



A Romanian Icon of the Burning Bush
20th Century

THE 'BURNING BUSH' GROUP SPIRITUAL RESISTANCE IN COMMUNIST ROMANIA

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OVERVIEW

- A brief history of Romanian Christianity
- A *philokalic* tradition
- Spirituality and culture before the second world war and in the early days of the communist regime
- The 'Burning Bush' group

ROMANIAN CHRISTIANITY

- Apostolic Christianity
- “...there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free, but Christ is all and in all!” (Colossians 3:11)

SCYTHIA MINOR

Still a
Roman province
in
400 AD



ROMANIAN CHRISTIANITY

- Late Antiquity to Middle Ages
- Modern times to the time of the 'Burning Bush'

A PHILOKALIC TRADITION

- Late Antique beginnings
- Carpathian monasticism
- 14th century: The disciples of Saint Gregory of Sinai and the first recorded Romanian hesychasts
- 15th century: Generalisation of Romanian hesychasm
- 18th century: The *philokalic* revival and the first modern translation of the Byzantine *Philokalia*
- 20th century: The new *philokalic* movement

SPIRITUALITY AND CULTURE

- Nae Ionescu and his disciples
- The 'Burning Bush' group
- Constantin Noica's 'School of Păltiniș'



A 20th Century Romanian Icon of the Burning Bush
by Elder Sophian Boghiu

THE 'BURNING BUSH' GROUP

- 1943-1956
- Founded by poet Sandu Tudor and Elder Benedict Ghiuș of *Antim* or *All Saints* Monastery in Bucharest
- Prominent figures: Sophian Boghiu, Paul Constantinescu, Nichifor Crainic, Anton Dumitriu, Ivan Kulygin, Alexandru Mironescu, Arsenie Papacioc, Ioan Marin Sadoveanu, André Scrima, Vasile Voiculescu, Mircea Vulcănescu
- Activities: retreats, communal prayer, creativity, private meetings, public lectures
- End

THE 'BURNING BUSH' GROUP

- The farewell letter of Father John the Foreigner (Ivan Kulygin): “Glory and thanks to the Lord, who, at this very moment, shows us his kindness. . . . I strongly confess the work of providence which is carried out and continues to be carried out within me. And I also confess the wholeness of the divine mercy showered upon us and all those whom the Lord would like to further select as vehicles of the glory of his name . . . Even since my very youth, the sweet energy of providence basked in my heart and granted me the charismatic blessing of the inheritance on the way to my salvation. It also granted me the gift of a spiritual father within whom acted the grace that filled his life. (cont. on the next slide)

THE 'BURNING BUSH' GROUP

- The farewell letter of Father John the Foreigner (Ivan Kulygin): (cont.) Moreover, and most important, it granted me the gift of the unmediated spirit of strength and wisdom throughout my pilgrimage. . . . This is how the Lord granted me what it is called “the charismatic tradition of the spiritual inheritance” and the grace of directing souls toward salvation. Looking back in contemplation of the road and paths which I have travelled through this life as a pilgrim for sixty-four years, I acknowledge that the Lord sought to pour in my young heart the invincible flame of his love from the very beginning. I praise the Lord, for he hastened to fill my inner life with his ineffable mercy. (cont. on the next slide)

THE 'BURNING BUSH' GROUP

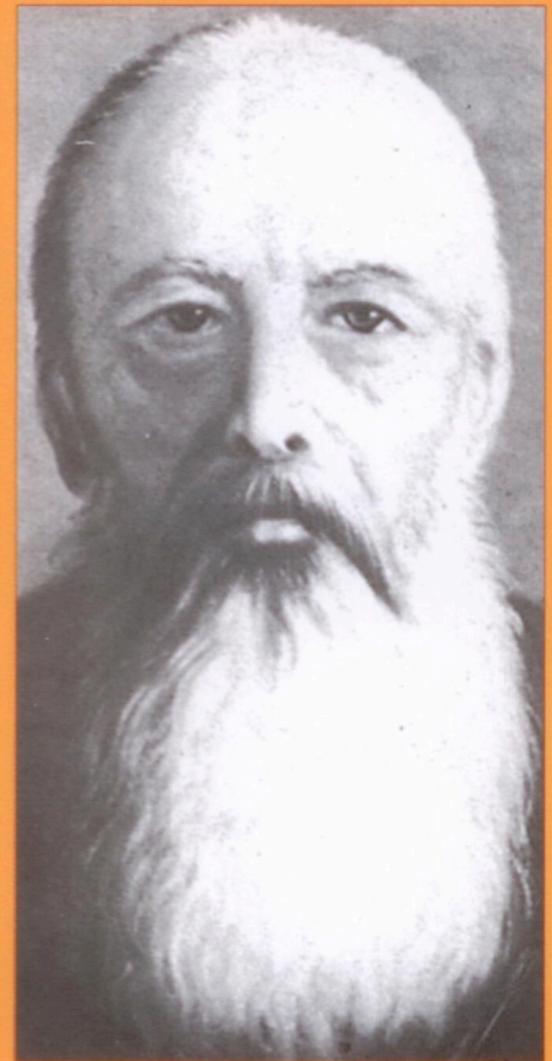
- The farewell letter of Father John the Foreigner (Ivan Kulygin): (cont.) ... Yes, I praise the Lord, who, at the threshold of my adulthood, made to be melted in the interior chamber of my heart this abundance of the gifts which I live from and which renew me even today. ... I offered the grace that was entrusted to me to those who truthfully sought it. Yes, it is he alone, the Lord, who has always shared himself with all the pilgrims of our earthly journey, who has brought them to himself by the very paths of their everyday lives in order to quench their spiritual thirst. Yet the thirst of the Spirit is insatiable and cannot be satisfied. And the more its grace pours into the soul, the more it increases the capacity and fills it. It is truly like this. May the mercy of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all you. Amen!"

FATHER
DANIEL

Notebooks, vol. 2

IEROSCHIMONAHUL
DANIL DE LA RARĂV

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CAIETE



Sfințita Rugăciune

editura  christiana

THE 'BURNING BUSH' GROUP

- Father Daniel Teodorescu (aka poet Sandu Tudor) on the unceasing prayer: “true, God-received prayer cannot be just a prayer or what we understand and know as prayer; it is a greater and more overwhelming offering than prayer. To pray truly, in spirit and truth, means to unceasingly burn in God’s glorious light. To unceasingly pray to God means to burn yourself up in all ways, in all manners and in all the causes of your life, becoming flame and embers and fire for Him. The Lord is the Comforter. You must unceasingly burn, continuously consuming yourself for Him, passing through the entire wheel of your potential, thus fulfilling, through your burning up, the crown of God’s fiery love. The holy and unceasing prayer cannot be just the chosen hour and moment for uttering certain words. The holy and unceasing prayer cannot be the uttering of a little and dry formula of certain words. Holy and true prayer cannot be just one’s prayer.” (my translation)

THE 'BURNING BUSH' GROUP

- Sandu Tudor, *The akathist of the Burning Bush* (first stanza)
- “Who is She, so white and pure like the dawn? She is the Queen of prayer, she is prayer embodied, Imperial Lady and Lady of the morning, the Betrothed one to the Comforter, the Transformer of life. To You do we run, burning up, consumed by longing. Make us partakers of the holy mountain Tabor. Be for us shading and dew, You, the shading of grace, so that our nature is renewed through abundant grace. And so shall we cry out with the whole of the creation, in profound reverence: Rejoice, Bride who weaves unceasing prayer.” (my trans.)

PAUL
CONSTANTINESCU
Christmas Oratorio (1947)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=28pJR9SBnOM>



REIMAGINING THE 'BURNING BUSH'

Contemporary anonymous
artwork, 'The graphic
philosopheme of the
Burning Bush'



CONCLUSION

- The 'Burning Bush' group epitomises not just “a phenomenon of attitude ... of Orthodox spiritual resistance” (Antonie Plămădeală); it crowns the entire Christian history of my people as a traditional, ecumenical and creative movement
- A complex synthesis of *philokalic* spirituality, cultural creativity, Christian faithfulness and martyrdom—an inspiring treasure trove for the Orthodox everywhere and all Christians

SOURCE IN ENGLISH

- Giocas, Athanasios and Paul Ladouceur. 'The Burning Bush Group and Father André Scrima in Romanian Spirituality.' ***Greek Orthodox Theological Review*** 52:1-4 (2007) 37-61.