Miercurea-Ciuc, in 1938, printed later under the name of *Legionary Phenomenon* (*Fenomenul legionar*). As there are suspicions regarding the paternity of these texts, we take into discussion only several ideas. In the first lecture, the speaker argues that to every historical momentum corresponds an appropriate "life form"/*Lebensform* (a social, political, economical and cultural formula) mandatory for all individuals. We find again the Weber-ian-type correlations that Nae Ionescu made in his articles and lectures: "I can not be Orthodox if I am Capitalist, idealist or nominalist in philosophy, individualist in ethics, or democrat in politics. (...) If it [a time/period] is Protestant, then it should be Capitalist in economy, democrat in politics, individualist in ethics (democrat and parliamentarian), rationalist and idealist in philosophy etc."³³.

Moreover, compared with the ideas of 1934-1936, the state makes the object of more consideration. As representative of collectivity's interests, the state should actively intervene in the life of the community, not allowing the individual to act according to his will. The individual (particular) interest should take the second place, and the collective interest - the first place. The individual should perfectly fit into the community. The Romanian researcher George Voicu explains Nae Ionescu's "biological" perspective: "The human being is only a 'cell' or an 'organ' within the social body; he has to accomplish his fated physiological functions, only so the social body is healthy and consequently functions

well. If not, a surgical intervention is mandatory to ensure the health of social body”³⁴.

The separation from community is considered by Nae Ionescu as an abnormal situation, even a betrayal. “For Ionescu, the only way for a collectivity to perpetuate its existence was by denying other collectivities their right of existence. This was true for the relationship between nations, but also within the Nation; Ionescu saw the war-principle operating. It was part of the natural order of things that political parties fought each other and the group suppressed every individualizing tendency within itself.”, argues Philip Vanhaelemeersch, author of a monograph dedicated to inter-war Romania³⁵.

In 1938, in *Cuvântul*, Nae Ionescu wrote that the liberal democracy was dead and he proclaimed the dictatorship of the leader “chosen by the masses”: “The man chosen by the masses – this is the new political form which is being created today by the history”³⁶. On the basis of the concept of the leader chosen by the masses (not by elections)³⁷, Nae Ionescu sets the principle of the act of faith “which connects people to him and, depending on the intensity of the historical momentum, may take shape of a fanatical exaltation”.

Thus, a leader is not appointed as a result of electoral exercise. The people’s faith is more important, because it supports, in Nae Ionescu’s opinion, a large participation of the masses to the community. Nae Ionescu did not consider the regimes of Mussolini and Hitler as being dictatorial. “It is not a dictatorship the regime (...) which has the most impressive adhesion of the masses, known in the history”³⁸.

In direct connection with the ideas on individual and the collective body, Nae Ionescu states that the nation should be defined in analogy with the Christian Church³⁹. Every individual has an obligation to participate in the life of his nation, not on the basis of a social contract, but on the basis of a mystical attitude: “A nation is a community of love and life, an organic solidarity”⁴⁰.

The individual membership to a nation is ethnically conditioned. “When Simeon Bărnuț, Eminescu, Iorga, Goga, and in the last ten years “*Cuvântul*”, have talked about nation, they meant, a collective spiritual being, with an organic unity of its own, with a life of its own (...). When our Constitution says that “the powers come from the nation”, it defines the nation as the totality of the inhabitants of a state, no matter their spiritual structure and (...) ethnicity. The difference is fundamental”⁴¹.

Nae Ionescu had formulated these ideas since 1930, when he wrote about his famous distinction – a Romanian [citizen] *versus* a good Romanian [citizen]. The thinker argued that there was a direct and exclusive relation between being Romanian and being a part of the nation, from an ethnical, spiritual and religious point of view, the example provided by Nae Ionescu: Ion Brătianu, Samoil Micu and the unknown Bercu Solomon, all “good

Romanians”, but not “Romanians”⁴². This definition was criticized because it sets the basis for ethnic and religious discrimination⁴³.

Conclusions

Nae Ionescu and his philosophical and political ideas are part of what researchers such as Leon Volovici or Z. Ornea identified as being the “new nationalism” or the “full-fledge nationalism”. Of all the traditionalist currents of the inter-war period, it had the greatest influence on intellectual, political and cultural life of Romania. The *new* nationalism added to the *traditional* nationalism (represented by Nicolae Iorga, Constantin Rădulescu-Motru or Lucian Blaga) the anti-Semitism and the pledge towards a totalitarian state, built on orthodoxy and the national specificity, as explains Leon Volovici or Z. Ornea in their works⁴⁴. This type of nationalism brought with itself a wave of radical ideas, influenced mostly by controversial Western thinkers. Nae Ionescu made use of – among others – Spengler, with his theories about the decline of Western civilization, and Berdyaev and other Russian theologians, with their pessimist views on rationalism, democracy and parliamentary system.

Nae Ionescu’s ideas on democracy, political parties, parliamentary regime, universal suffrage, individuality, leadership and nation resembled ideas present in the discourse of Romanian right-wing political organization, the Iron Guard. The relationship between Nae Ionescu and the Iron Guard can not be proven exactly, because the sources of information are contradictory. Researchers like A. Laignel-Lavastine, S. Lavric, Z. Ornea, F. Veiga or L. Volovici believe that Nae Ionescu was one of the most important ideologues of the Iron Guard; others as D. Mezdrea or M. Diaconu admit that there is no clear proof regarding Nae Ionescu’s membership, and the right-wing politicians used Nae Ionescu’s beliefs to build an extremist ideology.

Thus, for example, Nae Ionescu’s ideas are so similar with those expressed in Corneliu Zelea Codreanu’s book, *Pentru legionari* (*For legionaries*). It is also true that there are no documents to help us evaluate Nae Ionescu’s connection with the Iron Guard. Nevertheless, his public lectures and his journalistic works did develop coherent ideas that have circulated during the inter-war period. This responsibility – of the written word – can not be denied or forgotten, especially under the circumstances in which the Romanian Right needed ideologues for developing and imposing a nationalist doctrine⁴⁵, as Z. Ornea explained: “Of course, Nae Ionescu did not enroll himself into the Legion. Neither in 1933, nor later. But, for sure, a pact of active collaboration was in place”⁴⁶. The historical facts can not be easily clarified, as a result of the fact that in the Romanian political life, Nae Ionescu built himself the image of an *éminence grise*⁴⁷. He applied that strategy in relation with Carol II, by refusing a public position,

and also in relation with the Iron Guard, by keeping a certain distance from its leaders.

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Notes

¹ "Trăire" is a fundamental concept for understanding Nae Ionescu's philosophical attitude. "Trăire" is a Romanian concept that translates the German *Erlebnis* – "the act of living". For a complete analysis of "trăire" and its influence on Nae Ionescu's belief, see Philip Vanhaelemeersh, *A Generation "Without Beliefs" and the Idea of Experience in Romania* (Colorado: Boulder, 2006), 200-251.

² Paul Hayes, "Introduction," in *Themes in Modern European History, 1890-1945*, ed. Paul Hayes (London: Routledge, 1992), 9.

³ Nicolae Berdiaev [Berdyayev, Nikolai], *Un nou Ev Mediu* (București: Paideia, 2001), 129.

⁴ Berdiaev, 135.

⁵ "Raționalismul lichidează", in Romanian. Nae Ionescu, *Curs de istorie a logicii, 1929/1930* (București: Humanitas, 1993), 56.

⁶ Nae Ionescu, "Sindicalismul," in *Nelinıştea metafizică*, ed. Marin Diaconu (București: Editura Fundației Culturale Române, 1993), 128.

⁷ Nae Ionescu, *Curs de istorie a logicii. Însoțit de trei prelegeri din Logica colectivelor* (București: Eminescu, 1997), 83.

⁸ Nae Ionescu, "Sindicalismul," 129-130.

⁹ J. J. Rousseau, *Du contrat social* (Paris: Flammarion, 2001), 68-69, Livre II, Chapitre III.

¹⁰ See the interpretations of the General Will in the endnotes of "Du Contrat Social", ed. Bruno Bernardi, 205-206.

¹¹ Nae Ionescu, "Sindicalismul," 129.

¹² Skythes [Nae Ionescu], "Democrația evoluează," *Cuvântul*, August 15, 1926.

¹³ See above a commentary of the Romanian researcher Adrian Marino on the critique of democracy as it was made by the Romanian Right: "profoundly unreal, illusory, obscurantist, reactionary and anti-patriotic. Had it taken seriously, politically and socially, Romania would have remained a primitive country, with medieval, ethnical, rural and isolated structures, until the end of the XX century. Solely, under the motivation that the modern Western structures do not correspond with its 'organic' realities." Adrian Marino, "Pentru neopașoptism," *Sfera Politicii* 60 (1998): 5-14.

¹⁴ Nae Ionescu, "Partidul de cadre și masa electorală mobilă," *Cuvântul*, July 31, 1930.

¹⁵ Nae Ionescu, "Între 'echipele de lucru' și guvernul personal," *Cuvântul*, August 3, 1930.

¹⁶ The Romanian electorate system had one important characteristic: the party that won the elections received an electoral bonus which helped in obtaining the majority of seats in the Parliament. Many intellectuals and political leaders criticised that mechanism, for being unfair.

¹⁷ Nae Ionescu, "Internaționala' sub glugă," *Cuvântul*, December 18, 1930.

¹⁸ Nicolae Ionescu, "Descartes – părinte al democratismului modern," *Ideea europeană* 66 (1921).

¹⁹ Nae Ionescu started a press campaign in "Cuvântul", and denigrated Maniu, accusing him of using the figure of Prince Carol during electoral campaign, to attract the voters. When the Peasant National Party won the elections, Maniu suddenly forgot his promises, explained Nae Ionescu. The promises mentioned by Nae Ionescu regarded mainly the return of Prince Carol in Romania. In fact, Maniu accepted the idea, under certain conditions: Carol had to reconcile with his wife, and he was supposed to forbid his mistress to return to Romania; also, Carol was expected to wait a period of time, until his proclamation as King of Romania. Carol rejected these conditions: he made a dramatic return to Romania, and insisted to be proclaimed king immediately – he would be restored in his royal rights and privileges, and proclaimed King by the Parliament only two days after his return. Last but not least, Carol brought his mistress back to the country a few weeks later. Keith Hitchins, *Rumania, 1866-1947*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 415.

²⁰ Nae Ionescu, "Între imperativele istoriei și aventură politică. Anul politic," *Cuvântul*, January 2, 1930.

²¹ Nae Ionescu, "Sub specie historiae," *Cuvântul*, January 24, 1930.

²² Nae Ionescu, "Dinastie-monarhie," *Cuvântul*, May 16, 1930.

²³ Florin Țurcanu, *Mircea Eliade. Prizonierul istoriei*, (București: Humanitas, 2005), 320.

²⁴ Such a leader was Benito Mussolini, a character praised by Nae Ionescu in his writings; still, even in the fascist Italy, Mussolini was never able to completely sideline the monarch, Victor Emanuel III.

²⁵ Nae Ionescu, "Între geniu personal și virtute colectivă. Răspuns d-lui prof. Enric Otetelișanu," *Cuvântul*, March 1, 1930.

²⁶ Laura Pavel, "Eliade and His Generations: metaphysical fervour and tragic destiny," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, no. 15 (2006) 14, http://jsri.ro/new/?Archive:JSRI_volume_5%2C_no._15%2C_Winter_2006_%26nbsp%3B_Remembering_Mircea_Eliade_%26amp%3B_Religion%2C_Culture%2C_Ideology.

²⁷ Nae Ionescu, "Eroarea filantropică," *Cuvântul*, October 5, 1931.

²⁸ We will comment here only upon the political relation between an individual and the collective body. In Nae Ionescu's works there is also a close connection between the mathematical logic and the logic of collectivities, as states Al. Surdu in the volume *Confluente cultural-filosofice* (București: Paideia, 2002), 119-128.

²⁹ Nae Ionescu, "Curs de istorie a logicei," 157.

³⁰ In one article of 1931, Nae Ionescu compares the individual with a human cell, and the collectivity with the human body as a whole. As the cell can not exist without the body, and has to submit itself to the whole, in the same the individual can not exist without the collective body and has to submit himself to it. Nae Ionescu errs in constructing this

argument because a cell has not self conscience and free will. (Nae Ionescu, “Eroarea filantropică,”).

³¹ Nae Ionescu, “Curs de istorie a logicei,” 161.

³² Nae Ionescu explicitly refused to write books. Therefore, his works mainly consist of newspaper articles – thousands – published in *Cuvântul*, *Predania* and other publications. His lectures at the University were shorthand by stenographers and were published by his students, mostly after Nae Ionescu's death. There are legitimate doubts that some paragraphs were not correctly typed out. See also, Philip Vanhaelemeersh, *A Generation “Without Beliefs” and the Idea of Experience in Romania* (Colorado: Boulder, 2006), 247-248; Romina Surugiu, *Dominante filosofice în publicistica lui Nae Ionescu. De la Logos la Cuvântul* (București: Paideia, 2008), 124-125.

³³ Nae Ionescu, “Fenomenul legionar,” in *Garda de fier spre reînvierea României*, ed. Șt. Palaghiță (București: Roza Vânturilor, 1993), 354.

³⁴ George Voicu, *Mitul Nae Ionescu* (București: Ars Docendi, 2000), 48.

³⁵ Philip Vanhaelemeersh, *A Generation “Without Beliefs” and the Idea of Experience in Romania (1927-1934)* (Colorado: Boulder, 2006), 245.

³⁶ “A political formula has a time of its own, and so it may die. In the same way, democracy is dying today. In the same way, it has died. Therefore, why do we talk about it?”, Nae Ionescu, “Dictatură și democrație. Pe marginea unei conferințe a domnului Iorga,” *Cuvântul*, January 27, 1938.

³⁷ The theologian and journalist Nichifor Crainic also sustained the idea of a leader chosen by the masses through an act of faith. In 1931, Crainic wrote: “The man of faith, the man with strong convictions is in command (...). He creates the history. (...) I believe in Benito Mussolini and I believe that the human power can destroy the beast”, Nichifor Crainic, *Puncte cardinale în haos* (București: Albatros, 1998), 21.

³⁸ Nae Ionescu, “Dictatură și democrație,”.

³⁹ Nae Ionescu, “Noi și catolicismul,” *Cuvântul*, October 31, 1930.

⁴⁰ Nae Ionescu, “Cazul Stere. Ce este un ‘trădător’,” *Cuvântul*, April 10, 1930.

⁴¹ Nae Ionescu, “Român și rumân. Abdicările liberalismului rumânesc,” *Cuvântul*, November 19, 1933.

⁴² “Bercu Solomon” was, for Nae Ionescu, the prototype of the Romanian Jew, a good citizen that regularly paid taxes and fought in the Great War. Samuel Micu contributed significantly to the rise of the Romanian national consciousness, but he was Greek Catholic, not Orthodox. As for the liberal political leader Ion Brătianu, he had a decisive role in building the Romanian modern state, but Nae Ionescu was questioning the real Romanian identity of that state. Nae Ionescu, “A fi ‘bun român’,” *Cuvântul*, October 30, 1930.

⁴³ N. Steinhardt contradicted Nae Ionescu's distinction good Romanian/Romanian by using a theological demonstration. N. Steinhardt, *Jurnalul fericirii* (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1995), 17. For an interesting commentary see George Ardeleanu, *N. Steinhardt și paradoxurile libertății* (București: Humanitas, 2009), 198-202.

⁴⁴ Leon Volovici, *Ideologia naționalistă și “problema evreiască”. Eșeu despre formele antisemitismului intelectual în România anilor '30* (București: Humanitas, 1995), 76-80; Z. Ornea, *Anii treizeci. Extrema dreaptă românească* (București: Editura Fundației Culturale Române, 1996). 37-72.

⁴⁵ In one of the volumes dedicated to Nae Ionescu's biography, *Nae Ionescu, Biografia IV* (Brăila: Istros, 2005), 412, Dora Mezdrea includes a fragment of a Siguranta's (Romanian Secret Police) report, in which it was clearly stated that the Iron Guard wanted to attract on its side “professional intellectuals”.

⁴⁶ Z. Ornea, 226.

⁴⁷ Matei Călinescu, “The 1927 Generation in Romania: Friendship and Ideological Choices (Mihail Sebastian, Mircea Eliade, Nae Ionescu, Eugène Ionesco, E. M. Cioran),” *East European Politics and Societies* 3 (2001): 658.