

# ROMANIA AND EUROPE

MODERNISATION  
AS TEMPTATION,  
MODERNISATION  
AS THREAT

GERMAN - ROMANIAN ACADEMY, SIBIU 1999

EDITED BY BOGDAN MURGESCU  
AFTERWORD BY BODO VON BORRIES

**ALLEN** 

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# ROMANIA AND EUROPE : MODERNISATION AS TEMPTATION, MODERNISATION AS THREAT

Edited by Bogdan Murgescu,  
Afterword by Bodo von Borries

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# Contents

<i>Bogdan Murgescu</i> Introduction	1
<i>Alexandru-Florin Platon</i> European Typologies of Modernisation: A Comparison between the Orthodox and the Catholic-Protestant Areas	13
<i>Brigitte Krech</i> Transylvania - Example for a Multicultural Society?	23
<i>Victor Rizescu</i> Romania as “Periphery”: Social Change and Intellectual Evolution	29
<i>Ileana-Maria Ratcu</i> Educational Modernisation in Transylvania in 1774-1848. Temptation and Threat	41
<i>Silvana Rachieru</i> Gender and Modernisation in 19th Century Romania. Case Study: Ploiești Society between 1825 and 1833	51
<i>Alin Ciupală</i> King Carol I and the Cultural Modernisation in Romania	57
<i>Dietmar Müller</i> Agrarian Populism in Interwar Romania. The Economic Policy and Politics of the Peasant Party and National Peasant Party	64
<i>Hans-Christian Maner</i> Aspects of Modernisation and the Orthodox Church in Romania	74
<i>Mariana Hausleitner</i> Romanization of the Bukovina, 1918-1944	84

<i>Edward Kanterian</i> The Malaise of Modernity: The Case of Romanian Intellectuals	93
<i>Constantin Davidescu</i> Totalitarian Discourse as Rejection of Modernity. The Iron Guard: A Case-Study	103
<i>Joachim Krauss</i> From Slavery to the Mahala: Roma in Romania - Just a “Social Problem” of Long Duration?	113
<i>Violeta Barbu</i> Rural Women in Romania: The Challenge of Modernisation	121
<i>F. Peter Wagner</i> On the (Alleged) Peculiarities of Romanian Development: Romania’s “ <i>Sonderweg</i> ” and the Problematic of the Transformation in Eastern Europe	132
<i>Bodo von Borries</i> Considerations about a Romanian-German Summer Academy on Modernisation	140
Bibliography	150
On the authors	169



## Introduction

*by Bogdan Murgescu*

This volume is the outcome of a German-Romanian academy, which took place in Sibiu (Hermannstadt) in September 1999. For the idea of such an academy I must pay tribute to Edward Kanterian, who sought a way of bringing together young German and Romanian scholars in the humanities. It was also Edward Kanterian who contacted the Körber Foundation, which was in the process of extending its activities towards establishing cultural and intellectual exchange networks between various parts of Europe under the generous heading “Living together in Europe”. Dr Wolf Schmidt, manager of the Körber Foundation, and Dirk Eilinghoff, at that time responsible for the Körber Foundation’s activities in Central and Eastern Europe, backed Edward’s idea and agreed to extend to Romania the model of academic meetings already experienced by the Körber Foundation in Turkey and Bulgaria. They even insisted on organising the first academy in 1999, although time was short for such an endeavour.

The concrete organisation of the academy is a characteristic example of post-modern effectiveness. Edward and I worked out the concept of the academy almost entirely on e-mail, with the additional help of some long-distance phone conversations. Electronic mail, but also previously existing personal relations, helped to disseminate information and to determine individual registrations from various locations in both Germany and Romania. Numerous young scholars with very different academic and institutional backgrounds joined the project, and were even forced to make a selection in the case of the Romanian participants.

Finally 17 young German and Romanian scholars (Nachwuchswissenschaftler) presented papers in the academy, lively discussions were moderated by Professors Daniel Barbu, Bodo v. Borries, Mircea Flonta and myself, and the concluding speech was delivered by Professor Paul Philippi. The participants also had the good fortune to be joined by a group of German and Austrian professors and students who were undertaking an academic excursion in Romania, and could thus benefit from the insights of Professors Armin Heinen, Klaus Heitmann and Vladimir Iliescu.

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The general theme we chose was: Romania and Europe: Modernisation as Temptation, Modernisation as Threat. It was designed to be broad and of general

interest. It was also designed to allow scholars from various social sciences to bring illuminating insights into the common reflection.

In fact, “modernisation” is not a simple concept. It is more than a notion; it is the core of a whole theory which aims to explain the whole evolution of mankind during several centuries<sup>1</sup>. Yet, “modernisation” has been used in at least two basic ways. First, “modernisation” means the transition to “modernity”, which is seen as a basic stage in the history of mankind. Of course there might be differences in defining what is “modern”<sup>2</sup>, or when society became “modern”, but from a theoretical point of view I would rather insist that in this framework “modernisation” is an event which is experienced only once by a society. Yet the very debates about what “modernity” really is have led also to another meaning of “modernisation”. If one accepts the fact that “modern” can also mean “up-to-date”, then “modernisation” would mean permanent adjustment (*aggiornamento*) to the most recent and best adapted social solutions to the challenges of history. Within this framework, we will never cease to “modernise”, because the contents of modernity are continuously changing.<sup>3</sup> This particular perception of modernity is even more acute in the case of latecomers, who are trying to catch-up with their already successful “modern” forerunners.

Such a latecomer–forerunner relationship shaped the Romanian perception of (Western) Europe beginning with the 19<sup>th</sup> century, although development gaps can be traced already during the Middle Ages.<sup>4</sup> But only during the 19<sup>th</sup> century did the processes of increasing political and economic integration combine with the triumph of an evolutionist paradigm and put the relation with (Western) Europe at the core of all major intellectual debates in Romanian culture. Members of Romanian elites began to travel and to study in Central and Western Europe, and returned with the conviction that they had to change Romanian society according to the Western success model. Certainly, there were also some reactions against the imitation of Western patterns, especially against excesses in taking over French fashion and in using French words and expressions, but nobody challenged the idea that the West was the right model for Romanian development.

In the 1860s Titu Maiorescu and the Junimea movement developed the theory of forms without content (*teoria formelor fără fond*), criticising the fact that Romania had adopted modern (Western) institutions for which its society was not yet prepared.<sup>5</sup> Still, Maiorescu and his followers rejected only concrete aspects of imitating the West, but not the principle that Romanian society should become modern according to European standards; within an evolutionist framework, they asked for a slowdown in institutional and political modernisation, in order to

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Wehler (1975).

<sup>2</sup> Gumbrecht (1978).

<sup>3</sup> Hall et al. (1996).

<sup>4</sup> Murgescu (1999), 13-92.

<sup>5</sup> Ornea (1966), especially p.86-108.

avoid divergence with the real functioning of society, and to allow the gradual adjustment of social structures to modernity.

Maiorescu's theory of forms without content was highly influential in modern Romanian culture. Even an opponent of Maiorescu, the Marxist ideologue Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea started in his analysis of modern Romania from Maiorescu's assumption that the Romanian political class had enforced the adoption of Western institutional patterns upon a society unprepared for the functioning of modern institutions. Certainly Dobrogeanu-Gherea also introduced some specific accents. He insisted on the importance of the treaty of Adrianople (1829) in the opening of the Romanian Principalities to European trade, and even developed an interesting theory about the impact of capitalism in undeveloped countries, where the modern system of law (a Constitution establishing basic rights for all citizens, formally free labour relations) gave way to a system which enslaved economically and politically the majority of the population (the peasantry), a system called by him neo-serfdom (neo-iobăgia).<sup>6</sup>

At the beginning of the 20th century the critics of the concrete forms taken by Romanian modernisation became more numerous. The contrast between the Westernised cities and the impoverished life of the majority of the population in traditional villages focused widespread criticisms. The peasant rebellion of 1907 showed that an agrarian reform, or at least measures to improve the life in the villages, was urgently needed. There were even voices which demanded that the whole politics of Romania should be shaped according to the interests of the peasantry, in order to improve the material and moral condition of the bulk of the people.<sup>7</sup> This increased concern about the peasantry was consistent also with the development of nationalism and with the idea that the peasants were the most authoritative representatives of the profound Romanian nation.<sup>8</sup> Such ideas could lead to an outright rejection of modernity in the name of Romanian traditions, but such a rejection was still marginal before World War I. Even in the 1920s modernisation continued to be a positive theme, and some of the leading intellectuals of the period found it rewarding to analyse its relationship with the diffusion of Western influences in Romanian society. The main protagonists of this debate were Ștefan Zeletin and Eugen Lovinescu.

Ștefan Zeletin was a philosopher and social scientist who had completed his studies in Germany (but had also studied for a semester in Paris). He was aware of most of the Western literature of the time on economic and social history, and, although influenced by Marx, was not a Marxist; in fact, his main intellectual reference was Werner Sombart. Zeletin tried to analyse the formation of modern Romania within the framework of Sombart's theories on capitalism, and even argued that Sombart's stages of capitalist development applied also to

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<sup>6</sup> Dobrogeanu-Gherea (1910).

<sup>7</sup> Ornea (1972).

<sup>8</sup> Ornea (1971).

Romanian evolutions.<sup>9</sup> Zeletin insisted that Romania's modernisation was determined by the economic influence of the West after the liberalisation of Romanian foreign trade in 1829. In a polemical manner that shocked a lot in the 1920s, Zeletin argued that the economy counted much more than culture and/or politics, and that the development of a capitalist economy and of a bourgeois class conferred on Romania the content which was needed as a basis for the cultural and institutional forms of modernity; thus he rejected Maiorescu's theory of forms without content, and even dared to argue that the positive force in Romania's progress had been the bourgeoisie (most of it of non-Romanian origin), while the intellectuals, including Maiorescu and the Junimea movement, had failed to join this trend and had preferred to criticise the modern elements intruding into Romanian society. Romanian culture was, according to Zeletin, "the rebellion of the medieval elements of our soul against the bourgeois order imposed by the invasion of foreign capitalism in our patriarchal life."<sup>10</sup>

The materialistic determinism of Zeletin was too extreme to be easily accepted by Romanian cultural elites. A more moderate alternative was supplied by Eugen Lovinescu. Lovinescu synthesised his difference to Zeletin as follows: "While Mr Zeletin employs historical materialism in its entirety and acknowledges in our civilisation a natural process from content to form, i.e. from a capitalist commodity system towards a bourgeois juridical and political structure, I argue that the ideological revolution came before the economic revolution, and thus for the existence of a reverse process, from form to content, under the law of the mutual dependency of moral and material life."<sup>11</sup> Lovinescu also argued that the reaction of Maiorescu and the Junimea movement against some features of the modernisation process was at least in part justified, and that it was beneficial for the development of modern Romanian culture. Despite these differences, Lovinescu shared with Zeletin the conviction that Romania's adjustment to modernity, i.e. to Western patterns, had been both necessary and beneficial.

Yet, this very basic assumption began to be increasingly questioned in the years after World War I. Most of the intellectual critics of the modernisation process came from the nationalist corner, and blamed the modernising adjustment to Western patterns and standards as a betrayal of the Romanian "national soul" and traditions, which were presumed to be superior at least morally and spiritually to the corrupted and materialistic West. Traditional village life and Orthodoxy were played against urban civilisation and de-Christianisation. Needless to say the "European-ists" tried in vane to explain that adjustment to modernity did not mean abandoning national values. Eugen Filotti argued: "For us there is no antagonism, no incompatibility between Europeanism and Romanian-ism. We want only to bring Romanian-ism into harmony with the pulse of contemporary life... We have a better opinion about our people

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<sup>9</sup> Zeletin (1925); Zeletin (1927).

<sup>10</sup> Zeletin (1925), 254.

<sup>11</sup> Lovinescu (1992), III, 172.

than all the traditionalists altogether, and therefore we want to see it joining Europe. From the Atlantic to our border there are enough nations which have succeeded in being European without losing anything from the specific of their ethnic soul. Why should we stick to a senseless and useless isolation? Why would we risk more by becoming European together with the French, the Germans, the Czechs or the Hungarians, who have not thus ceased to be what they were before..."<sup>12</sup> Such arguments did not impress critics of modernity, who insisted on the paramount importance of Eastern Orthodoxy. One of the main ideologues of this anti-Western stand, Nechifor Crainic, editor of the journal *Gândirea*, stated: "We inherit an Eastern soil, we inherit Christian fathers—our fate is determined by these geo-anthropological data... Westernisation means the denial of our Orientalism, European nihilism means the denial of our creative possibilities."<sup>13</sup> Widespread disillusion with the parliamentary system, whose shortcomings were almost unanimously criticised, the social effects of the Great Depression, and the apparent trend towards authoritarian/totalitarian regimes in large parts of Europe during the 1930s, determined a large number of Romanian intellectuals to reject both modernity and Western values<sup>14</sup>.

It is true that from the nationalist corner there emerged also a radical movement which considered that in fact the nation's chances to progress depended on the speed of its race to modernity, and that the adjustment to at least some Western patterns was not only useful, but also beneficial. Yet for Emil Cioran, who argued most convincingly for this idea, the model of modern efficiency was no longer the liberal West, but the totalitarian regimes of Mussolini and Hitler.<sup>15</sup>

The communist takeover after World War II completely altered the pattern of the debate. A Soviet-inspired version of Marxism was enforced as the theoretical framework for analysing all social evolution, including the process of modernisation. This had a bivalent impact on the study of the modernisation process. According to Marxism modernisation meant transition from feudalism to capitalism, i.e. a necessary stage in the human society's progress towards communism. As such, it was mainly an economic and social process, the cultural/intellectual and even political aspects merely being determined by the social structure. Taking into consideration also the ideological need to stress distance from "bourgeois historiography" and the "imperialist powers", it was natural that most of the studies published in the late 1940s and in the 1950s downplayed the influence of the West. Normally, this led to an increased concern with the local class struggle, and with the internal development of

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<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Ornea (1980), 353.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Ornea (1980), 427. For the general framework of the debate, see also Hitchins (1997), especially p.261-285; this study written by Hitchins on Romanian Orthodoxy was first published in Banac & Verdery (1995), 135-156.

<sup>14</sup> Ornea (1995).

<sup>15</sup> Cioran (1936); see also the comments in Ornea (1995), 137-145.

capitalist forces of production.<sup>16</sup> Yet this trend was mixed with another one. In Romania the communist regime had been enforced by the Soviets, and the enduring Soviet influence determined a strong pro-Russian bias in the Romanian historiography of this period<sup>17</sup>. Therefore several historians insisted that it was Russia which limited the Ottoman dominion, and helped to expose Romanian society to the modernising influence of the capitalist West, which had been progressive at that stage of history, but was no longer so in the age of imperialism.

During the 1960s the political leadership of Romania turned from obedience to Moscow to a certain opening to the West in foreign policy, and to National-Communism in the ideological sphere. The consequences for modernisation studies were again mixed. The return to at least a part of the previous national traditions meant also that the study of the relations with the West and of “bourgeois” theories about Romania’s modernisation was allowed and sometimes even encouraged by the authorities. Nevertheless, ideologically the internal forces had to prevail over external influences in the whole historical evolution of Romania, i.e. also in the modernisation process. This prerequisite determined ambiguous attitudes from most of the scholars writing in this period. While happily studying various aspects of Western influences in the Romanian transition to modernity, they had to downplay the significance of the problems studied by them and to stress the crucial role of internal progressive forces; at the same time, while the West was allowed to have had a beneficial influence in some aspects, especially in the earlier stages of the modernisation process, the neighbouring empires—especially the Ottoman Empire, but also the Habsburg Empire (later Austria and Austria-Hungary) and Russia—were considered responsible for the fact that Romania’s development during the modern age was belated and incomplete. In this ideological framework, “the whole history of the Romanian people is the history of ceaseless class struggles, of battles fought by the popular masses for freedom and social justice, for the defence of the national being and for independence, for progress and civilisation.”<sup>18</sup> In this context, all accomplishments in the modernisation process were overshadowed by the more recent deeds achieved under the wise guidance of Nicolae Ceaușescu. As for the past, it was less important to analyse the concrete and practical aspects of modernisation; it was enough to reveal the continuous struggle of the people, which led in triumph to the establishment of the modern Romanian state (1859), to independence (1877), and to the Union of 1918 which created Greater Romania, preparing in a certain way for the nation’s unanimous devotion to Ceaușescu’s rule and policy.

Of course this description of the national-communist ideology is an oversimplification. Most scholars working during this period tried to reconcile

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<sup>16</sup> See for example Georgescu-Buzău (1949).

<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless historical references were rather marginal in the propaganda hymns dedicated to the Russian/Soviet help to Romania’s development. For the whole ideological framework of the period, see Cioroianu (1998).

<sup>18</sup> *Programul* (1974), 13.

the official ideology with the academic standards of their intellectual disciplines. While political historians were especially vulnerable to the attraction of an ethno-centric vision of history, scholars who studied the cultural and intellectual evolutions during the modernisation process were better prepared to take into consideration “external influences”. The results were mixed. The focus on “internal forces” also shed light on aspects which had escaped when the analysis had been obsessed only by Western influence. Special significance must be assigned to the studies which revealed modernising efforts prior to the 19th century, especially the reform policies of the so-called “Phanariot” princes of the 18th century and the Romanian intellectual movement during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18th centuries. Yet while some of these studies had a high academic standard, and approached in a balanced way the relationship between foreign influences and local initiatives<sup>19</sup>, during the 1980s official ideology strove to use all Romanian accomplishments in order to show that the Romanians had been forerunners in various aspects of history. This protochronistic approach to history<sup>20</sup> led to ridiculous excesses: the peasant rebellion of 1784 was considered a “revolution”, so that the Romanians had “their” revolution five years before the French, and the limit between the medieval and the modern period in the history of Romania, which had been traditionally placed in the first half of the 19th century (either in 1829/1831, 1848, or 1821), was pushed to the middle of the 18th century and even to 1600 (the first political union of the Romanian Principalities under Michael the Brave) without making any distinction between early modern and 19th century “modernity”.

The protochronists pushed the crude version of Romanian ethno-centrism to the limits of paranoia. Most of them used almost only Romanian references, starting of course with Ceaușescu, but also resuscitating part of the Romanian nationalist and right-wing tradition of pre-communist times. Some, like the sociologist Ilie Bădescu, tried to display a more sophisticated approach.<sup>21</sup> Bădescu started from Wallerstein’s modern world-system theory<sup>22</sup>, but only in order to argue that peripheral societies evolve in a different manner than the core of the world-system (the West). He presented full of resentment first the

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<sup>19</sup> I will mention only as examples: Georgescu (1971); Constantianu (1972); Duțu (1981).

<sup>20</sup> Verdery (1991).

<sup>21</sup> Bădescu (1984).

<sup>22</sup> It is not our point here to analyse in detail the selective and even vicious way Bădescu used Wallerstein. In fact, Bădescu took from Wallerstein mainly the core-periphery dichotomy, missing completely the semiperiphery and the complex dynamics of the world-system. It is also significant that Bădescu did not make any reference to Chirot (1976), who had already studied Romanian history from the theoretical perspective of the world-system (although not entirely depending on Wallerstein), and who had provided a rather critical description of Romania’s modernisation during the 19th century. If we consider Bădescu’s extensive references to Western literature, such a neglect, as well as the very selective use of Jowitt (1978) suggests that the avoidance of Western scholars who had explicitly analysed the Romanian case was a tactic in order to preserve, at least on the Romanian cultural market, a monopoly in the use of the most recent social theory with respect to Romanian history.

peripheralisation of the Romanian Principalities by the Ottoman Empire during the period of Phanariot rule, i.e. the 18th century, and then their shift to the periphery of the West during the 19th century. Yet this economic and social framework was just a background for Bădescu's main argument. He claimed that in the field of culture the Romanians did not limit themselves to striving to synchronise with the West (Lovinescu's theory), but managed to obtain also an analytical priority (protochronism) by developing a critical perspective on the modern world-system, whose main representative was in his opinion the poet and journalist Mihail Eminescu. Bădescu thus abused historical reality in at least three different points. First, he claimed that Eminescu's ideas scattered in various newspaper articles were a coherent sociological system. Then, he argued that the Eminescu's critiques, which were rather traditional, linked to the past and heavily xenophobic, were helpful in Romania's struggle for a fair part in the world. And, if Eminescu had thus become progressive, then it was easy to describe him as "materialist" and almost Marxist, and to claim that he anticipated more recent radical theories which criticise modern capitalism; in the English summary Bădescu even praised himself that in his book, "The priority of Romanian critical theories is also emphasised in relation to quite recent Western theories, to the theories of peripheral capitalism, dependent accumulation and unequal exchange trade, to the series of globalistic theories, and the theories of articulated modes of production and dependent-associated development."<sup>23</sup>

After 1989 the general background of the discussion again changed. Communism and Marxism were almost unanimously rejected. The West became once again the good model which guided Romania's modernisation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as it guides also the current transition from communism to capitalism; it is just to be hoped that this transition will not last long enough to generate a wave of disillusion which will again cloud the perception of the West and determine more people to question if adjustment to the Western model makes sense. In opposition with the resented communist rule, the inter-war period is seen as a sort of golden age, when Romania was great (it encompassed also the territories of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina), was a constitutional monarchy comparable to other European democracies, and its economic development was closer to European standards than in the present. Numerous uncritical reprints of pre-communist scholarly and cultural literature combine with the theoretical shortcomings of Romanian historiography, to lead most of the debate on Romanian modernisation back to the arguments and analytical level of the inter-war period, mixed with some ingredients of Ceaușescu's nationalist vision of the past as the triumphal march of the Romanian nation towards the accomplishment of national unity and independence. Critical opinions on Romania's way into modernity, such as Daniel Barbu's argument that the domination of the nation-

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<sup>23</sup> Bădescu (1984), 323. The tactical and ideological reasons of Bădescu's approach are analysed by Verdery (1991). For true Romanian early contributions in the analysis of world capitalism, see more recently Love (1996).



state upon the individual citizen is deeply rooted in the political tradition of pre-communist Romania<sup>24</sup>, are still a tiny minority.

Yet, the cultural opening of the 1990s also prepares the way for a breakthrough in Romanian perceptions of the modernisation process<sup>25</sup>. Contacts with the theoretical and methodological evolutions of the social sciences are in progress, especially among the younger generation of scholars. Equally important are contacts with Western scholars who have developed a more critical perspective on Romania's historical evolution, and who have already accomplished important analyses. Therefore, we can expect from the younger generation of scholars a more balanced picture of the Romanian modernisation process, which will overcome the ethno-centric perspective and put the Romanian experience in a broader comparative framework.

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It is our conviction that the contributions gathered in this volume<sup>26</sup> should be judged in this general context. Of course, these contributions are quite different one from another, both in approaches and in academic value. This was unavoidable if we consider the different ages and professional experiences of the participants in the German-Romanian academy at Sibiu. Some of them had one or two decades of scientific activity and a Ph.D. behind them, while others had just graduated. Yet, they all illustrate the effort to push further our knowledge about the Romanian modernisation process, and I think that each of them succeeds this in her/his own specific way. In the following I do not intend to discuss in detail the merits—and shortcomings—of each paper presented at Sibiu and included in this volume; I will just outline some basic ideas in order to better put these papers in context.

At least since Max Weber, the relationship between religion and capitalism/modernity has been widely debated. In countries of belated modernisation like Romania the debate has been more dramatic than elsewhere, because the analytical dimension has merged with questions about identity. Both in the inter-war period, and in the 1990s, Romanian historians (and their counterparts from other parts of Orthodox Europe) have asked themselves whether Orthodoxy has been the determining factor which has blocked or delayed the economic and political progress of their country. Dr Alexandru-Florin Platon revisits this

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<sup>24</sup> Barbu (1999).

<sup>25</sup> A good starting point for further analyses might be the source material edited by Iacob & Iacob (1995).

<sup>26</sup> For various reasons, three of the papers presented at Sibiu could not be included in this volume: Silviu Bălănică, *Euromania or the Run after Europe at the End of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*; Alice Kanterian, *The current state of economical transformation and modernisation in Romania and outlook. Why the need of foreign direct investment for economical transformation in Romania?* Tatiana Petrache, *Anthroponimy – Epitome of European Unity*. Nevertheless, their insights contributed a lot at the success of the academy in Sibiu.

problem, putting it in a broad geographical and chronological context, and argues on the basis of the medieval European experience that there is no essential determination for Orthodoxy to be less favourable to development than Catholicism/Protestantism.

Multiculturalism has been a notion in vogue in the 1990s. Brigitte Krech tries in her essay to enlighten the multicultural tradition and potential of Transylvania. In Sibiu her contribution aroused objections from several German and Romanian participants. I will not detail here the disputes about the historical relationship between different communities and/or individuals. The most important issue under debate was that concrete multicultural societies are not a final stage of history, but dynamic social settings which evolve in time, leading either to mutual isolation or to better integrated societies, where each individual and/or community preserves their identity. Krech's paper is also a good illustration of the path-dependence theory: only part of the suggestions made during the debates in Sibiu could be included in the final version of the paper without altering completely its structure and main arguments.

Victor Rizescu investigates the theoretical and practical consequences of peripheral status in the modern world, and tries to enlighten the different perceptions of the modernisation process in the West and in the periphery. While Rizescu operates at a theoretical level—evidence that the young Romanian scholars who have studied in the 1990s have had the opportunity to get acquainted with recent scholarly literature and to join academic debates in the social sciences—, Ileana Ratcu, Silvana Rachieru and Alin Ciupală illustrate a more empirical approach, which, without neglecting recent theoretical evolutions, focuses on concrete historical aspects of the modernisation process. The themes they have chosen shed light on aspects which have been less studied by Romanian scholars. Historians who have studied 18th-19th century Transylvania have focused their attention mainly on the national issues; Ileana Ratcu's fresh look on the practical contents of the education system and on divided attitudes towards modernity is symptomatic of the attempts of a younger generation of scholars to enlarge the range of historical investigations. A similar remark can be made about the contribution of Silvana Rachieru. The topic chosen by her was also neglected by the mainstream of Romanian historical research during the last decades: she focuses her attention on modernisation in a provincial town, on the impact of music, and on the active role of women in a changing society. After having been either described as an agent of oppressing social forces or simply neglected, king Carol I is after 1989 again a subject of great interest for historians; yet while most scholars focus on his political role in establishing Romania as one of the members of the European state system, Alin Ciupală investigates his efforts to modernise Romanian culture and society, and especially the activity of the University Foundation. Of course, most people did not benefit from the king's philanthropy, which was focused mainly on the higher culture of the elite and of the middle class; as several participants at the

discussions in Sibiu noticed, this pattern was consistent with the conservative setting of the Romanian political system during the reign of Carol I.

As I have argued before, most Romanian intellectuals of the 1990s tend to consider the inter-war period a “golden age” in Romanian history, brutally discontinued by World War II and by post-war totalitarianism. A more critical approach towards the ideology and policies of Romanian elites is often perceived as an attempt to destroy a valuable asset of Romania’s democratic and European tradition. Under these circumstances, the German contributions on such topics are particularly welcome. A special mention is deserved by Dietmar Müller, who puts Romanian peasantism in the broader context of European agrarian populism, and who argues convincingly—but disturbingly for most of the Romanians who now associate the National-Peasant Party with pro-Western attitudes and anti-communist resistance—that peasantist policies and politics were a misleading solution for the real problems of inter-war Romania.

Four contributions focus on the facets and implications of nationalism in inter-war Romania. Dr Hans-Christian Maner draws on his extensive knowledge of Romanian sources on the inter-war period in analysing the difficulties experienced by the Orthodox Church in its attempts to adjust to the new social setting of inter-war Romania. A particular attention is devoted to the tension between the official policy of the Church of co-operating with the state, and the ethno-centric ideology shared by most of the clergy, which risked bringing it into conflict with the constitutional political system. Dr Mariana Hausleitner summarises her findings on ethnic relations in inter-war Bukovina, and shows the way the discrimination against minorities harmed the attempts at economic and social development in this region. Edward Kanterian and Constantin Davidescu try to investigate whether the Young Generation (a intellectual group whose main figure was Mircea Eliade) and the Iron Guard (the most radical right-wing political force in the 1930s) were traditional or modern. Both Kanterian and Davidescu argue convincingly that these cultural and political movements, despite their rhetoric and despite their genuine efforts to preserve some traditional values, had in fact to integrate modern elements into the very core of their ideology and practice, and were striving mainly towards a “modern”, totalitarian—although mistaken—solution of Romania’s problems.

Two contributions focus on the analysis of the way marginal groups adjust to the general modernisation of society. Joachim Krauß investigates the case of the Gypsies in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the persistence of discrimination in various economic and social contexts. His argument about the ethnic hard-core of this marginalisation was controversial in the debates at Sibiu, and some of his empirical evidence—especially the diagnosis of the economic and social evolution of the Gypsies under communist rule—might also be subject to dispute; nevertheless, it is obvious that the Roma have to be taken into consideration in any scrutiny of the modernisation process. Dr Violeta Barbu analyses the way rural women have been affected by the post-socialist transition,

and the concrete policies designed to help them take up an active role in the modernisation process.

The post-socialist transition is also the starting point of Dr Peter Wagner's contribution. Capitalising on the German "Sonderweg-debate", and in contradiction with the trend to focus on Romania's particularities (its status as exception) with respect to presumably normal development cases, Dr Wagner insists that studying Romania as just a case within the norm is analytically rewarding, both for a better understanding of concrete Romanian evolutions, and for putting together a comprehensive theory of the post-socialist transformation of Eastern Europe.

Obviously, the contributions gathered in this volume do not attempt to solve all analytical problems raised by Romania's relationship with modernity. Our goal was mainly to show the way young German and Romanian scholars from the humanities approach this problem at the end of the 1990s, and to display some results of their approach. I think that due to this younger generation our scholarly knowledge is in progress. Yet we might question ourselves together with professor Bodo von Borries, who graciously agreed to deliver a stimulating text for this volume, whether more development and a more refined scientific knowledge will be sufficient in the post-modern society we are heading to. In fact it is revealing that we are facing change, in the post-modern as well as in the modern world, simultaneously as a temptation and as a threat. Is such a continuity of human attitudes frightening or is it stimulating?

# European Typologies of Modernisation: A Comparison between the Orthodox and the Catholic-Protestant Areas

by Alexandru-Florin Platon

Supposing that the numerous definitions of modernisation as a historical process were ever to be grouped together under the sign of a hypothetical common element, this would certainly be rejection of, or at least dissociation from, *tradition*. Indeed ever since Antiquity the elements of what is *new*—irrespective of the (positive or negative) meanings attached—have been understood as a refusal of, or detachment from, the past, and, at the same time, as breaking free from the constraints of the latter.

However, in spite of its proclaimed freedom, modernity has never been able to disregard the “world it has lost”.<sup>1</sup> Tradition was always a constant strain on the processes of renewal. It influenced their rhythm, modulated their direction and it always assessed the results. For quite a long time this statement has been a commonplace in the analysis of modernity. But its repetition is still necessary time and again, at least for making us better understand the span and variety of types this phenomenon has acquired. Even though the past survives at least as residue, it always influences the present in one way or another. This is the starting point of what follows.

I do not pretend to reconstruct here the emergence of European modernity in its integrity. Nor do I wish to make a sequential reconstruction of it, as there are more substantial studies devoted to the subject. The scope of this essay is not only to see what kind of *political* and *religious traditions* left their marks on the renewal in Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries; nor will I build on the development of these processes as such. More precisely, these reflections begin with an interrogation and formulate a hypothesis. The global phenomenon of European modernity has been systematically analysed and adjusted to some patterns which helped detect some regional peculiarities and temporal gaps. At the same time, research made in this field has not overlooked the role of immediate historical conditions, which gave the process one course or another. I think that *structural historical factors* have been less often considered, and this is not a thing to overlook. The question and the explanatory hypothesis I referred to above originated in the following questions: should not these two factors be

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<sup>1</sup> The exact phrase is “the world we have lost”, and is borrowed from Laslett (1975).

considered for a better understanding of the genesis of the two major types of European modernity, the Western and the Eastern? Is not the difference between the political and religious traditions of the two areas more significant than the pressure of immediate or moderately long-time historical circumstances in assessing their correct evolutionary gaps? And, finally, are not these traditions themselves a more convincing explanation of the flagrant discrepancies in the exodus from communism evidenced by recent evolutions of Eastern (European) countries? These are the questions I shall try to answer in brief in what follows.

First of all, two items of terminology need to be discussed. The notion of “modernisation” used in this essay refers only to a narrow topic, the political (or better the social and political) aspect of the phenomenon; it does not imply its global dimension. I am tempted to see in modernisation, quite close to Cyrill E. Black’s restrictive definition, a process of crystallisation of the idea of state as an abstract transcendence doubled by the development of bureaucracy and hegemony over all sectors of social life, driven and rationalised according to its use and image<sup>2</sup>. This is neither the most exact nor the most comprehensive of the many conceptualisations of the term; but it serves the hypothesis I would like to formulate, which makes it quite useful. Secondly, by “*structural historical factors*” I understand a set of traditional ways of collective organisation, of customs peculiar to a certain geographical area, whose influence on the historical evolution of certain communities is constant and durable even if not always obvious. By their long-term effect the specific character of *political organisation* and *religious tradition* were probably two of the most important factors in the development of Europe. In my opinion, both—either each in itself or in connection to others—have made a major contribution in the Western, as well as in the Eastern hemisphere of Europe in the creation of the two distinctive historical models (or paradigms) which account for the way in which modern political life was accessed and, in more general terms, for the different course the overall evolution of each society in these areas took place especially in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

As to the Catholic and Protestant Western Europe, the specific character of this organisation consisted in the formation of a *multi-polar political system* or of an “*acephalic federative structure*”<sup>3</sup>, which, unlike the Orthodox East and some Far Eastern societies, made it impossible for a singular power agent of imperial type to control both large territories and numerous populations. This model of political organisation assumed an original type of social balance, by which the state could penetrate and act as a driving force in the community in exchange for acknowledgement of certain liberties. Among other things, the diverse local communities gained the right to autonomous organisation and to send their representatives to the central assemblies; this set the social compromise on more solid grounds and also limited, at least in theory, the

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<sup>2</sup> Black (1966), 14-18.

<sup>3</sup> The expression is from Michael Mann (1988), 8-19; see Mann (1985).

arbitrary potential of power which otherwise might have developed freely. This *Ständestaat*, in Daniel Chirot's well chosen words<sup>4</sup>, which was born under different hypostases in Western Europe, could appear neither in the Byzantine East nor in the states which succeeded the Empire, where the constantly autocratic structure of power prevented society from building its own forms of organisation. As in China, which had been governed for centuries by a centralised and gripping structure, in Byzantium (and in the Ottoman Empire) repeated bureaucratic interventions stifled any possibility of spontaneous social association and preserved the omnipotence of the State. On the other hand, this way of organisation was incompatible with the development of a free exchange network capable of eventually generating capitalism by encouraging free circulation of people and capital and competition among the states. Analogy with China is once again revealing: economic expansion of the "Middle Empire" seems to have been most significant, not in the periods of centralisation of the political regime, but rather in those of division. Unlike Western Europe, where the social compromise reinforced the state without weakening society, the Eastern part of the continent and the Orient witnessed an all-powerful governing whose authoritative nature considerably narrowed social freedom and economic life. Therefore discrepancies in vitality of development and later differences between the two zones became inevitable.

Of course, the political peculiarities of these types of historical development have not passed unnoticed so far. On the contrary, they have been repeatedly emphasised, mostly in analysis focused on determining the factors that could account for the economic superiority of Western Europe as compared to other civilisations and on the historical conditions which made it possible<sup>5</sup>. But the *concrete* background of the changes which generated the two different models of political evolution has been less discussed.

I do not think it is a mistake to place the beginnings of this divergence in the centuries that followed the gradual disappearance of Roman political unity. If one eludes the debate raised on the matter of the true beginning of the Middle Ages and the ephemeral Carolingian restoration, which did not essentially change the nature of political organisation in the Western part of the former Empire, one can say that beginning with the 5<sup>th</sup> century the Roman world developed in two fundamentally different directions; not only did these directions consolidate the more and more obvious disparities between the hemispheres of the Empire which had become apparent before, but they also made them irremediable. In the East the Roman state lasted without interruption until the 7<sup>th</sup> century, when it was totally infused with Greek culture; in the West, on the contrary, it gradually disappeared and was replaced by regional Germanic kingdoms whose standard of development and cultural tradition did not allow them to take over more than a few fragments of the political heritage of their

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<sup>4</sup> Chirot (1986), 14-19.

<sup>5</sup> See, *inter alia*, Hall (1988), 20-38, and Macfarlane (1988), 185-204. Also, Chirot (1989).

predecessors. Under the circumstances of rapid multiplication of geographical, cultural, and linguistic peculiarities, when the only potential unifying factor left was the Church, when the former Roman universalism tended to take on, under its influence, a more and more spiritual nature, local communities, freed from the constraints exercised by the central authority, adopted predominantly community-based forms of organisation based on the only principles capable of ensuring their perpetuation: collective solidarity and reciprocity of rights and responsibilities. This was basically what Western society looked like all through the Middle Ages.

The community-based model of social organisation later enriched in its expression by the Middle Ages is commonly interpreted rather as the accidental result of specific factors at the end of Antiquity than as something inherited or as an embodiment of a mental paradigm. However, this model was as much conjectural as *structural*; the most appropriate way to understand it is to see it as a hypostasis of *religious* articulation of a society dominated by the irremissibly burden of the past and by sovereign tradition. The slow disintegration of the Roman state and the turmoil brought about by the great invasions were not the only factors which confronted Western European society with exigencies of inventing an alternative “compensatory” type of solidarity able to substitute itself to the juridical relationships between citizens and the political power. One should rather see this as the *recuperation* or actualisation of an *already* existing relationships than as a “discovery”; under the given circumstances these relationships could become more dominant as they were rooted into a specific old outlook on the world, common in fact to all pre-history.

The fatal risk of such a rapid brief description of the social and political reality in Western Europe at the end of Antiquity is to leave aside the innumerable details which should normally be mentioned. For instance, the degeneration of the state I referred to above had been long counterbalanced by a strong feeling of unity which gave the Eastern monarch the only universal formally acknowledged type of political and religious authority. On the other hand, the amplification of centrifugal effects induced by the settling of Germanic tribes in the West of Europe was not so rapid as to cancel the effects of the newcomers’ cultural mimetism and the so-called “laws of hospitality”, which had significantly contributed to the maintenance of the same appearance of continuity. Nevertheless, the Roman world got gradually more and more fragmented. Assumed as such by contemporaries, this fragmentation eventually replaced, during the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the previous unitary organisation of the Western part of the Empire with a new multi-polar order; the new order was marked by great cultural and linguistic diversity and defined by a system of local autonomy with specific juridical norms and institutions. This was the background of the resurgence and progressive development of the monarchic state around the year 1000.

Embodied by *royalty*, these processes were defined almost everywhere in the West by two complementary aspects applied at the same time: firstly, by



*centralisation of power* (through absorption of local centres of authority) and, secondly by its *institutionalisation*. As far as the first aspect is concerned, monarchs assumed attributes which had hitherto been a collective expression and instituted a monopoly over them; secondly, they used unique mechanisms of power, which were drawn by a faithful and increasingly more specialised system (bureaucracy) and symbolically used them in order to strengthen their exclusive authority. The result of both processes was a gradual territorial unification and homogenisation whose centripetal nucleus was the king's domain.

This was no continuous evolution. There were quite a lot of periods of stagnation and temporary interruption, as for instance in England after 1215 and in France during the Hundred Years War. But there were better periods when the evolution rhythm got faster and there was considerable progress in unification. However irrespective of the nature of the auspices, it always had to meet resistance from peculiar elements.

The stronger the polarisation of the process of royal stateliness, the stronger the power of the peculiar elements. Quite normally, the same tendency manifested itself on a local level as well in the sphere of the great territorial principalities in France, the Iberian Peninsula and the Empire; this shows that there was a strong propensity towards concentration of power and its centralised organisation during the 11<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Challenged by this intense resistance, the institution of monarchy could eventually overcome it only by negotiation and accepted compromise. This happened everywhere, throughout Western Europe, in Spain, as well as in the Capetian kingdom or in England. The following conclusion is obvious: the centralisation process was never complete in Western Europe. More rigorously speaking, once it was over, it never went so far as to exercise total political control on society. The monarchical institutions were always forced to be more or less permissive about the rights of different communities, which they could never annihilate.

Should we then conclude that they stayed irremediably "weak"? The answer is undoubtedly negative. First of all, I should say that diverse West-European forms of royalty did not have a political alternative to the policy of acknowledging local autonomy. Cast for centuries on end into compact shadow by the prestige of the imperial institution and forced to live a quasi-insignificant political life on the outskirts, the monarchies started their ascent in the period of the maximum development of community-based life forms and of multiplication of local peculiar elements which again came uppermost after the disintegration of the Carolingian Empire. So monarchies had to consider these circumstances and act accordingly; this was quite natural, as Germanic tradition itself, essentially defined by the personal character of power and precariously institutionalised forms of organisation, encouraged them to follow this direction. It is therefore not accidental that in the process of affirmation of its own sovereignty, royalty used tools and means of action peculiar to the very social-political background in which it was reborn, adapting and "recycling" to its own needs a large set of elements such as the feudal-vassal law and forms of

organisation present in the urban and seigneurial area to which it gave a new finality. In parallel, the stronger emphasis on the sacred dimension of power—which was itself a part of a complex phenomenon of symbolic construction by which royalties became associated with a set of rituals, signs and myths meant to give them legitimacy—compensated for the concessions made by the central institution to local communities and consolidated monarchic sovereignty while, at the same time marking the beginning of a long process of depersonalisation (transpersonalisation) of the act of governing which was shaped in the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries into the modern notion of the state. According to the new significance of “supra-human” instance independent of the person chosen to embody it, medieval royalty became synonymous not only with a *permanent* but also with a *universal* principle of power, and captured to its own behalf an attribute hitherto associated only with the Empire and the Papacy. It is a curious and characteristic fact for political evolution in the West of Europe that the suggestive force gained by the institutions of monarchy through elaborated symbolical features and more and more sophisticated instruments of governing were not sufficient to dislocate many local liberties, although they did narrow them. What appeared against the background of resurgence of the principle of stateliness and as a condition of its perennality was the relative balance between the monarch's power and the subjects' privileges. This was conserved in its essential elements in the centuries that followed the Middle Ages and became a fundamental structure in Western European forms of political organisation; at the same time it became one of the specific factors of development in this part of the continent.

In Byzantium and in the states which succeeded it, uninterrupted continuity of the imperial state and the autocratic dimension of power generated, as I have already stated above, a completely different evolution. The hiatus of several centuries which appeared in the West between the existence of stately structures favoured for a while the elaboration and preservation of autonomous means of social organisation; on the contrary, in the East the absence of this circumstance considerably weakened the community spirit and the individual was more directly exposed to the power of state and hindered from finding the same means to resist. I do not think it an exaggeration to state that it was here that one of the paradigmatic sources of the authoritative, despotically, and even totalitarian nature of the different forms of power which were to appear in this area should be first sought. The second generating factor of this reality was religion.

Classical analysis of modernisation processes and the common perception of the phenomenon have long argued in favour of a lack of connection between modernisation and the religious factor. Modernity appeared as a purely exterior manifestation in relationship to all that was tradition, and at the same time it opposed it; modernity was allegedly in a strictly accidental relationship to religion: the gradual expansion of the former also meant the latter's degradation. Such an interpretation is no longer true today. “An unforeseeable result reached after the winding road of symbolic alchemy,”<sup>6</sup> the modern rebuilding of the

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<sup>6</sup> The quotation is from Gauchet (1995), 209.

structures of European civilisation was not independent of the existing data; neither did it oppose them. It was mostly an *inner* process, which developed *within* the dominant religious paradigm and as a result of the transformation of the latter. The memorable demonstration made in this respect by Marcel Gauchet is much too well known to be fully repeated here<sup>7</sup>. But is it not the only one. Pierre Manent, for instance, is certainly of the same opinion when he writes about evolution in the intellectual and political field, stating that “the development... of Europe can only be understood as a history of the response to problems raised by the Church;” in his opinion, the key to this process is “the theological and political problem.”<sup>8</sup> The same idea can be found in the work of two authors: Karl Ferdinand Werner and Max Weber; according to the former, European modernity is closely bound to the Middle Ages and should be interpreted as a result of religious and cultural-political transformations of that time<sup>9</sup>. In the famous analysis made by the latter, emphasis is laid on the dynamic role of the religious (particularly Protestant) factor in the emergence of modernity, which was only to express a consensus of opinion.<sup>10</sup> Of course, these are not all the possible examples, but those given seem sufficient. They attest the fecundity of an interpretation, which has cast a totally new light on this complex contradictory reference phenomenon.

In Gauchet's version, which I would like to recall here, European modernity is the consequence of a fracture between the sacred and the profane, coupled with a crisis of mediation. It is essentially a gradual process of disjunction between the celestial and the terrestrial order concluded by the autonomous organisation of the latter according to its own requirements and by virtue of a spirit which apparently contradicts the religious one. The factors and historical conditions which precipitated such an evolution of European civilisation do not matter here. Within the limited scope of this essay, suffice it to say, closely following Gauchet's analysis, that the long process of “disenchanted” the world, and the resulting new cultural and political paradigm, took place within the religious sphere itself by its “metabolisation”, and as a distinctive feature of Christianity, the only monotheistic creed that included the virtual separation inscribed in its constitutive “gene” (the fundamental dogma of the Incarnation); this was the reason why it was constantly subjected to the tension between the imperative of allowing an existence of its own to the material world and a certain value to secular life, and, at the same time, the aspiration to repudiate it. Unlike Buddhism, which denies any substance to the natural world and advocates becoming one with the transcendental, and Islam, which, on the contrary, implies acceptance of the tangible reality and subjection to it, Christianity has manifested a constant tendency to reconsider the difference

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<sup>7</sup> See previous foot-note. Briefly summarized, one can find the same ideas in Gauchet (1992), 67-78.

<sup>8</sup> Manent (1992), 18-19.

<sup>9</sup> Werner (1988), 169-184.

<sup>10</sup> Weber (1934), *passim*.

between the visible and the invisible and their periodical reconstruction; this led to a more and more complex process of interpretation of the data of belief which produced inherent transformations.

The progressive secularisation of thinking, the lay character of life and the incontestable prestige of all hypostases of the profane did not chase the religious elements away from the visible reality, nor did they dissolve them. These elements only “migrated” and hid in the sphere of the new concepts of “State” and “Nation”, which took on the transcendental character formerly peculiar to invisible entities. At the same time, the process of “disenchanted” the world was provoked at the end of a number of transformations; briefly speaking, it was both a crisis of religious mediation (consumed by the Reformation) and one of political mediation; the latter generated the modern system of democracy sketched within monarchic absolutism. Both are revealing symptoms of early modernity<sup>11</sup>.

Marcel Gauchet assigns this complicated evolution to the intrinsic nature of Christianity. But the fact that in the East faith did not score the same avatars suggests that the difference was not caused by the peculiarity of our religion but rather by some different dynamics which should be explained.

In my opinion, the explanation does not purport to the religious factor as such (or not only to it) but first of all to the different relevance of the political factor which gave the Orthodox religion an orientation different from the Catholic one. The dual authority of the Byzantine emperor, both temporal, and spiritual, as well as his permanent control over the Church (the so-called “*Cesaropapism*”<sup>12</sup>), hindered, in the East, not only the disruption between the sacred and the profane, but also the potential conflicts dormant in the inherent distinction between the two terms. While in the West the temporary absence of the omnipotent state (in the 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> centuries) left to the Roman Church the responsibility of ruling the world and made it appropriate two fundamentally distinct types of power (the temporal and the spiritual), the uninterrupted continuity of the state in the East maintained the unity of power and the impression of direct connection to the transcendent intact, and *ipso facto* excluded the possibility of apparition of a crisis resembling that in the West. In contrast to the West, where the temporal authority of the king and of the Pope could not dissolve the essentially dual nature of power, in the East, the mingling of the “sacerdotal” and the “imperial” was always flawless; the person of the Emperor did not embody the “terrestrial” transcendence of the king in relationship to the mystical reality of the State, but a definitely celestial one in

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<sup>11</sup> Looking at this process in the same way as Gauchet, but not using exactly the same interpretation, Werner (1988), 172-175, considers that the religious roots of European modernity are to be found mainly in the Christian doctrine of guilt and redemption, which was responsible for the social activism that generated, step by step, all the social and political transformations on our continent. The doctrine of Purgatory had the same effect.

<sup>12</sup> A critique—in my opinion far from convincing—that denies the existence of this regime in Byzance is to be found in Duțu (1999), otherwise an extremely interesting and provocative book.

relation to God Himself. That was the reason why there was no religious or political suspicion of power, which could induce the same changes in Byzantium. The autocratic element of governing, the vigour of tradition, the relative scarcity of local autonomy, the inner correlation between the lay and the ecclesiastical, and other such peculiarities largely sprung out from the same maintained conjunction, which made the Augustinian distinction between the two "cities" less operative in the East. The hesychastic aspect of the Orthodox religion might have operated in the same way but it was little interested in aspects and problems of its involvement in the world. Inseparable, as one can see, from the nature of the political factor, the Eastern religious specific changed in its turn into a fundamental structure of mentality and life which played a certain role in the subsequent evolution of the whole region.

Finally, some observations seem absolutely necessary for a correct judgement of this paper.

First of all it is quite obvious that singling out the structural differences between the two regions should not make one forget the variety, richness, and even the contrasts between their constitutive elements. In fact both Catholic and Protestant Europe, on one hand, and Orthodox Europe, on the other, were far from being homogenous and identical in their evolution. A lot of peculiar aspects and discrepancies were shaped in each hemisphere and this left an imprint on the development of each country. The sometimes deceptive terminology used to express them would have been absolutely impossible to understand otherwise. Notions such as "Central Europe", "South-East Europe", "the Balkan Peninsula" and "Eastern Europe" are not simple geographical expressions; they also attest substantial differences in historical experience and mentality, which should make one more prudent about hasty generalisation.

These peculiarities are a result of the background of development in each region and are no indices of the overall value of the reality they evoke. This is why they should never be the criteria for making hierarchies of the areas. In taking into consideration the two structural factors which to my mind had a certain influence on the historical processes in the West and in the East, I have had no intention of suggesting that such a hierarchy actually exist and so becoming addicted to some rather well-known interpretations which attempt to transpose the historical experience of the two parts of the continent into terms of superiority and inferiority<sup>13</sup>. *Comparaison n'est pas raison*. As much pertinent analysis has shown, until the 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries the historical "cadence" of the Orthodox East and of Catholic (later Catholic and Protestant) Europe was generally speaking the same; Byzantine civilisation definitely played an important role in the genesis of a number of cultural phenomena in the West. The prevalent political consciousness in both regions in that epoch and sporadically later was one of unity; confessional divisions were temporarily

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<sup>13</sup> The most known is that of Huntington (1993), 22-49. Similar ideas are also shared by Peter Hünemann, Walter von Leowenich, and Heinz Gollwitzer (see Duju (1999), 253 and 258 for these references).

overshadowed by solidarity against the Ottoman menace. The 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century avatars of the medieval idea of the crusade are too convincing to need any emphasis. The fracture between the two civilisations certainly appeared later and foreign (mostly Ottoman) power had an overwhelming responsibility. On the other hand, the essential contribution of Orthodox spirituality to the genesis of the national spirit of peoples in this area proves that it cannot be judged in the deprecatory manner of contemporary reductionist inquiries.

Exaggeration of the fissure between the West and the East is mostly a retrospective illusion, undoubtedly fostered by the events of the latter half of the century. But acknowledgement of its existence and of the structural factors, which influenced it, cannot annihilate or dominate the real fact that the two regions belong to the same sphere of civilisation. Long ignored by the vicissitudes of history, the “European” nature of the East is a reality which we should learn again. In fact, this is what the author of this paper has tried to convey.

# Transylvania - Example for a Multicultural Society?

by *Brigitte Krech*

The concept of a multicultural society has become popular and even fashionable in Western societies. It is seen to explain and maybe resolve recent societal problems. But is “multiculturality” a modern phenomenon marking the beginning of a new age? Or is it only a trendy word for politicians who do not have other solutions for a better co-existence of different people and minorities in a nation state? Why has the concept “multicultural society” only been examined for the Western world? The concept was used for the first time in Canada in the 1960’s.<sup>1</sup> There is little literature and survey data on multicultural societies in Central and Eastern Europe. However, CEE<sup>2</sup> has a long tradition of multilingual or multi-ethnic societies in the past, especially under the Habsburg Empire. During the recent transition processes starting in the late 1980’s, national conflicts erupted in the former Communist countries. States with federal status broke up, such as Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia. New nation states were created. Migration became a pressing issue forcing states around the world to deal with new questions. The integration process in the European Union and the worldwide phenomenon of globalisation call for a new interpretation of the co-existence of people from different ethnic backgrounds. On the other hand regional identity is becoming more important. Do globalisation and regionalism depend on one another? Euro-regions are successfully overcoming national borders, for instance the SaarLorLux region between Saarland, Lorraine, and Luxembourg. There are more than a hundred initiatives for co-operation between European states. The Carpathian (Euro)Region—established in 1993 exclusively by Eastern European countries—also seeks to acquire the benefit of common goals and policies.<sup>3</sup> This is one of only two regions in the world that can be accessed by five countries (Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Ukraine) within a radius of 60 km. This unique geographical characteristic offers opportunities for multilateral co-operation. However the region faces massive economic problems and poverty. A common effort between all countries might attract more investment in the region. “The removal of political, economic and technical obstacles to cross-border connection could create more favourable conditions for development, even under present circumstances.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mintzel (1997), 21.

<sup>2</sup> Central and Eastern Europe.

<sup>3</sup> Illés (1996), 5.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by Illés (1996), 23.

This essay gives a brief overview of the aspects relating to a “multicultural society” in general. The main focus will be on Transylvania, the different cultural groups living there and a possible point of reference for the Western concept of multicultural society.<sup>5</sup> An attempt will also be made to evaluate some aspects of present-day Transylvanian society, together with a future perspective for the importance of people’s identity with the assistance of socio-psychological approaches.<sup>6</sup>

In the years following 1918, a Europe of nation states emerged. Multinational states, especially the Habsburg Empire, were replaced by new national states. The national character of a state was particularly emphasised. Regarding Romania, the relationship between Romania and Hungary became tense.<sup>7</sup> The Hungarians were suddenly confronted with being a minority after having been the “ruling force”. It was easier for the German minority to adapt to the new situation because their position had not really changed. The Jewish minority held a special position, between assimilation to the Hungarian side and the capture of the own identity, especially in the Bukořina region. An open dialogue in the inter-war-period was more likely on a cultural rather than a political level. As a consequence of the 1929 economic crisis, a radical position taken by the Right increased in Romania. Some of the problems have lasted into the present.

There is no such thing as an ethnically homogeneous nation state since there have always been minorities—due to migration, demographic development, and inter-ethnic marriages.<sup>8</sup> The nation state has created different minorities within its unified administration and judicial territory. The state should set itself the task of protecting minorities—from either an ethnic or social point of view. This represents a new task for the state: the protection of different minorities, something which should not only imply promoting cultural customs but also financial support. Nation states are becoming more like welfare states to improve the quality of life for all human beings living there.

“Multicultural society is already reality in centres such as Paris or Marseilles.”<sup>9</sup> One urban type of multicultural society suggests a mix of ethnic groups with different cultural characteristics and with all the associated conflicts.

In general, multicultural societies can be determined, described or examined on the basis of different keywords<sup>10</sup>:

- multiculturality, interculturality

<sup>5</sup> Excursion with AEGEE in 1998, Homepage: [www.rtz.uni-hamburg.de/AEGEE/CST-TRANS/](http://www.rtz.uni-hamburg.de/AEGEE/CST-TRANS/).

<sup>6</sup> Strocbe (1996), chapter 17.

<sup>7</sup> Szegedi (1992), 309 in Seewann (1992).

<sup>8</sup> Baier (1995) in Roth (1995.).

<sup>9</sup> “Das Wort von der “multikulturellen Gesellschaft”, mit dem in Deutschland noch immer auf der soziologischen Theorieebene jongliert wird, ist in den Ballungszentren Paris und Marseille längst zur Realität geworden”. So kanzelte im August 1991 ein Rezensent im Rheinischen Merkur (Nr. 31 vom 02.08.1991:16) soziologische Bemühungen um eine Begriffserklärung ab.: quoted by Mintzel (1997), 21.

<sup>10</sup> Mintzel (1997), 55.



- society, culture
- inhabitants, migration, territory
- ethnicity, ethnic identity, ethnocentrism
- ethnic group, people, nation
- ethnic segregation
- political pluralism, cultural pluralism, ethnic pluralism
- identity
- integration, assimilation
- foreigner, xenophobe
- discrimination, prejudice, racism
- majority, minority, minority protection

Multicultural society contains an inter-cultural aspect regarding the society and culture. Furthermore, it could be useful to look at the geographical appearance of population, migration, and territory. The integration and assimilation of ethnic groups are also characteristics of the model. This refers to majority, minority and their minority rights which are important for Central and Eastern Europe after the experience of the communist period. Minority rights are a significant political criteria in the pre-accession period within the EU-enlargement.

Multiculturality calls for a specific language policy because language is very important for one's own identity. This includes having an effective policy on language as well as the aim for different cultural groups to live together in a state through official recognition. The policy depends on the relationship between the dominant group and the minorities. In Australia, a national language policy (CLOTE: "community language other than English") at all levels of education works towards establishing stable multiculturalism.<sup>11</sup> Several minority languages are offered in schools up to university level. Multiculturality has become an official policy in states with a high migration rate, such as Canada (1971) and Australia (1977/87). Susanne Frank describes multiculturalism for Germany as a specific way between integration on the one hand, and the definite return of migrants to their home countries on the other.<sup>12</sup>

The aim of democracy can be said to be double-edged. Democracy calls for protection of minorities and the guaranteeing of their participation in politics. On the other hand democracy results in rule by the majority, which can lead to discrimination against minority groups.

There is not one final definition of a multicultural society. Nevertheless an active policy is essential in order that an intercultural exchange should actually take place. Therefore the term should perhaps be replaced by "intercultural or plural-cultural society". Research on the cultural pluralism of European societies should focus on the intercultural relations between minority and majority.

Is a multicultural society likely to be realised or to remain nothing more than wishful thinking?<sup>13</sup> The US-American "melting pot" is seen as a mythical ideal.

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<sup>11</sup> Smolicz (1998), 286 in Balla and Sterbling (1998).

<sup>12</sup> Frank (1995).

<sup>13</sup> Freese (1996), 28.

However surveys in the 1960's concluded that: "The point about the melting pot (...) is that it did not happen."<sup>14</sup> In France, the *Front National*—in spite of recent internal divisions—is very strong. Although, citizen of North African origin often have a French passport, this does not prevent xenophobic discrimination. The German "Guest workers"<sup>15</sup>—a minority through migration into Germany—have been living in Germany for several decades and play an important role in German society. Nevertheless, the largest group, the Turkish minority, still has difficulties in obtaining German passports, especially with the recent decision against possibility of allowing dual citizenship.

In Transylvania in the beginning of the 1990's, Hungarians were the victims of violence.<sup>16</sup> Under communism, Germans and members of the Jewish minority were often "sold" for money. However, the realisation of a pluralistic and open society calls upon politicians and citizens to strive towards less conflict and violence in society.

There are reasons why we should concern ourselves with the Western concept of multicultural societies as it is applied to Central Eastern Europe. In some respect, Western countries can learn from Central and Eastern Europe and vice versa. The experience with different ethnic groups, massive changes in the economical, political and social order are factors which occur in Western societies as well—for instance referring to globalisation. CEE has a decade of experience in the transition process. Furthermore, educational exchange programmes—which leads towards the goal of a better co-operation within the European integration process—between universities in Western and Eastern Europe are increasing. The European Union student exchange programmes "Tempus" and "Socrates" should be mentioned. The university of Cluj/Klausenburg/ Koloszvár is popular among Romanian and foreign students. More co-operation is also an important step towards correcting the negative image the Western countries have of Romania.

However, surveys on multicultural societies should be carefully examined for CEE. There are some fundamental differences that have an impact on today's society in CEE in general and Transylvania in particular. The fact that the nation state has lately emerged in CEE is a key issue for its people and must be taken into consideration within the scientific approach of "multiculturalism" in Eastern countries. Nationhood and ethnicity are very sensitive questions in CEE because of the various rulers of the land. The former empires, the Ottoman, the Habsburg, the German or the Russian empire, had a specific impact on the life-style of the population, on identity, language and politics.<sup>17</sup> During the years of the repressive Ceaușescu regime, there was little contact with foreigners and minority rights were abolished in Romania. Hence the communist phase will be an important field for future research work. On the other hand, migration and population movement did not disappear completely: the migration of Germans and of Jews, the residence of students and workers from overseas countries,

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<sup>14</sup> Quoted by Freese (1996), 5.

<sup>15</sup> "Gastarbeiter".

<sup>16</sup> Szegedi (1992), 323 in Seewann (1992).

<sup>17</sup> Excursion with AEGEE in 1998, Homepage: [www.rtz.uni-hamburg.de/AFGEE/CST-TRANS/](http://www.rtz.uni-hamburg.de/AFGEE/CST-TRANS/).

waves of people leaving after the uprisings in Budapest and Prague, plus the presence of the Russian army itself, all had an impact on society. Furthermore, CEE has a more rural character. Sometimes, the ethnic composition of the population can change within a village, especially in Transylvania. CEE is more centralised than federal states such as Germany or USA and this might have an impact on the policy towards minority rights as well.

Is it possible to have a European identity? Would it be possible to have a common Transylvanian identity within the population of Romania? What does social identity mean? Social identity refers to a social group or social category.<sup>18</sup> Language is an important characteristic for a human being. Language denotes membership of an ethnic or national group and forms part of the social identity. Language is also a tool for communication with other groups and can be used to integrate or indeed exclude others. The languages spoken in Transylvania represent an advantage for those who speak them. Knowledge of Romanian, Hungarian and German, is a key tool for communication, better understanding between the different ethnic groups, a future career, travel, etc.

Broadly speaking, social groups need a common goal in order to co-operate together and to form mutual tolerance. In to international companies, a corporate identity is emphasised on each hierarchical level nowadays. What does this mean for Transylvania and its different ethnic groups? They can emphasise the importance of Transylvania for the whole of Romania—on economic terms, on terms of relations with other countries or regarding the steps towards European integration. The German minority has been a unifying feature in the past.<sup>19</sup> Today mixed marriages are more common than in the past. Romanian pupils attend German schools in Transylvania. The Greek community in Brasov/Kronstadt/Brassó organises conferences with Romanians, Germans and Hungarians.<sup>20</sup> All inhabitants have a common enemy: corruption. Mismanagement can only be solved by joint striving. Economic prosperity might follow after more contacts between Transylvania and Hungary. For instance, Hungarian tourists in Transylvania are of great significance. Hungary and Romania are members of the CEFTA, the Central European Free Trade Association. Once Hungary joins the EU and enters into the Schengen treaty, contacts on a personal level between Hungary and other countries may be difficult to maintain. Therefore, the policy of EU-enlargement must consider this kind of disintegration and the consequences for countries which will join the EU only in the long-term as well.

An inter-ethnic dialogue was developed between the two World Wars in Transylvania, especially on a cultural level. The term “Transylvanism” described a way of tolerance and cultural pluralism.<sup>21</sup> The first secretary for minorities in Europe was created in Romania in 1931. After 1989, the democratic opposition brought the ethnic groups together. At present minority parties form part of the government.

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<sup>18</sup> Stroebe (1997), 562 - 564.

<sup>19</sup> Excursion with AEGEE in 1998, Homepage: [www.rz.uni-hamburg.de/AEGEE/CST-TRANS/](http://www.rz.uni-hamburg.de/AEGEE/CST-TRANS/).

<sup>20</sup> Discussion with members of the Greek community in Brasov/Kronstadt/Brassó, August 1998.

<sup>21</sup> Szegedi (1992), 317 in Seewann (1992)

Parliamentary representation is an important issue for the political integration of minority concerns.<sup>22</sup> Minorities in Romania have a guaranteed mandate in the Romanian parliament—independent of votes. All minorities receive financial support from the state. In general, juridical protection has been established. “The new constitution of 1991 forms a positive approach to the juridical setting of standards to guarantee the same status as the majority.”<sup>23</sup> Romania is also a member of the Council of Europe and signed the treaty on the protection of national minorities in 1995.<sup>24</sup> Although the Romanian constitution still refers to a national state, ten percent of the population belongs to an ethnic minority.

The questions arising from the discussion about multicultural society need to be looked at from various points of view: an interdisciplinary approach is absolutely necessary. The concept of a multicultural society includes historical, geographical, political, sociological, anthropological, and psychological aspects. Which factors can reduce conflicts between groups? The field of social psychology gives an interesting answer regarding relations between groups. Overarching values or an important common aim can reduce conflicts between different kind of groups.<sup>25</sup> A society that is governed by consensus might develop shared values that overarch the ethnic groups. Within this kind of “cultural umbrella”, ethnic groups may keep core values, such as family tradition, language or religion.<sup>26</sup>

The model needs differentiated research, especially for Central and Eastern Europe. Conferences or research projects with an interdisciplinary approach are a good starting point for a better understanding of the transformation processes in society. Our nationhood and environment is dramatically changing; therefore a new dimension for people living together in a pluralistic society is required.

Transylvania has preserved a rich cultural life. The landscape, surrounded by the Carpathian Mountains, belongs to all people living there, no matter, what ethnic background they have.<sup>27</sup> When looking at “multicultural societies”, Transylvania might be a future reference for CEE.

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<sup>22</sup> Blumenwitz (1995), 195.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted by Wittstock (1995), 216 in Roth (1995).

<sup>24</sup> ‘Rumänien hat am 1. Februar 1995 beim Europarat das Rahmenabkommen über den Schutz der nationalen Minderheiten unterzeichnet, und beide Parlamentskammern haben dieses Abkommen bereits ratifiziert.’; quoted by Wittstock (1995), 215 in Roth (1995).

<sup>25</sup> Stroebe (1997), 571 - 576.

<sup>26</sup> Smolicz (1998), 267; in Balla and Sterbling, Rds. (1998).

<sup>27</sup> Excursion with AEGEE in 1998, Homepage: [www.rz.uni-hamburg.de/AEGEE/CST-TRANS/](http://www.rz.uni-hamburg.de/AEGEE/CST-TRANS/).

# Romania as “Periphery”: Social Change and Intellectual Evolution

*by Victor Rizescu*

It has long been customary in Western, and especially American, scholarship on Eastern Europe to describe the region as a “periphery” of the West. At the time of decolonisation, several decades after the Paris Peace Settlement, when “East European studies” had already become an old-established academic domain, and “Third World studies” were just emerging as a burgeoning new one, some analysts in the West discovered that these two areas of research could shed considerable light on each other, and correspondingly the concepts, theoretical models and heuristic instruments elaborated for the understanding of each of them had to prove their validity by being tested against the other one as well. As one scholar wrote:

“The recent history of Asia, Africa and Latin America has shown that many phenomena previously considered to be specifically east European were not so at all, but merely characteristic of the impact of western influences on non-western societies. ... These developments place the history of eastern Europe... in a new perspective, which the observers in 1914 could hardly have foreseen. ... The wider interest of eastern Europe’s history lies in those aspects of social and cultural development in which it resembles or differs from the history of western Europe on the one side and of the non-European, “under-developed” countries on the other. But to see these resemblances and differences it is necessary... to see the real social forces, without preconceived notions of the universal validity of Victorian categories.”<sup>1</sup>

The image of Eastern Europe as the “first under-developed area”, and as a laboratory for studying the effects of the “westernisation” of the world became deeply entrenched, so much so that the region started to be used as a training-ground for American diplomats specialising in Asian and African affairs.<sup>2</sup> Behind that part of its heritage that Eastern Europe undeniably shares with the West—and regardless of the traditional infatuation of the East Europeans with their European identity—we have to distinguish, it was argued, structural features that make the comparison with non-European regions more meaningful, and scientifically more rewarding, than the comparison with the Western half of the European continent. New analytical instruments were required for making

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<sup>1</sup> Seton-Watson (1956), 429-430.

<sup>2</sup> Roberts (1974), 378.

this comparison effective, and for replacing the obsolete “Victorian categories”, and accordingly they were forged in the following years, all of them being placed under the umbrella of the concept of “periphery”. And these instruments were employed for building social science models and historical explanations that contrasted the evolution of the West with that of the peripheral world, of which Eastern Europe, in the last two centuries, was considered to be a part.

Of course, not even in the United States has this view been universally accepted. Some authors who have tackled big issues of social and political development in Eastern Europe have continued to ignore the demand for a special set of concepts and theoretical models, maintaining (or implying) that the evolution of the area could be conveniently grasped with the conceptual apparatus developed for the study of Western society.<sup>3</sup> Others have considered that, although we do have to distinguish between different paths that societies might take in the transition from the agrarian, traditional world to modernity, the same theoretical models could account for any such variety of modernisation processes, whether in a large or a small country, in the East or in the West. Thus the three routes to modernity identified by Barrington Moore through comparisons between the largest Western and Asian societies could be found replicated inside Eastern Europe, in spite of Moore’s own suggestion that the decisive factors in the evolution of the small countries lie outside their borders, and as such they are not appropriate as independent units of research.<sup>4</sup>

Authors who did share this view have identified a pattern of modernisation in the area in which the successive stages appear not as equivalents but as mere distortions of the developmental stages followed by the West. For some of them, who have taken a (more or less qualified) “Wallersteinian” approach, such distortions are to be blamed on the perverse influences of the world capitalist market centred in the West, and explained by reference to the (supposedly) inescapable mechanisms of global capitalism.<sup>5</sup> Although the golden age of this “world-system” or “dependency” theory is past, and its errors have often been stressed,<sup>6</sup> terms like “core” and “periphery” still seem to be inseparable from it. They smack of neo-Marxism and of denunciation of the “plutocratic nations”, and their very occurrence in an academic text is seen as if it bore the inherent implications of this denunciation. As has often happened in the history of ideas, the tenets of a wider school of thought have come to be associated only with one particular variant of it. As a result of this, the conceptualisation of East European history as that of a “periphery” is sometimes seen with suspicion in the West today, and increasingly so in the East, where liberal and “occidental” circles are careful to distance themselves from dependency theory, which is perceived as going together with indigenist and anti-Western attitudes, and as resonating with the local nationalist autochthonist thinking.

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<sup>3</sup> Stoianovich (1974).

<sup>4</sup> Stokes (1989); see also Moore (1967), 413-483.

<sup>5</sup> Thus Chirot (1976), with precise reference to Romania. The author subsequently considerably modified his views; see Chirot (1989).

<sup>6</sup> Chirot and Hall (1982), 97-103; Kitching (1989), 157-176.

Other authors, who are equally concerned with the distorted nature of East European modernisation, place the blame for it not on the influence of world capitalism, but on the strategies and policies that the East Europeans have developed for meeting the challenge of the West, or, in more general terms, on the responses of peripheral societies at large to this challenge.<sup>7</sup> Eastern Europe has become a periphery, on this view, precisely because of its eagerness to catch up with the West as quickly and as completely as possible, without being endowed with the prerequisites for doing so. While in the West modernisation has run its course as an organic process, at the basis of which stood certain spontaneous transformations in the realm of economy and society, on the periphery the driving force has been the desire to imitate, or emulate, Western civilisation. While in the first case the modern state only emerged as a consequence of changes in the infrastructure, in the second case the political superstructure of Western type was erected first, in the absence of a corresponding social foundation, and assigned the role of the main instrument of social change. The sequence of development was thus reversed, leading to the ascendancy of the state over all aspects of social life, and to the hypertrophy of its bureaucracy. While in the core countries the category of state officials was recruited from different segments of society, and mirrored the class-division of society, produced by the dynamics of economic forces, in peripheral countries bureaucracy became an interest group in its own right,<sup>8</sup> and the states “became instruments of revenue raising as well as of income transfer from the societies at large to the new bourgeoisie of state officials”, or else instruments of “income equalisation, not, to be sure, between the various economic strata of peripheral societies, but between the elites of the backward and the advanced industrial societies of the Continent.”<sup>9</sup> Some trappings of parliamentarism were adopted as a façade, but the peripheral political class “integrated the administrative and parliamentary systems into a single machine in which the bureaucracy was in charge of manufacturing safe majorities whose votes provided legitimacy for the essentially bureaucratic regime”,<sup>10</sup> a machine which “enabled the bureaucratic arm of the government, usually under liberal and progressive labels, to turn out predictable majorities, thereby debasing parliamentarism without abandoning it.”<sup>11</sup> The attempt to imitate the West was followed by equally futile attempts to find a shortcut to the modern society of affluence through an authoritarian, corporatist political design<sup>12</sup>, or by spasmodic attempts to reject the Western

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<sup>7</sup> The most elaborated approach of this type can be found in the works of Andrew C. Janos, see Janos (1970), Janos (1978), Janos (1982), Janos (1989); a much simpler interpretation on the same lines can be found in Jowitt (1978).

<sup>8</sup> The same idea can be found in Seton-Watson (1956), 397, and Roberts (1969), 338-339.

<sup>9</sup> Janos (1989), 338, 342.

<sup>10</sup> Janos (1978), 87.

<sup>11</sup> Janos (1989), 342. Other authors offer a slightly better assessment of the workings of parliamentary institutions and of the long-term results of these electoral practices; see Shapiro (1981); Dogan (1987).

<sup>12</sup> Of which the most characteristic proponent in the region was the Romanian Mihail Manoilescu, see Janos (1970), 213-214, and Schmitter (1974), 117-125.

model, as in the various fascist movements. The inter-war years witnessed the confrontation of, and reciprocal contamination between these two political alternatives.<sup>13</sup>

As the “dependency” view is increasingly rejected for the indictment of the West that it contains, so the perspective of “emulative modernisation” has recently come under attack for the depreciation of the non-Western societies that it allegedly implies. While some of its critics have confined themselves to protesting against the extension of the theory over some of the historical cases that it claims to cover, arguing with empirical evidence against it,<sup>14</sup> a Bulgarian author has raised doubts about the very “dichotomy in the patterns of social and political development” that was originally formulated “to explain the nature of social and political change in the contemporary third world and... later expanded to the historically underdeveloped regions of Eastern Europe”, and which claimed that “there [were] more similarities in the realm of politics between the... countries of the European “periphery” in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries and the contemporary third world than between any of them and the West.”<sup>15</sup> Such ideas, which appear here more as received wisdom than as a scientific view, are rejected as just another variety (albeit a rather subtle one) of Western “orientalist” or “hegemonic” discourse.<sup>16</sup> Actually East European scholars have always been very reluctant to accept a “peripheral identity” for their societies, despite some occasional enthusiasm for the “dependency theory”.<sup>17</sup> So deeply ingrained is the notion that the region has always been, and has to be conceived as, an integral part of European civilisation, that the suggestion of looking to India or Brazil in order to better understand Hungary, Romania or Bulgaria can only be seen here as yet another proof of the irreducibly exotic character of American academia, or of a lack of “historical sense” on the part of social scientists of all persuasions. The recent drive to European integration could have only estranged them further from any possible self-identification with this way of thinking. While its (Western) adherents are still willing to defend their opinions, and to highlight the relationship between the “peripheral” past of the region and its present predicaments,<sup>18</sup> much more common are attempts at understanding the specificity of the area, in terms of historical heritage, by using concepts tailored exclusively for European realities, and which involve only intra-European comparisons.<sup>19</sup> Given all these, it seems likely that the tradition we are referring to will end as a casualty of the profound change that the paradigms of historical writing have undergone since the end of the Cold War, being driven to the grave,

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<sup>13</sup> Janos (1970), *passim*; Janos (1978), 102-113; Janos (1982), 201-312; but also Nagy-Talavera (1970), 345-375.

<sup>14</sup> Sked (1989), 202-205.

<sup>15</sup> Mishkova (1995), 64-65.

<sup>16</sup> Compare Todorova (1997).

<sup>17</sup> As for example in Bădescu (1984); see also a criticism at Verdery (1994), 140-151.

<sup>18</sup> Janos (1994).

<sup>19</sup> On the model set by Szücs (1983).



and lost from the sight of the scientific community, before being taken into account very seriously in the East and without being re-examined, in the light of present developments, in the West.

A comparison with the case of Germany might be enlightening. About two decades ago, a British and an American historian made a famous intervention in the (mainly) German academic debate on the *Sonderweg* issue.<sup>20</sup> They pointed to the fact that the notion of German abnormal historical development, as it was customarily understood at the time, rested on an over-enthusiastic adoption by German authors of some (mainly) Anglo-American social science theories (of the kind offered by A. Gerschenkron, R. Dahrendorf or B. Moore) and on their eagerness to take the historical experience of England, France and the United States as a norm against which the experiences of all other societies in the world had to be measured. Beyond their narrower concern with Germany, they raised general questions both about the limits of social science paradigms as heuristic instruments for historical studies and about the appropriateness of using the particular development of the westernmost countries as a canon of “normal” development. Their declared aim was not one of rejecting the idea of German peculiarities altogether, but of disclosing the contours of a scientific orthodoxy, establishing the connections between various components of it that were not always perceived as being connected as such, of bringing to light certain views that were circulating as not fully articulated presuppositions, and reworking them in order to obtain a more accurate historical picture. They addressed in the first place a German, and not an Anglo-American audience, feeling that more distortions had resulted from the importation of ideas across the Atlantic than from the career of the same ideas in their place of origin.

If measured against the Western canon, countries like Romania, and the others in East-Central Europe, are less likely to appear as strikingly peculiar (although a variety of *Sonderweg* to the East of Germany has occasionally been claimed for the case of Russia<sup>21</sup>), but rather as instances of a historical pattern characteristic of most of the non-Western world. The notion of “peripheral” can be seen then as a suitable equivalent for them of the German *Sonderweg*. And as East European scholars cannot be said to be less prone to a fascination with (more) Western academic fashions than their German counterparts, who subscribed in large numbers, at least in the recent past, to the idea of the *Sonderweg*, we might have expected the same kind of clarifying intervention from outside, in the local debate concerning a peripheral pattern of development pertaining to the region, to be long overdue. We can easily notice that it is not, at least as far as Romania is concerned, and the explanation might be rather the above-mentioned revulsion against the very concept of “periphery”, which is perceived as implying a stigma identity, than the fact that the traps inherent in using it have already been avoided without great efforts. At a time when the Romanians, and the East Europeans generally, are claiming their European identity more eagerly than ever, and are protesting more forcefully than ever

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<sup>20</sup> Blackbourn and Eley (1984).

<sup>21</sup> Pipes (1974).

against any attempt by outsiders to project another identity on them, it might prove useful for them to take issue with a view which claims that the structural similarities between this region and Asia and Africa have been stronger, in the last two centuries, than the cultural links with the larger European “family”. The remaining part of this article will also try to argue that the historical picture of Romania as a periphery should not have the embarrassing connotations usually associated with it in the ears of many Romanians, and that a certain dignity could be ascribed to the condition of being “peripheral”.

While no serious attempt at probing the “periphery” theories by a more empirically oriented research has been advanced in post-war Romanian scholarship, they do seem to be supported by a great deal of the Romanian social thinking of the period before the Second World War.<sup>22</sup> Contemporary interpretations of peripheral politics gain further credibility from the fact that virtually all the elements “assembled” in them can be identified, at least in a crude form, and of course in different combinations, across a large spectrum of Romanian authors from the past, of various ideological orientations. At the same time, these Romanian authors gain additional respectability from the fact that their intellectual concerns appear as wholly legitimate ones, and different from the concerns that stood at the basis of classical social and political theory in the West. Such observations are not new, of course. On the one hand, the contemporary protagonists of “periphery theorising” have themselves acknowledged their debt to the thinkers from whom they have drawn suggestions.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, it is generally acknowledged that most of the themes that form the backbone of present-day development theory have been prefigured in the debates of pre-communist Eastern Europe. But the implications of these observations have not been sufficiently elaborated upon.

As said above, the comparison with old Romanian works of social theory suggests that there is a great degree of truth in the idea formulated by recent theorists that, when we address the problem of modernisation, “we deal not with a single process, but with two different processes. One, the process of innovation in the Occident; two, the gradual diffusion of these innovations from the core area to the peripheries of the world system.”<sup>24</sup> And, “as the dynamics of these two processes vary considerably,” it is our task to “identify two different patterns of social and political change,”<sup>25</sup> or else “to develop a general paradigm for the study of peripheral politics.”<sup>26</sup> But at the same time the recent works that try to identify such a paradigm suggest that we are also in need of a corresponding paradigm for studying the evolution of social and political ideas

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<sup>22</sup> To give just one example, the issue of the hypertrophy of bureaucracy, and its transformation into a social category of its own, can be found treated very vividly in a rather neglected text: Sanielevici (1996), 124-127; see also Eminescu (1998), 29-32; Zeletin (1991), 87-99; Manoilescu (1997), 125-148.

<sup>23</sup> Thus, for example, Chirot makes clear his indebtedness to Gherea; see Chirot (1978), 41.

<sup>24</sup> Janos (1982), 313.

<sup>25</sup> Janos (1982), 313.

<sup>26</sup> Janos (1978), 74.

in peripheral countries, and of the analytical tools appropriate for this. If “the domestic political activity” in countries like Romania “is understandable only as a variety of responses, involving the copying, modification, or rejection of Western political and ideological models, to the social and political dislocation that growing contact with the West has brought about,”<sup>27</sup> or, in more general terms, if, when studying modernisation, we deal with both “the rise of a successful material civilisation in a handful of countries” and “the responses of the rest of the world to this particular and ongoing process,”<sup>28</sup> then it follows that we need to understand in more detail what the *intellectual* response to the expansion of Western civilisation has consisted of in peripheral countries like Romania.

“Ever since their emergence as an independent nation the Rumanians have been preoccupied, almost obsessed, with the nature of their relation to the West.”<sup>29</sup> It would be grossly unfair to say that this obsession has not been paid the attention it deserves on the part of historians of ideas. But we still lack a more precise understanding of how this preoccupation has shaped public discourse, and of what exactly its place has been in the intellectual trends that have dominated this public discourse. How was thinking on the relation with the West articulated with other ideological themes, and how should we assess its relevance for the general dynamics of Romanian culture? As with the social or political historian, the intellectual historian vacillates between approaching the realities of a peripheral country with analytical tools that have been originally forged for the study of Western realities, and trying to replace or supplement them with instruments especially designed for this task. Too often historians treat the intellectual debate at the periphery as only a translation of the Western ideological debate, and endeavour to ascertain local equivalents for each and every category of thought, or cultural formation, that can be found, or that appears recurrently, in the history of the West. Terms like “liberalism”, “conservatism” or “socialism” are used as though they were perfectly suited for capturing historical realities that would require, in fact, a different conceptualisation.<sup>30</sup> The one important issue that we have to address when studying the intellectual history of a peripheral country would be, according to this approach, the process of acculturation, the diffusion and adaptation of cultural idioms and political languages from the Western cultural metropolis to the underdeveloped cultural colonies.

There is also the symmetrically opposite temptation, that of denying any relevance to concepts like those mentioned above, and treating the declared ideological commitments of the theorists in such countries, as well as the ideological labels chosen by the political groups, as mere surface phenomena, that must not disguise for us the all-important concern of the relation to the

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<sup>27</sup> Roberts (1969), VI-VII.

<sup>28</sup> Janos (1978), 74.

<sup>29</sup> Roberts (1969), 339.

<sup>30</sup> To give just three very recent examples, see George (1998); Iliescu (1998); Preda (1998); a more balanced approach can be found in Brown (1982).

West, orienting all their endeavours. In one way or another, most of the works of intellectual history focused on Romania, or Eastern Europe, have tried to strike a middle ground between these two extremes. But so far none of them has formulated the agenda of treating its subject under a rubric altogether different from that of the intellectual history of the West, and of relating it to the general framework of the pattern of social and political transformation characteristic to a peripheral society.<sup>31</sup> The following pages contain a proposal for such a conceptualisation of the intellectual history of a peripheral country, that should be applicable to the Romanian case in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries. Such a perspective could be summarised in the following statements:

1. If the ideologies of the West are primarily attitudes towards modernity, the ideologies of the non-Western world are primarily attitudes towards the West. Both the former and the latter have to be seen as reactions to the process of modernisation. But in the non-Western world the modernisation process has meant the dissemination of the Western model. So if the ideologies of the West have arisen as responses to the challenge of modernisation, then the peripheral ideologies have arisen as responses to the challenge of westernisation. And as in the West the spectrum of modern ideologies took shape at the moment when modernity was first perceived as an absolute novelty, and began to be treated accordingly as a problem and not as a fact to be taken for granted, so outside the West the ideological spectrum took shape, in each place, at the moment when the different strands of westernisation came to be perceived as elements of a coherent whole, and the modern West was understood as a peculiar historical formation, unlike anything else in the history of the world, but which nevertheless had come to stand as the inescapable horizon, and the inevitable reference, of any project of development. In the West, this awareness of living in a new condition—the condition of modernity—could be conveniently dated to the most formative period of its history, namely the age of the French Revolution and of the Napoleonic wars. Outside the West, the corresponding awareness came at different times, in different places.

2. If the languages of political thought<sup>32</sup> in peripheral areas consist first and foremost in elaborate reactions to the problem of westernisation, and as such address a different problem than the Western political languages, this does not mean that the problem of the diffusion of Western intellectual traditions should be dismissed as irrelevant. Because, if Westerners define their attitude towards

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<sup>31</sup> The work which comes closest to this is Love (1996), who occasionally speaks about “Third World ideologies”, exemplified by the Romanian case in the period 1880 to 1945; for a shorter statement see Love (1988); but valuable suggestions can also be found in Roberts (1969), 108-116, 142-156, 192-198, 274-292, 339-348; Kitch (1975); Kitch (1977); Schmitter (1978); Chirot (1978); Chirot (1989); Janos (1982), 316-320; Daskalov (1997).

<sup>32</sup> We are following here the well-known suggestion of conceiving ‘the history of political theory not as the study of allegedly canonical texts, but rather as a more wide-ranging investigation of the changing political languages in which societies talk to themselves.’ (see Skinner (1999), 105. Perhaps the best sharp theoretical introduction to this way of practicing intellectual history is Pocock (1987). See also Tuck (1995).

modernity in the terms of their own culture, the non-Westerners define their attitude towards the West in terms that have themselves been borrowed from the West. According to time, place, local circumstances or individual preferences, they will select one or another of the political languages of the West and will use it as an instrument for making intelligible the predicament of their own society. Accordingly we have to make a distinction between two types of political language that appear in peripheral areas: political languages proper, defined by reference to westernisation, and what we shall call "interpretative languages", that is, European intellectual traditions, or particular mixtures from such intellectual traditions, that have been borrowed and adapted as instruments for elaborating each of the peripheral ideologies.<sup>33</sup>

3. In the West political theory operates at two levels: the explanative level, or the level of facts, and the normative level, or the level of values. On the one hand it offers sociological descriptions of the modern world, or historical explanations of its genesis. On the other hand it offers prescriptions and norms. At least since David Hume, the connection between facts and values, or between explanations and norms, has been the main topic of philosophy in the West. But we have to notice that in peripheral countries the problem of assessing the viability of different values, of selecting among them or of establishing a hierarchical relation among them, appears in a different guise than in the West. The values are here simply those that come with the Western model, and have acquired prevalence in the West at a certain moment of time. The works of

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<sup>33</sup> Thus, for example, Marxism at the periphery has acted less a political ideology in the Western sense than as an intellectual instrument (that is, an "interpretative language") with the help of which various peripheral political languages have been structured: that which is commonly designated as "Marxism" (which appeared here more in the guise of a theory about the proper way for a backward country to adopt Western institutions and social structure), but also populism (see Kitch (1975), 249-254). The presence or absence of an interpretative language can lead to the existence or non-existence of certain typical attitudes towards the West. Thus, the fact that the Latin Americans were less acquainted with Marxism than the Romanians can help explain the more belated emergence of peripheral ideologies in the Latin American case: see Love (1988), 478. The distinction between peripheral political languages and interpretative languages will also enable us to avoid asking such anti-productive questions as whether Zeletin was a liberal or a Marxist (Preda (1998)). It will also help us to avoid such confusing practices as that of classifying Manoilescu sometimes as a "modernist" or "westernist" (categories which are themselves equated many times with "liberal"), and belonging together, as such, with authors like Lovinescu; and at other times as a "fascist" or "extreme-right" theorist (categories most often equated with "traditionalist" or "autochtonist"), and belonging together, as such, with authors like Crainic or Nae Ionescu (see Ornea (1995), 24, 265-283). Zeletin was certainly a "liberal" in the Romanian sense, that is, he defended a certain strategy of modernisation/westernisation best incarnated historically in the practices of the Romanian Liberal Party. But to achieve this task he made use of an interpretative language in which the Marxist tradition played a prominent part: Roberts (1969), 114-115; Chirot (1978); Love (1996), 46-50. Manoilescu's position (as that of the other corporatists of the region) can best be described as a modification of the old Romanian "liberal" position, whose major rationalisation had been given by Zeletin. He was pleading for the same old aim of emulating the West, only recommending a different strategy. His views did not involve any general rejection of Western "rationality", as in the case of the traditionalists. At best, they involved an overestimation of it: see Roberts (1969), 192-198; Schmitter (1978); Brown (1982), 292; Love (1996), 71-98.

political theory are here almost exclusively historical or sociological analyses that try to ascertain the degree of compatibility between the Western model and local conditions. They try to establish, firstly, whether westernisation has been done, so far, in an appropriate way, and has led to the desired results, or has been pursued mistakenly, failing as such to bring forth the promised benefits. This is the equivalent of the explanative side of the Western political tracts. From this analysis of the facts, and without caring too much, most of the time, for Humean dilemmas, the theorists go on straight to the normative level: they extract recommendations for the future, long-term strategies and short-term tactics for handling the challenge of westernisation. When we try to establish the place of an ideological utterance on the political diagram, we have to look at both aspects: how the past and present influence of the West is evaluated, and what attitude towards the West is recommended for the future.<sup>34</sup>

4. One important difference between the political debate in the West and that at the periphery comes from the role played by the national idea in each of the two cases. In the West, the principle of nationality acquires a new significance at the beginning of the modern era, and starts to influence politics in new ways. Different currents of ideas employ and elaborate it in different ways, at different times and in various places. So it appears as a factor of differentiation between movements and ideologies. But this new significance of nationality for modern politics should be analysed against the background of a body of thinking, elaborated in pre-modern and early-modern times, in which the idea of nation played a much smaller role. Western political thought was first elaborated with reference to such concepts as the individual, society and the state. The concept of the "nation" was only later superimposed upon this body of thinking. Although nationalism has pervaded most of the political doctrines of modernity, becoming even an unconscious assumption for some of them, in at least some of these doctrines it appears less as an initial building block and more as an ingredient added at a later time. The tension between the vision of universalism and the particularism inherent in the idea of nation provides one of the main dialectical principles in the evolution of modern Western political thought.

At the periphery, by contrast, nationalism does not appear as one ideology among others, or as a specific component of some ideologies, but as the face turned inside out of all ideologies.<sup>35</sup> The main object of the political debate here is precisely the relation between one particular local culture and a cultural model—the Western one—that comes from outside that particular culture. The concepts of the "individual", "society", the "state", or "universal mankind" are

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<sup>34</sup> Different normative positions could be advocated by reference to one and the same assessment of the current state of modernisation, as was the case with the "Marxists" and the Populists, see Kitch (1977), 75-77.

<sup>35</sup> An observation that should be de-dramatised, and looked on as something which does not imply any pathological deviation (for examples of works which do exactly the opposite, describing this state of affairs in the most dramatic language, see Mitu (1997), 5-7; Laignel-Lavastine (1998), 16-19.

inherent in the Western model,<sup>36</sup> and they do not constitute the main issues to be debated. The main issue is to be decided at the level of the collectivity, and concerns the relation between this collectivity and the outside world. Political debate in countries that have entered the orbit of Western influence does not operate with abstract and impersonal ideas like “individual” and “community”, “state” and “civil society”, “rights” and “duties”, “liberty” and “equality”, but with broad cultural systems that have already been embodied in different models of civilisation, such as “West” and “East”, “Catholicism” and “Orthodoxy”, and so on.<sup>37</sup> It does not deal so much with concepts and doctrines as with models and symbols that stand for such concepts and doctrines. The individuality of the national community is elaborated by reference to such symbols and models.

5. The problem of the relation to the West is addressed, in peripheral countries, at two main levels, and to each of them there corresponds a specific type of discourse and type of inquiry. There is, firstly, the more general level of cultural criticism, which involves the broadest possible topics related to the process of acculturation. At a more specific level, there is then the problem of the relation to what can be considered as—or is perceived to be—the nucleus of modern Western civilisation: the capitalist economy.<sup>38</sup> While at the first level the debate involves historians, literary critics, philosophers of culture or folklorists, at the second level it is pursued by economists and sociologists. The distinction between the two levels of the debate is an important one, because one and the same political language can display different attitudes towards the Western cultural model on the one hand, and the world-economy dominated by the West on the other hand.<sup>39</sup> The two types of inquiry appear in different proportions at different ideological currents.

Such an insistence upon claiming the status of a “periphery” for Romania, and even extending this characterisation from the realm of society and politics to

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<sup>36</sup> Something which is true for the concept of the “nation” itself, in so far as it is employed in an abstract way. This is why, from the perspective defined here, it is mistaken to speak about an Eastern variety of nationalism (ethnic or cultural), as opposed to a Western one (political or contractual). The distinction was first formulated with respect to the comparison between German and Anglo-French conceptions of nationality (see an early statement at Namier (1963)), was later used for contrasting the nationalism of the Easterners *stricto sensu* to that of both the Germans and their Western neighbours (Plamenatz (1976)), and still later was taken as the cornerstone for building general interpretations of modernisation (Greenfeld (1996)). Recently, the idea has come under attack both with respect to the case of Germany (Llobera (1996), Fahrmeir (1997)), and to that of East-Central Europe (Walicki (1989), 5: ‘It would not be too difficult for a critic of Kohn’s theory to demonstrate that all the characteristics which he regards as specific to Central and Eastern European nationalism could also be found in Western Europe’). It was also challenged at the theoretical level (Singer (1996)). “Eastern” nationalism appears more and more to be just another innovation of Western modernity.

<sup>37</sup> Even “France” or “Germany” can be used as models by reference to which different normative positions in the issue of modernisation/westernisation can be formulated, see Boia (1997), 186-194.

<sup>38</sup> Most of the time they are treated separately, as in Love (1996) and Verdery (1995).

<sup>39</sup> As exemplified by the various “liberal”, “neo-liberal”, populist-peasantist or corporatist currents in Romania and in other East European countries.

that of culture, might appear strange in the end. The explanation is, however, very simple. This approach will make us to think of the intellectual debate at the periphery as something different by nature, and not only by degree, from that in the West. Peripheral social thinkers did not merely repeat Western ideas, at a lesser level of sophistication, but tackled new problems, whose full relevance was to become obvious only in the post-war period. The intellectual debate on the margins of Europe evolved in the past as a response to the very same challenges that Third World intelligentsias and Western specialists in development studies are facing today. The main topic of the debate was the impact of the West on local societies, and the main concern was how the challenge of westernisation should be handled by local policy-makers. Accordingly since the very first formulations of “world-system theory” in Latin America and the United States, some social and economic thinkers from pre-communist Eastern Europe have started to be re-read as anticipators of it, and placed in the long-term history of thinking on modernisation and centre-periphery relations. Too often, however, this re-reading has stopped at identifying the pedigree of dependency theory, being confined to those authors and themes that could be fitted into this tradition. Proving that a way of thinking has a venerable ancestry does not prove anything about its validity, however, and the critics of dependency theory could even turn this argument upside down, arguing that it is precisely this ancestry which can raise doubts about the theory in question: far from offering any new insights into workings of the present-day international economy, and far from posing any original challenge to mainstream economic wisdom, it would then be only the translation into a modern idiom of preconceptions that stretch back to the very beginnings of the industrial revolution, and which have been associated, at times, with the most reprehensible political attitudes.<sup>40</sup> A more comprehensive re-reading than this is needed, one which would go beyond the occasional occurrence of the rudiments of *dependencia* thinking, to disclose a whole framework of thought in which the problem of globalisation, or of the encounter between Western and non-Western civilisations—perhaps the most pressing problem of our times—was for the first time circumscribed and addressed in a coherent manner.

A political philosopher has recently described the current landscape of contemporary political theory as resulting from the fusion between the Western canon and the various non-Western traditions that the former encountered during its expansion, and with which it entered—rather unconsciously—into “conversational” exchanges.<sup>41</sup> The perspective proposed here on the political languages of the periphery is intended as an analytical tool for better understanding this centuries-long conversation between the coloniser and the colonised.

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<sup>40</sup> Kitching (1989), 18-61, 142-157.

<sup>41</sup> Tully (1995).



# **Educational Modernisation in Transylvania between 1774-1848. Temptation and Threat**

*by Ileana-Maria Ratcu*

The period 1774-1848 constitutes an important stage in educational development in Transylvania. The first part of the period, 1774-1805, represents the time between two legislative acts concerning the elementary school, and the years which follow up till 1848 are significant especially in order to depict the way that the road opened at the end of the 18th century succeeded in training people with a modern progressive vision of the world and an intellectual politically emancipated class.

It is not by chance that the first period taken into discussion is marked by law giving. In Austria there is a manifestation of enlightened absolutism defined by a general need of renewal of the feudal state through an ensemble of social, political and cultural reforms. The most important figure of enlightened absolutism in the Habsburg monarchy, the one who initiated the most profound reforms in all domains, placing the state in the centre of his political conception, is Joseph II, but undoubtedly the signs of an enlightened absolutism appeared during the reign of his mother, Maria Theresia, who, advised by her councillors, developed education in order to have trained functionaries and at the same time to granting the requests of the bourgeois class, that was in full progress<sup>1</sup>. As a result, in 1766 the first frontier-guards' schools were established in Transylvania and the Banat<sup>2</sup>. As is mentioned in a 1773 document, in localities such as Veștem, Cugir, Ohaba and Hațeg, Uniate (Greek Catholic) priests paid by the regimental pay office taught frontier guard children to read and write in Romanian. In the same document it is also specified that in many other localities Uniate and Orthodox Romanian priests, as well as German preachers, taught children reading and writing in their own houses, due to the lack of proper establishments.<sup>3</sup> In such conditions, it was obvious that education had to be supported by favourable laws and funding. To what degree the modernisation of Transylvanian education was desired and to what extent this fact could become a threat and for whom, it is the purpose of this work to show. But a few

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<sup>1</sup> Carpentier and Lebrun (1997), 243.

<sup>2</sup> Popescu Teiușanu (1975), 177.

<sup>3</sup> Duzinchievici (1977), 424-425.

specifications are also needed concerning the type of education, lay or confessional, its level, elementary, secondary, higher education, the language of teaching and pupils' nationality, and the pedagogical orientation that guided it.

### School legislation

The first aspect that should be considered is the legislative one, because on the one hand, this reflects the conception it started from, and on the other hand, the legislation was what directly imposed change in one system or another. Reforms undertaken in all domains had to strengthen the Empire through the unification and uniformity of the institutional system. Education, therefore, had to submit to the same tendencies. An opportunity to work out a new school legislation was provided by the abolition of the Jesuit Order (1773), a measure that followed the idea that the Catholic Church must be subordinate to the state, and its huge material resources at the disposal of the sovereign and his subjects.

Thus, on 6th December 1774 the most important school law of the time began to be applied. It was the work of Ignaz Felbiger<sup>4</sup>, and brought about an important modernisation of education, because as the title suggests, *Allgemeine Schulordnung für die deutschen Normal-, Haupt- und Trivialschulen in sämtlichen Kaiserlich Königlichen Erbländern*<sup>5</sup>, this ordinance was applicable to all the Crown's hereditary provinces, referring to normal<sup>6</sup>, principal and trivial schools. It thus served the goal of the uniformity of the state establishments pursued by Joseph II. Applied in Transylvania until 1805, the law proposed by Felbiger stipulated the founding of trivial schools (*Trivialschulen*) in villages with a Catholic parish, where reading, writing and arithmetic were taught together with domestic and agricultural economy and special educational training. The Catechism played an important role in children's training. These schools with one or two teachers were supported by the community or the domain where they existed. In the same spirit of the law, at least one principal school (*Hauptschule*) was founded within an administrative circle, where, besides reading, writing, composition and arithmetic, the teaching of Latin, history, geography and religion were important as well. The principal schools supported by the state were assigned three or four teachers and a priest. In the capital of each province, which was at the same time the residence city of the School Commission, a normal school (*Normalschule*) would also be founded as specified in *Allgemeine Schulordnung..*, with a similar but more complex programme to the principal schools, because future teachers were trained there.

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<sup>4</sup> Johann Ignaz Felbiger (1724-1788), abbot of Sagan from 1758, he reformed the Silesian schools. Called to Vienna in 1773, he reformed the elementary schools in the spirit of the Catholic Enlightenment. He elaborated *Die wahre saganische Lehrart in den k.k. Erbländern* (1775), *Methodenbuch für die Lehrer der deutschen Schulen in den k.k. Erbländern* (1775), *Meyers Enzyklopädisches Lexikon in 25 Bänden* (1980), 605.

<sup>5</sup> Protopopescu (1966), 23.

<sup>6</sup> *Normalschule* meant in the varying terminology of the time elementary school.

These schools opened the road for secondary education<sup>7</sup>. Half a year before *Allgemeine Schulordnung*, a regulation thought-out for Romanian and Serbian orthodox schools was applied in the Banat, beginning with 14<sup>th</sup> April 1774: *Regulae Directivae für die Verbesserung des illyrischen und walachischen (nicht unierten) Elementar – oder Trivialschulwesens*<sup>8</sup>.

On the 22nd August 1777 there came into effect a school document *Ratio educationis totiusque Rei Litterariae per Regnum Hungariae et Provinciae eidem Anexas*, also known as *Ratio educationis*<sup>9</sup>, which assumed as a basis the previous regulations. Although it was applied only in Hungary and Banat, this regulation is a point of origin for all school reforms. As we have seen, the elementary school was the basis, because public welfare and the citizens' needs require that all the people should have a minimum of civic and cultural education. The purpose of education was not only the raising of the cultural level, but also the shaping of useful, obedient citizens, devoted to the state as well, good clerks of its bureaucratic apparatus. There was an attempt to make education between 7 and 13 years of age obligatory, and to establish uniformity of curricula and schoolbooks.<sup>10</sup> Even if the Theresian reform dealt mainly with German schools, it had good results for the education of the Banat's other nationalities as well. In 1768 the number of Romanian and Serbian schools was around 66, but by 1778 their number had tripled (148 Romanian, 52 Serbian and 6 Romanian-Serbian schools).<sup>11</sup>

In 1781 a school regulation for Transylvania was passed, printed under the title of *Norma Regia pro Scholis Magni Principatus Transilvaniae, Joseph II, Caes. Aug. Magni. Principis Trans. Jussu Edita*<sup>12</sup>, but also known under a shorter name as *Norma Regia*. Although this law was passed almost exclusively for secondary and gymnasium education, there were also some general directives, the basis for which was the *Ratio educationis*. Before and even after that regulation, there was no unitary prescription concerning teachers' training. Some of them attended gymnasium classes, others were trained with other professors, doing at the same time all kinds of chores (like sweeping classrooms)<sup>13</sup>.

In the ten-year period between 1780 and 1790, the Commission of Studies, the highest cultural forum, passed new amendments and decrees that enriched previous regulations and legislation, both in Transylvania and in other regions of the Empire. Laws passed between 1774-1781, as mentioned above, were replaced in 1805 by *Politische Verfassung der deutschen Volksschulen*<sup>14</sup>, a new

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<sup>7</sup> Protopopescu (1966), 27-28.

<sup>8</sup> Bocşan (1976), 152.

<sup>9</sup> Protopopescu (1966), 23.

<sup>10</sup> Oţetea (1964), 736.

<sup>11</sup> Göllner (1979), 359.

<sup>12</sup> Protopopescu (1966), 201.

<sup>13</sup> Göllner (1979), 344-345.

<sup>14</sup> Protopopescu (1966), 24.

school code imposed by the general orientation of the Empire, an orientation that after the abolition of Josephinism embraced a new aspect. From the point of view of the content of education, one can notice a regression. Elementary schools suffered the most, due to the lack of financial aid from the state. The new conditions had negative repercussions for secondary education as well: thus the very well known Blaj gymnasium gave place till 1830 to the Preparandia of Arad (Teacher-Training College), founded in 1812<sup>15</sup>. The abundance of regulations and school laws, which can be noticed in the last quarter of the 18th century and up to the year 1805, is no longer characteristic of the next period up to 1848.

The projects of the Diet of Cluj concerning Romanian education in Transylvania are noteworthy. From these projects it can be seen that between 1790 and 1848 the most lucid part of the nobility realised the necessity of accepting material expense in order to resolve educational matters. Nevertheless the results were below the level of possibilities and necessities<sup>16</sup>. Two decrees defined by a restrictive attitude of the authorities deserve attention: in 1833 the government passed a decree which declared history a tolerated matter in Romanian schools, and in 1842 the Diet of Cluj decided that the language of teaching in Transylvanian schools must be Hungarian<sup>17</sup>. Despite these decisions, after 1830 the intellectual class in Transylvania was preoccupied with renewing the content of education, with its lay character, and at the same time, with the generalisation of rural schools. One can also notice progress in secondary and higher education in the establishing of new schools or reorganisation of those already existing in old school centres of Transylvania: Cluj, Sibiu, Braşov, Blaj, Aiud, Beiuş and Sighişoara. Lyceum episcopate Blasiense, a superior education establishment, founded in the fourth decade of the century, could compete with other Transylvanian high schools.<sup>18</sup>

In 1844, through the *Entwurf der Organisation der Gymnsien und Realschulen in Österreich*, education reform was implemented in the Habsburg Empire. The reform came into effect a year later in Hungary and in 1849 in Transylvania. This law stipulated the organisation of gymnasia and real schools with eight-year duration. The gymnasium was divided into two cycles: inferior and superior, and subjects like mathematics, geography, physics and history had a great share in the new curriculum<sup>19</sup>. National communities were allowed to establish gymnasia of four and eight classes.

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<sup>15</sup> Bozac / Teodor (1966), 165.

<sup>16</sup> Gyémánt (1971), 116-117.

<sup>17</sup> Oşetea (1964), 1057-1058.

<sup>18</sup> Oşetea (1964), 1057.

<sup>19</sup> Popeangă / Țărcovnicu (1966), 177.

### Categories of education in Transylvania

Another item of our discussion is the type of education. In Transylvania this presents itself under a great variety of forms due both to the legacy of the past and the new school reforms. Thus, there were church and state schools, the latter preserving a confessional character in their manner of organisation. By introducing the nationalities' languages in education, these schools became German, Hungarian, Szekler or Romanian schools. As we have already seen, there were frontier-guards' and miners' schools functioning as forms of state education<sup>20</sup>.

Romanian education first appeared and maintained itself in Transylvania around monasteries, making little appeal to change for centuries. The organisation of frontier-guard regiments entailed the founding of new school structures. In elementary schools frontier-guards' children were taught in the nationalities' languages, but these lacked resources. In secondary frontier-guards' schools training was in German. The introduction of German as an official language instead of Latin by Imperial Rescripts on 11th of May 1784 and 3rd of June 1786, must be understood as a step forward in obtaining the Habsburg Empire's unity, and had numerous repercussions in education<sup>21</sup>. On 23rd March 1775, Maria Theresa passed a decree for organising general education in Transylvania in German.<sup>22</sup> There is no doubt that German education saw a bigger development in Transylvania. Catholic state schools, also known as German schools, were shown considerable care. Catholic German education was considered an official education, and supervised Orthodox schools as well. The founding of a Juridical Sciences Faculty in Sibiu represents one of the most favourable premises for German education. On 2nd of November 1844 Juridical Studies Academy of Sibiu was founded. Over its existence of four decades it trained also Romanian students, the most well known being Simion Bărnuțiu<sup>23</sup>.

Hungarian secondary schools were very well represented by Reformed gymnasia and colleges in Aiud, Cluj, Târgu-Mureș and Odorhei and Unitarian ones in Cluj, Turda and Rimetea (Trascău).<sup>24</sup>

In the Banat, before it was incorporated in Hungary (1788), there had been 50 schools, of which 46 were German schools plus another 12 German frontier-guards' schools. In 1791 a law was passed that stipulated the promotion of the Hungarian language in Banat schools. Hungarian was to become the main subject of study a year later. Despite the Hungarian tendencies of Banat education, German schools developed in the first half of the 19th century, and numbers of both pupils and teachers grew as well. The development of education in the Banat allowed the opening in Timișoara of Law and Philosophy faculties in 1846 and later of one of Theology.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Protopopescu (1966), 30-31.

<sup>21</sup> Stepan (1973), 193.

<sup>22</sup> Popescu Teiușanu (1975), 178.

<sup>23</sup> Göllner (1979), 346.

<sup>24</sup> Protopopescu (1966), 207.

<sup>25</sup> Göllner (1979), 360.

The University of Cluj, founded in 1581 as a college, comprised in 1774 three faculties: Philosophy, Medicine and Theology. It changed its structure with the new school regulation. In 1777, theological studies were transferred to Alba Iulia while the rest of the teachers remained in Cluj. After 1780 Austrian higher education underwent a series of changes imposed by the Emperor Joseph II. By reducing the number of university centres to Vienna, Lemberg and Pest, the remaining higher education institutions became high schools. Thus the University of Cluj became the Royal Academic High School.<sup>26</sup>

### Curricula and textbooks

While the growing number of schools and their diversity leave us in no doubt about the development of education, its modernisation is reflected especially in curricula, new textbooks and pedagogical methods, all of which are based on certain pedagogical concepts.

If the *Ratio educationis* stipulated the uniformity of education, programmes and textbooks, this was achieved only partially, because the curricula for elementary schools in Transylvania were different from one school to another, with respect to dividing matters for each class and the number of hours for each discipline. The textbooks for elementary schools were especially spelling books, arithmetic books, Latin grammars and textbooks for studying foreign languages. Textbooks for foreign languages were either remade by Gheorghe Şincai or printed in Austria following Felbiger's method. The most significant are the spelling books, from the point of view of their conception and especially of their ideological content, which aimed at educating future citizens of the Empire.

At gymnasium level education the subjects taught were diverse but Latin language and culture, ancient history, history, literature, rhetoric and poetry had preponderance, thus perpetuating an obsolete and rigid training system in a century full of change in most of European countries. At the beginning of the 19th century the practical character of the sciences was growing, specifying the formative value of disciplines such as mathematics, geography and natural sciences—irrespective of the theological limits of the period. As for the textbooks used in gymnasia in Transylvania, these continued to be old editions together with a few manuscripts of the teachers. New works or new editions of classical works appeared all the time. Worthy of consideration is the fact that Banat had pre-eminence in the purchasing of the philosophy, pedagogy and ethics books<sup>27</sup>.

If progress could be felt in gymnasium education, it was not because of the programmes or textbooks, which were still an enclosed system, but especially due to the teachers, who studied philosophy and law abroad and who brought a new ideology into the gymnasia despite the adversities and obstacles which confronted them.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Protopopescu (1966), 248.

<sup>27</sup> Bocşan (1976), 169.

<sup>28</sup> Protopopescu (1966), 244.

### Pedagogical conceptions of Transylvanian intellectuals

At the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th, Transylvanian intellectuals, as true representatives of the Enlightenment, distinguished themselves through a variety of scientific studies. Their common concern was education and pedagogical principles that had to guide it.

Being trained in several domains of science in important university centres in Germany (Göttingen, Tübingen) or in the Empire (in Vienna, Pesta, Cluj, Blaj, Sibiu), scholars from Transylvania were familiarised with the most modern philosophical and pedagogical ideas of the moment and often had contact with important scientific personalities of the period. This caused them to have a high conception of the world, and their ideas were abreast with the development of science in Western Europe.

In this respect, the mathematician and professor Bólyai Farkas (1775-1856) following his studies in Göttingen, had the chance to meet “the colossus of Göttingen”, Karl Friedrich Gauss, with whom he exchanged interesting letters. He is certain to have read the works of Comenius, Locke, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Fichte and A. H. Niemeyer, and on these works he would enounce pedagogical principles; according to them each person should work in the domain he is very good at, both for his own sake and that of others<sup>29</sup>.

Another Transylvanian scholar trained in Göttingen, Michael Hißmann (1752-1784), dedicated himself to philosophy. In his work *Briefe über Gegenstände der Philosophie* he speaks about some materialist matters, thus drawing vehement comments and finally the interdiction of his book by Andreas Funk, bishop of the Evangelical Church. Wanting a renewal, he wished to improve the quality of Transylvanian education with his handbooks, offering himself to write a philosophy textbook<sup>30</sup>.

In his desire to improve education, Gheorghe Şincai (1754-1816), professor and principal of the normal school in Blaj and also of the national Greek Catholic schools in Transylvania (1782-1794) carried on an intense activity in order to increase the number of Romanian schools and for the training of teachers, guided by Felbiger’s method. Şincai himself graduated from Felbiger’s courses in Vienna in 1780<sup>31</sup>. He printed a catechism, two spelling books and an elementary arithmetic textbook. We have from him a manuscript named *Istoria naturii sau a firii (History of Nature)*, remade after Helmuth’s physics, which includes notions of botany, mineralogy, zoology and psychology in the spirit of rationalist ideas<sup>32</sup>.

A unitary conception is found with Stephan Ludwig Roth (1796-1849), who studied theology and philosophy at the University of Tübingen and came in contact with great thinkers of the period. He personally met Hegel, and made an

<sup>29</sup> Hójos (1967), 84-102.

<sup>30</sup> Göllner (1969), 31-41.

<sup>31</sup> Popescu Teiuşanu (1975), 153.

<sup>32</sup> Popeangă and Țărcovnicu (1966), 171-188.

intense study of the works of Pestalozzi, Voltaire, Locke, Hume, Fichte and Kant. He became the disciple and close collaborator of Pestalozzi in Yverdon (1818-1820), and succeeded in enriching Pestalozzi's conception, elaborating *Der Sprachunterricht* (1820), in which he develops a method of learning languages<sup>33</sup>.

Simion Bărnuțiu (1808-1864), philosophy professor in Blaj (1832-1845), based his *Pedagogy* (published after his death in 1870) on the theory of the German pedagogue August Herman Niemeyer, professor at the University of Halle. He also took over some Rousseau's ideas, while rejecting some of the latter's exaggerations<sup>34</sup>.

At the origin of George Barițiu's pedagogical conception (1812-1893) lies his admiration for enlightened philosophy (Rousseau, Locke, Pestalozzi, Niemeyer). His interest in statistics is significant: in this way he succeeded in emphasising the education situation in Transylvania<sup>35</sup>.

Significant as a reflection of Transylvanian intellectuals' studies in several domains of science is a book-list offered to the Central Library in Iasi in October 1868 by the Transylvanian professor Petru P. Câmpeanu (1802-1893), who, from 1836, was a professor at Academia Mihaileanu in Iași<sup>36</sup>. This list, comprising philosophical, pedagogical, literary, historical, geographical, natural science and medical works, indicates the range of Transylvanian intellectuals' interests in that time, which undoubtedly offered them a wide vision of the world. Pedagogical conceptions blend in their content subjects belonging as a matter of fact to all scholarly fields, validating the so-called "pan-pedagogism" of the Enlightenment, its anthropocentrism and humanism<sup>37</sup>.

### **Educational modernisation as temptation and threat**

There is no doubt that educational modernisation in the middle of an enlightened changing era could not but be considered attractive for all social classes that felt the need for a renewal in all domains. The modernisation process initiated by reformists, especially between 1774 and 1790, was tempting for the flourishing social classes, and for the intellectuals of the politically inferior nationalities, e.g. the Romanian intelligentsia, which felt the moment as an era of unchaining.<sup>38</sup> However educational modernisation in Transylvania also confronted a strong resistance due to many factors specific to the period in question.

Resistance and sometimes even hostility towards the Josephinian reforms in all domains and especially in education, is noticed at the nationalities level, and at a social, political and religious level, to which we can also add the psychological factor.

<sup>33</sup> Göllner (1969), 42-70.

<sup>34</sup> Cimpoieș (1967), 149-158.

<sup>35</sup> Netea (1967), 162-181.

<sup>36</sup> Grozav (1997), 195-219.

<sup>37</sup> Boçșan (1986), 242.

<sup>38</sup> Prodan (1967), 262.



The introduction of German as an official state language, compulsory in schools, determined the protest of some cultural personalities of the time, like Marcus Fronius, Martin Felmer and some other Hungarian professors in Aiud College.<sup>39</sup> Paradoxically Transylvanian Saxons were against using German as an official language: the explanation is given to us by the Emperor himself, who intended to consolidate the Empire, which could mean loosing the rights and privileges they had had for many centuries. On the other hand, despite the Edict of Tolerance of 1781, that allowed religious liberty to Lutherans, Calvinists and Orthodox, and took favourable measures concerning Jews, the pre-eminence of the Catholic religion was still maintained. There is no wonder that the Evangelical bishop Andreas Funk, mentioned above, was strongly against the Enlightenment in his notes, kept in the Sibiu Archives: "In my opinion, the Enlightenment is nothing but a fetish of some dandies with modern literary tendencies. But we can observe how different the interpretations of an enlightened era are even from their results, and achieving the objectives proposed by enlightened persons is not practical; on the contrary it is of a great prejudice. No one can foresee its consequences."<sup>40</sup>

Whereas progressive intellectuals were interested in developing Romanian schools, governors, aristocrats and Catholic clergymen were strongly against it, or at least did not support it. Orthodox schools especially confronted financial problems, but Romanian Uniate (Greek Catholic) education developed very well in Blaj. Romanian people wanting their children to go to school confronted several problems concerning the language of teaching, the type of school, the religion and of course financial problems, because not every family could afford to send their children to school for so many successive years. There is another aspect that should be mentioned here: the Romanian way of thinking, deeply rooted in its traditions and customs, and inclined to reject the modern, the new. "In such a conception the problem is no longer that the Romanians are stopped by others in their progress, but they themselves do not want to step forward and to leave behind the old traditional way of life, in other words, these are elements that separate them from contemporary civilisation. The philosophy *this is the way I used to do it*, so it has to stay that way... represents a genuine national specificity, that is responsible a great deal for the bad situation we are in."<sup>41</sup> This opinion concerning the Romanians' psychology was enunciated in the enlightened period by the Transylvanian intellectuals themselves and it was probably true.

Nevertheless the personality of the Emperor Joseph II remained very popular among Romanian peasants, who did not forget that due to him Romanian schools had been founded in Transylvania. He shared this popularity with Maria Theresa, who had given them the Blaj School. Joseph II's popularity was

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<sup>39</sup> Daicoviciu, Pascu et. al. (1960), 200.

<sup>40</sup> Göllner (1969), 38.

<sup>41</sup> Mitu (1997), 145.

strengthened by his visits to Transylvania and the Banat.<sup>42</sup> For the Romanian people reformism meant the way to political advancement; therefore after Emperor's death, they would remain faithful to their political fight and to Josephinism<sup>43</sup>.

Transylvanian intellectuals with progressive conceptions, professors of the greatest Transylvanian gymnasia, elaborated and tried to publish historical, linguistic, philosophical and theological studies characterised by a new enlightened spirit. Their didactic activity and works determined important changes in the national and social consciousness of Transylvanian students.<sup>44</sup> In the two decades preceding the 1848 Revolution, maternal languages prevailed in Transylvanian schools, whether Romanian, German or Hungarian. Philosophical disputes, modern and liberal discussions, and history lessons about the nation aroused national consciousness, and all these transformations prepared the revolutionary events of 1848. So it was natural for the authorities to react with restrictive decrees, thus provoking Transylvanian intellectuals' protests.

Educational modernisation in Transylvania between 1774 and 1848, whether demanded or rejected, could not be stopped in spite of a less than prudent application of the reforms and their contradictory character often for short period of time. On the background of new and old confrontations, the innovating trends of education stand out even better. Transylvanian scholars feeling that they could not gain success in Transylvania turned to Bukovina or Wallachia and Moldavia, thus promoting the modernisation of education in those regions and giving education a unitary meaning in all Romanian provinces.

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<sup>42</sup> Ruffini (1993), 160.

<sup>43</sup> Oțetea (1964), 742.

<sup>44</sup> Protopopescu (1966), 1057.

# **Gender and Modernisation in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Romania. Case Study: Ploiești Society between 1825 and 1833**

*by Silvana Rachieru*

The 19<sup>th</sup> century in the history of the Romanian Principalities corresponds to a period of reforms and actions directed towards the organisation of a society adapted to the notion of modernity. The phenomenon is similar to that in other Balkan countries and also to the situation in the more developed European states such as France and England. People who were more receptive to the new and people who were not able to accept new ideas and customs were likewise the two sides of the Romanian attempt towards modernisation. It is well known and accepted that modernity represented an important challenge for the inhabitants of the Romanian Principalities. Women, as in the rest of the Europe and even in the Ottoman Empire, were more open regarding the adaptation of some Western realities to Romanian society<sup>1</sup>. Romanian women, from both Moldavia and Wallachia, were among the first to accept the new fashion and ideology imported from Western Europe and to impose them on their neighbours, husbands and relatives.

The present article is a case study. The analysis is focused on the community of Ploiești. The aim of the paper is to determine similarities and also differences between the societies of Ploiești and Bucharest. The source for this analysis is a collection of documents concentrated on musical life and musical events in Ploiești between 1825 and 1833. The information is not only focused on the bands and singers who were important in the Ploiești of that time but also identifies the organisers of different social events and draws interesting portraits of their families and friends. The chosen period is characterised by an importation of information from Europe and a tendency to copy Western values and customs. Consequently, the paper focuses on the role of the female gender in the process of modernisation and their relationship with the male sector of society in the very specific case of the town of Ploiești.

The reason for selecting Ploiești as the target of my study is not difficult to explain. Ploiești is the town closest to Bucharest, only 60 km away, and consequently it was always in the shadow of the capital. This reality had and has two sides. On the negative side, the town is always considered (of course, by

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<sup>1</sup> Kleiberg (1988), 3-15.

those who diminish its importance) to have no individual personality, and to be only a faded copy of Bucharest; on the positive side, it is a town which very quickly hears any news from the capital. In this perspective, to analyse the social life of Ploiești in the period 1825-1833 is a challenge. Also, another reason for the analysis of Ploiești society is to see to what extent observations about changes in Romanian society are characteristic not only for people from the capital but also for provincial society such as that of Ploiești.

Another question which may arise in connection with my paper is the period chosen. In Romanian history the period between 1825 and 1833 corresponds to a period of political transformation. The Romanian Principalities passed through a period of transition in which the influence of Russia was growing in this area while the importance and the role of the Ottoman Empire was diminishing. Consequently the entire society experienced the transition.<sup>2</sup> Another important point about Russian influence in the Romanian Principalities concerns the role of Russian officers as foreign agents of modernity. Their case is well known in Romanian historiography. They had a huge success in society, both in the capitals and in the provinces. They were usually young men dressed in beautiful uniforms, skilled in the art of dancing, and in some cases speaking French, and consequently they became the favourites of the ceremonies.<sup>3</sup> Young boyars' daughters were very much influenced by their "modernity" and tried to copy their attitudes. Their role in the modernisation of society is not directly connected with my presentation, but it is important not to forget it when an analysis of the period 1825-1833 is made.

The source for this presentation is a chronicle of Ploiești, written in the 1980's by a Ploiești scholar, Dr. Nicolae Debie, who assembled documentary information about the musical activity of Ploiești in the period 1825 to 1970. He collected the material found in the Ploiești archives and transformed it into a living portrait of the town, without altering the information.

As a general impression, it would seem that one of the strongest ways of interference of Western culture in Ploiești was music. The phenomenon is not unique, the same happened in Bucharest and Iași<sup>4</sup>. That the first step towards modernisation should come from music need not be considered a demonstration of the frivolousness and lack of maturity of Romanian society. A new dance determined a new costume, a new type of social events and later a new house, new furniture, a new style of life.

So music was the first link of a long chain of transformations.

In 1837 Count Dimitrov clearly pointed out this transformation which was provided by music: "The official robes of the boyars stand in vain against this invasion of modern fashions and habits. The present generation needs a large

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<sup>2</sup> Cazimir (1996), 12.

<sup>3</sup> Eliade (1982), 205-207.

<sup>4</sup> 'I have started to believe, after consulting an important number of sources, that the first signs of the changes were in our area in the field of ... dance.' Cazimir (1996), 21.

hall, where the waltz and gallop can be easily danced and turned around; they need a costume which does not suffer in the narrow corridor of the French quadrilles.<sup>5</sup>

The desire to spend time according to the fashions of the European capitals was too great to be resisted. One of the solutions was to educate the young daughters of boyars in a European style, teaching them to play piano or to speak French. For example to buy a piano from Vienna was a real adventure. One learns from the chronicle that a boyar, the *vel-vistiernic* (treasurer) Stefanache Bellu, who wanted to buy a piano, for his daughter of course, sent a carriage with servants and a letter with money to a merchant in Sibiu. The merchant, Zenovie Hagi Pop, then wrote a letter to a German in Vienna who was famous for his pianos. The piano was very expensive and its journey to the boyar in Ploiești very long. It took six weeks and a carriage with large soft mattresses to bring the instrument to Ploiești. But the problem does not end here. A German teacher was also needed and she was brought from Sibiu. She spent three years in Ploiești, until the spoiled young Ploiești girl learnt how to play the piano.<sup>6</sup> Thus we can see that to introduce Western fashion was very expensive, but it is also mentioned that the playing of the young girl became very touching for the guests of the house—so pleasure won in the end.

The following paragraphs focus, as I have already mentioned in the introduction, on the role of women in the adoption of European fashion and customs. Young daughters of boyars, with the strong support of their mothers, represented agents of modernity in the case of Ploiești as elsewhere. One learns that the main reason for organising events and adopting Western fashion and music was to demonstrate to the suitors that they were open-minded young girls, happy to live *à la française*: “Parties with songs and dances are organised also in other houses in Ploiești. For example, in the house of Gheorghe Panait from the Sfinții Voievozi area, who has a very difficult household full of girls: daughters, nieces, sisters-in-law who have to be married.”<sup>7</sup> A further example to support the idea that women were more open to the new fashion than men is provided by another public event in Ploiești. At a party organised by a great Ploiești boyar, Nae Balaceanu-Paharnicul, one of the guests, a young man named Gheorghîță showed his ability to dance European dances. Why? The same reason as for the young girls mentioned before, to succeed in getting married to his beloved. Gheorghîță had studied in France and came dressed in “German clothes”: consequently he became the agent of spreading the newest fashions from Paris. The chronicle informs us that “Gheorghîță, the son of Enache Fălcoianu Serdarul, showed the young ladies (*cucoanelor și cuconițelor mai tinere...*) how to dance the new dances: the *cracovianca* (dance from Cracow), the *ecoseză* (dance from Scotland), and the *contradantz*, which is danced by two or by four.

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<sup>5</sup> Cazimir (1996), 21.

<sup>6</sup> Debie (1825), 5.

<sup>7</sup> Debie (1825), 5.

And the ladies danced delightedly all night long.”<sup>8</sup> Thus we can observe that the situation in Ploiești was similar to that in Bucharest, where at ceremonies organised by the Prince or by a great boyar women were very active when music was played and dressed in elegant European dresses.

To support my argument I shall present in the following paragraphs the portrait of a rich young lady from Ploiești, a lady who influenced Ploiești society in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Her clothes, her attitudes and her life in general were of great interest to the rest of Ploiești high-society. I am talking about the young daughter of Beizadea Costache Caragea, and Moruzoaia, Cucoana Ralu. The young lady was named Elenca and she is the heroine of my analysis.

What one learns about her by reading the chronicle is that: “Right after sunset, the young lady (*cuconița cea tânără*) Elenca, receives guests, young ladies and gentlemen who play on Italian guitars and pianos. After dinner follows the dance... where gypsies play the music of German dances...”<sup>9</sup> Thus we can draw a picture of the preferences of the young generation in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and how they chose to spend their evenings.

Returning to Elenca, she was present at all the social events of Ploiești, together, of course, with her mother, who had to keep a strong eye on all the fortune hunters who tried to convince her of their qualities. Elenca was the heroine of a great scandal in Ploiești connected with her engagement. Her father, Beizadea Caragea, selected a husband for the young girl. Surprisingly enough for the Balkan mentality, where it is the father who decides the future of members of the family, Elenca protested against her father’s decision, presenting strong reasons for refusing a marriage to Iancu Bălăceanu. Elenca explained that Iancu was indeed an intelligent young man with a Paris education, but on the other hand he was very proud and not at all handsome. But the strongest argument presented by the young girl was that Iancu did not know how to dance at all or how to act in society.<sup>10</sup> This example suggests two ideas about the status of the women in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Of course it is too early to speak about the emancipation of women in Romanian society, but we cannot deny that it represents a sign for the future. It was possible at least to comment on her father’s decision, even if later the young woman would have to act according to the interests of her family. Consequently our heroine Elenca tried everything possible to determine her father to choose her secret lover as husband and not Iancu Bălăceanu. Forms of protest? She went in the morning to her father and explained as follows: “She knew about his plans regarding her and Iancu, she understood his politics and what advantages he hoped to receive... and consequently she preferred to kill herself rather than be married against her will.”<sup>11</sup> Next she locked herself in her room and spent all day there, not answering the requests of her mother, her cousins or her friends. As one might

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<sup>8</sup> Debie (1826), 6.

<sup>9</sup> Debie (1825), 2.

<sup>10</sup> Debie (1825), 15.

<sup>11</sup> Debie (1825), 16.

expect for the period which is analysed in the present paper, her father's will prevailed... but not for long. Elenca married Iancu and they spent six years together. Their wedding followed the preferences of the young bride, as they have already been described: German dances, piano music, and servants dressed in European clothes.<sup>12</sup> In the presentation of every social event in which the young family took part in subsequent years, one thing becomes constant. Elenca danced and was the soul of every party, while Iancu preferred to stay apart and talk politics, or even not to make an appearance. Consequently after six years she decided to divorce him and to marry her old friend, Aga Scarlat.

In order to get a divorce the agreement of the Metropolitan and a strong reason were necessary. But in the case of our heroine Elenca, anything seemed to be possible. In May 1832 the news of the secret marriage of Elenca to Aga Scarlat shook Ploiești society. They were married secretly by a priest loyal to both of them, even through the Metropolitan had not yet replied to Elenca's petition for divorce. But two months later the Metropolitan agreed to the divorce, as the record shows: "The Metropolitan thought for a long time about the divorce petition received from Coana Elenca, a petition which blamed Iancu. He also listened to the ladies, who all mentioned the shameful attitude of Iancu, and finally agreed to the divorce."<sup>13</sup> It was well known that Iancu was having a steady affair, and the Metropolitan explained his decision by his wish to avoid the suffering of a young and sinless woman. He even accepted the idea of a new ceremony to be organised in Ploiești. This episode is important because it demonstrates interesting changes in the mentality of provincial town society. To accept that a man had done something wrong and even to agree to consider him officially an unfaithful husband would be quite impressive even for a later period. And to protect a young lady and to listen to her wishes is also something new for the first half of the century.

The notion of divorce in a conservative society as that of Romanian Orthodoxy is not easily accepted. Orthodoxy accepted divorce, but of course it was not recommended. Also public opinion disagreed with the idea of divorce, especially at the level of high society. As today, a divorced woman could have problems getting married again, and in a way she was rejected by society. Surprisingly enough, at that time of transition which is the period 1825-1833, the situation was undergoing an interesting transformation. It seems that divorce was accepted, as in the case of our heroine Elenca, if the husband was against the new fashions and too conservative. For example, one Western witness of Romanian modernisation, Wilkinson, tells us that: "Women divorce very easily if the husbands refuse to fulfil their wishes, if they do not buy them a house on Mogoșoia Bridge or if they do not keep the expensive train which the women desire."<sup>14</sup> Of course, this passage is quite ironical and stresses the lack of maturity of the women. But divorce was a reality. Vasile Alecsandri once explained that it was because of the age difference between the man and woman

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<sup>12</sup> Debie (1826), 5.

<sup>13</sup> Debie (1832), 13.

<sup>14</sup> Alexianu (1971), 237.

in a couple—usually a girl married around 18 and a man around 40—, and also because a new series of young men were coming back from studies in Europe and were more attractive and enjoyable as husbands than the old conservative boyars.<sup>15</sup> In the legal level of society divorce was more frequent, and it was requested, especially by women, for different reasons than in the case of high society: aggressive behaviour of the husband, the husband's absence from home for a long period of time, adultery etc.<sup>16</sup>

Another piece of information which is strongly connected with the events presented in the previous paragraphs concerns the guests at the famous wedding. Documents of the time describe the guests as follows: "It seems that the present young boyars are different from those at the time of Vodă Ion Caragea. They wear local police uniforms or redingote. At the wedding the groom and his brothers wore blue and lilac tailcoats and grey trousers. They shaved their serious bears and had long hair, like young men from France and Germany. And even the older boyars forgot their Turkish clothes."<sup>17</sup> After just seven years it is another world. Regarding the relationship between the male and female genders, another observation is important: "During these two days there were not only discussions among men. They talked together with the women, and not even in Greek about business from Țarigrad, but in Romanian about the problems of the country..."<sup>18</sup> Why is this detail important? Because the situation was totally different at the beginning of the century, when women stayed in a separate room from the men, following the Oriental model. Thus one can notice here a difference of mentality and an acceptance of women as partners of conversation. It was, of course only a beginning, but at least it created the feeling that something was moving towards a modern society.

In conclusion, Ploiești society in the period 1825-1833 was making efforts to adopt Western values and customs. Music had an important role in this attempt towards modernisation and created a link between Europe and Ploiești. Also, women were open to the transformation and focused their efforts to become respected members of the society. The way to complete emancipation was still long, but their capacity to accept reforms in their way of life must not be diminished. The short distance between Ploiești and Bucharest determined access to information and the desire to introduce the model of the capital. In addition, the short distance created the possibility of collaboration between Ploiești high society and that of Bucharest.

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<sup>15</sup> Cazimir (1996), 58.

<sup>16</sup> Barbu (1992), 1148-1151.

<sup>17</sup> Debie (1832), 15.

<sup>18</sup> Debie (1832), 16.



# King Carol I and the Cultural Modernisation of Romania

by Alin Ciupală

The modernisation of Romanian society during the second half of the 19th century implied the transposition into Romanian moulds of western cultural values, values that had already been assimilated by the Romanian elite while studying abroad, in French, German or Italian universities. Of course, this phenomenon was not a linear one nor did it lack certain excesses—but the very moment they occurred, it was again the elite that criticised them.

After the year 1866 a new element appeared, in the person of Prince Carol (later King Carol I). Apart from his personal traits of character, which allowed him to understand the true dimension of Romanian realities, Carol I had the advantage of having been formed within a western cultural environment. And this constituted the roots of his deep concern for the cultural development of the Romanians (one of the principles explicitly stated from the very early years of his reign). Even when the necessities of the moment were different (the consolidation of the Romanian dynasty, gaining Romania's independence), Carol I permanently followed the above mentioned principle: "Only through knowledge and enlightenment can we strengthen the present and set up solid bases for a modern future. The power of a state is measured mainly through the degree of its intellectual culture".<sup>1</sup>

The modernisation of Romanian society implied knowledge, theoretical and practical notions absolutely necessary to material progress, achieved and completed in schools—which were viewed as "foundations of the state"<sup>2</sup> and "places of enlightenment"; expressed in a different manner, modernisation meant quitting the isolation and "the darkness we have lived in"<sup>3</sup>, and as a consequence, opening towards the values of European culture. From this point of view, we observe that the King had the wisdom to surround himself with capable people, who put the above-mentioned ideas into practice under his direct guidance. All the more, under the given circumstances, should we acknowledge the contributions of such personalities as Titu Maiorescu, Take Ionescu and Spiru Haret, who set Romanian education on modern bases. And we used the expression "all the more" as they were, after all, just the ministers of a king, sanctioning their laws.

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<sup>1</sup> Carol I (1909), 199.

<sup>2</sup> Carol I (1939), 25.

<sup>3</sup> Carol I (1939), 33.

But there is one more cultural aspect of the modernisation process, initiated by the sovereign, and equally original—the moral-Christian aspect.

“For the benefit of the social order, it is necessary that the strength of a nation should increase through an impulse of moral development. Let us all work hard to reach this strength, to generate this impulse”<sup>4</sup>. The motto of the royal family “*Nihil sine Deo*” was thus extended over the whole of Romanian society. Following this line of thought, and at the King’s insistent requests, a Faculty of Theology<sup>5</sup> was added to the University of Bucharest in 1881: “As Faith and Education are society’s reliable pillars, the most reliable ones, the State has the constant duty of taking care of them; without religion there would be no sacred feelings, without education there would be no national ideals.”<sup>6</sup>

The need for morality was all the more necessary, as in 1866 when Carol arrived in the country, Romanian society was going through a moment of a both institutional and civic crisis. Therefore, the first thing to change had to be the mentality according to which anyone and anything had a price.

That is why modernisation had to bring to the forefront the modelling of character, as “character, more than talents decides the fate of a nation, and only moral strength can protect nations from being defeated or destroyed”<sup>7</sup>—and we believe that to a large extent this attempt was successful. Seen from this particular angle we consider the royal example an eloquent one. On the other hand, Carol I tried and managed to maintain a balance not only in political life but also in cultural life. During the formal session of the Romanian Academy of March 23 1884, the King launched the project of elaborating “*Etymologicum Magnum Romaniae*” which was to be financed out of his personal funds.<sup>8</sup> This was regarded as a good way of preserving Romanian traditions and spirituality, as well as a critique of excessively protrusive alien elements in the Romanian language.<sup>9</sup>

All the examples we have presented here—without pretending to have exhausted them—tried to shape the King’s conception of modernisation where cultural life was concerned: “the power of a state is not only given by the number of its soldiers and its economic development. One important factor, perhaps the most important, is the cultural level.”<sup>10</sup>

But the King did not content himself only with defining a concept. The absolute necessity for culture, seen as education both through schools and through moral principles acknowledged by society, would also be put into practice.<sup>11</sup> This is the perspective we should consider<sup>12</sup> when discussing the

<sup>4</sup> Carol I (1909), 23.

<sup>5</sup> Bogdan (1914), 8.

<sup>6</sup> Carol I (1939), 23.

<sup>7</sup> Bogdan (1909), 9.

<sup>8</sup> Carol I (1909), vol. II, 501.

<sup>9</sup> Carol I (1909), vol. III, 512.

<sup>10</sup> *Domnia regelui Carol I* (1941), 102.

<sup>11</sup> *Domnia regelui Carol I* (1941), 104.

King's direct and personal involvement, as it was materialised in school visits both in the Capital and in the countryside, during which he attended examinations or end-of-year celebrations, offering rewards, praising the good students or granting funds.

The impact his actions had at the time—and we can not fail to perceive their significance even nowadays to a certain extent—demonstrates how well perceived royal involvement in the educational field was. But perhaps it was the creation of the University Foundation that showed Carol's role as a moderniser at its best: "Wishing to leave after me a living witness of the feelings I have for this country—but also to prove the permanent interest I have in education, I have created for the younger generation this place of study, with the important purpose of contributing to the development and the wider spread of science in Romania."<sup>13</sup>

The King's wish responded to urgent necessities. The only university-type library, the Central Library, had ceased to exist and the books had been sent to the Romanian Academy. University Regulations stated that students had to print their graduation theses, a rather important financial effort, as some of them did not have the means to meet the requirements. Also there was no organised system of scholarships.

All these obstacles disappeared with the creation of the Foundation, which provided by Article 1 of its Regulations for the establishment of a Library where students "could satisfy their love for study"<sup>14</sup>, offered funds for the printing of final theses and also grants for students "who, lacking the means, might have had to interrupt their studies, thus prejudicing the general culture of the country."<sup>15</sup>

The building of the Foundation, nowadays the University Central Library, was erected following the plans of architect Paul Gottereau, but according to the King's direct indications<sup>16</sup>, on a surface measuring 1,200 m<sup>2</sup>. Between 1911 and 1914 the building was enlarged, as the old one could no longer satisfy the increasing demands. The administration of the Foundation was the responsibility of a Director (the first being G. Dem Teodorescu) appointed by a Royal Act, at the proposal of the Ministry of Cults and Public Education; the Director assisted by a three-member committee: the Rector of Bucharest University (Titu Maiorescu), the rector of Iași University (N. Culianu) and a delegate of the Royal House (Ion Kalinderu).

The inauguration took place on March 14, 1895 in the presence of the King, Prince Ferdinand and Princess Maria (as heirs to the throne), high dignitaries of the Romanian Orthodox Church and other members of the government.

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<sup>12</sup> Radulescu-Pogoreanu (1939), 282-285.

<sup>13</sup> Carol I (1909), vol. III, 228.

<sup>14</sup> Tzigara Samurçaş (1933), 1.

<sup>15</sup> Tzigara Samurçaş (1933), 1.

<sup>16</sup> Tzigara Samurçaş (1933), 2-3.

Although students also participated, some of them boycotted the festivities because of political circumstances of the moment. In 1895, when the Carol I University Foundation opened, a Conservative government led by Lascar Catargiu held power. The boycott by students—among whom the Liberals had connections—was not totally foreign to the Liberal attempt to overthrow the government. On October 3, 1895, Lascar Catargiu resigned and the next day D. A. Sturdza was called to form a new cabinet. There were no further consequences and soon things went back to normal; as Rădulescu Motru, the Librarian of the Foundation, wrote in his *Confessions*<sup>17</sup>, it was equally due to the King's good political sense.

More than that, we believe that it was the creation of the Library that set the balance in the favour of the Foundation. The books which were so much needed by students, had already been bought when the Foundation was established. In March 1892, G. Dem Teodorescu had obtained 850 lei to buy history books from M. Stunberg, the antiquarian<sup>18</sup> and in May 1892, Ionescu Gion was sent to Paris for the same purpose. He signed a contract with the booksellers Larchon & Arnouf, buying 1,005 volumes for 6,141 lei. Here are the criteria followed by Ionescu-Gion when selecting the books: "We tried to put first the complete collection of dictionaries of immediate use, copies of classical authors: Latin, Greek, French, in the most recent editions, and therefore the most up-to-date with the latest philological requirements, historical works to help the students in preparing for their exams and finally, a few of the famous French writers, whose works might give ideas to our students for their theses or further directions of research in history, philosophy or literature."<sup>19</sup>

The necessary funds for the Library and other activities of the Foundation came from the King's private resources (200,000 lei in rent bonds) and various other donations: 1,500 lei per annum. from the Romanian Bank<sup>20</sup>, 1,000 lei per annum from the Dacia Romană Insurance Company<sup>21</sup>, 20,000 lei from Deutsche Bank in Berlin<sup>22</sup> and 100 lei per annum from Louis Spalaroca in Bordeaux.<sup>23</sup> Worth mentioning among the private contributors is Eulogie Georgief, a rich Bulgarian merchant who had settled in Romania in 1847 and who offered 200,000 lei in rent-bonds, a donation significant both in monetary terms but also because of its motivation: he had seen his country freed by the Romanian army led by its "mighty captain"<sup>24</sup>. To remind us of this gesture<sup>25</sup>, Carol I had a marble plate set up in the study-room.

<sup>17</sup> AN.MCIP, Ds 727/1891, 56, 71, 105.

<sup>18</sup> AN.MCIP, Ds. 737/1891, 78.

<sup>19</sup> AN.MCIP, Ds. 737/1891, 78.

<sup>20</sup> AN.MCIP, Ds. 218/1891, 37, 52.

<sup>21</sup> AN.MCIP, 3.

<sup>22</sup> AN.MCIP, Ds. 2556/1907, 2.

<sup>23</sup> AN.MCIP, Ds. 293/1896, 5.

<sup>24</sup> AN.MCIP, 218/1891, 9.

<sup>25</sup> AN.MCIP, 5.

In October 1898, new Regulations were adopted.<sup>26</sup> The Foundation was to be administered by a Librarian, appointed by a Royal Act, but taking into consideration the proposals of the Education Minister (at the time Spiru Haret). A newly introduced element was the simplification of the management system and the establishment of a more direct link between the Foundation and the University. Starting from 1899, the appointed Librarian for the next four decades was to be Al. Tzigara-Samurçaș.

The concrete results of the Foundation's activity are easy to observe in the reports presented to the King, reports that were later published. They might not be relevant if considered in absolute figures but they say a lot if we interpret them comparatively, giving us a good idea of what the institution meant for its time. Thus in 1911 the Library comprised 24,513 volumes (compared to only 1,500 in 1896) and 109 foreign and 322 Romanian periodicals, having in fact the best collection of the kind in the country (at the very beginning there had been only a few tens of Romanian titles); there were seven student grants for the Universities in Bucharest and Iași (compared with only two to start with) while the total income was 61,286 lei (compared to 42,000 lei in 1896) and the value of the total assets was estimated at 1,032,400 lei (compared to approximately 400,000 lei at the beginning).<sup>27</sup> But it is more important to see beyond the abstract figures and to understand the significance of the Foundation for cultural modernisation and society.

First, following the establishment of the Library, students and others were given a place to study and a means of instruction and education.

Secondly, the Foundation ensured through various types of financial aid the material base for the affirmation of the young "intelligentsia". This was the real meaning of the grant of various prizes for papers on Romanian history, papers that had been elaborated during the seminars of Dimitrie Onciul.<sup>28</sup>

In the third place, the Foundation inaugurated in 1900 a series of conferences aiming to point out the importance of the institution for university studies and for the major problems of the younger generation.

And last but not least, King Carol I managed to initiate a tradition which would be honoured by his successors (e.g. the King Ferdinand Foundation appeared in Iași in 1926; then in 1931, after his trip around the world, the future Carol II, then still the prince-heir, created the Prince Carol Foundation; in Cluj there appeared the Institute for Experimental Research, and in Bucharest the Carol II Foundation for Literature and Art; all these were grouped in 1932 in the Union of Royal Foundations).<sup>29</sup>

We can see now the direct involvement of Carol I in the modernisation of Romanian society. It was not only the University Foundation that put it into

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<sup>26</sup> Tzigara Samurçaș, (1933), 29.

<sup>27</sup> Fundațiunea Universitară Carol I (1911), 1-10.

<sup>28</sup> Tzigara Samurçaș, (1933), 11.

<sup>29</sup> Gusti (1939), 226.

practice but also the Geographical Society of Romania, the Romanian Athenaeum and the Romanian Academy (which frequently received material support), the extension of Bucharest University with the foundation of new Faculties (for Medical Studies and Theology), and the patronage of numerous schools. And, as a final gesture, in his will, Carol I left two million lei to various cultural institutions, out of which 600,000 lei were to go to the University Foundation.<sup>30</sup>

“I am proud that during my reign the great epoch of national revival reached its summit and I am fully grateful to the Almighty for blessing my attempts to obtain for our dear Romania an honourable place among the European states.”<sup>31</sup>

We did not aim to offer only a positive image of King Carol I and his reign—which still awaits thorough study and a future critical approach to its history. It is therefore useful to look further at a few of the aspects presented above.

As a first remark, a discussion about King’s personality can not be avoided. As a German prince of the House of Hohenzollern, profoundly Catholic, the King allowed his military education to show in many ways: from making the uniform of an army general his everyday wear to his resolute way of walking, a reminiscence of the military parades, the *marsch* he had got used to from early youth in the regiments he had served with in Berlin and Potsdam.

His solid cultural background and German meticulousness allowed him to study attentively all that interested him and his sense of reality—blamed by some of his contemporaries on the French blood he inherited from his mother, a descendant of the Beauharnais family<sup>32</sup>—allowed him to become a good analyst of national and international politics.

Of an average height, he had an upright stature; the chin pointing upwards, in a very proud attitude creating the illusion that he was a lot taller than in reality.<sup>33</sup>

Having a West-European cultural background helped him to gather a wider perspective on Romanian realities and to understand that in a country exposed for so many years to internal fights, foreign intrigues and endless changes, the most important thing was what one did not do, not what one did. This attitude was among the main factors in his success.<sup>34</sup>

As a second observation, the whole royal activity was aimed at a few objectives that today appear to be more or less clear. Its public discourse sought almost obstinately to achieve a permanent and indissoluble link between the German dynasty and the Romanian people. The King considered his reign as only a very first link in the chain, with the purpose of strengthening the Monarchy as an Institution of the Romanian State, and also as an example offered to his successors on the throne. It is interesting to notice that official

<sup>30</sup> See the will of Carol I in N. Iorga (1914), 98-99.

<sup>31</sup> Carol I (1909), vol. III, 350.

<sup>32</sup> E. Brătianu, I. I.C. Brătianu, (1999), 616.

<sup>33</sup> Duca (1933), 9.

<sup>34</sup> E. Brătianu, I. I.C. Brătianu (1999), 67.

propaganda would incorporate the past in all its glorious dimension, history offering support for ideological debates. To offer only an example, when Romania took part in the Universal Exhibitions in Paris in 1867, 1889 and 1900 and in Vienna in 1873, it was the King's figure that ended the long row of the national Pantheon. And the schoolbooks of the epoch follow the same line<sup>35</sup>, though through a more simplified language.

The establishment of the Constitutional monarchy in 1866 marked the beginning of a tradition which Carol wanted to be both one of the dynasty and of the people. We may then wonder whether the failure of this attempt was due to the dynastic incapacity to lower itself from the Olympian peaks of power to a more ordinary level of society, or, *au contraire*, whether the German dynasty ended up by becoming too "Romanianized"?

As a third idea, we can discuss the way the Romanians received the previous two matters we have brought into discussion. We believe that there were two types of reception: one at a general level and the second referring to what we usually call the *elite*. Ordinary people did not—and probably could not under normal circumstances—go further than the appearances of the official discourse. As for the second category, their opinions showed a more refined level of perception. His contemporaries agreed in acknowledging the King's kindness and charming conversation, and the noble air emanating from his person. Nevertheless familiarity was never present and the strict *etiquette* Carol had imposed at the Court was many times considered as a proof of rigidity (it is well known that the King used to offer watches to ministers who did not respect the set time of their audiences). The King's thriftiness was not only limited to his own financial means but also to those of the state, a fact little acknowledged by the people around him. The only luxury he ever allowed himself was Peleş Castle, built out of his own money. Perhaps it was mostly political passions that determined the politicians of the time to see the King's person, the members of the royal family and the institution of monarchy, filtered through politics. Carol I was a respected monarch but surely not a loved one...

The moral-Christian side of Carol's cultural work brings Romanian modernisation a step closer to synchronisation with its western model. Although discussing this synchronisation is not the aim of this paper, we should say that in most cases it was incomplete and hard to achieve.

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<sup>35</sup> M.L. Murgescu (1999).

# **Agrarian Populism in Inter-war Romania. The Economic Policy and Politics of the Peasant Party and National Peasant Party**

*by Dietmar Müller*

The time between the two World Wars is probably one of the most intensely mysticised periods both in Romanian historiography and also in present politics. Different political parties and currents try to build up their legitimacy on a supposed juridical, ideological or personal legacy from venerable inter-war times. In this process of mystification they, are assisted by those historians who describe Romanian history after the achievement of a Romanian nation-state in 1859/81—and especially the inter-war period—as a post-Ottoman and pre-Socialist success story. According to this narration, a linear process of transformation changed Romania from a constitutional monarchy into a parliamentary democracy and from a predominantly agrarian into an agrarian-industrial country. Obviously this version has not gone unchallenged. In Western European and US scholarly literature the economic policy of the National Liberal Party (Partidul Național Liberal) is judged as a misguided nationalistic protectionism ending in stagnation. Similar objections have been raised regarding the democratic quality of inter-war politics and parliamentary life; recently from non-Marxist Romanian historians too.<sup>1</sup>

One of the most persistent myths of Romania's inter-war period is related to the character of the economic policy of the Peasant Party (Partidul Țărănesc) and the National Peasant Party (Partidul Național-Țărănesc)<sup>2</sup> and, consequently, to the reasons for the total failure of their economic politics. According to the dominant perspective on these events, the National Peasant Party simply had bad luck, since their term of office coincided with the Great Depression and their sensible and feasible economic plans thus came to nothing. Such an overtly voluntaristic assessment is due to the rejection of the National Liberals' "prin noi înșine" economic policy, especially the element of closed doors towards foreign investment, and the very human expectation that things are going to change into better with an other party in charge. Very telling for the great expectations raised by the National Peasant Party and the even greater disappointment which ensued

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<sup>1</sup> For the most comprehensive critique of Romanian historical myths see Boia (1997), and Boia, ed. (1995 a), (1995 b), and (1997). See also Barbu (1999) and Constantiniu (2009). For a contemporary criticism see Dogan (1946).

<sup>2</sup> The standard work on peasantry is still Ornea (1969). For a dominantly descriptive history of the National Peasant Party see Scurtu (1994).



is Henry L. Roberts" sigh: "Perhaps the most disheartening episode in Rumanian history between the wars was the failure of the National Peasant party (...)"<sup>3</sup> The underlying notion seems to be that the Liberals' economic policy was simply ill designed. But one should not underrate the common prerequisites each Romanian party in the inter-war period, irrespective of its political or economical outlook, had had to meet once it was in charge: the new provinces had to be integrated politically and economically into Greater Romania, requiring a policy of state- and nation-building, and the economy needed to be modernised, which required a carefully balanced policy of developing industry without neglecting agriculture and vice versa.

Below I shall raise basically two objections towards the notion of the National Peasant Party as the would-be agent of a successful modernisation of the Romanian economy. The first objection points to the persistence of agrarian populist ideas in the body of thought of the National Peasant Party throughout the inter-war period. Contrary to the widespread notion "that the policy of the Peasant Party underwent an important and perhaps fundamental evolution from its radical origins of 1921"<sup>4</sup>, reaching a climax with the merging of the Peasant Party, which had its strongholds in Moldavia and Wallachia, and the Transylvania-based Romanian National Party (Partidul Național Român) into the National Peasant Party in 1926, I shall demonstrate this persistence in the writings of Virgil Madgearu, the most important ideologist of the National Peasant Party. Madgearu was deeply influenced by the thought of Constantin Stere, the creator of the Romanian version of agrarian populism, the so-called poporanism. Populist ideas may have given way to a more pragmatic Peasantist policy and politics after 1926 and in the short period of the peasantist governments between 1928 and 1933, but more out of short-term electorally motivated reasons than out of conviction. The argument goes further, that the failure of the Maniu governments' agrarian policy was not only due to the Great Depression, but also due to half-hearted support for the pragmatic approach from the populists within the National Peasant Party. From 1931 onwards, populist thought appeared again in the party's programme combined with a large portion of etatism.

For a better understanding of Virgil Madgearu's economic policy and his party's economic politics it is necessary first to analyse both his ideological forerunners and sources and the economic consequences of the Romanian land reform of 1918/21.

### **Constantin Stere and Romanian Agrarian Populism (Poporanism)**

The history of Eastern European agrarian populism can be divided into three periods: narodnichestvo in Russia, the passage from narodnichestvo to Peasantism in Central and South-east Europe and the high tide of Peasantism in the inter-war period.<sup>5</sup> Russian narodnichestvo emerged during the 1850s as an adaptation of, and in opposition to, Western European Marxism, and, of course, as

<sup>3</sup> Roberts (1951), 130.

<sup>4</sup> Roberts (1955), 155.

<sup>5</sup> Ionescu (1969), S. 98f. See also Ließ (1910), V, 1–17.

a reaction to political and social conditions during the reign of Nikolai I and Alexander II.<sup>6</sup> Despite the lack of a closed Weltanschauung not to mention a party program, some common and relevant ideas can nevertheless be found in the narodniki body of thought. Basing themselves on the Russian obshchina institution, with its collective property rights on land and a rudimentary democratic self-government, the narodniks hoped to bypass capitalism and to jump immediately into socialism. Agitation and propaganda amongst the peasants should be the duty of the intelligentsia, in order to convince their ignorant brethren of the desirability and feasibility of this utopia. Nikolai K. Michailovsky can be considered as a typical narodnik, since in his writings is reflected both the intelligentsia-position towards Western European Marxism and that of a rural and backward country like Russia when confronted with capitalism:

“Progress is the gradual approach to the integral individual, to the fullest possible and most diversified division of labour among man’s organs and the least possible division of labour among men. Everything that impedes this advance is immoral, unjust, pernicious and unreasonable. Everything that diminishes the heterogeneity of society and thereby increases the heterogeneity of its members is moral, just, reasonable and beneficial.”<sup>7</sup>

This stance is equivalent to an outright rejection of the differentiation of labour, which is considered as one of the main prerequisites of the industrial/modern world. Obviously Michailovsky took note only of the criticisms of capitalism in Marx’s *Das Kapital* in order to justify his agrarian populist utopia, with its glorification of the rustic and primitive peasants’ way of living and working, and their supposed independence of the capitalist market.

The Central and South-east European agrarian populism which in Anglo-Saxon literature is labelled “Peasantism” emerged at the beginning of twentieth century under the influence of both Western European Marxism and Russian narodnichestvo. Peasantism also lacks a clear-cut ideology, but certain characteristics can be identified, according to Ghiță Ionescu:

“It takes the individual peasant explicitly as its social prototype and proposes to mould society and its state on the peasants’ conception of work, property and administration; it blends its social-economic doctrines with a strong nationalistic concern for the emancipation of the respective “people” from under foreign domination; and it claims that the peasantry is entitled as a class to the leadership of political society, not only on account of its electoral preponderance but also because of its innate spiritual and national values.”<sup>8</sup>

The common concern of agrarian populists like Constantin Stere (1865–1936), Svetoslav Markoviæ (1846–1875), Antun (1868–1919) and Stjepan Radiæ (1871–1928) was to prevent their respective peasant societies from the devastating consequences of capitalism. The reasons for the emergence of a distinct variant of

<sup>6</sup> Ziemke (1980), 30f. See also Pipes (1964), 441–458.

<sup>7</sup> Nikolai K. Michailovsky, quoted in Walicki (1969), 53.

<sup>8</sup> Ionescu (1969), 99. For a slightly different classification into a spectrum from “left” to “right” in populism–agrarianism–middle class ideology, see Gollwitzer (1977), 34.

south-east European agrarian populism, influenced by but not identical with Russian *narodnichestvo*, can be found in a double situation of late-coming: On the one hand there was the process of nation-state building, which was perceived as not yet completed and therefore as overlapping the agrarian question. On the other hand, the reception of Western European Marxism took place mainly through *narodniki*-channels and was therefore strongly influenced by their criticisms already. The combination of these two elements made southeast European agrarian populists like Constantin Stere prone to believe in the paradoxical possibility of making “big jumps” mainly by conserving agrarian structures.

Already as a pupil of one of the grammar schools in Chişinău (Kishinev), Stere came in contact with the local branch of *Narodnaia Volia* and even before passing his exams he was deported to Siberia for six years.<sup>9</sup> He immigrated to Romania in 1892 and very soon became one of the leading members of the radical intelligentsia in Iaşi. After the Peasant Revolt of 1907, Stere published a series of articles in *Viaţa românească* laying down the theoretical concept of *poporanism*.<sup>10</sup> He started his argument with the indisputable fact of Romania being an agrarian country, with 3.5 million peasants and only 40,000 people working in industry in 1905.<sup>11</sup> He described Romania as a “pre-eminently agrarian country”, supposing that this was not a temporary but a structural state of affairs. Due to a lack of foreign markets for Romanian industrial products on the one hand, and the very low purchasing power of the Romanian peasantry on the other, a policy of industrialisation as in Western Europe would be doomed to failure right from the beginning.<sup>12</sup> Stere argued for social and political consequences of Romania's being economically an agrarian country forever: On the basis of a socially homogenous peasantry Romania should remain, or rather should become again, an agrarian society, by getting rid somehow of the “parasitical layers” above the peasantry, including mainly industrial workers and merchants.<sup>13</sup> In his traditionalist *Weltanschauung* the landed aristocracy was part of the agrarian utopia; they should be convinced, to sell the peasants some more land. In the intellectual construct of a socially homogenous peasantry for times to come, one can discern some Marxist elements as well as *narodniki* influence and even some elements of the Western European Marxists’ revisionism debate. Stere considered the peasantry “a distinct social entity”<sup>14</sup>, neither bourgeois, because the peasant exploited nobody except himself and his family, nor proletarian, because he was exploited by nobody. In claiming that family-farms—supposedly independent from market forces—were superior to market-oriented middle-sized farms or *latifundias* and that, as a consequence, the

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<sup>9</sup> A very detailed biography of Stere is provided by Ornea (1990/91). See also Schmidt (1980), 199–201.

<sup>10</sup> As a monograph these articles were published for the first time in 1996. Stere (1996).

<sup>11</sup> Stere (1996), 45ff.

<sup>12</sup> Stere (1996), 87.

<sup>13</sup> Stere was referring explicitly to the Jews as agents of such a parasitical capitalism. Stere (1996), 124–174.

<sup>14</sup> Stere (1996), 70.

peasantry would stay homogenous, Stere was referring to the French and German revisionists.<sup>15</sup> But he couldn't simply ignore the fact that most peasants lived on their tiny plots of land (or leased land) in appalling misery and that their supposed superiority would only be a theoretical one as long as they lacked more land and cheap credits. As a remedy to this situation Stere advocated co-operatives, both on the producer and distributor side—village-based collective smallholdings (obști sătești, obști de arendare)—, and on the financial side—“popular banks” (Bănci Populare).<sup>16</sup>

### **The economic and socio-political doctrine of the National Peasant Party: Virgil Madgearu**

Virgil Madgearu (1887–1940) is undoubtedly the most important theorist of Romanian agrarian populism, called *țărănism* in the inter-war period in order to distinguish it from the more radical *poporanism*.<sup>17</sup> I shall concentrate here on his books and articles, since they were the most comprehensive publications of the movement, and had an immense influence on the party's principles.

During Madgearu's period of activity as a politician and theorist, two principal goals of Stere and the *poporanists* were achieved: land reform and universal suffrage. The land reform of 1918/21 turned Romania from a country of *latifundias* into one of smallholdings: Approximately 6 million ha of land was expropriated, and 3.6 million ha of arable land and some amounts of meadow and forest were distributed to approximately 1,368,000 peasant families.<sup>18</sup> But all the optimistic expectations nurtured both by the Liberals and the Peasantists, that land reform would have a profound and positive influence on diversification of the planted crops, on the medium yield per hectare, on the purchasing power of the peasants, and, as a consequence, also on the sales figures of ploughs etc. were disappointed. This was mainly due to the political and social, rather than economic motivation of the land reform, which:

“in brief, has meant an enormous legal change, but only a very moderate economic change. Production is, on a whole, carried on by the same men with the same means as before. Broadly speaking, it has been not so much a change from large-scale to small-scale farming, as a change from farming by small tenants to farming by small owners.”<sup>19</sup>

The medium yield per hectare fell significantly below that of the pre-reform period, reaching previous levels again only at the end of the 1930s. Compared to Central European, but also to South-east European countries, Romania had the worst equipped and financed agriculture. The value of agricultural equipment per hectare amounted only to 1,000 Lei,<sup>20</sup> one tractor had to work 4,600 ha in the

<sup>15</sup> He was quoting from Eduard Bernstein (*Socialisme théoretique et social-démocratique*), Eduard David (*Sozialismus und Landwirtschaft*), and Fr. O. Hertz (*Die agrarischen Fragen im Verhältnis zum Sozialismus*).

<sup>16</sup> Schmidt (1992), 59ff.

<sup>17</sup> For biographical details see Malinschi (1987), 49–67.

<sup>18</sup> The exact figures differ slightly from author to author: Mitrany (1968), Șandru (1975).

<sup>19</sup> Mitrany (1968), 282f.

<sup>20</sup> Compared to 15,000 Lei in Germany, 3,000 in Poland, and 2,000 in Bulgaria. Madgearu

1930s,<sup>21</sup> and from 1936 to 1938 only 0.2 kg of fertilisers were used per hectare.<sup>22</sup> David Mitrany, a contemporary sympathiser with land reforms and peasant parties, was at pains to prove, that the bad standing of Romanian agriculture was not due to its change into a small holding agriculture (țărănizare), but to the misconceived general economic policy of the Liberals. Agriculture as a sector of the economy, but also the peasant as an individual, had to bear the heavy load of an ambitious and expensive policy of industrialisation. Several fiscal and political elements served the purpose of drawing scarce money out of agriculture and re-allocating it to industry. Fixed low prices for agricultural products contrasted with the high level of industrial prices, there were some additional taxes for peasants only, and the tariffs on foreign agricultural equipment could be considered prohibitive. Since the profit margins in the neglected and exploited agriculture were constantly being reduced, there was a massive capital outflow from this sector towards the protected industrial sector.<sup>23</sup> So the overdue modernisation of Romanian agriculture was delayed once again.

Madgearu and his Peasantist colleagues intended to make the peasantry and agriculture the principle object of government. After land reform and the granting of universal suffrage, the peasant and his small family holding was politically and socially the basis of future development since he:

“has an interest in earning from the cultivation of his plot of land the greatest product which can be obtained in the shortest time, to endow his holding with equipment and livestock, and to provide enough for himself and his family. This presupposes an organisation of production which guarantees a maximum return and an organisation of sales, which, by doing away with intermediaries, gives the villager the whole value of his produce. (...) The peasantry forms the most numerous stratum of consumers. It is therefore directly interested in the industrial regime. While understanding the necessity of encouraging the progress of national industry, it cannot admit a protection based on a prohibitive tariff system which artificially maintains certain industries that lack any favourable conditions for their development. (...) Finally, as a citizen the peasant has an interest in living in a community of free men, who administer their interests through elected representatives.”<sup>24</sup>

The viability of the small peasant holding was crucial to this Peasantist economic and social theory as well as to the political doctrine of the peasant state, and so needed to be demonstrated. In doing this Madgearu drew extensively both on Constantin Stere’s fundamental ideas of the small peasant holding and on the writings of the Russian agricultural economist Alexander

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(1995), 54; Marcu: (1970), 587.

<sup>21</sup> Compared to 829 ha in Hungary, and 1,500 ha in Bulgaria. Berend and Ránki (1974), 293.

<sup>22</sup> Compared to 100 kg in Germany, and 1.8 kg in Bulgaria. Berend and Ránki (1974), 294.

<sup>23</sup> Mitrany (1968), 426.

<sup>24</sup> Madgearu (1931), 21ff. This booklet was first edited in 1921 and is the extended version of his contribution (“Doctrina țărănistă”) to the volume *Doctrinile partidelor politice*, Bucharest, 1923.

Chayanov, especially his *Die Lehre von der bäuerlichen Wirtschaft* (1923).<sup>25</sup> Following Chayanov, Madgearu argued that the economic activity of peasant families was governed by laws of its own, and characterised by a different conception of gain and a different economic psychology from those of the capitalist enterprise.<sup>26</sup> In the centre of this argumentation lies a quasi-mythical attachment of the peasants to their plot of land, leading to their non-economic behaviour in working their land even without profits or indeed at a loss. So in the Populists' view, the social differentiation amongst the peasants was not due to economic reasons but to purely demographic ones, because the empirically observed tendencies towards concentration of productive forces in industry do not apply in agriculture. Not only in times of crises when the peasants are forced to lead a self-sufficient life, the argument continues, but also generally, capitalist market forces have no implication on the profoundly non-capitalist thinking and acting peasantry. The peasantry and agriculture were perceived, at least in theory, as a non-capitalist sphere within a capitalist national economy, which is, of course, in reality not observable, keeping in mind the peasants' duty to pay taxes, to buy matches, salt, and simple agricultural tools, but also their reliance on credits for their daily needs.<sup>27</sup>

Like Stere, Madgearu was also aware of the poverty and shortcomings in production among the peasantry, which did not coincide at all with Peasantist economic and social ideals. In keeping with the poporanist tradition, he thought that the co-operative system was the best means of modernising Romania's agriculture and of raising the peasants' standard of living without jeopardising her assumed non-capitalist economic and social structure. Madgearu and his Peasantist colleagues were not interested in raising the efficiency of peasant working hours or the profitability of invested capital by such reforms as re-parcelling agricultural land in larger units: this would have been in contradiction to his firm belief in the viability of small and non-capitalist family holdings. He thought of the co-operative system as nothing less than an association including all peasants based upon mutual aid and income from labour and excluding the idea of profit. Co-operatives, he says, are:

“saving the family smallholdings from pauperisation by getting control of all commercial and credit links and are assuring the development of all national productive forces by reorganising production on a national basis.”<sup>28</sup>

Obviously the co-operative system envisaged by Madgearu only remotely resembled the Western European co-operative. On the one hand it was overloaded with unrealistic, since all-encompassing, expectations, while on the other hand it was disfigured by agrarian populist ideas. It took the Danish co-operatives which were very often mentioned as an example for Romania much longer than a few years to be successful, and they managed it precisely because

<sup>25</sup> Tschajanow (1987); Tschajanow (1924), 577–613.

<sup>26</sup> Madgearu (1936 b) in: Madgearu (1936 a), 60. See also Foster (1965), 293–315.

<sup>27</sup> For a devastating critique of Chayanov's theoretical assumptions see Patnaik (1979), 375–420. For the Romanian case see Katherine Verdery (1986), 84–104.

<sup>28</sup> Madgearu (1936 c), in: Madgearu (1936 a), 138.

they were thinking and acting in a capitalist way. Analysing some 188 Romanian co-operatives in 1938-39, the Danish expert M. Gormsen came to the devastating conclusion that only a few co-operatives were being managed roughly according to Western European standards and a single one fully deserved this description.<sup>29</sup> In addition to the already mentioned reasons for this assessment Gormsen referred to the excessive bureaucratisation within the co-operative system and to its growing reliance on governmental subsidies,<sup>30</sup> becoming a mere Government maid-of-all-work.<sup>31</sup>

As far as industry was concerned, Madgearu and the other Peasantists, again following Stere, distinguished between "artificial" and "natural" branches. The former relied on an "abnormal" development of the Romanian bourgeoisie,<sup>32</sup> Romanian cities,<sup>33</sup> and Romanian capitalism,<sup>34</sup> since all these institutions had served merely as "annexes" to foreign capital since the 1820s, neither changing the agrarian-feudal economic structure nor revolutionising the mode of production. In general, only those industrial branches were desirable which could serve as a support for agriculture, either by processing agricultural products or by employing peasants during the winter.

It is true that some of these anti-capitalist, anti-industrialist, and anti-urban policy elements were watered down somewhat after 1926. And the actual economic politics of the Maniu governments (and of the other short-lived Peasant governments) pursued a moderate industrial protectionism, an open-doors policy towards foreign investment, and an agrarian policy which encouraged social differentiation among peasants. But this overall picture is true only at first glance and only if we trust in party programmes. As Minister for Industry, Commerce, and later on, also for Finance in the first Maniu government, Madgearu was not only the leading theorist of the National Peasant Party but also one of its leading politicians. Within the narrow limits of the above-mentioned structural prerequisites he tried to improve the peasants' situation by creating new credit facilities, by spreading agronomic knowledge, and by re-organising the co-operative system. Obviously his political radicalism and his academic intransigence were tempered by the pragmatic needs of the day-to-day business of government.

As is well known, the Great Depression had a tremendous negative impact on the Romanian economy. Prices for agrarian products and other commodities tumbled on the world market, budgets between 1930 and 1934 had huge deficits, and Romania was on the verge of bankruptcy.<sup>35</sup> One of the main reasons for the diminishing tax income was the inability of hundreds of thousands of peasant families to pay taxes, not mention repaying their debts. To restore the peasants'

<sup>29</sup> Gormsen (1940). 133, footnote 117.

<sup>30</sup> Gormsen (1940), 105-120.

<sup>31</sup> Digby (1930), 427.

<sup>32</sup> Madgearu (1925), 31-48.

<sup>33</sup> Madgearu (1928), 70-81.

<sup>34</sup> Madgearu (1936 c). in: Madgearu (1936 a).

<sup>35</sup> For the Great Depression in Central and Southeast Europe see Berend and Ránki (1974).

ability to pay taxes, the peasantist Mironescu government was the first of other peasantist, but also national-democratic (Iorga-Argetoianu) and liberal (Tătărescu) governments in the Great Depression, which decided in April 1931 to interfere in the relations between the creditors and debtors. This first “Law against usury” had a transitory character, being followed by other laws which suspended the forced alienation of land in case its owners were unable to pay their debts, and, finally, by laws which shuffled and cancelled partially the peasant’s debts<sup>36</sup>. The banks’ losses, be it the National Bank, the private or the “popular banks”, were to be paid by the state.<sup>37</sup> Irrespective of their economical outlook, all political parties had to face the serious consequences inflicted by the Great Depression on the Romanian peasants. It’s true, laws with the more serious and far-reaching consequences for the Romanian banking-system were brought forward by the Iorga-Argetoianu and Tătărescu governments, but they met with no decisive resistance from the peasantist camp<sup>38</sup>. Besides, the peasantists have authored during this period two out of the four laws concerning the debts of the peasants.

These measures struck a fatal blow in three directions: to Peasantist pragmatic politics, because the legalised and sponsored differentiation among the peasants was stopped for many years; to the Romanian agrarian sector as a whole, because from now on the amount of private and state investment in this “dangerous sector” was negligible;<sup>39</sup> and to the reputation of Romania as a country which met her foreign debts in time and in full amount.<sup>40</sup>

Very telling for the ideological way of dealing with sad realities was Madgearu’s reaction to this catastrophe. In 1931, in the middle of these painful events, he was re-publishing his principles of țărănism from 1921, stressing again the viability of non-capitalist family smallholdings, and all the other

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<sup>36</sup> These laws are: Law for the reshuffling of agrarian debts, April 19, 1932 (Iorga-Argetoianu government); Law for changing the law for the reshuffling of agrarian debts, October 26, 1932 (Maniu government); *Legea pentru reglementarea datoriilor agricole și urbane*, 14 aprilie 1933 (guvernul Alexandru Vaida-Voevod); Law for cancelling the agrarian and urban debts, April 7, 1934 (Tătărescu government). Details in Bozga (1975), p.162

<sup>37</sup> Bozga (1975); Șandru (1985).

<sup>38</sup> In a debate in the Senate with Mihai Manoilescu, Virgil Madgearu seemed to be aware of the negative consequences which the conversion of agrarian debts had had on Romania’s international creditworthiness. Nevertheless, he was boasting of the “Law against usury” as a good measure which had halved the peasants’ debts – see Madgearu (1932), 53-55.

<sup>39</sup> According to an inquiry of the National Bank in 1938, private credit for agriculture after the reshuffling of debts amounted to only 30% of the status quo ante. This loss of agrarian creditworthiness could be seen also in the “popular banks”’ share of total distributed credit from the National Bank: It fell from 37.7% in 1930 to 13.2% in 1932, and once again to a mere 6% (!) from 1933–1938. See Madgearu (1995), 65, 248.

<sup>40</sup> More detailed research concerning the rationale of the National Peasant Party’s agrarian economic politics during the Great Depression seems to be necessary, in order to better understand Madgearu’s reasons for remaining in the Party and in the Peasantist governments and not leaving, like Nicolae Lupu.



populist credenda.<sup>41</sup> But it is verging on cynicism to hail the self-sufficient peasant on his plot of land in times of crisis, when this meant in reality bitter poverty and was, in addition, only possible at the price of near state bankruptcy. It seems that Madgearu was the most important Peasantist to give theoretical reasons for this serious interference of the state in economic affairs, which had been rejected by the Peasantists, especially where industry was concerned, in the 1920s. He now began to propagate an elaborate version of the old poporanist and țărănist utopia of the Peasant State (*stat țărănesc*) by adding elements of state dirigisme.<sup>42</sup> In the 1930s the Peasantists were seriously working at national development and investment plans for the co-operative system and for industrial branches; the most important industries were to be nationalised anyway. Apart from their continued adherence to the notion of private property, the National Peasant Party's economic principles were beginning to resemble more and more those of a moderate communist provenance.

In conclusion, I would not wish to blame the Peasantists for what came after World War II: that is a different story. But they are surely to blame for the fact that their economic program and political rhetoric failed to show their political clientele, the peasants, a possible way to modernity<sup>43</sup>. Instead, they propagated a kind of Third Way between western capitalism and individualism and eastern communism and collectivism towards a non-capitalist state, formed according to the needs of the peasantry.

To sum up my main argument: if the agrarian populists' utopia had been realised, the economy and politics of inter-war Romania would surely have looked very different, but it is highly questionable if the results and the prospects for Romanian society would have been much brighter than they proved to be in reality.

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<sup>41</sup> Even writing in retrospect in 1940, in his scholarly economic history of Romania, he repeated most of the *poporanist* and *țărănist* credenda. See Madgearu (1995).

<sup>42</sup> Madgearu (1934a); Madgearu (1934b). See also Costăchescu (1934).

<sup>43</sup> In a stimulating book, Daniel Barbu is casting serious doubts on the perceived exclusive importance of the Soviet troops presence in Romania for imposing a Communist regime upon the Romanian society. Both, the relative failure of Liberal as well as Peasantist economic politics – especially regarding the agrarian sector – and the radical Peasantist rhetoric concerning a future Peasant state (having class character and where the state prevailed over the economy) made especially the peasant population receptive for Communist promises for a “good government”. See Barbu (1999), 76-82.

# Aspects of Modernisation and the Orthodox Church in Romania

by *Hans-Christian Maner*

## Preface

The connection between modernisation and the Church has already been the subject of several studies, in which attention is focussed on the contemporary situation from a variety of perspectives. While in one of these studies Orthodox Eastern Europe as a whole is confronted with the decision between modernisation and traditionalism, another study points out the important matter of how to apply modernisation to the inner life of the Churches.<sup>1</sup>

The following expositions seek to deal exclusively with the relationship between Romania's Orthodox Church and modernisation in the Inter-war Period.

The question of a fundamental modernisation of State and society became even more pressing after the First World War. Not only the State and its institutions, but also all relevant social forces were required to support and encourage this process with the objective of establishing a basic democratic order.

Successful modernisation was among other things characterised by the democratisation of State and society. In addition to the parameters of the party system, elections, cabinet government, Head of State and parliament, various intermediary organisations were set up to further encourage the development and stability of democracy and its indispensable services and functions.

Churches, together with professional organisations and associations, represent the classical example of an intermediary organisation as a powerful factor in the democratisation of a society. The Church and its representatives are held in high esteem within the State and in society at large. Its public statements and actions are widely respected and perform an exemplary and guiding function.

Modernisation commonly means the strategic development of a traditional agricultural society into a highly developed democratic and pluralistic industrial society. It represents an alternative to traditionalism and traditional structures—agricultural methods of production, stagnant technology, low rates of literacy, great significance of religious and sacral values—which were to be overcome in the social, economic and political sphere. The expression can be understood to mean “the increasing ability of society to meet the requirements of a changing environment (.....) through the application of rational solutions”.<sup>2</sup> Modernisation

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<sup>1</sup> Solomon (1997), 321-332; Wünsch (1998/1999), 16-17.

<sup>2</sup> Zapf (1969), 22; Flora (1974), 13; Sundhaussen (1993), 24.

is moreover also equated with “Europeanisation”, “Westernisation”, “industrialisation” or “democratisation”. The modernisation process therefore comprises numerous aspects, and cannot be looked into in all its facets.<sup>3</sup> The extent of the contribution made by the majority Church to the democratisation process in Romania after the First World War remains a question of great interest. A related question, concerning whether there were inside the Church impulses or ideas for the modernisation of the State and society shall also be examined, i.e. what was the attitude of the Orthodox Church to particular socio-political situations in the Inter-war Period. I have therefore consulted relevant published sources such as the newspaper *Telegraful Român*, *Apostolul Circularelor*, the magazine *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* and unpublished sources from archives.

### **Critical assessment of the political system and proposed solutions**

In the Constitution of 1923 the State guaranteed the freedom of all religious institutions and granted these protection as long as their practice did not conflict with public order, “good custom” or the laws of the State. As “Romanian Churches” the Orthodox and the Uniate (or Greek-Catholic) Churches were given priority over other denominations. The Orthodox Church was additionally identified as the “dominant” State Church. It was, moreover, stipulated that the Church was subject to the control of the State.<sup>4</sup>

After the First World War, the Orthodox Church was increasingly confronted with internal organisational questions. Efforts to unify of the Orthodox Churches of different parts of the country, the organisation of the new State and the problem of denominational schools all became matters of central importance. No less fundamental, however, were relations with the State and associated considerations in respect of its political situation and development.

The Orthodox Church was no different to other persons and institutions in having great hopes and expectations for the period after the First World War. Nonetheless, it did consider the beginning to be a difficult phase, full of shortages, dissatisfaction, difficulties, rivalries, intrigues and hostilities.<sup>5</sup> While the first elections in 1919 took place still under the influence of the war and the as yet inconclusive peace negotiations, and therefore in the absence of any unity or solidarity, the elections of the following year were again characterised by quarrels. Disappointment among priests was widespread. The frequent elections in these first years after the end of the war were criticised as a “sign of deep impoverishment within the social organism.”<sup>6</sup> In the elections there was often seen a great danger of abuse which would only escalate passions and lead to an increase in the misery of the population.

<sup>3</sup> See also Maner (1997), 31-32.

<sup>4</sup> I. Muraru et al. (1993), 74-75. Concerning the history of the Orthodox Church see Păcurariu vol. 3 (1994), and many articles in the magazine “Biserica Ortodoxă Română”.

<sup>5</sup> “Telegraful Român”, no. 86, 1/14 Nov. 1922; “Telegraful Român”, no. 87, 4 /17 Nov. 1922; Directia Arhivelor Naționale, București [DAN], fond Miron Cristea, no. 3, f. 3ff.

<sup>6</sup> “Telegraful Român”, 18/31 Jan. 1922; *Cincizeci de ani de preoție* (1928), 63-64.

At the beginning of the 1920s, the newspaper *Telegraful Român*, the central organ of the Orthodox Church in Transylvania, had already begun to call for a unification of all useful forces in the country. "Without unification of the required forces we see no way out of the difficult situation in which the newly-enlarged country longing for consolidation is presently languishing."<sup>7</sup> A joining of political forces was vehemently advocated, since this was considered to be the only possible way of solving the most difficult problems. Only a concentration government, a unity of all political forces, could have a chance against internal unrest and political corruption. This remained one of the fundamental concerns of the Orthodox Church, and one of the main points in its criticism of political life, the inability of the various political powers to formulate a common agenda.

Within the Orthodox Church, clear positions were formulated not only on the concrete political situation, but also with respect to fundamental principles. During the constitutional debate one of the central figures in the Church, the Metropolitan of the Transylvanian Orthodox Church, Nicolae Bălan held a speech in which he stated the Church's general principles on the subject of "The Gospel and Democracy". Bălan characterised democratic principles as the guiding values of the Orthodox Church. The Church did not merely conform to the demands of a modern State. It was even in favour of democratic reforms, such as agrarian reform and the related support and elevation of the status of the peasants, or electoral reform. By democracy, Bălan understood not only the contents of a party programme but a much greater concept of living which placed man at the centre of things and not merely "as a means to an end, as a tool among other objects." For the Metropolitan of Transylvania it was, in this context, rather a matter of elaborating a fundamental understanding of democracy as something involving not only a small elite but also the vast majority of the people. Bălan saw in this process a close connection with the Gospels in which the personality of man and moral values are equally of central importance. From this starting point the Metropolitan first and foremost saw himself as a spokesman for a democracy as an ethical principle.<sup>8</sup> In the political sphere, according to Bălan, such a conception means:

- State power must be so construed as to guarantee the co-operation and responsibility of all citizens towards the leadership of the State.
- State goals must allow all citizens widespread and fair access to material and spiritual benefits.

The second principle which defines democracy is the national or ethical principle. Progress and democracy are accordingly necessary for the development of the national spirit.<sup>9</sup> The Orthodox Church found itself, after the financial and economic crisis, confronted by a deep moral and spiritual crisis, and took it upon itself to bring about the "moral regeneration of a people at the gates of the Orient."<sup>10</sup> It considered itself the "highest institution of the State and of the

<sup>7</sup> *Cincizeci de ani de preoție* (1928).

<sup>8</sup> Bălan (1923), 6-8.

<sup>9</sup> Balan (1923), 9-14.

<sup>10</sup> I. Crăciun, *Biserica neamului nostru*, in "Telegraful Român", 25 Jan./7 Feb. 1922; Letter of the Holy Synod of Nov. 1931, in "Telegraful Român", no. 83-84, 21 Nov. 1931.

Romanian people," which had always been committed to the defence of a "national existence within the borders of our ancestral lands." People and Church were accordingly seen as a unity. Representatives of the Church thus wanted to see it given a central role in both public and personal affairs.<sup>11</sup>

Dissatisfaction with the political parties had been widespread from the beginning of the 1920s. "Our political parties, in particular those of the post-war period, are lacking in any great sense of law and order."<sup>12</sup> The increasingly negative attitude of the Orthodox Church towards the parties was hardly helped by the ever precarious position of the State, which at the beginning of the Thirties was, of course, also reflected in the budget of the Church, and developed into a fundamental criticism of State policy and of those who represented it.<sup>13</sup>

The murder of the Prime Minister I.G. Duca on the 29<sup>th</sup> December 1933 by a young student gave vent to a discussion on the future education of juveniles in which the Orthodox Church also took part. The "juvenile problem" was seen not as a national but also as an international phenomenon. The main reason for this outbreak of violence was seen to be the great changes which has taken place after the conclusion of the First World War. Together with the achievements of modern science and technology, democracy in particular was accused of encouraging people to do as they pleased and to flout "the traditional norms of any religious or moral authority." Accordingly, post-war democracy too exercised a "catastrophic influence on the soul of contemporary youth." In future the education of juveniles must therefore be based upon a Christian view of morality.<sup>14</sup>

Comments issued in Church circles began to receive wider circulation. A clear statement on the internal political situation was given on the occasion of the opening of the assembly of Orthodox bishops in Sibiu on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 1936 by Metropolitan Nicolae Bălan. He spoke of a "great instability in public life": everything was based on improvisation. Laws concerning the whole of public life were—after each change in government—amended or annulled, and there were many such changes. Respect for the law, the rule of law or a public awareness of the law could hardly be established under such circumstances. There was also some electoral abuse and political pressure which exercised a negative influence. "I do not know whether our lively temperament drives us to make so many frequent changes or whether we have not yet managed to work out a unified and well defined political concept for our State."<sup>15</sup> Bălan spoke against the political experimentation and incoherent attempts which were weakening the country. Instead he favoured a system of government based on a

<sup>11</sup> DAN, fond Miron Cristea, no. 3, f. 19-20, 89; "Telegraful Român", no. 4-6, 14 Jan. 1933; "Telegraful Român", no. 1, 1 Jan. 1934; see also "Apostolul Circularelor", 2, 1937, no. 13-14, 51-52.

<sup>12</sup> I. Mateiu, *Statul și Biserica Ortodoxă*, in "Telegraful Român", no. 66-67, 19 Sept. 1931.

<sup>13</sup> Mateiu, *Statul*, in "Telegraful Român", no. 69, 26 Sept. 1931.

<sup>14</sup> "Telegraful Român", no. 5, 27 Jan. 1934; "Telegraful Român", no. 21, 20 May 1934; "Telegraful Român", no. 34, 19 August 1934.

<sup>15</sup> "Telegraful Român", no. 22, 24 May 1936.

unified political concept and a logical and permanent continuity. The permanent renewal or alteration of the laws thus contributed little to the necessary education of the population in this sense, but instead to their continued failure to be applied perfectly and well implemented in practice.

The Church saw the only way out of the moral crisis as lying in the expansion of Christian belief in the family, society and public life.<sup>16</sup> In the opinion of the Church representatives, moral reform consisted of fasting and praying, patience and perseverance.<sup>17</sup> This can be seen in their attitude towards the modernisation of the State and society. A solution to the crisis was to be sought in the preservation of tradition and customs. Religious life and the Orthodox Church could look back on a tradition lasting several centuries. Conservatism was considered to be a constant current within the Orthodox Church.<sup>18</sup>

### **The denominational conflict as an aggravating element**

As a constant motivation for the “continuous unrest within Romanian society,” Orthodox Church circles repeatedly referred to the inter-denominational conflict. In particular the official discourse was characterised by the antagonism between the Orthodox and the Catholic Church. The existence in Transylvania of a Church united with Rome represented a constant threat for the Orthodox Church. The Roman Catholic Church, but also the Uniate Church, were accused not only of sowing discontent within the Romanian population but also of proselytising. Disputes surrounding, for example, the Concordat and a later agreement with the Vatican in respect of possessions belonging to the Catholic Church in Transylvania, or the Romanisation of the Uniate Church, took up much space in public life, and contributed to the growing political crisis.<sup>19</sup>

### **The Church and nationalism**

In its efforts to disassociate itself from the various other denominations, for example Catholicism or Free-Masonry, or in the struggle against “sectarianism”, the Orthodox Church increasingly took up clearer and at the same time more radical positions. In an article of 1932, the Deacon Dumitru Stăniloae called for the creation of a “truly Orthodox State”. The theologian identified himself with the circle surrounding Nichifor Crainic and the newsletters *Gândirea* and *Calendarul*, which were read mostly by right-wing radicals and which were on several occasions at the end of 1933 banned by the government.<sup>20</sup> This circle not

<sup>16</sup> “Telegraful Român”, no. 4-6, 14 Jan. 1933.

<sup>17</sup> “Telegraful Român”, no. 27-28, 2 April 1932.

<sup>18</sup> Bălan (1912), 29; *Cincizeci de ani de preoție* (1928), 65-66.

<sup>19</sup> Părintele Nichifor (1930); Părintele Nichifor (1933). See also “Telegraful Român”, no. 44-45, 23 Oct. 1934; “Telegraful Român”, no. 51, 2 Dec. 1934; “Telegraful Român”, no. 53, 16 Dec. 1934; “Telegraful Român”, no. 47, 10 Nov. 1935; “Telegraful Român”, no. 48, 17 Nov. 1935; “Telegraful Român”, no. 49, 24 Nov. 1935; “Telegraful Român”, no. 13, 22 March 1936; “Telegraful Român”, no. 15, 5 April 1936.

<sup>20</sup> Heinen (1986), 185.

only denounced political corruption but also considered the political parties and the parliamentary democratic system to be out-dated, advocating their replacement by committees and a corporate system.<sup>21</sup> Other voices again called for the parties to be replaced by “well-known honourable moral personalities.”<sup>22</sup>

The Romanian Anti-revisionist League, publicly supported by the largest Romanian daily newspaper *Universul*, also contributed to a degradation of the internal political atmosphere through the Orthodox Church. Anti-revisionist meetings were supported. Representatives of the Church, such as the Metropolitan of Transylvania, were members of this organisation. Even the village populations, led by the local clergy, took part in its gatherings.<sup>23</sup>

While the Church hoped that such actions would enable it to become attractive again to youth and the intellectuals, moderate voices warned that, by involving itself in these activities, the Church was stepping on thin ice “with ominous results for the life and peace of the population.”<sup>24</sup>

Church representatives, as can already be inferred from Bălan’s comments, repeatedly referred to the Orthodox Church as the “home” of Romanian nationalism. Nationalism was seen as a miracle which could help lead the State out of the crisis in which it found itself. “We share a deep conviction that the Romanian State, which was founded on the basis of the national idea, also will be consolidated through a nationalism which is Orthodox in character.”<sup>25</sup> Nationalism was seen as an urgent requirement for the intensification of national awareness. A decisive factor here was, however, the definition of this nationalism. The reference to the legitimacy of nationalism on the part of the Church is ultimately also a matter of fundamental importance for future political development and the implication of the Orthodox Church. Nationalism was not understood in party political terms by Metropolitan Bălan. The Church announced a conception which was anchored at the spiritual level of mercy and faith, a strong and tough nationalism transformed by faith. “This conception should apply to all believers, to all Romanians, so that everyone loves their people and fights for its elevation.”<sup>26</sup> The raising of nationalism to a metaphysical level was at the same time a justification for the Church to commit itself to the idea. Priests were virtually obliged, “with all their power” to support the national movement. This new definition of nationalism led to an indivisible and thoroughly disastrous association between eternally spiritual and profanely political goals and motives.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>21</sup> See the articles by Crainic in *Calendarul* in 1932.

<sup>22</sup> V. Gan, *Solidaritatea satelor?*, in “Telegraful Român”, no. 23-24, 19 March 1932.

<sup>23</sup> “Telegraful Român”, no. 43-44, 27 May 1933; “Telegraful Român”, no. 45-46, 3 June 1933; “Telegraful Român”, no. 1, 1 Jan. 1934; “Telegraful Român”, no. 46-47, 4 Nov. 1934.

<sup>24</sup> DAN, fond Direcția Generală a Poliției, no. 41/1935. f. 17.

<sup>25</sup> D. Stăniloae, *Biserica și naționalismul*, in “Telegraful Român”, no. 28, 5 July 1936.

<sup>26</sup> “Telegraful Român”, (1936).

<sup>27</sup> D. Stăniloae, *Naționalismul în cadrul spiritualității creștine*, in “Telegraful Român”, no. 36, 30 August 1936.

Associated with this there was a lack of critical thinking towards right-wing ideologies and a vehement rejection of left-wing ideals, which were explained only in terms of material conceptions. The Church and its servants were required to suppress left-wing ideas among the population. In official Church newsletters, such as the *Telegraful Român*, hefty attacks against the class struggle, Communism and Bolshevism were frequently made.<sup>28</sup> The rejection of Communism by the Church was not only based on ideological differences but on the concrete social and political conditions in Romania. The suppression of this “hydra” also meant of course, according to the theologian Stăniloae, the defence of the country against possible claims by ethnic minorities and revisionist neighbouring states. By linking the struggle against Communism with the protection of Romania a process was initiated that clearly threw the Church in the whirlpool of a profane political dispute.<sup>29</sup>

For church elders like the theologian Dumitru Stăniloae, the failure of post-war democracy was a fact. Instead of individualism, atheism and materialism, Stăniloae wanted, following Crainic, to set up a Christian national solidarity. Equally Stăniloae took over from Crainic the theoretical basis of the neo-national doctrine for the existing social problems.<sup>30</sup> This brought about the strengthening of the autochthonous current which would encourage a “spiritual emancipation” from foreign Western European values. Their own “thousand year old culture” represented by the Orthodox Church should help to counteract the time of crisis. The “living national tradition” should put an end to the imitation of western values. The Church follows here the train of thought in Crainic’s book *Puncte cardinale în haos* (“Cardinal points in chaos”).<sup>31</sup> The Church, as “strongest supporter of the national idea”, simply had, according to its representatives, to become more active and militant.<sup>32</sup>

### **The clergy and the radicalisation of politics**

In the Inter-war Period there was no party in Romania which identified itself exclusively as a purely denominational grouping around the Orthodox Church. The participation of Church servants in party politics led to an extraordinary congress of the Romanian Orthodox clergy in 1936 in which a request was made for the withdrawal of priests from the political parties. The parties were accused of being hostile towards the Church and its servants. Ever since 1928 the Holy Synod had forbidden priests to place the Church or other religious activities in the service of a party or to incite rebellion against the State power. The danger was that priests could be used by the parties for their own purposes and that the

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<sup>28</sup> C. Zoican, *Lupta de clasă și aprecierea creștină* in “Telegraful Român”, no. 34, 16 August 1936; *Telegraful Român*, no. 35, 23 August 1936.

<sup>29</sup> D. Stăniloae, *Biserica împotriva comunismului*, in “Telegraful Român”, no. 42, 11 Oct. 1936.

<sup>30</sup> D. Stăniloae, *Un atlet al naționalismului creștin*, in “Telegraful Român”, no. 14, 1 April 1934.

<sup>31</sup> “Telegraful Român”, no. 10, 1 March 1936.

<sup>32</sup> “Telegraful Român”, no. 46-47, 4 Nov. 1934; “Calendarul”, 9 March 1933.



Church could be used as a political platform.<sup>33</sup> The participation of priests in the political activities of the various parties was also regarded with suspicion by the State power.<sup>34</sup>

However priests were not to limit themselves to the ritual and administrative affairs of the Church but also, as “religious personalities”, to perform universal functions. Priests must steer the population at all levels and commit themselves to their spiritual consolidation and elevation.<sup>35</sup>

A logical consequence of the requirement on priests to no longer participate in the spiritual life of a party was the introduction of the Penal Code, entering into force on 1 January 1937, which forbade Church servants to speak out to their parishioners in any manner likely to influence their political behaviour.<sup>36</sup> The activities of the Church and its servants in political life continued to remain unaffected. This however was also soon to change.

The struggle against Communism led the Church to adopt a counter position which was finally made public around the middle of February 1937. The repatriation to Romania of the two Legionaries fallen in the Spanish Civil War, Ioan Mota and Vasile Marin, and their burial in Bucharest on the 13<sup>th</sup> February took place with massive participation of the population. The Orthodox Church was represented by numerous priests and several high-ranking churchmen showed an undeniable presence. It was literally a procession, with the participation of 100 priests. Within Church circles this process was completely misunderstood as an expression of the “sensitivity of our Orthodox Church to the great problems of the age.” Metropolitan Bălan was finally to characterise the two Legionaries in his prayer in the Bucharest Church of Saint Ilie Gorgani as the “best and bravest sons of our people,” whose names would not be forgotten.<sup>37</sup> Above all, parts of the lower rural clergy declared their support for the Legion of the Archangel Michael.<sup>38</sup>

The political appearance in public of numerous priests again inflamed discussion about the participation of priests in politics. Voices in the government called for limits to their activities. This was opposed however by the highest committee of the Orthodox Church, the Holy Synod. The functions of the Church were self-confidently set out as follows: to teach, to advise and to point the way that the Romanian people has to go forward as a “national collective”. Priests would only be called to account for acting counter to their spiritual

<sup>33</sup> “Apostolul Circularelor”, 1, 1936, no. 37, p. 204; DAN, fond Direcția Generală a Poliției, no. 41/1935, f. 25.

<sup>34</sup> DAN, fond Direcția Generală a Poliției, no. 112/1934, f. 1, 3, 4; DAN no. 228/1935, f. 2, 4, 6, 8, 15-16; DAN no. 274/1936, f. 2, 5, 13, 15, 17, 19.

<sup>35</sup> D. Stăniloae, “Misiunea preotului”, in “Telegraful Român”, no. 25, 14 June 1936; DAN, fond Onisifor Ghibu, No. 55, f. 19-20.

<sup>36</sup> “Apostolul Circularelor”, 2, 1937, no. 17-18, pp. 73-79; “Telegraful Român”, no. 4, 31 Jan. 1937.

<sup>37</sup> “Telegraful Român”, no. 8, 21 Feb. 1937; A. Popa, “Întorși acasă”, in “Telegraful Român”.

<sup>38</sup> See one example of 34 clergymen in Bessarabia, DANIC, fond Onisifor Ghibu, no. 55, f. 151.

mission. To this end they might only be members of political parties which were monarchist, dynamic, and national. Moreover, priests were forbidden to wear party insignia during services, to take oaths of a political nature or to introduce party-political affairs into their sermons. Guidelines published by the Holy Synod set out among other things that the Church and its servants should be employed for the well-being of the country, the consolidation of the State and the monarchist form of the State. As further aspects of the Church's political programme, there were also the closer approach to God, the well-being of the Romanian people, Christian values, solidarity, harmony within the population and the limitation of the power of foreigners in order to guarantee the existence of the nation.<sup>39</sup>

The radical-national point of view finally led the Church in August 1937 to speak openly about a "Jewish" problem in Romania. "Judaism is and every day that passes is becoming a greater and greater burden on our people and our country." The patriarch did indeed distance himself from equating such statements with anti-Semitism. His remarks were however little more than a verbal excuse without consequence.<sup>40</sup> Priests in other parts of the country too spoke of the "Jewish problem". During a religious ceremony in Iași the priests referred to the "Semites as a great evil for Romania," as archive sources from the General Direction of the Police noticed.<sup>41</sup>

At the end of 1923 several priests had already started to spread an anti-Jewish mood through their articles in *Telegraful Român*. Two things were complained about. Firstly, Jewish teachers were employed in Romanian public schools: "people for whom the law is strange and who are declared enemies of the Faith of our fathers." Such educators exercised a bad influence upon the future intellectual class.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, the Jews were also made responsible not only for weakened religiosity in all social classes but especially for the religious indifference of the lower classes. This was above all blamed on the inns and restaurants run by Jews which kept the Christians from going to Church on Sundays. At the same time priests were involved in trials in which Jewish judges conspired against them. And finally, a large part of industry and commerce was in the hands of "foreigners". The Jews were also referred to pejoratively as *jidani* and sworn at. In neighbourhoods with bars and other places of entertainment, young people were corrupted and spoiled. "Look how this parasitic and destructive people amuses itself on the back of the tolerant people and poisons it spiritually and physically."<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Communiqué of the Holy Synod, and the Patriarch's speech in *Telegraful Român*, no. 11, 14 March 1937; "Apostolul Circularelor", 2, 1937, no. 16, S. 65-67; "Apostolul Circularelor", 2, 1937, no. 17-18, pp. 79-80; see also D. Stăniloae, "Un eveniment epochal, in "Telegraful Român", no. 13, 28 March 1937; S. Căndea, Preoții și politica in "Telegraful Român", *Curentul*, 12 und 21 martie 1937.

<sup>40</sup> "Telegraful Român", no. 35, 29 August 1937.

<sup>41</sup> DAN, fond Direcția Generală a Poliției, no. 44/1937, f. 13.

<sup>42</sup> V. Păscău, *Preoțimea în parlament*, in "Telegraful Român", no. 97, 28 Nov./11 Dec. 1923.

<sup>43</sup> Pascau (1923).

By August 1937 at the latest, at the time of the xenophobic statements, the Orthodox Church had distanced itself publicly from democratic principles such as universal suffrage. Foreigners, in this case the Jews, should not have the right to vote in Romania, since they would otherwise set the Romanians against each other. In an article of August 1937 in *Telegraful Român*, we find the following: "Anything that could damage the unity of the people and destroy its function as master in its own land should be removed from democracy. When what remains is no longer democracy, democracy no longer has any meaning. Our struggle, which is based on reality, cannot be intimidated by a mere phantom."<sup>44</sup> It is not surprising in this context that Church circles started to speak about the present less in terms of democracy but as an "age replete with anarchy and demagogy." The most suitable form of State was thus an "enlightened dictatorship". "Peoples feel safer when they are led by a strong hand."<sup>45</sup>

### Final remarks

For the Orthodox Church it was primarily a question of consolidating the State founded in 1918, and in this connection to strengthen national awareness. In this process there remained little room for thoughts about democratisation of the State and society if these were not already established. In the early post-war period it was especially the Orthodox Church in Transylvania which kept a thoroughly critical distance from certain political developments. There were also constructive democratic theoretical concepts proposed in respect of the development of the new State. However, the indispensable association with the principle of nationalism gave a strong hint of the future direction of the Church in view of the Europe-wide radicalisation and elevation of the ethnic principle. In its efforts to place itself at the centre of public life, to counteract the secular tendencies of youth and above all intellectuals, the Orthodox Church, in line with State policy, was to adopt increasingly nationalistic positions. Through its unambiguous rejection of western European imports, including democracy, the Orthodox Church at the same time also rejected all forms of modernisation which represented these values. For the Church it was a matter of going another way, its own way.

By 1937 the Orthodox Church found itself in a dangerous position. Its open demonstration of sympathy for the Legion of the Archangel Michael placed it in clear opposition to the existing State and the political system. In this way they were to stir up the conflict rather than to work as a team to further the unity of the State and society. It could not fulfil the requirement of appeasement. The strong ethnocratic orientation of the Orthodox Church ultimately prevented the establishment of a pluralistic political culture or even the development of a culture of conflict.

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<sup>44</sup> "Telegraful Român", no. 35, 29 August 1937.

<sup>45</sup> I. V. Feleac, *Dictatura disciplinei*, in "Telegraful Român", no. 61, 26 August 1933.

# Romanization of the Bukovina, 1918-1944

by Mariana Hausleitner

## 1. Theme and Research Question

Prior to 1918, more ethnic groups lived peacefully together in the Bukovina than in other parts of the Habsburg Monarchy. One of the essential reasons for this was that no single group was able to dominate the others and social competition hardly existed. The numerically strongest groups, the Ukrainians with 38% (1910) and the Romanians with 34% of the population, were mostly made-up of peasants who were able to assimilate each other because of their mutual Orthodox faith. The cities were predominantly inhabited by Jews and Germans. When the Bukovina was made part of Romania in 1918, the German vernacular remained dominant in the cities until the 1930s despite the pressure of the new rulers. In my study for the Habilitation I examine if the Romanian government attempted in the inter-war years to integrate the 30% minority population into Greater Romania.<sup>1</sup> How did the concept of a “Romanization” change between 1918 and 1944? Who benefited from “Romanization”? What were the consequences of “Romanization” at the economic, social, and political level? What were the effects of “Romanization” on the sought-after modernization? Four reasons in particular supported the choice of the Bukovina as an exemplary case:

- In this region, non-Romanians accounted with 60% for the majority of the population.
- There was hardly any irredentism among the ethnic population groups of the Bukovina. Although many Ukrainians sought between 1918 and 1920 the unification with the Western Ukrainian Republic, after the Republic’s collapse, irredentist movements reappeared only at the beginning of the war.
- Unlike in the cases of Transylvania and Bessarabia, no neighboring state claimed the Bukovina as part of its own territory until 1940, thus, the conflicts between minorities did not escalate with encouragement from the outside.
- The ethnic organizations’ leaders who participated in government during the Austrian period were capable and ready to cooperate in a constructive manner. This, for example, was not the case with the Hungarians in Transylvania.

In the following, I will first discuss the present state of research and then present my own findings.

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<sup>1</sup> The book *Die Rumänisierung der Bukowina* will be published by the Oldenbourg-Verlag in 2000.

## 2. State of research

The field of East European Studies was dominated by a nation-state perspective until the 1990s. There was hardly any interest in poly-ethnic regions which had been divided up by the creation of territorial borders among nation-states. This lack of interest was due in part to the influence of modernization theory, which conceived of poly-ethnic regions as remnants of pre-industrial societies. Also, theorists of nationalism, like Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson, deemed the surmounting of heterogeneity a necessity and saw a society with a “homogenous culture” as the goal of development. The convulsions in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia made Gellner reevaluate the development in the wake of the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire. In 1991, Gellner declared the creation of the frontiers after 1918 to have been a “pyrrhic victory” because many minority groups were not integrated into the new states. The degradation of formerly dominant ethnic groups made them susceptible to Hitler’s reorganization plans. Ethnic homogenization was then achieved by resettlement and genocide.<sup>2</sup> Rogers Brubaker also concerned himself again with the development in the inter-war years under the impression of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. In the case of Poland, he analyzed why the government pursued a policy of assimilation towards the Slavs and a policy of displacement towards Jews and also Germans.<sup>3</sup> The new debate about the effects of the Paris Peace Conference of 1918 and the opening of archives in Romania and the Ukraine made it possible for me to take up the question of the consequences of Romanianization in the inter-war period.

When I began my work in 1993, not very many publications on the history of the Bukovina were available. Although sporadic references to the history of the Bukovina could be found beginning with the national-communist turn in Romanian historiography in the 1970s, those references were attacks by selected party historians directed against the Soviet Union. In the 1980s, no historical sources on the Bukovina could be consulted: in the archival listings of the Central State Archive they were marked mostly as “closed”. After 1991 the formerly banned writings of such nationalists from the inter-war years as Ion Nistor were for the first time published again. The few Romanian historians who took up the subject – like Nicolae Ciachir and Mircea Grigorovița – presented the Bukovina as Romanian territory and dealt with the minorities only as factors of disruption. Without presenting any evidence, it was asserted that the Bukovina achieved great economic successes in the inter-war period.<sup>4</sup>

Historians from the Ukraine did not concern themselves with that distant border region. Until 1991 mention was made only of class struggles. Ukrainian historians in exile published in 1956 a voluminous monograph on the Bukovina

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<sup>2</sup> Gellner (1991), 130.

<sup>3</sup> Brubaker (1996), 84-103.

<sup>4</sup> Ciachir (1993), 94-122; Grigorovița (1996), 128-136.

which stressed the struggle for independent statehood. It was republished in Cernauti in 1993. This work and also some new publications dealt predominantly with the development of the national organizations of the Ukrainians in the Bukovina.<sup>5</sup>

Some works appeared in Israel where most of the Jews of the Bukovina who had survived the holocaust had emigrated. These studies concern themselves predominantly with the development of Jewish institutions.<sup>6</sup> In Germany, an ethnocentric perspective was cultivated for a long time: the cultural achievements of the Germans in the Bukovina were stressed and the decline of their institutions under Romanian domination presented as the reason for the resettlement. A synthesis of the history of all ethnic groups was for the first time presented by Emanuel Turczynski in his "History of the Bukovina", but its focus lies on the development prior to the First World War.<sup>7</sup> In the 1990s three more works appeared that gave me valuable suggestions. Christian Maner presented in 1997 a voluminous analysis of parliamentarism in Romania, which provided me with cross-references for the general part of my work. Hiltrun Glass examined in her doctoral thesis the relationship between Germans and Jews in Romania between 1918 and 1938, several pages of that work are dedicated to the development in the Bukovina. The US-American historian Irina Livezeanu analyzed the cultural policy in Romania between 1918 and 1930. One chapter deals with the Bukovina, however, without taking sources from the archive in Cernauti into account.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. Sources and Findings

I define Romanization as a broad process which, while most visible in the field of education, engulfed all parts of society. The following areas were analyzed in my study: the restructuring of the administrative apparatus, the restrictions of citizenship status, the persecution of all minority organizations by the police, the dismantling of all independently operated co-operatives, and the agrarian reform in favor of the Romanians. During the 1930s, new stipulations were regularly made to ban non-Romanians from economic activities. I have examined the confrontation with these discriminatory measures at three levels: the regional, the central, the international. With the files from the regional archive in Cernauti I was able to explicate the effects of the Romanization policies in the region. The different administrative units were confronted with protests from non-Romanians and had to react to them. The most important problems were mostly sent to the Ministries in Bucharest, where I was able to examine their treatment further with the help of the files in the Bucharest State Archives. Juridical initiatives for the centralization of the administration and the

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<sup>5</sup> Zukovs'kyi (1993).

<sup>6</sup> Gold (1958/1962).

<sup>7</sup> Turczynski (1993).

<sup>8</sup> Maner (1997); Glass (1996); Livezeanu (1998).

reduction of autonomous structures were also put forth since the mid-1920s from Bucharest. The third level at which the confrontation with the problem of the Bukovina occurred was at the international level, first at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and later at the League of Nations. Especially many complaints were made about the violation of the law for the protection of human rights by representatives of the Ukrainian population in the Northern Bukovina. For the nodal points of especially important conflicts I consulted, apart from the unpublished sources, the press coverage in the Bukovina. I will present the results of my work divided into the following four periods: a) the phase prior to 1918, b) the nineteen-twenties, c) the thirties, d) the nineteen-forties.

a) Romanians in the Bukovina did not undergo the same liberal phase other nationalist movements underwent at their beginning. Romanian nationalists already spoke out immediately after the Revolution of 1848 against equality for the Ukrainians.<sup>9</sup> When the Ukrainians in the Bukovina asserted themselves for the first time as a political force, representatives of the Romanians demanded the preservation of the Romanian privileged status from the Austrian administration. The Romanian representatives declared that “historical rights” did only accrue to the Romanians because they were the only indigenous population. The argument of indigeneity the Romanians in the Bukovina took from the Romanians in Transylvania, but the latter used the argument with emancipator intent: they desired equality with the privileged Hungarians, Szeklers, and Transylvanian Saxons. By contrast, the Romanians in the Bukovina sought to keep the privileges that had been granted to them for a long time by the Austrian administration: especially the majority of seats in the diet (Landtag) and the control over the considerable financial means of the “Fund of the Greek-Orthodox Religion”. Although the Ukrainians presented a third of the population even before the Bukovina had been made a part of Austria and even though the increase in migration of Ukrainians to the Bukovina also came about because Romanian big estate owners preferred Ukrainians as a relatively cheap source of labor as compared to Romanians, the Romanian nationalists propagated the conception that the Romanians were victims of a conscious policy of denationalization by the Austrian administration: Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews were stigmatized as foreigners.<sup>10</sup> The members of the Romanian elite only seldom participated in nationalist organizations; instead they oriented themselves until 1918 predominantly at the German-Austrian culture. Their representatives negotiated a compromise with other ethnic groups for the reform of the electoral law in 1910. Nationalist theories were developed especially among Romanians from the educated petite bourgeoisie: teachers, priests, and some professors. Many of them, like for example Ion Nistor, were first generation city dwellers

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<sup>9</sup> On the visions of a Risorgimento nationalism which tried to realize the plurality of nations, see Alter (1985), 33-35; Schulze (1994), 267.

<sup>10</sup> Romanian nationalists assert that the recruitment of Ukrainian laborers only commenced after the majority of large estate owners were not Romanians anymore, but there is no evidence for this affirmation; cf. Loghin (1943), 240.

and were in competition with non-Romanians for the small number of qualified positions in the educational system and the church hierarchy. Thus, they fought against the development of schools for non-Romanians, to whom education opened the path to social advancement as well. The propaganda writings against a "Slavization" of the Bukovina were mostly directed against the demands for participation of a developing Ukrainian middle class. The anti-Semitic thrust of nationalism only increased in the Bukovina prior to the First World War. It was a consequence of the reception of the thesis by Professor Alexandru C. Cuza of Iasi according to which "the Jews" had forced out the Romanian craftsmen and merchants.

b) With the Bukovina becoming part of Greater Romania in 1918, the situation of the non-Romanians turned radically worse. Although representatives of the non-Romanians still held seats and had a voice in some city councils and city administrations, their participation was seen by the Romanians as a mere token gesture. The National Liberals pursued the social marginalization of the Non-Romanians and saw in the Romanianization of the educational system a decisive initial measure. As an explanation for their actions against cultural associations, co-operatives, and minority schools one could note that at the Paris Peace Conference Romanian representatives had made the incorrect claim that the Romanians in the Bukovina represented the majority of the population and that the attempt was now made to make good on this claim in practice. To the politicians in Bucharest any autonomous structure appeared suspect, and therefore they also destroyed for example the workers social insurance even though it was not organized on the basis of ethnicity. Especially strong pressure was exerted on the Ukrainian peasants, whom the Romanian Nationalists tried to tell that they had only forgotten in the span of a couple of generations their Romanian mother tongue. All those peasants whose names could supposedly be traced back to Romanian roots were to be converted to Romanianess through preferential treatment: since 1925 they received land as part of the program to Romanize Ukrainian villages. The program was planned by the Ministries in Bucharest and consciously violated the stipulations of the treaties for the protection of minorities signed in Paris. As employees in administrative service and education had to prove some knowledge of the Romanian language already since 1919, many non-Romanians without the necessary knowledge lost their employment. In this way, all Romanian graduates of the University of Cernauti were able to be placed in positions of work until the 1930s. Thus, the trend towards the right was until the mid-1930s weaker among the students in the Bukovina than among the students at Iasi and Bucharest.

c) Two phases with different policies towards the minorities can be detected in analyzing the nineteen-thirties: between 1928 and 1933 the National Peasant Party was in government which sought a cooperation with the minorities, afterwards the National Liberals continued their policy of discrimination against non-Romanians. The National Peasant Party was unable to achieve its goals because of unfortunate economic conditions. In the years of the Great



Depression the state was unable to support the already weakened institutional networks of the minorities: for lack of financial means schools of minorities had to be closed then as well. At the same time, the crisis had ruined many co-operatives and banking houses of the minorities who therefore were unable to support their institutions by themselves. Only the Germans were somewhat able to continue supporting their institutions through financial aid from the German Reich, which led, in turn, to an increase in the influence of National Socialism. Moderate leaders were replaced by radical forces that did not define their reference group as a minority but as part of the Germanic peoples: as a "Volksgruppe". Yet even without support from the outside, moderate Ukrainian leaders lost their influence during the same period. The radicals were seeking to create a Greater Ukraine already by the mid-1930s, before any plans by the German Reich for the creation of satellite states. Even the Jews focused increasingly on the outside: the influence of Zionism grew. Those three parallel processes of radicalization point to the fact that they were the results of the uselessness of the politics of negotiation on the part of the minorities. The National Liberals who were in power again from 1933 onwards dismantled not only all concessions made in the period when the National Peasant Party had been in power, they also increased the pressure on the minorities. Now, Romanization was not anymore simply directed against their "social capital," but already aimed at forcing back their economic influence. Although the attack was aimed at all minorities, the minorities did not unite anymore to fight back: Germans as well as Ukrainians had misgivings about acting together with the Jews against discrimination. The influence of the radical right was even greater than their share of votes of 25% in 1937 indicated. The radical right among the Romanians, Germans, and Ukrainians were indeed in agreement that "the Jews" had to be thrown out of power. At the same time, right-wing Romanians and right-wing Ukrainians fought ardently against each other because each of the groups wanted to create a homogenous national territory in the Bukovina at the cost of the respective other part of the population. The government of the National Liberals and subsequent Authoritarian governments tried to take the wind out of the sails of the Romanian radical right by converting measures for the Romanization of the economy into law. Yet because of the general gridlock of reform the situation of the Romanian university graduates remained problematic. In order to win over the restless youth, many politicians of the former middle resorted to ever more radical demands for exclusion. Those demands were predominantly directed against Jews, but in the Bukovina, demands for the exclusion of Ukrainians were also always being made. The theory of the infiltration by Non-Romanians was only used to legitimate special rights for Romanians in economic and administrative matters.

d) In the nineteen-forties the turn was made from the politics and policies of discrimination to the politics of violence against and expulsion of the minorities. The first step in this direction was the change in legal status of many non-Romanians. While the revocation of citizenship for a third of Romanian Jewry was carried out between 1938 and 1940 on the basis of special laws, pure

violence as measure took over in the “National-Legionary State” in 1940. The transferal-of Jewish property into the hands of Romanians who did not possess any special expertise increased the speed of economic dissolution, a process that was covered up in the war years by renewed possibilities for looting. Under the heading of “Romanization”, the genocide and plunder of the Jews by the state was planned as a first step in this phase. Of the roughly 60.000 Jews that were deported from the Bukovina to Transnistria a third died there of hunger, of diseases caused by malnutrition, or by being shot. All Ukrainians, Poles, Armenians and others were to be driven out of the Bukovina, but the military defeat saved them from being deported.<sup>11</sup>

#### **4. Romanization without Modernization**

When comparing the persons who fought for the rights of their population group, one can distinguish three generations that differed in their conceptions and politics. As first generation, I characterize all those politicians who worked immediately after 1918. They were born around 1860 and belonged to the founders of the first political parties. They cooperated with each other most of the time during the Austrian period, yet immediately after 1918, power struggles between them ensued because of the changes in conditions. After 1918, more and more persons from the generation born around 1880 came into positions of leadership in the national-ethnic organizations. They had been socialized in the Austrian period and went about finding solutions to the new tasks mostly in a pragmatic manner. While this second generation tried to cooperate within the parliamentary structures, a new generation grew up that was shaped by the experience of an increasing disempowerment of parliament in the nineteen-thirties. Those who were born around the turn of the century therefore aimed to realize the interests of their respective client groups by violent means. When Hitler began to shake the foundations of the state system that had been created in Paris in 1919, the radicals believed that the time had come to create ethnically homogenous areas in the Bukovina. The three generations not only had different conceptions of the political means, but also of modernization. Within the Austrian Confederation, the Bukovinian politicians of all ethnic groups worked in common for bigger grants from the Viennese center for the economic development of their region and adamantly maintained their autonomy in the distribution of the funds. That the Romanians around Nistor joined the PNL (National Liberal Party) in 1922 was due to a shared programmatic point: the enterprises of Romanians were to receive preferential treatment in the reception of funds. Yet while the Bucharest politicians wanted to enforce industrialization and therefore cooperated in a pragmatic manner with Jewish enterprises, the party in the Bukovina wanted solely to support Romanian projects. Nistor’s conception, which for over twenty years propagated in a conjuring manner the erasing of all traces of Austrian domination, can hardly be subsumed under the heading of a modern, differentiated society. Instead, it has more in common with

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<sup>11</sup> Hausleitner (1999), 172.

what anthropologists call "nativism": a return to a primordial state.<sup>12</sup> In Austrian times this theory had been a means in a defensive struggle against the onslaught of new forces. While not changing its contents, the theory found itself after 1918 in a new context: for the Romanian bureaucracy it became an ideology of domination over the non-Romanians which were in part more economically powerful. For the non-Romanians, Nistor's model held only two alternatives: assimilation or displacement. Special privileges for Romanians were deemed by him a "national task", the beneficiaries, however, were only his friends in the party. Nationalism transformed itself "from a means of modernization to a substitute for modernization."<sup>13</sup> An economic upturn did not come about, only a small segment of the population achieved some prosperity. For this reason, a variety of opposing forces developed. Right wing radicals of all ethnic groups began to mobilize their supporters with the help of a reactive Nationalism. Their utopian state was based on Stände and only peasants of their respective ethnicity were allowed to own the land. The goal that was to be achieved was legitimized by claiming that in the good old times only Romanians or Ukrainians had lived in the Bukovina. The radicalization among the youth of all ethnic groups points to the fact that the reasons are not only to be found in national-ethnic discrimination, but especially also in a stagnating social development. In the nineteen-twenties, the educational institutions had been opened also for pupils from the countryside, yet because of the modernization blockage, no new employment opportunities were created. Thus, the radicals demanded the exclusion of the graduates of other ethnic groups in the struggle to compete for the few available positions. Because no solutions to the social problems were found, the parties of the center lost their credibility. At the same time that the political system of mediation had in effect broken down, external pressure came to bear as well. The questioning by the German Reich of the borders that had been drawn in 1919/1920 only increased the tendency to resort to violence in the handling of conflicts. Without the war against the Soviet Union, the Romanian government would not have had the possibility to pursue the "ethnic cleansings" in 1941. Yet because of the agitation against minorities that had been waged for years, no reservations existed on the part of the planners of destruction in 1941 against mass deportations. The civil servant from the Bukovinian agency for Romanization who worked out the plan of how the other non-Romanians were to be driven out after the deportation of the Jews had been completed explicitly cited Nistor's view that the Bukovina had to be freed from the consequences of the "foreign domination by the Austrians."<sup>14</sup>

The theoretically-derived propaganda about the infiltration of the Bukovina by foreigners was used as a means of legitimization in all phases of "Romanization." Ion Nistor's thought is a good example for the continuity of exclusionist thinking. Nistor was not only the most important creator of this

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<sup>12</sup> Elwert (1989), 27.

<sup>13</sup> On this as a general problem for Eastern Europe, see Schödl (1995), 151.

<sup>14</sup> Greu (1941), 16.

school of thought, he was also since 1919 an important politician, and legitimated with his ideas the closing down of minority schools in the nineteen-twenties and the special laws against the influence of non-Romanians in the economy in the nineteen-thirties. Although he held his Ministerial office only until May 1940, he legitimized in 1943 the plans for deportation in a piece of writing in which he called the Ukrainians of the Bukovina an “alien body” and “scattered alien population fragments” within an “ancient Romanian population space.”<sup>15</sup> Only minor differences can be detected in Nistor’s writings from 1934 to 1943. The writings were mostly directed against the Ukrainians, and in them Nistor denied all rights to the largest population group in the Bukovina. The second professor of the University of Cernauti who made a career as politician, Traian Braileanu, opposed especially the Jews, and in his role as Minister of Education in 1940/1941, he was able to turn his anti-Semitic conception into practice.

While the moderate forces in the history of the Bukovina are being ignored or still treated as traitors today, Ion Nistor is seen as an exceptional scientist and a prudent politician.<sup>16</sup> Traian Braileanu, too, was honored in 1993 in the Bucharest-based “Journal of Philosophy.” An author demanded a return to Braileanu’s conceptions because Braileanu had demonstrated that nationalism is not the invention of interested agitators, but the “only principle of social cohesion.”<sup>17</sup> The idealization of these nationalists and the republication of their theories without any scholarly commentary and apparatus in contemporary Romania demonstrates that the process of historical-intellectual reflection and democratization is still at the beginning. Only when the old controversy whether the Bukovina should be considered “Romanian” or “Ukrainian” territory has died down will all the people who are living there today be able to prosper. The common history of the region could serve as a bridge between those ethnic groups that once had lived there and those that still do. One of the major requirements would be the rejection of chauvinism.

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<sup>15</sup> Nistor (1943), 50 and 57.

<sup>16</sup> Bozgan, (1994) 345; Zukovskyi (1993), 141.

<sup>17</sup> Topa (1993), 252.

# The Malaise of Modernity: The Case of Romanian Intellectuals

by Edward Kanterian

## 1. Modernity versus Traditionalism

According to a common interpretation, Romania's intellectual scene in the '30s was characterised by what Eugen Ionescu called the process of "Rhinocerosisation". From the mid-'30s onwards most members of the Young Generation gradually shifted in their political options to the far right, as best incorporated in the social and political movement of the Iron Guard. This process is thought to be an *irrational* and *psychological* one. In their search for authenticity and precious emotions, or "Angst and Adventure", intellectuals who previous to their conversion were neither politically interested in nor sympathetic with conservative political options, got *fascinated* and *mesmerised* by the radical and mystical ideas of the Guard and its leader Codreanu. The shift in question included an explicit rejection of democracy, Western ideas and modernity, and a commitment to fundamentalism and fascism. This interpretation is prevalent in the works of some historians and political scientists such as Zigu Ornea, Radu Ioanid, Michael Shafir, Dan Pavel and Vladimir Tismaneanu.

The common interpretation is certainly not wrong, but I do not think that it grasps the phenomenon in its full depth, given its inclination to prefer an explanation in terms of irrational fascination. The jargon of the '30s, encompassing such admittedly enthusiastic and romantic notions as "authenticity", "spirit", "the New Man", "eternal Romania", etc., cannot be understood if it is just repeated. A jargon is, by its own nature, not entirely part of commonly used language, but rather it resembles, especially if it is the jargon of an intellectual elite, a theory-laden speech, entailing its own presuppositions. This is why such a jargon has to be *explained*, and in our case its explanation has to be effected in correlation with detailed investigations into the social and economic history of modern Romania as much as with a broader, comparative analysis of the history of ideas of societies entering the process of modernisation. This task is still awaiting its completion and it cannot be done here either. Instead I restrict myself to the question of whether the Young Generation were modern or anti-modern. My answer will be that in an important sense they were modern indeed, although this is not meant as a justification of their views and writings.

The common interpretation, as I view it, can be summarised in the following way:

- (A) Modernity is tantamount to free market economy and democracy. Traditionalism, nationalism and fascism are opposed to free market economy and democracy, hence anti-modern.
- (B) The Young Generation was predominantly an anti-modern movement, first traditionalist and nationalist, later extremist and fascist.
- (C) The Young Generation converted to the Iron Guard because they were uprooted, emotionally disturbed individuals fascinated by irrational ideologies and obscure spiritualism (cf. “*primatul spiritual*”).

## 2. General consideration about the terms “modern” and “modernity”

Claim (A) is a key one, upon which much of the validity of the common interpretation hinges. It is surprising that in the debate we are concerned with, (A) is presupposed without much justification, as if the definition of “modern” was obvious and could be taken for granted. But how is one to define it? What falls under the range of the concept “modern” and what does not? When did modernisation and the modern age start? Did it start in the *Quattrocento* of the early Renaissance? In the 16<sup>th</sup> century with the Reformation or in the 17<sup>th</sup> century with the philosophers of the Enlightenment? Or did it start in 1760 (the beginning of the industrial and economic revolution in England)<sup>1</sup>, 1789, 1848 or even later? *Prima facie* there are no compelling reasons to restrict the meaning of the term to a single feature or a few features of historical development in the last 600 years, unless one deliberately chooses to use the term in a monolithic and *normative* way by stipulating that “modern” refers to a democratic society with a free market economy. But if we really want to keep it as a general, and as such artificial term in our *scientific* discourse—and the whole debate about modernisation ought to do so—, then we should distinguish the neutral, objective use from the normative one.<sup>2</sup> Modernity as such encompasses a historical process of complex dimensions and aspects, part of which are democracy and free market economy, *among others*. Not all of them are linked

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<sup>1</sup> See Ashton’s [Ashton (1948)] masterful description of the industrial and economic revolution in England 1760-1830.

<sup>2</sup> Although this looks like a dire neglect of Heidegger’s and Gadamer’s historicisation of any process of understanding and interpretation, hence also of the scientific one, and a step back to Max Weber’s thesis of *Wertfreiheit*, it is not so. Weber founded his *Wertfreiheit* on a quite problematic philosophy of values, deeming them to belong to the rationally not arguable sphere of life, belief and action, whereas I only hold that the distinction between the scientific and normative use of terms is a very useful one, since the normative use of the term “modern”, as it occurs in life and politics, is semantically poorer (and it has to be so). As for Heidegger and Gadamer, I do not see much conflict with their positions, since the constitution of the semantically richer scientific term “modern” is based on the variety of uses of “modern” in different contexts, some of them being those of our own prejudices, others being those of prejudices of other times. Building the *artificial*, scientific term “modern” certainly requires an understanding of our own *Verstaendnisse*, although this is just one requirement for that building.

to each other, and some of them even contradict others.<sup>3</sup> The rise of modern logic (Boole, Frege, Russell) is not really related to the importance sport has gained in the last two hundred years, nor does the French Revolution necessarily presuppose Ficino's Neoplatonism. The same holds for the free market economy, but also for the rebels of the Hippie revolution, which defied civil societies' values and the capitalist world and stressed the authentic development of the self and its harmony with nature. Nationalism is, thus seen, a modern phenomenon just as much as democracy is, simply because it emerged within the same period of time as did the other phenomena. There are more specific reasons which call for a definition of nationalism in terms of modernity (see below), but this general consideration already suggests that we should treat the term "modern" as a title of a list of descriptions, these descriptions being in turn headings for various different topics of history which are not necessarily related to one another.<sup>4</sup> The common interpretation concentrates on *one* heading of this list, namely that taking "modern" to be tantamount to "democracy" and "free market economy", whereas below I will focus on aspects of the Romanian intelligentsia which are modern in a different sense of the word.

### **3. Nationalism as a modern phenomenon. Theoretical considerations**

My position can be illustrated best by two quotations which I would like to contrast to the common interpretation:

"Nationalism is in essence a phenomenon which does not relate to the process of modernisation as such, but rather to its uneven and non-simultaneous extension." (Ernest Gellner).

"First you feel inferior, then you start imitating the top nation, then you revolt against the imitation, and you ask why we must imitate or ape others; we surely have our own culture."<sup>5</sup>

Although in apparent contradiction with the claim that nationalism is a phenomenon of modernisation, Gellner points to the fact that nationalism is essentially related to modernisation insofar as it arises from the discrepancy inflicted by the confrontation between two differently constituted worlds, the modern and the pre-modern (or half-modern). An often used picture, first advanced by Immanuel Wallerstein, underlying this assumption is that of the core and its periphery, whereby the western world is located at the core and the non-western world is situated at the periphery of the modern world. The periphery is shaken and disturbed by "waves" of modernisation stemming from the core and responds to this situation in various ways, one of which, Gellner claims, is nationalism. If one agrees with this picture, then it is obvious that *any* response to modernisation is a "modern" one, since it is caused by the tension

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<sup>3</sup> They do this both in the conceptual as well as the concrete realm. The warfare of the United States against the Third Reich is a clear example of this two-fold conflict.

<sup>4</sup> "Necessarily" means: there is one and only one criterion which determines the occurrence of all events in history—teleology.

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah Berlin (1982).

the core exerts upon its periphery. But even if one accepts the picture in general, why should the claim follow from it that nationalism in particular is a modern phenomenon?

The answer is that modernisation as received and imposed from the outside brings about a tension within the periphery which is perceived *both* as positive challenge and encouragement to progress, *and* as tension and humiliation. The first response would be associated with “Westernisers” who propose a radical departure from the past and a full assimilation of Western values, whereas the second response is generated by “enemies” of the West who see Western values as endangering and alienating traditional culture.<sup>6</sup> These enemies rely on the view that there is such a thing as an autonomous ethnic substance and that this substance has to be preserved and opposed to the incoming modern temptation. Focusing on the view from *within* the periphery, Berlin’s quote dwells precisely upon this point. It stresses that acceptance of the West and its rejection both belong to one and the same dialectical process, and that this process has a very specific pattern: Accepting the West as a model of imitation takes over, among others, the value of the *autonomy of the self*, which, once implemented within the mentality of the periphery, leads to the *emancipation* of that very periphery and the belief that one’s own country has an original culture and that it does not need the West. It simply stops considering itself a periphery. However, and unfortunately, this emancipation remains a symbolic one: in terms of economy, politics and technology (civilisation) the country does not catch up with the West with the same speed the intellectual discourse does in the sphere of culture. The intellectuals remain torn between two options: to ask for a quick modernisation of the country in all respects or to reject the need for such a modernisation on the basis that the country is not inferior to the West. Their procedure clearly is an attempt to resist the West by claiming *equality* with it, i.e. modernity in certain respects (namely regarding the sphere of culture).

The idea underlying this whole discourse is the autonomy of the self and the claim of its authenticity, as analysed by the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor. Taylor has analysed this ideal in full detail as an essential one for the emergence of the modern *Selbstbewusstsein*.<sup>7</sup> According to him are several distinct, but partly interrelated sources which constitute the latter phenomenon.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Also the second point is a clear reaction to the first one and as such intimately bound to and dependent of its source. This argument is rather Hegelian, as I willingly admit.

<sup>7</sup> See his opus magnum *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Harvard 1989. For the current purpose, it suffices to refer to the summary of that book, as advanced in Taylor (1992).

<sup>8</sup> To mention the others: disengaged, instrumental reason; belief in the knowable order of the world (also pantheism); inherent moral sense. See chapter 3 of Taylor (1992), also the summary of his key notions offered on [http://www.baylor.edu/~Scott\\_Moore/handouts/E\\_A3.html](http://www.baylor.edu/~Scott_Moore/handouts/E_A3.html) (March 2000). One might object that this contradicts my general observations in section 1, since here we seem to have found *one* description encompassing all occurrences of modern age. The contrary is the case: Taylor’s analysis breaks down the concept of modernity into different sources. Moreover, his whole point is to show that these sources do contradict each other (e.g. disentangled reason



Taylor stresses first and foremost Herder's notion of individual uniqueness: each individual has a unique and original way of being human. "There is a certain way of being human that is my way. I am called to live my life in this way and not in imitation of anyone else's." If one is not "true to oneself", then one misses the point of one's life. Correlated to this notion of individual uniqueness is the idea of self-determining freedom: I am free only if I decide for myself what it is that concerns me. These concern is shaped by the self and not by external influences. The notion of freedom "demands that I break the hold of all such external impositions and decide for myself alone." This individual uniqueness, which as such is a metaphysical property of the self, can only be accomplished *realiter* if one lives in circumstances allowing the exercise of the self-determining freedom. When this freedom is achieved, the self lives in *dignity*, the essential goal of the life of the self. This is why the pursuit for freedom belongs to the foremost task of the subject. Another related major idea is the principle of originality: not only is each individual unique, seen from within its own sphere, but each individual has something of its own to say in comparison to other selves. Each individual's peculiar voice contributes to the plenitude of the world and this is what makes him so precious and dignified.

In Taylor's view, an important presupposition of this conception is that the self is a sphere having an "inside" which is delimited from an "outside". Inside, the self is a unity and it has full control over itself. If freedom is exercised, then the outside does not contribute anything essential to the inner sphere. Taylor proves that our modern culture has been strongly centred on this distinction between the inner, the authentic, and the outer, non-authentic sphere of the self.<sup>9</sup>

Now Herder did not restrict this view to an inquiry into human nature, but he applied it to the realm of nations and cultures. Using a slightly far-fetched analogy, he considered cultures and nations as organic individuals ("selves") forming the "inborn and self-nourishing character of the peoples", to which a "particular cast of thought" and "peculiar vein of speech" belong.<sup>10</sup>

Following Taylor's analysis of the modern self as an entity which claims its inner being independent from the outside, it becomes obvious that nationalists treat their country as an autonomous self, transferring the image of the "inner" versus the "outer" onto the realm of culture and politics. This transfer can be at first merely a symbolic one, but it soon turns into the claim for unification of the "inner" in mental, social and geographic terms, and for demarcation of the nation from the outside world.

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versus subjective, pathos-loaden life), leading to the conflicts we so well know to have occurred and still occur in the modern world.

<sup>9</sup> Examples would be: the protestant conviction of religion as a matter of the individual, which cannot be mediated by the Church; democracy as a political system which, above all, stresses the rights of the individual; and the discovery of intimacy as a untouchable sphere within the individual.

<sup>10</sup> Herder (1784).

The need to unify the country will be the more urgent the more the country faces pressure, competition and humiliation from outside, and then the unification can turn into a violent way of disposing of minorities and a frenetic discourse which stresses in vain one's own originality or superiority. This is the case with developing countries such as India, Turkey or Romania. Although Taylor has solely focused on the western world and its modernity, his analysis can be employed for a study of the non-western world, however with the additional insights drawn from the discussion of the quotations from Gellner and Berlin above. There have been some attempts in this direction, the most notable ones having been made by Mary Matossian and Omar Kutty. Matossian demonstrates that in countries facing the pressure of entering the modern age such as Gandhi's India, Atatürk's Turkey and even Stalin's Soviet Union the educated elite adhered to nationalism out of the desire to accelerate and improve the process of modernisation.<sup>11</sup> Following Taylor and Partha Chatterjee, Kutty's study on the Hindu nationalists arrives at the conclusion that the discourse of the intolerant, anti-western and militant Bharatiya Janata Party is fundamentally rooted in and imitative of modern culture insofar as its ideology promulgates a vision of India as an independent self determined by Hindi and Hinduism, i.e. non-western culture and religion.<sup>12</sup> It is precisely because Hindu nationalists advocate a "Modernisation without Westernisation" that they are entangled in the contradiction of professing what they reject. Kutty admits that this conflict is not a mere illusion brought up by the Hindu intellectuals, but one caused by the pressure India (periphery) has been facing from the West (core) since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This pressure has not ceased yet, because India is still dealing with an incomplete modernisation due to the traditional mindset of the rural population which resists radical change.

I think that the discourse of nationalists (traditionalists) in a backward country becomes more transparent if we see their engagement as one particular attempt to modernise their country, with all the contradictions and intricate details which follow from this. Explaining, as the common thesis does for Romania, the views of nationalist intellectuals in terms of irrational ideology and fascination just misses this important aspect of the intellectual discourse in a non-western country.

To summarise and conclude these considerations:

1. One important strain of modernity is the emergence of the autonomy of the self.
2. Nationalism draws on the analogy between the individual self and the nation. Hence, nationalism is a modern phenomenon.
3. Non-western countries encounter the modern world in the form of pressure from and humiliation by the West.

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<sup>11</sup> See Matossian (1995).

<sup>12</sup> Kutty (1997).

4. They seek to diminish this pressure by importing Western values such as (1) the autonomy of the self and (2) nationalism.
5. Some politicians and intellectuals quickly internalise (1) and (2), and develop a nationalist discourse, claiming the independence and originality of their country (cultural nationalism).
6. This nationalism may take the shape of extremism if the country resists modernisation and remains poor and retarded. Humiliation follows, which is counterbalanced by ultra-nationalism, both in words and deeds.

#### **4. The case of Romanian intellectuals**

The above considerations represent an alternative to the common interpretation. Let us try now to read Romania's modern history by means of this alternative.

##### ***4.1 Before the Young Generation***

Ever since the Treaty of Adrianopole (1829), when the provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia fully entered the economic system of Western Europe, Romania has been faced with a strong need and pressure for modernisation. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century this need was most strongly felt by "intellectuals", mostly people who had been educated in France and Germany, and who, after returning home, had clear means of comparison between West and East. This led to a complex of inferiority. Their country seemed to be in political, economic and cultural respects much more primitive than the West. The 1848 generation aimed to remedy this situation by hastily importing Western values, be it in form of literature, philosophy, the academic and financial system, or the constitution. However, these changes were not welcomed by everybody; some intellectuals began to protest against the intrusion from outside which seemed to impose ideas and institutions foreign to the tradition, and their case was partly justified by the fact that the reforms did not really manage to thoroughly polish the country. The situation of the peasants, for instance, did not really improve, which only increased the contrast between a traditional and a modern society, with the difference that now the contrast was also to be found within the country. Thus the awareness of the troubled state of their country and their complex of inferiority were not diminished, but rather increased. The only way to mitigate this depressing situation was the world of fantasy and imagination: they constructed a nationalist myth claiming Romania's original and autochthonous being.

Lucian Boia's book about history and myth in Romanian consciousness presents some varieties of this rather powerless self-adoration.<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, most of these nationalist myths were already created in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and were only brushed up by later generations. Be it the brave Dacians fighting the Romans or some landlords beating the Ottomans, be it the alleged superiority of the Orthodox Church over the Western confessions or the folklore of the

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<sup>13</sup> Boia (1997).

peasants—according to Boia these imaginary models, mostly based on exaggerations and falsehoods consoled people disappointed by or fearing modernisation.

But, as Boia rightly puts it, “even the nationalistic discourse was carried out by the will to be part of Europe”. To understand this, one has to give up the conviction of the common interpretation that Romania’s intellectuals adopted nationalism because they rejected the modern world. What they rejected was a Westernisation of the country which would give up the nation’s *self* and let the outer world determine the country in every respect. This rejection drew precisely on the metaphorical distinction between the autonomous “inner” and the foreign “outer”, a distinction which is, as we have seen in Taylor, modern *par excellence*. Claiming a certain autonomy of a culture is not an inappropriate act as such, but rather one consistent with taking modernisation serious. It does become problematic only at the point where it neither serves the progress of a country nor serves to console some desperate souls, but it is employed to profess on the one hand obscurantism towards what has to be done to bring the country ahead, and on the other hand intolerance, fanaticism and, as a final consequence, crime.

#### 4.2 The Young Generation

This is what happened after the First World War, when several brilliant young intellectuals faced a more tensed situation and an even greater urgency to complete the reforms triggered by their former generation. According to Armin Heinen three unsolved *Modernisierungskrisen* persisted after 1918: first, the constitution of a nation based on social and political consensus (see the discrepancy between the rural majority and the urban minority); second, the establishment of a properly working parliamentarism; and third, the transition from the agrarian state to the industrial state<sup>14</sup>.

In this context the situation of the intellectuals was more problematic than ever. Having inherited the task of modernising the country and bringing it closer to the West, which was now more urgent than ever, they hoped to bring forward the country by professing cultural nationalism. The latter consisted in defending Romania’s *self* as an autonomous and genuine culture worth as much as the great cultures of the West. Eliade’s discourse up to the mid-thirties certainly illustrates this understandable, however misconceived struggle to secure an “eternal” place for Romania alongside Italy, France, England or Germany.

The new generation believed their predecessors to have had a one-dimensional and even misconceived vision of Romania’s path to progress. In their eyes, parliamentarism, positive science and urbanisation followed the wrong path. The right one involved the existential and historic condition of Romanians, i.e. the Orthodox Church and peasant mythology.<sup>15</sup> Following the ideal of a modern, authentic self, as transposed by analogy to the realm of

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<sup>14</sup> See Heinen (1986).

<sup>15</sup> However, the Young Generation granted the older one one great achievement: territorial independence.

culture, they claimed Church and folklore to be the Romanian self and the only elements capable of conveying dignity to their homeland. This was surely debatable. However, their main mistake was not to focus on culture, but to focus *solely* on culture, neglecting all other forms of modernity, especially in the realm of politics. Believing that politics and parliamentarism were external to the development of the self, i.e. both the individual and the national self, they replaced an apparently inadequate ideal of modern civilisation with one stressing “spirit” and “culture”. What happened in fact is that they replaced a one-sided concept of modernisation with another one, neglecting the fact that full modernisation involves all aspects of the modern world, both those associated with the sphere of culture (religion, literature, development of the self) and those belonging to the sphere of civilisation (politics, economy, technology). Nevertheless, it should be obvious now that their deeds and beliefs belong to a certain typical mode of dealing with modernisation. It should also be obvious now why the Young Generation so obsessively stressed the “*primat spiritual*”: it was the ideal of the autonomous self imported from the West, applied to both the life of the individual *and* the domain of authentic Romanian culture.<sup>16</sup> Due to his role as the leader of the generation and his intricate intellectual formation, Mircea Eliade is a paradigmatic example. It is puzzling that, given the vast amount of literature on Eliade, nobody has ever sought to bring together his interest in folklore, Yoga, Andre Gide’s self-exploring diaries, the pursuit of authenticity, India’s struggle for independence, Romanian nationalism and last but not least the Iron Guard. I claim that these topics have one source in common: the discovery of the autonomy of the self and its projection onto Romania’s culture.<sup>17</sup>

Since they did not become part of the establishment like their forerunners before the War, the young intellectuals faced in the ’30s an increasingly desperate situation, not only as promoters of modernisation without official support, but also on a day-to-day level, being hit by unemployment. A potentially dangerous “counter-elite” against the establishment, to use Pareto’s concept, emerged. Eventually they got attracted by the Iron Guard, whose “technique of mystification” (Marta Petreu) was nothing but an obscure and criminal distraction from concrete problems of life and society.<sup>18</sup> The Iron Guard itself has been often viewed as a vehemently anti-modern movement. However,

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<sup>16</sup> This is why it does not suffice, as Sorin Alexandrescu states in his otherwise valuable book, that Eliade & Co. were primarily non-political because they were interested in culture and “the” spirit.

<sup>17</sup> This claim does not propagate the view that these topics are internally related to each other and that Eliade’s fascination with India’s pre-Aryan tradition necessarily led him to the Iron Guard and an “anti-semitic ontology” (whatever the latter means). Some topics are more related to others, some less, and Eliade certainly contributed excellent texts and ideas to many of them. I am in utter disagreement with Daniel Dubuison’s and Ivan Strenski’s interpretations, but must leave it to a more thorough investigation to show why this is so.

<sup>18</sup> According to Heinen (1986), the Iron Guard had many supporters especially among those students and young people who stemmed from areas in which the process of modernization had been particularly unsuccessful.

both its ideology and its means of pursuing it were very modern indeed. Codreanu's figure of a young, serious, solitary and austere social hero, saviour of the poor, is only *prima facie* akin to the model of the Christian saint. In fact, he was commanding a well-organised (by Balkan standards), paramilitary mass movement and a political party, utilising modern mass media to spread his message. In addition he was promoting a radical anti-semitism comparable to Hitler's (certainly a modern phenomenon), and such non-Christian ideals as the cult of death, exemplary sacrifice, and terrorism.

To give just one example of this development: Eliade complained in a rather temperate article of 1933 that thousands of people having finished their studies were living in utter misery instead of being promoted by the government. Three years later, in 1936, he returned to this subject, this time with a more radical attitude: "It is no wonder that in a reactionary and gerontocratic country like ours, the young and gifted people live a miserable life, despite the fact that progress is possible only through the energy and spiritual products of young scientists, philosophers and artists. How many more revolutions do we have to undertake in order to get rid of this reactionary world?" These statements are essential for understanding Eliade's engagement with the Iron Guard, which was more substantial than terms like "sympathy" and "fascination" encourage us to believe.<sup>19</sup> It is obvious that Eliade is here expressing his discontent with the older generation which was not able to accomplish Romania's progress. One year after publishing these sentences Eliade was already actively supporting the electoral campaign of the Iron Guard (1937), a support which was much more seriously meant than usually assumed by both his critics and his supporters. The radicalisation of the Young Generation's most prominent representative clearly shows that failure of modernisation in the area of civilisation (in this case employment) leads to ultra-nationalism, not because the idea of progress (modernity) is rejected, but quite precisely because of the contrary.<sup>20</sup> Thus the common interpretation, which explains the right-wing conversion of "the generation of Angst and adventure" (Dan Pavel and Vladimir Tismaneanu) in terms of "anti-modernism", "irrationalism", "fascination" and "ideology", proves to be less fruitful than the one developed here.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> A mistake made even by a theoretically thorough author like Alexandrescu.

<sup>20</sup> See list in section 3 above, point 6.

<sup>21</sup> At no point is apology intended here. The claim that the case of the inter-war intellectuals deserves a more substantial theoretical treatment is a claim in favour of a better scientific understanding, not one in favour of the object of that understanding.

# Totalitarian Discourse as Rejection of Modernity. The Iron Guard: A Case-Study

by Constantin Davidescu

*"Noi nu dădeam naștere acum unei mișcări, ci aveam gata o mișcare pe care trebuia s'o încadrăm, s'o disciplinăm, s'o îndoctrinăm și s'o conducem în luptă."<sup>1</sup>*

Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, *Pentru Legionari*

Modernity is the great, original invention of Western Europe, which starts at the Age of the Renaissance and Reformation. Modernity was born as a new, challenging way of life, opposed to Tradition. Its main features are the modern state, the capitalist economy, the individualistic society, the culture of diversity and tolerance and peace as the normal state of being. The embodiment of these principles is the liberal democracy.

Since the 16th century, there have been many reactions against Modernity, as defined here, but we can classify them in two major categories: traditional conservatism and 20th century totalitarianism. Traditional conservative movements imagined different solutions able to deal with the crisis produced by modernity: religious renewal movements, strengthening of monarchical authority, reactionary politics. All of them are oriented toward the past, that is to say toward a previous "Golden Age" which is thought to be the age of human happiness, opposed to an age of increasing decay. Gradually this conservative tendency moderated itself and by doing so succeeded integrating, at least partially, into Modernity (19th-20th centuries). Totalitarian movements appeared in Europe and Russia as a consequence of the First World War, and represent the most radical anti-modern reaction ever to be known. They developed as two different versions (communism and fascism) of the same type of movement, but they both have a common nature, being animated by a teleological political ideology. They are future-oriented, aiming to create the Perfect Society and the New Man, which will be better than the traditional or modern Man were.

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<sup>1</sup> "We did not create then a movement; the movement was already there for us to staff it, to discipline it, to indoctrinate it and to lead it in battle." Codreanu (1936).

Both communists and fascists believe in the existence of historical or natural laws, which govern human destiny, laws that they know and control. They have a holistic social approach, aiming at the same time to create the social purity of the class or of the race. They conceive war, violent conflict as the normal state of life, at the national and international level. They promote a culture of intolerance, exclusion and uniformity. Political power is to be held in totality by the state, that is to say by those who control it. The justification of this total power and of terror as a prevalent political tool is offered by the ideological claim of the achievement of a utopian Perfect Society. This radical critique of modernity, which is the totalitarian discourse, spread throughout Europe during the inter-war period.

After the First World War Romania found itself in the same situation as other European states. The impact of the War, the politicisation of the masses and the weakness of liberal democracy created the appropriate conditions for the emergence of the totalitarian discourse in both forms: communist and fascist. The communist Romanian inter-war experience was a short-lived one. It succeeded initially in structuring a Communist Political Party (1921), but after three years of existence the Party was declared anti-constitutional and legally suppressed, because it was agitating for the ideas of Communist Internationalism which was under the direction of the Bolsheviks. More importantly, the communists had no public support within a nationalist Romania that had scarcely accomplished its national unity and felt threatened by the traditional Russian expansionism. As a consequence, during the inter-war period communism was a marginal, insignificant political movement, with no impact at all in Romanian politics or society.

The fascist movement was far more important, recuperating Romanian nationalism and Orthodox tradition, while warning against democracy and liberalism as the embodiments of modern decay. The most important Romanian manifestation of Fascism was the Legionary movement<sup>2</sup>, which was politically structured as a party under the name of the *Iron Guard* (1930)—from 1934 *All for the Fatherland*. This was the first well-structured totalitarian inspired movement able to operate as a significant political actor in Romania. This autochthonous version of fascism portrayed the most radical anti-modern discourse in inter-war Romania.

The present study seeks to outline the sociological profile of the Legionary movement at the confluence of three highly controversial concepts, modernity, fascism and totalitarianism. The political use and abuse of these ideal-type concepts, concepts that are never to be found in a pure state in the real world, has created a semantic inflation and a loss of conceptual precision. Nevertheless, the author believes that they can be successfully used as theoretical references

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<sup>2</sup> In this text the terms “Legionary movement” and “Iron Guard” are interchangeable, unless otherwise specified. They are not to be confounded, but this convention will allow us to avoid the use of the long and uncomfortable formula “Legionary movement” which is common in Romanian, but loquacious in English.



and serve as heuristic and taxonomic devices within the human sciences. Of course, not all communist or fascist regimes are totalitarian, but they all share a common theoretical complicity with the concept of totalitarianism which, depending on the historical context, can sublimate in close-to-the-model historical totalitarian regimes (as for example Russia under Lenin and Stalin and Germany under Hitler). Consequently, these concepts will be used as theoretical tools in order for us to better understand the Legionary movement.

The Iron Guard has a complex and composite sociological identity. It defines itself as a radical critic of democratic and parliamentary procedures, political parties, individualism, liberalism, capitalism, religious and political tolerance, which are the very characteristics of modernity—(a negative construction of identity). At the same time, the Iron Guard declared itself openly sympathetic with European fascism recognised as a common ideological and political family, that is to say “a genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism”<sup>3</sup>—(an affirmative, or positive construction of identity). The same logic of acceptance and denial applies when the Iron Guard refers itself to the totalitarian phenomenon. When the term totalitarianism has its initial sense given by Mussolini (total power offered to the state in order for it to better accomplish the well being of the nation), the Iron Guard voluntarily and openly accepts it. But when it comes to totalitarianism as it is understood in the present study (dictatorship in the Iron Guard’s terms), the members of the movement never officially declare themselves to be the fomenters of such a political alternative. They say that Italian Fascism, German National Socialism and Romanian Legionary movement are neither dictatorships nor democracies, but a new form of political regime which Corneliu Zelea Codreanu calls “a state of spirit”(sic!)<sup>4</sup>.

When compared with communism, which is more homogenous, Fascism seems to be highly polymorphous, precisely because it has a nation-based political approach that stresses the specificity, the exceptionality of “us” when compared with the “others”. It has at its core the experiences of Italy and Germany, the only inter-war European countries where a fascist movement gained political power only for itself. In the rest of the cases, we are in the presence of abortive fascist movements, that is to say movements that “fail in [their] declared aim to take over the state and embark on the total transformation of society.”<sup>5</sup> The Iron Guard is one of the many abortive fascist movements in inter-war Europe, one to be “co-opted and neutralised by a para-fascist regime (that is a radical right regime with fascist trappings)”<sup>6</sup> like the military regime of Ion Antonescu. That is why, while being nevertheless a fascist inspired movement, the Iron Guard individualises itself as a national version of Fascism.

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<sup>3</sup> Griffin (1996), 26.

<sup>4</sup> Codreanu (1936), 133-134.

<sup>5</sup> Griffin (1996), 116.

<sup>6</sup> Griffin (1996), 117.

What makes the peculiarity of the Iron Guard in this context of the abortive fascist movements is the way it reacts to modernity. It combines the two main currents of the anti-modern discourses identified before: conservative-traditional and totalitarian. On the one hand, the discourse recovers two traditional ideas, deeply rooted in the Romanian mentality: national unity and Orthodoxy. On the other hand, the political solutions offered by the Iron Guard as remedy to modern decay are of totalitarian inspiration. Its heterogeneous message (especially the insistence on the Christian Orthodox credo) offers it somehow a unique place in the landscape of European fascism.

The basic idea of this study is that the Iron Guard was a *political movement* and not a sort of political mystical sect. It was an *abortive fascist movement*, with a unique religious touch, but nevertheless ideologically related to the common political family of European fascism. In this way the Iron Guard structured the first significant Romanian political discourse inspired by the *totalitarian ideology* of the 20th century.

### **Politics of Salvation: Orthodox Nationality**

In 1918 Romanians lived their best moment of national happiness. A century of national struggle and a fortunate international balance of power had brought into existence one State for all Romanians (or almost all). But the moment of joy was short lived. Romanians were scared of losing Greater Romania. The newly born State was weak and powerless. It was confronted with new kinds of challenge. From the outside there was the internationalist communist hydra that seemed to be gaining power (Bolshevik Russia on the East, the short-lived Socialist Republic of Bela Kuhn in Hungary on the West). More dangerously, communism was infiltrating inside the country! The Romanian army liquidated the communist experiment in Hungary and the police cleared away the local Communist Party.

Another problem was the rise in the number of national and/or confessional minorities within the State's borders. And the most dangerous seemed to be the Hungarians (revisionists) and especially the Jews, who were also the two most numerous ethnic minorities. They became in the political imaginary of that time the scapegoat for Romanian misfortunes. This kind of threat was perceived as being more dangerous, because of its coming from inside the State.

When the official political establishment failed to find solutions to the Romanian economic and political crisis, the Romanians lost confidence in their leaders and the political system they represented (or claimed to represent). In the '20s, with the confusion of the Liberal Party, the Romanians lost their confidence in liberal ideals. With the failure of the National-Peasant government to solve the economic crisis, Romanians lost their confidence in the democratic ideal.<sup>7</sup> The "official Romania", which promised to continue the modernisation of the country in order to offer prosperity, democracy and national cohesion was

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<sup>7</sup> Alexandrescu (1998), 194.

discredited. So salvation could come only from outside the official political system, from a political force able to propose different solutions. The best candidate was *Legiunea Arhanghelului Mihail*.

Its success came not from its capacity to solve the concrete problems Romania faced, but from its ability to use the language of ultra-nationalism and Orthodoxy. The Iron Guard's discourse succeeded in convincing, for different reasons, specific strata of the society. The peasantry recently brought into politics, with little or no political education at all, was very sensitive to this new type of political discourse, which referred to the only values and concepts they were familiar with. The working class, with little civic experience, was in fact composed of rural people or half-urbanised peasants. As a consequence, they formed an audience that was sensitive to the same type of ideas. More interesting is the case of the intellectuals, who were highly interested by this new message. The reason for this? Romanian intellectuals were connected to the flow of ideas in Western Europe, where they went to study. And Europe was in the heat of the battle against materialism, whether capitalist materialism or historical materialism. The whole of European culture prized the virtues of religion, irrationality and nationality. The Iron Guard praised the same ideas and claimed to be the spiritual successor of *poporanism* and *sămănătorism*. The same discourse applied to different social audiences.

*Rediscovery of the myth.* The process of modernisation had dislocated Romanian society. The safety of the protective, predictable traditional world, ordered by founding myths, traditions and customs, had disappeared. Modern society installed insecurity, permanent change and the frugality of life. Man faced the tyranny of History with its traumatising experiences (the first World War, the Great Depression). The ancient familiar order seemed to be replaced by the chaos of an unknown world.

The Legionary movement imposed a new kind of discourse, opposed to the discourse of the other politicians. It insisted on the importance of traditional values, especially religion, in the making and survival of a nation. Through this appeal to traditional values, the *legionari* tried to re-order the world. They assumed the function of *kosmokrators*, reinstalling religion as the guiding *Axis Mundi*. Through their incessant appeal to the cult of the Ancestors, of Death and of Sacrifice, they resuscitated the founding myths of modern Romanian culture. Death was seen by the *legionari* not as the ultimate threatening experience, but as a duty and an honour. It was called metaphorically "engagement with eternity", following the example of the legendary shepherd in *Miorița*. Sacrifice, as an heroic act necessary to the reconstruction of the Romanian nation has its representation in the popular legend of *Meșterul Manole*. All this mystical and religious language had a broad audience, willing to understand it *tale quale*. In a Romanian society where the lay tradition was weak, the religious discourse awakened the intellectuals and the bourgeoisie to an Orthodoxy which had only been forgotten but not violently denied and abandoned, and strengthened the Orthodox convictions of the peasantry.

*Rediscovery of unity.* For the *legionari* Romania exemplified the lack of unity. Democracy institutionalised the disunity of the political parties. The Constitution guaranteed religious tolerance, liberty of the press and full citizenship for the Jews; that is to say anarchy and disorder. Everybody seemed to talk about unity, but no one knew how to achieve it: through Orthodoxy and ethnicity, said the *legionari*. All these realities incessantly eroded the very foundations of the Romanian State and nation. Unity could be brought in only when Romania would belong once again to the Romanians.<sup>8</sup>

The Iron Guard was unwilling to accept the modern democratic definition of the nation, as being a political and cultural artefact based on the principle of *jus civilis* and having a contractual nature. The only definition accepted was based on the principle of *jus sanguinis* and had at its core the idea of ethnic and spiritual identity. Those who were aliens because of their blood or of their religious belief could not legitimately claim affiliation to the nation and to the corpus of public rights.

The special character of the Romanians, heirs of an exceptional history, justified this politics of exclusion and intolerance. The Iron Guard goes in its discourse far beyond the traditional nationalism of the 19th century. The *legionari* were determined to promote ultra-nationalism as political platform on the matter and to impose their convictions with the aid of the Legionary State when the time came. Fear of disintegrative forces was particularly developed in Central and Eastern Europe, where the National States were recent creations, with no traditions and history. Each state and each nation in this region felt surrounded by enemies and was incapable of a different approach on the matter. The Romanians were threatened from abroad (the revisionist states and Bolshevik Russia) and from inside their frontiers (Hungarians, Russians, Bulgarians, communists, etc). The worst opponent in the imaginary of the Iron Guard was the Jew, the quintessence of the Enemy. The Jews were ethnically impure, were reluctant to be re-educated in the Orthodox faith, undermined the foundation of the Romanian economy and spread among the Romanians the ideas of communism and atheism. And they were especially dangerous because they were united, organised as an *army*, as a *State within the State*. They were proved to be working on the creation of an European Palestine, from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, occupying great portions of Poland, Czechoslovakia and half of Romania.<sup>9</sup> Last but not least, being united meant being anti-Semitic.

We are in the core of an imaginary construction—the myth of conspiracy.<sup>10</sup> But for the people of that time it seemed very real. They developed a *newspeak*

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<sup>8</sup> The first saying Corneliu Zelea Codreanu learned from Nicolae Iorga, his spiritual mentor during his adolescence, was: “România a Românilor, numai a Românilor și a tuturor Românilor.” In Codreanu (1936), 14.

<sup>9</sup> Codreanu (1936), 151—153.

<sup>10</sup> Corneliu Zelea Codreanu opens his book *Pentru Legionari* with the following lines: “N’am timp. Scriu în fuga condeiului, de pe câmpul de luptă, din mijlocul atacurilor. La ora aceasta suntem înconjurați din toate părțile. Dușmanii ne izbesc mișelește și trădarea mușcă din noi.” Codreanu (1936), 5.

and the result was that the discourse was credited with more reality than reality itself. This new kind of discourse does not allow a critical observation of reality; it only allows the attitude of a believer, faithful to the new kind of religion the 20th century invented: political religion. This brings us to the second level of our discussion, the totalitarian discourse.

### **Politics as Salvation: the Legionary State**

The *legionari* had a feeling of betrayal, of living in a “besieged fortress” (this fortress being at the same time the whole of Romania, but also the Iron Guard). But who was attacking whom? The *legionari* themselves were those who launched the attack, along with the other anti-democratic forces, against the fragile foundations of the constitutional and democratic political order of Romania. Despite the others, they formed a distinct voice: that of the totalitarian discourse.

Romania was in a deep crisis (economical, political and moral) and exposed to the dangers of disunity. What could be the solution to surpass this critical situation? The institutions of liberal democracy seemed incapable of dealing with the complex problems Romania faced after 1918. The return to an elite enlightened government was inconceivable in the age of universal male suffrage. Romanians fought for the right of political participation during the First World War. This was a good political reform, which revealed that Romanians had reached political maturity, and thus this measure could never be abolished. It seemed that the solution must come from a completely new political movement, able to control this flow of the masses into politics. And it should be inspired and lead by a providential man, able to identify the problems and to solve them.

Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, the future *Căpitan*, was a young Romanian nationalist who cherished the Great Union. He was very religious, with great respect for traditional values, such as Church, Monarchy, Family, Nation, Army and Honour: the pillars that should sustain in the future the newly created State. He was also a man of action, with a military education that he valued a lot.<sup>11</sup> He tried to identify the sources of the Romanian crisis. And he saw that the Romanians suffered from disunity and lacked organisation. What they needed was to be informed, educated and organised. The people should be informed by the propaganda service, educated in the spirit of an ultra-nationalist ideology and organised by a totalitarian political party. These practical solutions were totally new, adapted to a new social era: the era of the masses. They wanted to put into practice the project of a Perfect Society, an idealised image of what Romanian society should be, a society in which there would live a New Man, the result of the educational process deployed by the Legionary movement.

*The party.* The institutional tool able to fulfil these missions was a new kind of political party, with a military organisation, armed with a teleological salvationist

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<sup>11</sup> “... educația de la Mănăstire mă va urmări toată viața ... noțiunile de știință militară căpătate acum mă vor face să judec mai târziu totul prin prisma acestei științe.” in Codreanu (1936), 11.

ideology that popularised its ideas through a sophisticated propaganda. This is not the relative or the heir of the modern democratic political parties, which institutionalised legal, permanent and non-violent competition for political power. but “the party as a whole” the party-state system<sup>12</sup> that wanted to dilute all the aspects of public life into its own existence. The democratic parties were seen as factions or private interest groups disrupting the unity of the nation. If someone could unite the whole nation within the institutional framework of one official party, disciplined and united as an army, then the nation would never be subjected to the danger of implosion.

The *Iron Guard* and *All for the Fatherland* were the transposition into practice of these principles. They organised themselves like mass parties—having the desire to organise as much as possible of the people (potentially the entire nation), and having a hierarchical and rigid organisation (discipline and obedience to the superior’s orders). However financial support came rather from the donations of rich sympathisers than from the subscriptions of members. The basic law of the party was the maintenance of total discipline (critique, opposition, divergent opinions and minority factions were not tolerated). “The [Iron] Guard represents the perfect union.” says Codreanu.<sup>13</sup> The punishment of Stelescu was exemplary in this respect. On the contrary, those who followed orders with no questioning were promoted (a “stick and carrot” policy). In an ideal legionary state, the party had to embrace the whole nation. Subdivisions were created for every membership category: *Frății de cruce, Cetățui, Corpul militarilor, al muncitorilor, corpurile de șoimi și șoimane, străjeri și străjerițe, cercetași și cercetașe, premilitari, etc.* The political police and the internal tribunal of the party guaranteed the respect of these rules. For the first time in Romanian history, a totalitarian party was organised and functioned.

*The ideology.* This new party was armed with an all-embracing political ideology, which claimed to explain and organise the whole national activity in every detail and for good. It was based on belief in the existence of natural laws that governed human life. Human nature was obedient to the law of natural selection of the species. So it was in politics too, the strongest, that is to say the more disciplined and united, would win.

The role of the ideology was to educate the New Man through the services of the propaganda department. The Iron Guard wanted to “reform the man, not to reform the politics ... [because] it is more a school and an army than a political party”. “Din această școală legionară va ieși un *om nou*, un om cu calități de erou ... un uriaș. ... Tot ce își poate imagina mintea noastră mai frumos ca suflet, tot ce poate rodi rasa noastră mai mândru, mai înalt, mai drept, mai puternic, mai înțelept, mai curat, mai muncitor și mai viteaz....”<sup>14</sup> And this new

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<sup>12</sup> See Sartori (1976), 42-47.

<sup>13</sup> Codreanu (1981), 20. See also p. 27. “Să nu miște nimeni fără ordinul meu”. Another idea of Codreanu: “Lumea vrea șef și disciplina tuturoră.” In Codreanu (1971), 40. See also p. 41-44.

<sup>14</sup> Codreanu (1936), 307.

type of education was taught by the mean of propaganda, which claimed the educational virtue of labour. "Labour makes you free!"

The final goal of this activity should be the identification of the nation and the country with the Legionary movement.<sup>15</sup> But what was the Legionary movement if not a totalitarian world, governed by decrees (*circulare, manifeste*) by the mighty Leader, who wanted to control and order everything (even the menu and the hygienic norms of the *legionari*'s canteen)? If we accept (as the *legionari* accepted) that the Legionary movement is the image on a small scale of the future Romania they propose to build, then Legionary Romania could only be totalitarian.

This project did not materialise in practice for many reasons. At the time when the Iron Guard came to power, it already lost its "shepherd". The movement was no longer unitary, and came into power under the control of General I. Antonescu. Even during his life, Codreanu did not accept the idea of a *coup d'état*, being convinced that the movement would surely come into power after the completion of the moral revolution that would create the New Man. The crisis of mysticism of Codreanu in the last period of his life and the lack of decision and of revolutionary will made it possible for the Iron Guard to lose the favourable momentum to set up its power. In practice, the Legionary movement was a failed (*manqué*) totalitarianism.

## Conclusion

The Iron Guard represents an abortive fascist movement, the most radical anti-modern experience in inter-war Romania. Its heterogeneous character is due to the fact that it combines two different types of anti-modern discourses. The first one is inspired by the traditional critique of modernity and has within its core the ideas of Orthodoxy and ultra-nationalism. The other represents the totalitarian discourse. This duality of the discourse confused the perception of the nature of the movement for many contemporary Romanians. They perceived it as a new spiritual force, willing and able to purify Romanian politics through the appeal to tradition, nationalism, Orthodoxy. But this was only a discourse make-up, an *appearance*, behind which was hidden the real *nature* of the movement: its totalitarian essence.

Paradoxically, this strange combination of totalitarian ideology and orthodox fundamentalism and chauvinism helped the movement to be popular in Romania and to challenge successfully the already established political parties. But the same thing prevented it becoming a coherent, efficient and effective totalitarian party, able to repeat the success of Hitler's NSDAP in Romania.

From the ambiguity of the discourse results the ambiguity and indecision of the public manifestations of the Iron Guard. Because of its high degree of

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<sup>15</sup> "Noi trebuie să facem ca România să devină legionară...Țara trebuie să fie condusă după voința legionarilor.", in Codreanu (1971), 47.

centralism and discipline and because of its strong dependence on the leader,<sup>16</sup> the movement was decisively influenced by the evolution of the leader's personal disposition (and dispositions). At the end of his life Codreanu had the firm conviction that Romania had not yet achieved the phase of moral revolution, the prerequisite for political change. At the same time, he was convinced of the inevitability of this evolution in the immediate future. These convictions, along with the mystical crisis of the end of his life imposed political passiveness on the movement. The revolution was to come and it had a spiritual nature.

The Iron Guard's political thought was not animated by Romania's past experiences, but by contemporary totalitarianism. Consequently the true nature of the legionary political project was not Orthodox and nationalist, but totalitarian. The *legionari* were convinced chauvinists and religious fundamentalists willing to fight their own war by violent means. In their main propaganda texts (*Pentru Legionari*, *Carticica Sefului de Cuib*, *Circulari si Manifeste*) and journals, they were the supporters of a totalitarian State where the power should be held totally by the charismatic leader. This State should be national (that is to say ethnically based) and should embody the ideal of a perfect society made up of New Men (young orthodox Romanians).

Even if the governing experience of the Iron Guard was short termed, its influence on Romanian society was important. It was at the "legionary school" that the Romanians first got used to the violence and intolerance of the totalitarian discourse and with the institutionalisation of political murder. After the communist take-over in 1948, the political discourse and practice create the impression of *déjà vu*. The scenario is not new. Sometimes, even the actors are the same.

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<sup>16</sup> The *legionari* were the first to put into practice the cult of the personality in Romania, Codreanu being seen as a providential man, God's chosen, the only one able to save a decaying Romania. Codreanu himself had a strong belief that he was "elected" by God, and he had periodic mystical crises. His followers saw his life as an *Imitatio Christi*. See for example the image of the *Căpitan* portrayed by Palaghiță in 1944. Palaghiță (1993), 53—64.



# From Slavery to the Mahala: Roma in Romania—Just a “Social Problem” of Long Duration?

by Joachim Krauss

When we observe the Roma's situation and the way in which they are portrayed within Romanian society we come upon a dramatic image: large parts of the minority are extremely poor, and there are no signs that the crisis of society as a whole will improve. Although speaking of a “Roma issue” might be going too far, there actually *is* a tendency to regard the Roma—and not their present situation—as a social explosive. When this issue is discussed, the stress is placed on social characteristics<sup>1</sup>, and the situation of the Roma within Romanian society is explained by ethnic characteristics attributed to them.<sup>2</sup> So the aim of this paper is to trace the continuity of the social marginalisation of the Roma, and to analyse to what extent the concept of the Roma as a social minority is correct.

Historiography does not mention the Roma as part of “great history”.<sup>3</sup> The manifold attempts to explain the marginalisation range from ethnic to social approaches. Observing the Roma's situation from a socio-economic point of view just offers a look from the outside, tending to regard the assimilated Roma as being “good”, because they are inconspicuous, while labelling the traditional Roma as a “problem group” of society. The observations made here, however, will focus on the communities of impoverished and marginalised Roma who cannot be counted among either of the two groups described.

Although the importance of differentiating between the various groups of Roma must not be forgotten at this point<sup>4</sup>, this issue will not be pursued here.

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<sup>1</sup> Report by the Governmental Commission on the occurrences in Kogălniceanu in 1990, cf. Menschenrechtskomitee Rumänien, *Die Demokratie der Nomenklatura*, 155-157; cf. Ancuța-Romanescu, V. & Andreescu, V. (1994), *Stilul și modul de viață al Romilor din unele comunități urbane și rurale*, in “Sociologie românească”, vol. 2–3, 5<sup>th</sup> year, 283-290.

<sup>2</sup> cf. Haller, I., *Lynching is not a crime: Mob Violence against Roma in post-Ceaușescu Romania*, in “Roma Right Letter”, (1998), 4.

<sup>3</sup> In his book the historian V. Achim points out that the history of Romania can be—and is being—written without taking the Roma into account. Achim (1998), 9.

<sup>4</sup> cf. Burtea, V., *Neamurile de romi și modul lor de viață*, in “Sociologie românească”, vol. 2/3 (1994), 257-273, and Mihok (1999), 166-167.

The majority's neglect of the large heterogeneity of the minority leads to false estimations and fosters ethnic prejudices. Their view is limited to the minority's living conditions and—resulting from these—their strategies of survival. The majority of the ethnic prejudices result from a superficial observation of unstable communities. This leads to general ethnic discrimination against the Roma.

This paper is based on the assumption that the present situation is not merely a result of the transformations that have taken place since 1989. The potential for conflict, and that is what it actually boils down to, has a much longer history. So the question is: To what extent can the marginalisation of the Roma be regarded as a “social problem” of long duration? To answer this question we will have to analyse the consequences of the transformation on the Roma's present status within the Romanian society.

The Roma's position on the fringes of Romanian history and society combined with ethnic prejudices and anti-Roma attitudes have led to an insufficient and inaccurate coverage of Romani issues in literature. Even at present, empirical data is rare. One of the main difficulties lies in the fact that Roma have—almost without any exception—been portrayed by non-Roma. For these reasons, literary studies can only deal with fragments and therefore cannot claim completeness. But this, however, must not keep us from dealing with this issue.

### **The abolition of slavery**

The Roma represent an integral part of the Romanian population. Sources dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century mention Romani slaves on the territory of today's Romania. What made the Roma settle in Romania was not so much the tolerance of the local populace but rather the pressure of the authorities who pursued an economic interest. The enslavement of Roma, which lasted for four hundred years and ended only in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is an important factor of the history of the Roma in Romania. For the majority of the Roma concerned, this is a history which brought along the loss of their language, their traditions and their culture. Although we must not ignore the desperate situation of the rural population over the centuries, it is important to note that the Roma's situation was worse than that of the Romanian serfs. The Roma were at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Although there also was a small group of non-Roma slaves, the term *Robi* was used as a synonym for *Țigani* for centuries. The absolute ownership of Roma was still laid down in the *Règlement organique* of 1831.<sup>5</sup>

On their visits to western European countries in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, open-minded reformers became aware of the fact that in order to realise the dream of a national state it would be necessary to put an end to slavery.<sup>6</sup> Never again have the Romanians reported on the Roma as euphorically as during the revolution of 1848 and the final abolition of slavery in 1855/56. But they

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<sup>5</sup> Mihok (1999), 77.

<sup>6</sup> Potra (1939), 108-118; Achim (1998), 83-89.

have never stopped considering the slaves an ethnic group distinct from the impoverished peasants. The consequences this consciousness had on the Roma's possibilities to leave their position at the very fringes of society and to melt into the rural population will be demonstrated in what follows.

### **The Romanian National State and the marginalisation of the Roma before 1918**

In the new Romanian National State the abolition of slavery was part of the modernisation process. The comprehensive transformation process had various effects on the Romani communities. Their masters had guaranteed the Romani slaves at least *some* social security, but after the liberation many Roma were confronted with changes that left them helpless. They owned neither house or home, nor would they have known how to manage them. From today's point of view it is not possible to judge whether this was the reason why the Roma were not considered in the land reform laws of 1864.<sup>7</sup> The implementation of these laws entailed a general migration among the population. We can assume that during this time, the migration of the Roma increased—within Romania as well as across its borders. Therefore, legal and administrative measures were taken in order to force the Roma to settle. It can be generally stated that only few were able to make a living from a qualified trade. Those whose trade was not required where they lived had to do the work nobody else wanted to do—serving the majority population.<sup>8</sup> But working as day labourers or servants offered no chance for a social rise.

Regarding the large number of Roma who did not settle inside the towns and villages but on the outskirts, one comes to doubt that there was a significant integration during the years 1856-1918<sup>9</sup>. So the new conditions did not bring about the desired social assimilation, and at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Roma's marginal status had even solidified.<sup>10</sup>

### **Continuing marginalisation in Greater Romania until 1945**

After the year 1918, the heterogeneity of the minority increased due to the different social and cultural structures of the Roma communities in the annexed territories. Those Roma who worked as craftsmen, mostly Roma from Transylvania, had found a niche that had granted them certain social security. But as industrialisation in Romania increased, those groups, too, fell on hard times. The land reform of 1921, however, did not consider members of the

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<sup>7</sup> Achim (1998), 103.

<sup>8</sup> Boia, A. (1938), *Integrarea Țiganilor din Șanț (Năsăud) în comunitatea românească a satului*, in "Sociologie românească", Buc., vol.7-9, 3<sup>rd</sup> year, 18, and Păun, D. I. (1932), *Țiganii în viața satului Cornova*, in "Arhiva pentru știința și reforma socială", vol. 1-4, 10<sup>th</sup> year, 523.

<sup>9</sup> Achim (1998), 58; M. Block (1991), however, highlighted the clear segregation from the Romanian population, id., *Die materielle Kultur der rumänischen Zigeuner*, Leipzig (1923), ed. v. J. Hohmann, Frft./M. et.al., 158-160.

<sup>10</sup> Achim (1998), 104.

minority. Consequently, the majority of the Roma were still kept from contributing to their livelihood by means of subsistence production. Growing industrialisation in Romania caused many Roma to migrate to the towns where they formed the bottom of the proletariat.

Apart from this development there were few changes in the employment structure of the Roma on the territory of Old Romania: Unskilled labour remained the main sources of income. The oppressive poverty of the rural population hints at the hopeless situation of the Roma. Many of them scraped a living at the edges of the villages, without any perspective. In 1936, Aurel Boia illustrated the supply situation of the Roma, which lay far below the standard of the Romanian population.<sup>11</sup> The results of his studies also clearly show that the Roma were discriminated against by administration and the local majority for belonging to a different ethnic group.<sup>12</sup>

### **Strengthening of the fringe position v. social stability in the Socialist State until 1989**

Implementing the Communist model of society started a process of evening out social and ethnic differences. What were the changes that the development of Communism brought about for the Romani communities? When discussing this question, we must keep in mind that there exist neither reliable empirical data nor studies on the situation of the Roma.

Industrialisation and urbanisation as well as the collectivisation of agriculture were essential elements of the socialist attempts to modernise the country. Special programs promoting heavy industry were put into action and aimed at making Romania's economy catch up with other countries. The agricultural economy as its stepchild was neglected, and therefore had a low level of mechanisation. For this reason, human labour remained necessary for many working processes. The mobilisation of the masses caused social assimilation and also affected major parts of the Romani population. But at the same time it is true that during the period of state socialism, society was split up into different social classes, dependent on the ethnic group one belonged to.<sup>13</sup> Due to the employment structure assigned to them, the Roma remained at the bottom of social hierarchy. The work they pursued was enough to survive but it did not offer any chance to climb up the social ladder.

Apart from making the Roma settle, the settlement policies which were embodied by the systematisation of towns and villages, led to a destruction of social and regional structures. The Roma's housing conditions reflected the minority's status within socialist modernisation. The attempt to skip some stages of development left the Roma behind as a socially underprivileged people. As

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<sup>11</sup> Boia (1938), 20-22.

<sup>12</sup> Boia (1938), 36.

<sup>13</sup> Mihok, B. (1990), *Ethnostratifikation im Sozialismus, aufgezeigt an den Beispielländern Ungarn und Rumänien*, Frft./M. et.al., 293-303.

literacy and qualification did not include them to the same extent as other people, the Roma still were left at the fringes of society. Only a few managed to escape these conditions, but this required them to assimilate to the majority population. The public ignored the Roma as an ethnic minority, and there were also no political measures to improve their situation. During the 1980s, the stratification solidified, and the socially ensured poverty among the Roma increased the reproduction of degradation within the ethnic group—without neutralising ethnic borders.

### **First steps into market economy**

An evaluation of the effects of the transformation process on the Romanian society produces an ambivalent result. On the one hand, there were political, legislative and economic processes to democratise and liberalise the system. On the other hand there were social factors, including the actual and the individually sensed impoverishment among wide sections of the population, and the loss of the former framework of guidelines. From a social point of view one may well speak of a social crisis that lay beyond the control of the individual and did not allow of blaming anyone in particular for the development. The fact that the Roma are accused of slowing down social progress shows that society seems to need a psychological channelling of the consequences of the transformation. The observations presented so far show the poor preconditions for change among the Roma. Spéder, among others, states that in all countries it is the poorly trained workers, especially the farm workers, who suffer most. Transformation includes four types of poverty: traditional poverty, new poverty, demographic poverty and ethnic poverty<sup>14</sup>, which is characteristic of the Roma. The crucial thing is that many Roma communities are affected by all criteria of poverty, such as low level of education, unemployment and a large number of children.

As a comprehensive analysis of the present situation of the Roma would exceed the scope of this discourse, a description only of the conditions concerning education and employment will have to do in order to demonstrate the extent of the problems. It will become clear that an interplay of different elements creates a circle of poverty, or better, a circle of impoverishment. Research data from 1992 reveals that about half the Romani children of school age do not attend their classes and therefore do not complete school<sup>15</sup>. The extent of this problem becomes even more evident when we consider that 43.5% of the Roma population are younger than 16 of age.<sup>16</sup> A poll conducted by the Ministry of Education questioning teachers of Roma children showed that the pros and cons of going to school are always considered against the background of a short

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<sup>14</sup> Spéder, Schultz & Habich (1997), 'Soziale Ungleichheit in der ostmitteleuropäischen Transformation', in W. Glatzer & G. Kleinhenz, *Wohlstand für alle?*, Opladen, 378-384.

<sup>15</sup> Zamfir, C. & Zamfir, E. (1993), *Țiganiii între ignorare și îngrijorare*, 92-100. As the study covered only 1804 families, it is not possible to draw conclusions as to the situation of the Roma as a whole.

<sup>16</sup> Zamfir (1993), 67.

time horizon: The most important reason is the payment of child benefit, which depends on going to school. But girls especially often leave school early in order to help their mothers keep the house or raise the younger children. Another reason which often makes children drop out of school is that they often marry at a very young age. Parents expect their children to help support their family. During the winter months many children do not attend their lessons because they do not have warm clothes. And only very few of them can afford books and materials. Physically the Roma children are less developed than other children of their age.<sup>17</sup> Apart from their material situation which lies far below any subsistence level, however calculated, the families do not provide the children with a spiritual background. As the children do not have any possibility to study except at school, they cannot keep up with the standards, which is extremely hard for them anyway, as they start off with a lower level of both education and linguistic knowledge. But instead of providing some extra support, schools often send normally developed Roma children to special schools.<sup>18</sup> The fact that so many Romani children are stigmatised as mentally handicapped is the most evident sign that they do not have equal opportunities in the Romanian society.

The discussion about education shows very clearly that the Roma do not develop a perspective plan for their lives. This is due to the fact that the families have never had the financial resources to be able to afford such a plan. It is not possible to plan ahead when one has to worry about tomorrow and about how to feed the family. Those Roma who have lived in constant poverty have developed a way of life that corresponds with these conditions.<sup>19</sup> These unstable communities are marked by several conflicts such as violence, alcoholism and delinquency; many marriages break up and children are given away. Those characteristics distinguish their living conditions from those of the stable Roma communities and the majority population. This development cannot simply be described as a reproduction of poverty, but represents a clear deterioration compared with the times before 1989. One has to consider that the older generation on an average have had a longer school education than the adolescents. Today 80% of the employed pursue unqualified occupations, a figure which correlates with an unemployment rate of 50%.<sup>20</sup> When the state-owned enterprises went bankrupt and the collectives closed down, many Roma were deprived of their regular opportunities of earning a living. This makes the fact that due to the "long-term exclusion" described above only few of the Roma

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<sup>17</sup> cf. Ministerul Educației Naționale (1999), *Invățământul pentru rromi în sistemul educațional din România, anuarul pentru anul școlar 1997/98. Dificultăți întâmpinate în activitatea (pre) școlară cu copiii rromi și propuneri.*

<sup>18</sup> The average percentage of Roma children in these schools lies at 60%, cf. Mihok, B. (1995), *Recherchebericht zur Situation der Roma im Landkreis Mureș und Entwicklung von Sensibilisierungs-strategien gegenüber der Roma-Minderheit vor Ort*, 18.

<sup>19</sup> Mihok (1995), 7.

<sup>20</sup> cf. Zamfir (1993), 102-107.

received their own land even more serious.<sup>21</sup> There is no other point where exclusion from society due to ethnic reasons could become more apparent, as to large sections of society the distribution of land in 1990 ensured their survival in the economic crisis. Although society is concerned about the increasing birth rates among the Roma<sup>22</sup>, there are no solutions that would enable the Roma communities at least to feed the children. Social programmes, which would be necessary to ensure the Roma's survival, are at the very beginning and pose special difficulties for the Roma: as the payment of child benefit requires that the children go to school, many Roma do not receive these payments. This is especially serious because most Roma have a large number of children. Similar problems can be observed when it comes to unemployment benefits and welfare. Many Roma do not get even this scant support simply because they do not have the documents or knowledge necessary for filing an application.<sup>23</sup> Without a regular income, families are unable to pay the bills for electricity, water or refuse disposal. Public utility enterprises and homeowners worsen the Roma's situation by taking measures they claim to be necessary for economic reasons. The next problem within this vicious circle is healthcare, which you are only entitled to if you are covered by social security.<sup>24</sup> All this, which can be designated as concealed institutional discrimination, aggravates the Roma's social situation and adds fuel to the stereotypes branding the Roma as "idle, unwilling to work and antisocial".<sup>25</sup>

These three terms indicate one of the fundamental problems the Roma in Romania are confronted with today: The verbal attacks by the Romanian public do not take aim against the Roma as a social minority but as an ethnic group. Although those social problems are portrayed, the reasons given to explain them are based on ethnic prejudice.<sup>26</sup> An analysis of the Romanian media between May 1996 and May 1997 illustrates that the public does not differentiate between social and ethnic aspects.<sup>27</sup> Public attitudes toward different ethnic groups prove that calling the Roma a "social phenomenon" is simply not sufficient. The results prove very clearly that the Roma are being discriminated against in Romania.<sup>28</sup> Referring to the Roma as *Țigani* includes a certain stigma,

<sup>21</sup> As only few Roma had brought land into the economic collectives, they were not considered during the distribution of land. cf. Burtea, V. (1997), *Șansele Populației de Rromi*. in "Revista de Cercetari sociale", vol. 3, 4, 143-144.

<sup>22</sup> Achim (1998), 171, annotation 19.

<sup>23</sup> Mihok (1999), 170-171.

<sup>24</sup> Mihok (1993), 9.

<sup>25</sup> Cobianu-Băcanu, M. (1994), *Comunitatea sătească multiethnică – Hădăreni*, in "Sociologie românească", vol.2/3, 5<sup>th</sup> year, 279.

<sup>26</sup> The series of articles in the newspaper "România liberă" on the Mahala of Bucharest is exemplary for this phenomenon, cf. ed. April 14 and 24, May 4, June 29 and July 22, 1999.

<sup>27</sup> Study on the coverage of the Roma in the mass media, conducted by the Intercultural Institute of Timișoara, in 22, no. 56, October 28, 1997, 7-8.

<sup>28</sup> 67% of the people questioned confirmed a negative attitude toward the Roma, cf. Poll conducted by the Center of Urban and Regional Sociology – CURS, December 1997, cf. 22, no. 6, February 10, 1998, 12.

and it is the social environment that decides who has to bear the stigma. This stigmatisation increases the unequal opportunities of the Roma compared with the majority population. Public hostility additionally hampers attempts to put an end to marginalisation. Because of the intensity of the hostilities, one can assume that the prejudices against the Roma are based on patterns that have been trained again and again over a long period of time. But it is difficult to prove this assumption. The saying "a gypsy always remains a gypsy", remains true for the transition period. And what is more, the transition has even deepened the social gap between most of the Roma and the majority population. Distinguishing society into different classes strengthens the tendency of not distinguishing the Roma as an ethnic minority on the one hand and the Roma as a social minority on the other.

### **Conclusion**

The attempt to differentiate between the role of ethnic and social aspects to analyse the Roma's present situation can be compared to the question of the origins of the chicken and the egg. Both aspects lead to exclusion from society. From a historical point of view, the history of the Roma in Romania is a history of five hundred years of social exclusion. This exclusion results from belonging to a different ethnic group and melts with the elements of marginalisation. The continuity of the Roma's social isolation can be traced over the centuries, and since the period of industrialisation and the development of the National State, it can be described as a reproduction of poverty. Over the last 130 years, Romania's history has been marked by radical transformations with drastic consequences for the Roma. The types of marginalisation have changed with the economic conditions, but marginalisation itself has never stopped.

Romanian society discriminates against the Roma for being Roma and not for being a vulnerable group. The individual, being a Rom, suffers ethnic discrimination as he has neither equal preconditions nor equal chances to develop as other people. This again strengthens the Roma's consciousness of belonging to a fringe group. In the past, the Roma were forced to take on unqualified jobs which were poorly paid and detrimental to their health. Under Communist rule, a secure livelihood depended on the collectivisation of agriculture and on industrialisation. With these sources of income gone, the very existence of large parts of the Roma is at stake. It is especially serious that an agrarian country like Romania has always excluded the Roma from the distribution of land. The ethnic characteristics ascribed to the Roma include the idea that the Roma are aggressive and criminal and engage in shady dealings "just like the Mafia". But these concepts are a result of the marginalisation and are absolutely inadequate to describe the minority. Social aspects allow us to illustrate the Roma's status in Romania, but they do not allow us to conclude that the Roma are a "social problem" of long duration for society. The Roma have been suffering from a long-term marginalisation whose consequences can be noticed within society, but whose reasons are believed to be of ethnic origin.



# **Rural Women in Romania: the Challenge of Modernisation**

*by Violeta Barbu*

**1.** It is currently popular to talk of the need to recognise women as a “vital human resource” and, as a consequence, to encourage them to become “more economically active”. The implication is that women who are not currently “active” in the formal labour market do not make an economic contribution, and that these women have spare time on their hands which could be used more profitably elsewhere. In the rural area this is far from the truth. Most rural development strategies—to their detriment—do not fully recognise women’s contribution and roles. Successful rural development depends on harnessing the skills and resources of all citizens and on delivering benefits which meet their different needs (Braithwaite, Mary, 1994). Two principles are therefore essential for effective development: the integration of equality between women and men in rural development strategies and active participation by all in their implementation.

**1.2.** It is true that unemployment among rural women is generally far higher than among rural men. In some EU regions female unemployment is more than double. In rural areas of Portugal, nearly two-thirds of the rural unemployed are women (Green Europe, 1994). In the less developed regions of Italy and specially in their rural areas, an apparently contradictory phenomena is depicted by many authors: an ever increasing school level goes together with a weak professional status (ISFOL, 1991). Female unemployment in rural East Germany rocketed after 1989, with more than 80% of women who had worked formerly in the agriculture sector losing their jobs, at a far faster rate than their male colleagues. In only a few rural regions is male unemployment higher than female (Veith, K., 1991). This is the case in England, Scotland and Ireland, due primarily to the growth of part-time, low-paid service sector employment, which has been taken up particularly by women (Green Europe, 1994; Gloria, 1994).

**1.3.** In fact, taking a broader view than just formal European labour market activity (O’Hara, P, 1993; Whatmore, S., 1994), rural women generally have more roles and responsibilities, and work longer hours than men. Rural women and particularly farm women have the smallest number of free hours, fewer than urban women and most rural men. Rural women everywhere have multiple roles in the domestic sphere, they are household managers and family carers; in the community they maintain social and cultural services, predominantly on a voluntary basis, playing a pivotal rôle in maintaining rural communities.

1.4. Methods and instruments for the identification, planning, monitoring and evaluation of projects which integrate gender differences and equality objectives are being developed by European organisations, although primarily in the context of their co-operation with third world countries. These could be used by rural development agencies to develop approaches adapted to a European context (Norem, R. J., 1997). The European Communities have continued to build on the principle of equal pay and have extended the scope of its application by adopting between 1975 and 1992 six Directives, based on numerous examples of jurisprudence delivered by the European Court of Justice, which make up European legislation in the area of equal opportunity. This legislation covers equal pay, equal treatment in access to employment, training, promotion and working conditions for self-employed men and women, and safety at work for pregnant women. The integration of equal opportunities into all Structural Fund programmes has recently been made a priority (Braithwaite, Mary, 1994).

2. Transition from centrally planned to market economies in East Central Europe represents a moment of opportunity, but also of high costs, at least in the short term. Gender-specific implications are important in privatisation, marketisation, and in the introduction of new technologies. In this process it seems that women are first to go; the transition has been accompanied by an increasing feminisation of poverty (Kligman, Gail, 1994), a sharp drop in the political participation of women in the public sphere and an increase in female unemployment. In all of the former socialist countries, women currently form the majority of the unemployed, in massive regional concentrations. In Romania and in other ex-socialist countries, causes of high female unemployment are to be found in the dismantling of the enormously top-heavy central bureaucracies, the collapse of the textile and clothing industries, the closure of childcare facilities, and a dearth of retraining programmes specifically geared to woman's needs.

3. Study of the impact of development efforts on women in Romania is reduced either to press dossiers which popularise different approaches (Moroianu, Irina, 1992, Miroiu, Mihaela, 1994), to an examination of women's position in the Romanian labour market (Popescu, 1998), to synthesis in a global report (Women Statute, 1995), or to comparisons with other Central & Eastern European countries (Hubner, Maier, Hedwig, 1991; Corrin, 1992; Einhorn, 1993). There have been no studies on the predicament of women in the rural area, nor any management studies which have had as their target group women as potential businesswomen. With the aid of UNPD, two introductory guides about the gender perspective were published: on education and society (Miroiu-Grunberg, 1997).

4. The objectives and the methodology of this study are:

- to identify and inventory gender analysis, gender planning and gender training in Romania;
- to identify and to list studies, reports, unpublished sources concerning the development of the rural area and agro-tourism activities in Romania;

- to select policies, positive actions, and key exemplary experiences linked to the issue;
- to identify on the basis of an interview method which are the key organisations and actors, stakeholders, policies makers, and planners who may be interested in incorporating women's perspectives in projects and programmes of employment or in "mainstreaming" women in all development efforts in the rural area;
- to undertake a national survey of the topic on the basis of conceptual tools provided by a GAD/WID approach (WID focus on women's projects priority, GAD focus on gender "mainstreamed" projects).

#### **5. Key organisation actors contacted:**

- Government and State Authorities: Presidency of Romania (Luminita Petrescu, Advisor for Non-governmental Organisations), Ministry of Agriculture and Food (Floarea Bordanc, Department Director; Mariana Pavalan, Director; Nicoleta Barbuta, Advisor Department of Rural Development), Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Daniela Semenescu, Head of the Department for Women's Integration); National Statistics Centre;
- Legislative Authorities: Paula Ivanescu, Member of the Chamber of Deputies, Vice-president of the Parliament; Florica Raica, Member of the Senate, President of Women's Branch of the Demo-Christian Party;
- Academic Research Institutes: National Institute of Economic Research (Prof. Constantin Ionete, General Director; Aurelia Sârbu and Violeta Florian, senior research fellows), Institute for the Quality of Life (Prof. Cătălin Zamfir, General Director), Institute for Agrarian Economy (Prof. Nicolae Belli), Institute for Sociological Research (Prof. Stefan Costea and Maria Fulea, senior fellows), Romanian Institute for Human Rights (Prof. Irina Moroianu);
- European Organisations representatives: UNDP (Clonadh O'Keeffe, Gender and Development) EU-PHARE (Programme Management Unit; Dorinel Lefter, Project Officer), World Bank (Cornelia Giurescu, Officer; Ana Maria Sandi, gender expert);
- Universities: University of Bucharest, Political Sciences Department (Prof. Aurora Liiceanu);
- Regional Authorities: Statistics Department of Alba County (Anton Santa, Director);
- Non-governmental Organisations involved in business management: Business Centre Transilvania (Amalia Rus), International Management Foundation-FIMAN (Doina Visa), Romanian Centre of Small and Medium Enterprises (Cornel Bejan), Equal Chance for Women Foundation (Dina Loghin), Trade and Credit Rural Co-operative Union Centrocoop (Ion Popescu, Chief of Department);

- Professional Associations: Association of Entrepreneurial Women (Raluca Bejan), National Association of Travel Agencies-ANAT (Marcel Badescu);
- Training Centres: World Learning (Constanta Dragne), Center for Open Distance Education (Cornelia Polexe).

**6. Activity profile:** the activity profile is a tool for examining “who does what”: the gender division of labour in terms of the production of goods and services (productive labour).

**6.1. The level of employment of the active female population in the rural area:** from the total active population of the Romanian rural area, 42.6 % are women (1992). The level of involvement of the active population in the rural zone is 90.7 % (1992); the level for the female population is 92 %, and that of men was only 89.7 %. Among the uninvolved active population from the rural area, 67.2 % are looking for a job and 32.8 % are looking to change their job. The ratio between employed and unemployed women from the rural area is 1000 to 87, while in urban areas it is 1000 to 85. The female active population represents 71.2 % of the rural female labour forces.

**6.2. The structure of the employed female population in the rural area according to professional status (1992):** out of a total of 1,969,200 people, 1,100 were employers (0.06 %), 815,700 were self-employed (41.4 %), 771,700 were salaried workers (39.2 %), 140,000 were members of co-operatives (7.1 %), 134,100 were working in the family and receiving no remuneration (6.8 %), while another 106,600 were in other situations (5.4 %). Women typically fall into the following categories: self-employed workers, members of co-operative associations and unremunerated familial workers. According to the dates recently centralised by the Commercial Register of the district of Alba, for 8,087 companies with juridical status there were in June 1998 11,503 managers and members of administrative councils, of whom only 3,310 (28.8 %) were women.

**6.3. The rural unemployed female population,** in 1992 was 3,283,000 people of whom:

- students—699,100 people (21.3 %);
- retired persons—1,016,500 (31 %);
- familial dependants—595,100 (18.1 %);
- state dependants—8,100 (0.2 %);
- others inactive persons—26,300 (0.8 %).

For 1000 salaried workers there were 1405 pensioners.

**6.4. The access and control profile** is a tool to distinguish differences between women and men in terms of who has access to and control over the resources necessary to perform their tasks (education, information, financial funds etc.) and the benefits from performing them. In Romania, women are used to work and the female labour force has a high level of education and training, including the rural area (Einhorn, Barbara, 1993), but this education is less vocational and more academic. Despite their fairly high level of education,

women are heavily over-represented in the least skilled sectors of the labour market. Women's employment is a necessity for the majority of Romanian families, which cannot subsist out of a single member's income.

**6.4.1. *The professional statutes of women:*** according to the 1992 census, 4.2 % of the total Romanian female population have university degrees, 29.1 % have secondary education to baccalaureate level, and 66 % have only primary studies. There are great differences between the urban and the rural population, and this situation will create difficulties in the process of social and educational homogenisation of the population. Only 4.9 % of the women with university degrees graduated from agriculture and forestry high schools. The illiterate rural female population in 1992 represented 3.6 %. This number is higher than those for men or for both men and women.

**6.4.2. *The relation between rural women's level of education and their employability:*** in 1992 the following figures were recorded: a 44.4 % rural average, 86.5 % for graduates, 57.6 % those who had gone through secondary education, 77.5 % for those who had attended professional schools and 49.3 %, for those who had 10 classes, 32.4 % for those who had had only primary school education and 21.2 % who had claimed no education.

Women represent 53.2 % of the population active in agriculture (1992). In the group of those aged between 30 and 59, women take up 65.2 %, showing us the extend to which agriculture is "feminised".

**6.4.3. *The correlation between the activity profile indicator*** and the dynamics of salary winners split into activity types in the period 1991- 1997 to clearly show that those sectors which have a high percentage of women involved (agriculture, commerce, education, health, food industries) recorded the smallest salary (Liliana Popescu, 1998).

**6.5. *Influencing factors profile*** is a tool to examine the different factors that determine social norms and economic behaviours.

**6.5.1. *Legislation:*** "Agenda 2000" of the European Commission stated that in Romania there is no discrimination on the basis of gender. According to **Recommendation 1321 (1997) of the Parliamentary Assembly of The Council of Europe, on improving the situation of women in rural society**, each country has to promote women entrepreneurs by assuring adequate training courses for rural women in entrepreneurship, village and farm tourism, agro-forestry, fish farming, as well as in business planning, accounting, financing and loan procedures, issues regarding taxation and marketing, but also in non-traditional rural occupations (architecture, translation). The direct marketing and sale of farm products by the farmer must be facilitated. The Department for Gender Strategy of the Ministry of Labour has promoted two draft laws on **Equal opportunities between men and women** and on **Full-time parenthood** (Drepturile femeii, 1997).

**6.5.2. *Potentials for economic activity:*** Romania possesses a developed agricultural base; in the rural area there is land taken back from the state which is now in private hands and also a workforce (45%) growing due to urban

unemployment (Private Agriculture, 1997, Rural Development, 1997). Some traditional crafts have fallen but the co-operative system represented by the *Co-operative Union of Credit and Trade* which has a hundred years old tradition uninterrupted by communism, has encouraged local small cottage industry: jam factories, the collection and the preparation of honey, feathers, snails, frogs, medicinal plants, embroidery and sewing workshops, the wickerwork industry and timber. Today, this co-operative system forms a substantial part not of only the service and commercial sector, which has a predominantly female workforce, but also of the network of the credit banks. The complete decentralisation of this system, the encouragement of women managers, through training and financial assistance, may lead to a gradual privatisation of these enterprises, workshops, activities or services. This is one of the ways in which some jobs can be preserved for women, the principle being that it is easier to improve and add services to an already existing organisation.

**6.5.3. Policies or programmes of assistance intended for women in the rural area:** this social group has only been targeted by a very small number of local political initiatives or programmes; there has been no awareness or coherent conceptualisation of specific needs. In 1996 the UNDP initiated a training programme *Women in development: the strategy of equal opportunity in the transition process in Romania* (UNDP, 1996). This programme has many objectives: stimulating the creation of employment for women in districts where urgent intervention is needed, providing support for small enterprises through training programmes for businesswomen, giving financial aid (through advantageous credits, state guarantees, a protectionist fiscal policy for women, the opening of a branch at Women World Banking), helping the labour market to become more flexible to allow part-time and home based work, temporary work, and professional training for the tertiary sector. The programme was carried out in a few towns with the support of some NGOs, *Equal Opportunities for Women* of Iași, for example. The Romanian Centre for SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) applied for financial support from the PHARE-LIEN programme towards the establishment of a *Network for a Business Consulting and Incubation Centre* for women investors at the local level, but the project fell through due to lack of funds and interest.

From July 1998, the UNDP Project *Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Romania* (UNDP, 1998) will be set up in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture) in Buzau and Vaslui counties in Moldavia, (eastern Romania), the objectives of this project are set up starting with the following circumstances: the acute isolation of rural women because of their high unemployment rate in this part of the country; the lack of a strategy for economic empowerment of women in the area limits their equal access to resources employment, market and commercial activities, women feel discouraged, less trained to cope with the changing economic environment and they are the most vulnerable group in the present day transition in Romania. More than this the efforts made for creating alternative opportunities for

employment in the rural area (i.e. rural tourism, the development of small and medium size enterprises) do not meet the current needs of employment in the rural area. Therefore measures to support the creation of women-owned business become a priority for the Government.

The project intends to deal with the above mentioned lacks through a pilot project working in an area in which a framework ensures services for private initiators or for NGOs, with special stress on development services for women, for the bright ones. The model may be transferred to any other part of country through the service and consulting network in business development or through other means. The model will also serve as the background of local technological capacities, as new working places (for women too) in the rural area, within decentralised productive workshops of teams working on farm processing, and will demonstrate how the working power possibilities may be extended at the level of the entire sub-region already equipped with high performance food processing units.

The project has three phases: training, implementation, and evaluation /know-how/ dissemination. In the first phase, the national and UNDP consultants will evaluate natural resources, the possibilities of the national market, as well as the export prospects and various forms of management (micro or small active enterprises, family business, subcontracts, firms with joint capital or co-operatives, etc.). Implementation means the organisation of 4 pilot capacities of food processing in the most attractive activities which can ensure a wide implication of women in milk processing, honey bee production, wrapping of products, etc.

**7. Defining the concept of “rural area” in Romania.** The **rural area** is the administrative territory of all 2686 *communes* of the country. According to Law no. 2/1968 regarding the administrative organisation of the country (which is still in force) the *commune* is the basic administrative-territorial unity which gathers all the rural population. But we have to mention, that there are also 341 rural localities which are part of the administrative territory of towns and municipalities; these are called *villages that belong to the towns or municipalities*.

The National Commission of Statistics, in accordance with the methodology of collecting and aggregating statistical data includes these rural localities of “peripheral urban areas” in the towns” and municipalities” statistical data. This is the reason why all the studies and all the national and international programmes for rural development in Romania refer only to the 2686 communes. It is obvious that this definition of the rural territory it’s open to a lot of comment.

**7.1. The typology of the rural area:** The rural area has a great variety of natural, economic and social conditions. In order to create a strategy for rural development, involving the female population in the process we must classify the rural localities by some essential criteria (Otiman P. I., 1997)

**7.2. Natural conditions.** The development of rural society was influenced by climate, relief, the richness of the soil and underground features, either as an opportunity or a restriction. For example: *the plain*, which represent about 1/3 of Romanian territory, because the ground and the climate are proper for agriculture, creates great opportunities for the development of this economic branch. It is obvious that women from this area are involved in agricultural or connected activities and their competence is defined in this department. Cereal production is the most important activity in this area complemented by poultry and pig breeding. *The hill*, which represent also about 1/3 of Romanian territory, offers great opportunities either for agriculture or for other activities, and this is why the hill villages have a distinctive typology. Last, *mountain*, which represent also about 1/3 of Romania has created through history, a pluri-active rural life totally different from one micro-region to another.

**7.3. The historical evolution of rural economy and society** created economically and socially specific rural areas (Costea, St., Larionescu, M. Tănăsescu, Fl., 1996). For example: the peripheral urban areas as we mentioned above, are largely part of towns and municipalities. The direct influence of the urban areas on these rural areas has given them socio-economic characteristics that cannot be found in other rural localities.

At the other end there are fragile or in difficulty rural areas that have to manage with various unfavourable factors created both by natural and socio-economic conditions. The least favoured are the mountain areas where bad natural factors have combined, through history, with real social and economic underdevelopment circumstances. The Danube Delta, the sandy areas in southern Oltenia, the salty areas in the Western Plain, the flood zones, and the windy zones also belong to this category. There are also medium rural areas that are another type of the rural with specific implications on rural development (Green Book, 1997).

**7.4. Diagnosis methodology of rural area.** The diagnosis of rural issues should be thought in such a way that it should give the most proper image of the rural area's development stage and facilitate the main problems facing rural communities. *The PHARE Research Programme for Rural Development in Romania, (Rural Development, 1997)* based on European frame methodology aiming at ensuring the compatibility of Romanian rural area diagnosis with European methods, tries to include the most important dimensions of the rural life framework given by seven analysing criteria: physical-geographical, demographic, economic, dwelling and living conditions, technical equipment of localities, social and ecological criteria.

The analysis of these criteria should allow the identification of rural area potential meant to ensure a long-lasting development. For a complex analysis with a high rate of disposability each of these criteria has been detailed in a set of 3 to 8 sub-criteria that should express the main problems facing the rural inhabitants. It is the sub-criteria that allow the particularity of each zone specific to each territory. The criteria and sub-criteria were made functional by a set of



45 indicators meant to measure the intensity of the phenomena and processes already identified and to bring the tendencies in evolution to light.

### **8. Traditional patterns of women's employment in rural development:**

These patterns follow, as a rule, the type of rural areas forged by the social-economical and cultural development grafted onto the specific natural geographical conditions, as mentioned above (Costea, St., Larionescu, M., Tănăsescu, Fl., 1996, *Evoluția sectorului agroalimentar*, 1997).

**8.1. In the peripheral urban areas,** the opportunities for education and training, for finding jobs, either in the village or in the neighbouring town, and the opportunities of better salaries ensure a stronger economic and social dynamism and women take part, in a more modern way, in economic and social life. Either women work side by side with the men in the urban areas, away from agriculture, the village being just a "dormitory", during week-days, or they try to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the proximity of the town in order to market the agricultural resources of the farms, and, in this situation, potting for producing commercial agricultural produce (vegetables, fruit, fresh dairy products, etc.) becomes a main interest for the women and the other members of the family. Often intensive agricultural productions are developed (greenhouses, glass hothouses, poultry and pigs breeding, etc.), processing and direct selling of produce on the neighbouring urban markets.

**8.2. In the balanced rural area,** women are involved in all this activities, but also in what is usually called cottage industry: that is traditional handicrafts based on local resources, especially hand-weaving, embroidering and knitting. The village peasant crafts originating in a balanced area stimulate a diversity of activities, particularly between busy agricultural seasons. Daily commuting between these zones and the towns situated at convenient distances generates a diversity of activities in order to create supplementary earnings, jobs, and demographically stability.

**8.3. In underdeveloped areas,** the problems are more complex and the situations can be different. In some regions, as for instance in the Apuseni Mountain, men are away from home for longer periods, often to further away places in order to find work, earn money and buy goods for the household. In these cases, women are in charge of all housework and family problems, working the land, processing the produce, cloth-making or creating valuable craft objects. In mountain areas with a better off population, as in Marginea Sibiului, the woman's role is traditionally especially important in developing the family resources and representing the family in relation with tertiary partners. She is the true "maitresse de la maison" and this is the reason why the men try even nowadays to marry women better educated than themselves, who would be able to be perfect hostesses for guests, be they acquaintances or business partners.

### **9. Innovative programmes, models, and experiences.**

**9.1. The Project of Apulum University, Alba Iulia: Villages Revival.** Aware of the above mentioned facts, a project was started (with the participation of the

students of the Department of Rural Economy and Sociology of the Apulum University, Alba Iulia and the Austrian organisation (*Dorferneuerung*) to revive the local identity and culture of the villages, and to promote economic development and employment. The project focuses on a holistic approach: counselling, guidance and training for the local community and the local key actors in identifying their common problems, establishing their importance and priority for solving, evaluating their needs of financial support and human resources and drawing a plan of action for procuring these means and for implementing the established solutions and measures. Before women are recruited to business creation programmes, they and their local community must recognise and appreciate the significant impact that women's entrepreneurial activities can have on local economic development. Therefore, raising the awareness of local community, local authorities and employment services as to the potential advantages of women starting their own business can help them develop measures to support women locally. The project has been kick-started in the commune Galda de Jos in the Alba district and a first evaluation took place in June this year.

**9.2.** As a source of much needed foreign exchange and employment to stimulate regional development, *Rural and farm tourism* has been widely promoted in Romania in the last few years. This kind of activity, legally established in Romania through a Government Order and a Law, becomes also an important factor in changing and promoting women in economic and social activities.

The initiative of creating and stimulating rural and farm tourism belonged to the *Commission for Mountain Areas in Romania* (CZMR) and *The Romanian Federation of Mountain Development*, an NGO founded in 1991, which together with CZMR, established the first criteria of classifying agro-tourism farms and pensions in the mountain rural areas, the mountain region being considered the most attractive one, fit for rural and farm tourism. The most favourable institutionalised organisation for its development is undoubtedly *ANTREC (The National Association of Rural, Ecological and Cultural Tourism in Romania)* an NGO created in 1994, a specialised professional organisation, and *a female creation*. Now, ANTREC has 30 branches (in 30 counties) with 2225 members, over 2000 pensions and agro-tourism farms, amounting over 5000 rooms for tourists. ANTREC objectives are:

- identification and capitalisation of rural tourism potential;
- organisation of professional training, courses for hosts and rural tourism agencies, through seminars, short and long time courses, and exchange of experience with similar organisations in Romania and abroad;
- collecting and processing of information on rural tourism to all agents and persons interested in promoting and development rural tourism;
- promotion and publication of the classified and quality-controlled units included in the network, through the mass-media;

— participation in important specific events both nationally and internationally.

Through the Order of the Ministry of Tourism no 20 /1995, ANTREC was made part of the classification and quality-control of the farms and agro-tourism pensions according to the methodology established by the law.

Rural and farm tourism is a real change factor because: it mostly implies women in farm and rural communities as well; it obliges the women participants in this activity to improve their professional training (more courses have been already organised); farm and rural tourism largely and directly contributes to the increase of the civilisation and cultural standard of the rural inhabitants, this representing a real revolution of the rural in Romania. The studies and planning projects of farm tourism and farm exploitation as well as of rural communities made by the students of the Faculty of Farm-mountainology of Valahia University in Târgoviște, show the perspectives and extraordinary effects opened by rural tourism development for the emancipation of rural women (Ceriște și posibilități 1996, Proiecte de amenajare agroturistică, 1998).

**9.3. Multi-active development of the rural area** is another important way of mainstreaming rural women in rural development, to assess their entrepreneurial skills and competences. This orientation stipulated in governmental social policies is made for local multi-active and participative projects initiated and financed by various national and international agencies and programmes. Such a project is the *Programme for Developing the Apuseni Mountains in Alba District* for which FIDA granted a special credit of 34 million dollars. The money will support the implementation of the projects presented by the rural economic agents on the creation and development of small enterprises of production and services, agro-tourism, commerce etc. meant to provide opportunities for the labour market and incomes for rural inhabitants. The objective of these units is the capitalisation of the human, material, cultural and tourist resources of the Apuseni Mountains for the benefit of the population and environment. The role women can play in carrying out this project is of special importance.

# On the (Alleged) Peculiarities of Romanian Development: Romania's "Sonderweg" and the Problematic of the Transformation in Eastern Europe'

by F. Peter Wagner

"*Sonderweg Rumänien*": The title of Richard Wagner's book (1991) evokes the special case status that Romania occupies within the general literature on the East European process of transition/transformation. The elements that make up that "special case status" can be easily summarised: 1) the particular severity of the Ceaușescu regime, described by key analysts as a form of "Sultanism"; 2) the bloody revolution which ended in the execution of the dictator and his wife, the only bloody revolution among all the revolutions of 1989 in Eastern Europe; 3) the problematic transformation process that ensued in the aftermath of the bloody revolution; a process of transformation characterised by reconstituted old elites, ethnic tensions, nationalism, a slow and halting pace of reform, and a general condition of societal (*gesamgesellschaftliche*) poverty. Yet is Romania's special case status truly warranted? Or should we rather rethink the categories by which *development* in general, *post-communist* development especially, and the case of *Romania* in particular have come to be viewed and analysed?

In the following, I will try to steer the debate on the case of Romania towards a kind of "normalisation". This is not to belittle, indeed let alone disregard, the problems that Romanian post-communist development displays and faces: in the case of Romanian post-communist development, I would like to suggest, we are confronted with what in comparative politics is called a "deviant case". That is, Romania presents a case whose specifics critically illuminate a general problematic—here the problematic of the Eastern transformation—, and whose specific problems present a challenge for theory building in this regard.

## II

The formulation of a special case status, indeed of a "*Sonderweg*" in development, is not something new in the field of history and the political and social sciences. Especially the development of Germany in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, that is, from the beginnings of a national movement to the

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\* Revised and shortened version of the paper presented at the Koerber Summer School Seminar. As such, this version preserves the thesis-character of the original and is perhaps even more provocative.

Second World War, has been viewed as a *Sonderweg*. Initially, in fact, the formulation of a *Sonderweg*, that is, the assertion of a special, unique path of development, was an *indigenous* response to the challenges of the “twin revolutions” of democratisation and industrialisation that Germany, like all other countries in Continental Europe, faced in the “long nineteenth century” (E.J. Hobsbawm) from the French Revolution to the First World War. And as an indigenous formulation, it was meant to stand for something positive, namely for the organic expression of the unity between German essence (what it means to be German) and the political, economic and social development of the German nation.

Indeed, what later came to be known as “the compromise between iron and rye”, the compromise between East Prussian Junkers and (mostly Western based) industrial entrepreneurs around high tariffs and an authoritarian-aristocratic state, in Wilhelmine Germany appeared at the time to be highly successful. The Empire became the economic and political power-house on the continent and consequently began to see its politics in terms of a great-power rivalry between itself, France and Russia on the Continent, with the British Empire as the foremost rival in international terms. For the political-cultural identity of the Wilhelmine Empire, the rejection of “French” democracy and “English” economics was therefore foundational. The political culture reflected this development in terms of the construction of a German national identity as a “Kulturnation”, an identity that was consciously constructed in opposition to the posited identity of an English “civilisation” of “shop-keepers”. At the same time, the aggrandisement of German “genius” went hand-in-hand with an insistence on obedience to (national-state) authority. Yet to stress again, at the time, the Wilhelmine Empire appeared to be successful in its development. German Imperial-national political culture and politics came to be considered as a kind of model, not the least by all those countries (at the time national-states in the making!) on Europe’s periphery, such as Romania, which also faced the challenges and promises (!) of the twin revolutions of the long nineteenth century and began to voice their own respective visions of a national development.

Two World Wars, Nazism, and the Holocaust ended the positive vision of a German special path of development. The formulation of a *Sonderweg* now has come to stand for a development that was intrinsically flawed. It encompassed and fused into a single and singular complex of development the turning away from Liberalism and the turning towards nationalism; the coexistence of economic power, political might, and a political-cultural inferiority complex. This complex of development led to the complete failure of democratic politics and institutions and the triumph of Nazism. Thus, the present formulation of a German *Sonderweg* presents the National-Socialist reign of terror as the tragic, yet in effect willed and accepted, consequence of German history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (classic statements: Dehio 1952, Stern 1992).

The negative formulation of a *Sonderweg*, however, has spawned considerable critical debate. Since the nineteen-seventies, the *Sonderweg*-thesis has in fact been

steadily questioned (despite and not because of the infamous “*Historikerstreit*”). A more differentiated economic and social history has cast considerable doubt on the key assumption behind the formulation of a *Sonderweg*: the vision of a unitary and unproblematic *Western* path of development which managed to integrate in a peaceful manner the twin revolutions of “democracy” and “industrialisation” under the roof of the national state, *and against which an equally unitary yet catastrophic “special path” can be set apart*. Issue has especially been taken with the notions of an absent or failed bourgeois revolution in Germany and the realisation of liberal democratic polities in Europe’s “West” (Blackbourn and Eley 1984, Mayer 1984, Grebing 1986, Kielmansegg 1989, more critically against “normalisation”: Markovitz and Reich 1998).

The debate on German development in the context of a more differentiated view of European development should give reason to pause. At issue here, certainly at least for this author, is not the relativisation of the Holocaust (only a future development even more shocking in its inhumanity and even more devastating in its impact on humanity could potentially do that) nor is there any reason to deny the failure of German history down to the very core: individual guilt and public responsibility. Rather, the fundamental issue in the critique of the German *Sonderweg*-formulation concerns the teleological conception of development which we, social scientists and general public alike, have grown accustomed to: a conception of development characterised by rationalisation and functional differentiation, and last but not least by a model of the “West” as the historical, logical, and normatively unquestionable developmental unity of “liberal democracy” and “market capitalism”. In this sense, the critique of Germany’s special case status (questioning its “peculiarities”) is also linked to the more general debate on the meaning of modernisation and modernity that has been taking place in the political and social sciences for the past twenty or so years.<sup>1</sup> And in this sense, I would like to suggest, the debate on the development of Germany as a debate about *the pathology of development* carries some lessons for the debate about the process of transformation in Eastern Europe in general and for the debate about the Romanian case in particular.

### III

The parallels between the German case and the case of Romania are in fact striking, down to the very idea and question of a *Sonderweg*. In the case of Romania, the formation of the national state also went hand-in-hand with a political-cultural development that included both an emphasis on uniqueness (together with a cult of national “genius”) and obedience to (national-state) authority. Indeed, in its political culture and political economy of development, the Romanian case is closer to the German case than the Romanian national self-

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<sup>1</sup> Obviously, the question of the meaning of modernisation and modernity has animated some of the classic works in the political and social sciences, which are now being reread (or rather: rediscovered) in the context of the ongoing debate (examples by author: H. Arendt, L. Strauss, C. Schmitt, G. Simmel).

image of close French ties and Latin origins suggests. The nineteenth and early twentieth century struggle between “autochthonists” and “westernisers” can not be discussed here. For the purposes of this essay, it must suffice to note that as in the German case, a powerful self-image around the ideas of the uniqueness of the Romanian nation and the Romanian people was developed that served as the foundation for the idea of a special path of development *in contrast to*, if indeed not against, the “West”.

Equally clearly, the conception of a special path of development, which was meant in the course of national-state formation to represent a positive self-image, has become the linchpin of an ascriptive critique of Romanian development. As in the German case, the failure of an entire national history has in essence been stressed, from stunted industrialisation and democratisation to the failure of any democratic politics in the 1930s up to and including as the final piece in the chain Ceaușescu’s national communism. What we encounter, it is maintained, are the structural properties of a pathological development; and as in the German case, the pathology is grounded in an (implicit) comparison to a Western path of development which somehow managed to integrate the democratic and industrial revolutions under the roof of the national state. And in both the German and Romanian cases, historical timing appears to be one of the key explanatory factors: as “latecomers” in their national development, both Germany and Romania had to struggle with the synchronicity of a *triple* transformation, becoming national at the same time as becoming democratic and industrial. If anything, the literature on the Eastern transformation process after 1989 has only revived this historical pattern of explanation, and the case of Romania has been considered once more intrinsically, structurally deficient.

The study by Linz and Stepan on democratic transitions and consolidations presents the best case in point (Linz and Stepan 1996). Both authors use a special regime-type sub-category, namely “Sultanism”, to deal with Romania’s version of state socialism and its particularly detrimental effect on the country’s democratic transition. Sultanism, a term borrowed from Max Weber, is meant by Linz and Stepan to capture a regime that relies solely on the personality and discretionary power of one ruler and, thus, exhibits “a strong tendency toward familial power and dynastic succession” without any “rationalised impersonal” ideological foundation (Linz and Stepan 1996, 52). It is the legacy of Sultanism which in the view of Linz and Stepan continues to haunt the Romanian process of transformation. Sultanism’s utter inability to reform itself and the power and whims of a dictator and his clan have left the country without the political and social resources and skills necessary to effect a radical change towards democracy and a market capitalist order.

Richard Wagner’s own view of the case of Romania differs in a significant aspect from Linz and Stepan’s application of the concept of Sultanism. For Wagner “Ceaușescuism” was but the “result” of a deeper seated, pre-state socialist tendency within Romanian society towards nationalistic fabrications and hero-worship and an already existing “corruption of manners” in this regard

(Wagner 1991, 35-36). Beyond and above the power and whims of one dictator existed an entire system in which everyone was at some point perpetrator and at yet another point victim (Wagner 1991, 58f., 104-106). This, almost needless to say, leads us back to a kind of Braudelian *longue durée* perspective, or, at any rate, to the historical assessment of Romanian development alluded to above. Yet be that as it may, Wagner's view of Romania agrees with the general framework of Linz and Stepan's view: whatever one is able to say about state socialism and its effect upon a democratic transition, Romania presents something like a "worst case" scenario and therefore needs to be seen and treated as a special case.

Wagner's claim of a *Sonderweg* for the case of Romania therefore appears to be well-founded. It captures the special case status that Romania holds both in transitology and East European Studies. And in so doing, actually synthesises the structural and the historical properties of this special case into one eye-catching formulation. Yet if the conceptions behind the formulation of a German *Sonderweg*, mainly the underlying vision of a Western, unitary and unproblematic path of development, have given reason to pause, one should equally reconsider the formulation of a Romanian *Sonderweg*. Especially, when this formulation is being made in connection with the historical events of 1989 and the development of post-(state-) socialist politics and societies.

#### IV

The formulation of a *Sonderweg*, as noted above, is intricately linked to a particular vision of development. At the heart of that vision lies the story of the West, the creation of liberal-democratic polities and market-capitalist economies and the differentiation of societies, as exemplified in the terms secularisation, rationalisation, universalisation. It is this story of development to which we owe our contemporary meaning of "modern" and "modernisation" and their crowning substantive, "Modernity." It is also this story of development to which we owe the conceptions of political-geographical borderlines of development with which we have come to divide first Europe, then the entire world.

The case of Romania in this view presents an important, because indicative, case in point. At issue in this case is the division of Europe as a space of development into a "Western" and an "Eastern" half and the further regional differentiation of the latter into a "South-eastern", "East Central" and strictly "Eastern" part (with the "North-east", the Baltic states, either separated or viewed as part of either one of the latter two). This fundamental division had in fact been cast aside by the division into "East" and "West" inaugurated by the Bolshevik Revolution. What had been a question of development cast in terms of modernity and modernisation came to stand for a fundamental difference in "systems". "North" and "South" became the spatial representations of the question of development, while the "East" came to be known as the "Second World" and the significant difference between "East" and "West" came to be considered as a political one (Wagner 2000).



With the demise of state socialism, Europe has opened up again *as a space of development*. And therein lies also the crux of the matter: it is a pre-structured space, pre-structured by the already existing—formerly “Western”—institutions (most prominently now the EU) and by a reinvigoration of the historical “East/West” borderline in the aftermath of the demise of state socialism. Przeworski’s famous dictum, “[t]he East has become the South,” in fact only articulates the historical irony of the collapse of what had once been considered the societal-organisational alternative to the Western model of development. After the communist “detour”, the path of development once more and once again is the difficult path that leads from the “periphery” to the “centre”, only this time, that path is made doubly difficult because in their reform process, the countries of the former Eastern Europe have to engage consciously and at the same time in a radical restructuring of both economy and polity. The effect, if I may be permitted a graphic illustration, is indeed that of a self-performed emergency surgery, with the actual outcome still to be determined.<sup>2</sup>

Yet the “renaissance” (K. Müller) of modernisation theory in response to the events of 1989 demonstrates that the general, European and global dimension of the fall of state socialism has been (and continues to be!) highly underrated, if not overlooked. Moreover, this renaissance does not reflect upon its own central categories of modernisation and modernity; instead, it takes them at face value. But if the ongoing debate on modernisation and modernity in the political and social sciences in the West is any indication, then the meaning of both terms is less than self-evident anymore and the very idea of the West as a unity can not be easily upheld, let alone simply posited. We can therefore identify a particularly problematic context for the process of transformation in the former Eastern Europe. The fall of state socialism as a political-geographic borderline means that “East” and “West” are not self-evident categories anymore; at the same time, “modernisation” and “modernity” are equally not anymore—if they ever actually were—self-evident categories to capture the means and ends of development. The task confronting the countries of the former Eastern Europe presents it self there fore as a double synchronicity: the countries have to integrate themselves into a regional and international context which at the same time is itself undergoing a profound transformation. To put it bluntly: in their development the countries of the former Eastern Europe wish and are being asked to replicate a model of development which in reality is already history. Add to this the simple fact that in history no “society” ever developed by simply ingesting or replicating—one to one—the standards, models of forerunners and/or victors (no matter how successful the latter might have been) and one realises the openness and contingency of the entire situation.

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<sup>2</sup> Romanian readers find a thorough discussion of the Western debate on the Eastern transformation, remaining, however, on the level of political philosophy (discourse analysis) without delving into the themes set by political sociology and political economy, in Crăițu (1998), 189-220.

The consequences of the historical-structural, international and regional context of “post-state-socialism” present in each case an *Eigendynamik*.<sup>3</sup> In the case of Romania, as noted, this *Eigendynamik* is commonly held to be “special” in the sense of being set apart from the posited norm of a “democratic transition and consolidation” and “integration” as (implicitly or explicitly) defined by a unitary path and model of Western development (classical modernisation). Yet viewed as an *Eigendynamik* within the general context specified above, those peculiarities represent only the *specificity* of the Romanian case *in comparison* to other cases within and outside of its immediate historical-structural environment. This way, the debate about the Romanian case in the literature on the East European transformations can be reconstructed as a debate about the meaning and trajectory of the Eastern transformation itself:

- State socialism: Especially transitology views the “prior regime type” as the key influence on the transition and the process of democratic consolidation. The case of Romania with its especially brutal and tyrannical cult of personality underlines this view.
- Revolution: If the collapse of state socialism in the year 1989 was a big surprise to most, experts and lay persons alike, the rather peaceful manner in which the events unfolded was totally unexpected. The case of Romania presented the collapse of state socialism in a manner that was in fact more recognisable to its audience: as a violent, bloody event, charged with the question of what exactly happened and who was really responsible.
- Institutionalisation/consolidation/restoration: The case of Romania provides ample and exemplary proof that the transition in system/regime (*Systemwechsel*) in itself is no guarantee for a specific reform policy, or more generally for a smooth liberal-democratic, market-capitalist development.
- History: If the problems of development for/in Europe’s “East”, including the development of democracy, can be reconstructed as a question of the relationship to Western modernity, then Romania provides an exemplary and indicative case thereof, namely, the pathological “eternal repetition” of the struggle for and against that modernity.

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<sup>3</sup> In an early, important essay on the Eastern transformation process, the Polish sociologist and philosopher Jadwiga Staniszkis distinguished five “dilemmas of democracy” which can be summarised as follows: 1) demobilisation: the process of transformation was initialised by a process of mobilisation, yet for the transformation to continue, for the necessary consolidation to set in, mobilisation has to be taken back from above; 2) the ambiguous importance of the state: the state takes on a renewed importance as sole representative of the common interest and initialiser of the entire reform process, which also makes new abuses of state power possible; 3) the Russian problem: the process of transformation in Eastern Europe remains within the orbit and within the influence of a new Russian colonial state; 4) the ambiguous solution of the presidency: as an attempt to fill the power vacuum left behind by the communist party, the presidency as institution is rather ill-defined; 5) the restrictive context of reform activity: both internal economic crisis and external economic dependence reduce the options available to the political actors.

What Blackbourn and Eley concluded for Germany's *Sonderweg* therefore can be said to hold for Romania's role as well. Romania is "more the intensified version of the norm than the exception." As such, the case of Romania can be seen as exemplary and indicative of the European problematic of development as a spatial "West/East" problematic. In this way, "the peculiar ... help[s] to illuminate the general, rather than remaining stubbornly (and sometimes morbidly) peculiar." (Blackbourn and Eley 1984, 292)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Indeed, in this sense, it does not even make sense to present "Yugoslavia" as a special case, as the exception of Europe's old/new East. For if there has been nothing inevitable about the creation of a Yugoslav Republic in the first place, its dissolution was simply a possibility which took increasing shape after Tito's death and became an option after the last levy (the existence of a state socialist Eastern Europe) had broken.

# Considerations about a Romanian-German Summer Academy on Modernisation

by Bodo von Borries

## 1. Bringing together a New Generation of Scholars

In principle, meetings between Western Central European and South-eastern European Scholars are not unusual since 1989. Although the number may have been higher and the positive curiosity more intensive in the first years. Nevertheless, the communication between both “scientific worlds” is a problem, because it mainly takes place on the highest steps and ranks of social and historical research in big international conferences, not in the broad field of excellent young individuals at school and university levels.

A certain rapprochement and reconciliation of the leading persons socialised and experienced in the period of the Cold War (1946-1989) may be important and should not be underestimated. But the co-operation and exchange of the coming generations which will have to live together in the Europe (even the European Union) of the 21st century is much more important and much more difficult to organise. Nevertheless, building a network for the future scientific and intellectual co-operation is a very fruitful activity.

This seems to be the exact and valid legitimation for the investment, on the part of the organisers, Dr Murgescu and Mr Kanterian, and the financing Koerber Foundation, of a lot of work, time and money in the summer course “Modernisation of Romania” in Sibiu in September 1999—dealing mainly with the problems of the Romanian side and only sometimes covering German experiences of modernisation and bilateral relations of both societies as well (this is not a marginal observation, but typical of a complicated and asymmetric relation).

Nevertheless, the process of scientific communication among representatives of the Post-Cold War generation has been fascinating for me as a German professor, who is not a specialist in “Modernisation”, but deeply involved in the intellectual and cultural exchange between Western, Central and South-Eastern Europe (see *Miteinander leben in Europa*, 1996 and subsequent years), to participate actively in the whole ten day conference.

As an educator, my task was to moderate the discussions of “elite” university graduate students—and excellent assistant professors as well. Considering the participants’ status, the complex topic and the foreign language (English), nobody could be astonished, if some papers show some labours and shortcomings of scientific beginners. Nevertheless, we have to take care of the young

peoples” development in the field of international encounters early. We should not try to make the next generation excellent social scientists first and send them to intercultural meetings afterwards. In this way they will never put away their national or regional spectacles and blinkers.

## 2. Exchange between unavoidably Asymmetric Partners

Evidently and unfortunately, the relation of Germany and Romania is an asymmetric one—and not only in the case of a short summer academy. This is typical for the two regions of the continent and not very different in the cases of France and Serbia or of Great Britain and Bulgaria. On the one hand, we find the “old and rich” nations of the West with market economies and democratic structures at least since 1945; on the other hand we have the late-coming nations of the nineteenth century, a postponed industrialisation and “post-socialist” transformation societies of 1989. Coming to equal terms is not only (though it may be substantially as well!) a question of “good will” or “bad prejudices”. Clearly one precondition is to articulate and discuss the problems of “asymmetric” relations in an open and honest manner—without comfortable illusions or false politeness.

Often, the South-eastern nations felt (and feel) betrayed, neglected and despised by the Western societies. The integral nationalism of some nations in the region clearly shows signs of a feeling of inferiority, hidden behind a feeling of superiority. Indeed, this may be interpreted as a general characteristic of all “nationalisms” and other “socio-centrisms” (e.g. “male” and “female chauvinism”, “white” and “blue collar chauvinism” etc.). Nevertheless, in the case of “Western” and “Eastern” Europe the—partly real and partly imagined—“slope” or “gradient” from the Northwest to the Southeast of the continent is a major political and mental problem.

It is deeply rooted in “real” historical developments, but in historical constructions and in the minds of the peoples as well. We only have to mention “reformation”, “enlightenment”, “industrialisation” and “democratic revolution” in the Western parts in comparison to “Byzantine orthodoxy”, “Tatar yoke”, “Ottoman yoke” (and partly also “German/Austrian yoke”) in the East, to say nothing of the “sacrifices” of South-eastern societies in favour of ungrateful Western ones, the egoistic help of the slavophile “big brother” in Moscow and the assistance of Western powers for the Ottoman “sick man on the Bosphorus” (especially, but not only, in the Crimean War, 1854-1856).

Indeed, many people in the South-east feel at the same time superior and inferior to Western nations. Even today, they appear torn between both poles or tendencies like Russian intellectuals in the nineteenth century between imitating “Westerners” (e.g. Herzen and Turgenev) and proud “Slavophiles” (e.g. Goncharov and Dostoyevsky). This makes a “split” orientation towards a “foreign” and towards an “own” tradition.

The situation of people in the West (many do not consider the question at all) is another one: Normally, they simply feel superior, but have something like a bad conscience, a feeling of guilt or at least of pity. Nevertheless, they are

mainly orientated towards the “West”, i.e. (North)-America, France and England. The fundamental importance of the Eastern and South-eastern part of the continent for the wellbeing and stability of the whole unit was and is seldom recognised—with the remarkable exception of those groups remembering the long-term German migration to and influence in Eastern Central and South-eastern Europe. Understandably, this group often has an ambivalent mental approach to the Southeast, sometimes mixed of nostalgic longing and arrogant superciliousness.

There are heavy consequences of the asymmetric structure. It is very easy to motivate many German pupils or students to exchange programmes to America, France and Great Britain, also to Italy and Spain. They are prepared to learn those languages as well, especially English and French, but even Spanish and Italian. It is a much more difficult task to find only a few German pupils for an exchange programme to Poland, the Czech Republic or Russia, to say nothing of Bulgaria, Romania or Hungary. And the number of young Germans learning those languages—which are no languages of “small communities”!—is terribly low.

To say this is not very polite or “politically correct” (neither in Germany nor in Romania), but we have to face reality. Many persons in Western Europe are not deeply interested in the South-east. The public seems more or less indifferent or even bored. Maybe this is morally wrong and politically stupid; nevertheless it is a fact. There is only a small minority with engagement and enthusiasm for the “Balkan region”—without any touch of nostalgia or any claim of hegemony.

Hundreds (if not thousands) of German scholars work on “American”, “British” or “French” studies, thematising the history, literature, art, politics, economy etc. of those countries. Only some dozens (if that) have specialised in “Romanian”, “Bulgarian” or “Hungarian” studies. Those who have done so have often biographical links and motives, having come from those societies to Germany as emigrants or re-migrants (like some participants at the Sibiu conference with Transylvanian “Saxon” ancestors). Sometimes, this creates a marginal position for them in German society and German scholarship; they are a structural minority among Germans themselves.

Our Romanian (Bulgarian, Hungarian etc.) friends have to keep these contexts in mind, even if they are unfavourable or disappointing. Personally, I am not proud but sad about the facts. Nevertheless we have to be honest with each other and to work together carefully for a long-term improvement.

### **3. Modernisation—Good, Evil or Ambivalent?**

An additional remark should be made regarding “modernisation”. Perhaps, the word is not adequate, but up to now we have no better scientific concept. For me, “modernisation” or “the project of modernity” is not a self-evident “value”, but a basically ambivalent process. This process cannot be avoided but it can be at least partly consciously steered. Clearly nations and people all over the world are interested in longer life (“medical progress”, e.g. lower infant mortality),

assured and rich food, better houses, less hard work, higher education, improved political participation (“democracy”, “human and civil rights”), more mobility (“travel”) etc.

On the other hand, nobody can deny that “modernisation” has brought severe environmental destruction (with the new characteristics of globality, irreversibility, invisibility, and linkedness [feed-backs]), the absurdity and impossibility of constant exponential growth (“Chessboard Calculation”), a number of genocides and expulsions, individualism and individual isolation made absolute, mass unemployment etc., etc. And apparently, the risks are growing as fast as the problem solving capacities. We have to face at least the provocative idea of “modernisation” as a possible dead end or a threatening suicide course.

Subsequently, in the late eighties, it was known and publicly accepted that the standard of living in the most “rich” (and “wasting”) countries logically cannot be the aim of the “poor” (and “shortage”) countries (see the report of the Brundtland commission). One billion (1,000,000,000) private cars in China and India are a nightmare, but meanwhile a possible and probable one. Avoiding starvation and absolute poverty is a reasonable goal: imitation of the “Western way of life” is not.

On the other hand, these “limits of growth” included the admission that (Western) Europe and other “rich”, “modernised” countries cannot continue their way of constantly growing consumption, demand and destruction, as well. The “happy few” cannot refuse or deny goods and services to the “unhappy many”, as long as they insist on keeping their privileges themselves. As Immanuel Kant clearly stated, it is against logic and morality to forbid actions to others which you claim for yourself undoubtedly (“*moralischer Imperativ*”).

Therefore, “renunciation” and “transformation” (“qualitative growth”, “ecological change”, “soft technologies”) should be the slogans of politicians in the West. Unfortunately, this fundamental political insight has been forgotten completely in the meantime. It was lost again during the process of so-called “globalisation”, which in fact means already the fourth or fifth wave of “globalisation” in the course of “modern” history since 1492. The acceleration of the destruction of the environment and the inner world (mentality) goes on without any hesitation or bad conscience.

#### **4. Modernisation and Consciousness of History**

Perhaps some readers will find these remarks too pessimistic or too cynical. Therefore, I want to exemplify the ambivalence of modernisation by a more neutral example, the “consciousness of history” itself. In 1995, a survey, *YOUTH and HISTORY*, was administered among nearly 32,000 ninth-graders (around fifteen years old) in many European countries (30 samples of nations and autonomous cultural minorities), unfortunately with the exception of Romania (see Angvik/von Borries 1997, van der Leeuw-Roord 1998). Of course, the attitudes of adolescents towards “Europe” are of special interest, but have already been analysed elsewhere (see von Borries 1999).

Some other results were, especially the high explanatory power of per capita income and religious engagement (understood as the faith of traditional religious communities, like churches, synagogues and mosques) (see von Borries et al. 1999, 288-292). Obviously, both are indicators of modernisation processes, though very rough ones. As simple examples, some findings may be given in two illustrative and impressive forms. For this purpose, I do not select single and simple questions from the questionnaire (“items”), but combinations of groups of questions (“constructs”, calculated by factor analysis), because they are more reliable. In particular some correlation coefficients of “factors” to the gross national product per capita and to the intensity of religious engagement are mentioned; they are not calculated for 32,000 students, but for 30 samples (countries and minorities). Correlations describe the statistical connection (“common variance”) of two phenomena (though not necessarily a causal connection). The square of the coefficient gives the percentage of the common variance (e.g.  $r=.50$  means 25%,  $r=.70$  means 50%).

Additionally I will present some figures giving national mean values of factor scores (compared to the international mean and the standard deviations). A difference of 20% from the standard deviation between two samples is already a phenomenon not only statistically significant but also mentally relevant; but for some constructs we find contrasts of more than 100% (or even 150%) between the “minimum” and the “maximum” countries. These are extremely strong effects.

1. The *general motivation for dealing with history* is severely damaged by growth in income and by increasing secularisation (see figure 1). This is clearly proved by the correlation coefficients on country level: The “richness” of the country explains one third of the variance of general motivation ( $r_{\text{Country level}} = -.58$ , s.), the “religious engagement” even three fifth ( $r_{\text{Country level}} = .78$ , s.). As a historian, I cannot be happy that adolescents in “modernised” countries are saying “goodbye” to history and its importance for orientation in private and public life. Maybe, the youngsters in modernised countries are more “critical” mainly because they have been encouraged to criticise everything, even history, history learning and history teachers. Therefore, they seem to be less “enthusiastic” in nearly every question. Nevertheless, the loss of general motivation for dealing with history is the most striking phenomenon. The “rich” samples clearly have more “negative” ( $r_{\text{Country level}} = .44$ , s.) and less “positive” associations ( $r_{\text{Country level}} = -.37$ , s.) to older periods of history.

2. This indicates that adolescents in more “modernised” and more “traditional” countries have different concepts of history as well. For example, the students from “rich” countries ascribe a far lower *influence of important events and mighty persons* to history ( $r_{\text{Country level}} = -.57$ , s.) in the past (see figure 2). The students of “religious” nations expect and anticipate a much higher impact of important events and mighty persons to future history ( $r_{\text{Country level}} = .63$ , s.). Obviously, these are signs of a more “traditional” mode of writing—and learning or understanding—“political historiography”. In the survey *YOUTH*



and HISTORY, two other concepts (demographic and ecological processes, progress of science and technology) were measured as well.

3. Consistently, samples of “modernised” countries have another approach to the causation of “prosperity” and “poverty” than those in “traditional” ones. In rich societies, “richness” is ascribed more to “*luck*” ( $r_{\text{Country level}} = .49$ , s.) and (likely) to “*merit*” ( $r_{\text{Country level}} = .36$ , nearly significant) and less to “*injustice*” ( $r_{\text{Country level}} = -.57$ , s.) than in poor ones. This result (see figure 3) is not unexpected (we all remember the saying “property is theft”), but important. Parallel to this, “pious” samples express a better empathy to a “*religious reaction*” in the case of a forced marriage in the Middle Ages ( $r_{\text{Country level}} = .65$ , s.), but a lower empathy to “usual (traditional) obedience” ( $r_{\text{Country level}} = -.52$ , s.) in the same situation. They understand the Middle Ages less as “glory and splendour” ( $r_{\text{Country level}} = -.48$ , s.) and (likely) more as “dominance and violence” ( $r_{\text{Country level}} = .32$ , nearly significant).

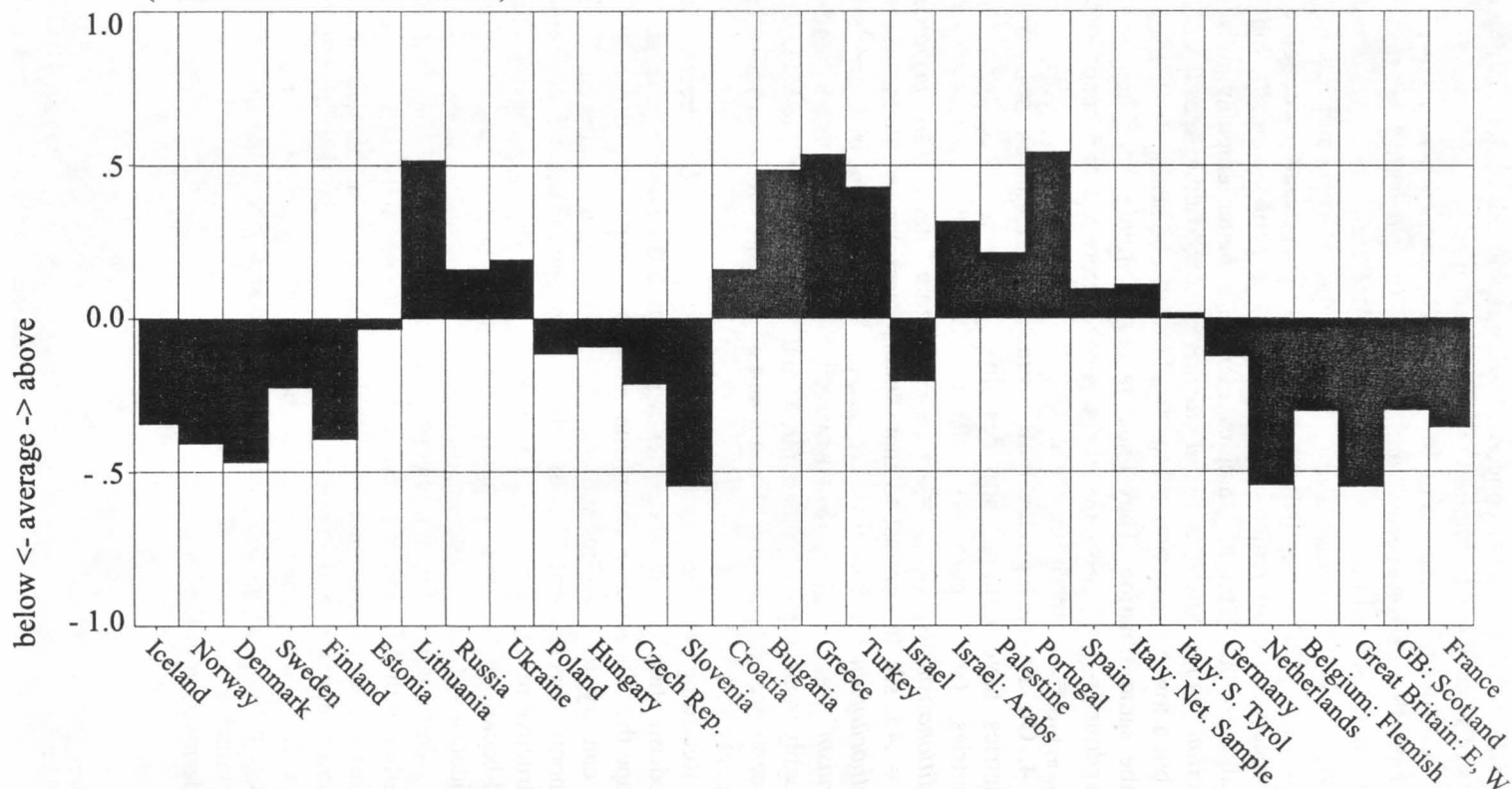
4. On a very high level of abstraction, adolescents from “modernised” countries have political attitudes divergent from those from “traditional” countries (see figure 4). “Rich” samples show less “*authoritarian traditionalism*” ( $r_{\text{Country level}} = -.57$ , s.), but more “*materialistic privatism*” ( $r_{\text{Country level}} = .45$ , s.). In contrast to that, “pious” samples are characterised by more “*authoritarian traditionalism*” ( $r_{\text{Country level}} = .78$ , s.), but by more “*fundamental altruism*” ( $r_{\text{Country level}} = .48$ , s.) as well. All these relations of “modernisation” (roughly measured by “consumption” and “secularisation”) to historical-political concepts are no “peanuts”. The amount of explained variance varies between 15 percent and 60 percent.

Returning to the main argument, it should be stressed again that “modernisation” is not altogether a positive and desirable process. We cannot escape the “dialectics of enlightenment” (see Horkheimer/Adorno 1947); at best, we can try to organise and steer mental and environmental, technical and economic development. This includes maximising the desired and minimising the destructive results, controlling and avoiding “negative side effects” and “negative feed-backs” of “desired changes”, and renouncing risky technologies (cautious avoidance instead of waste disposal).

Additionally, the ambivalence of “modernisation” requires us to live together with differences of national, regional (and minority) cultures. The way to this friendly coexistence is mutual acceptance of authenticity and diversity. Abstract equality and symmetry as the only model are too simple—while inequality and asymmetry must not be taken as legitimations of exploitation and subordination. Let us compete for and exchange about the most fruitful, most “sustainable”—in respect to environmental balance and mental health—modernisation in Europe.

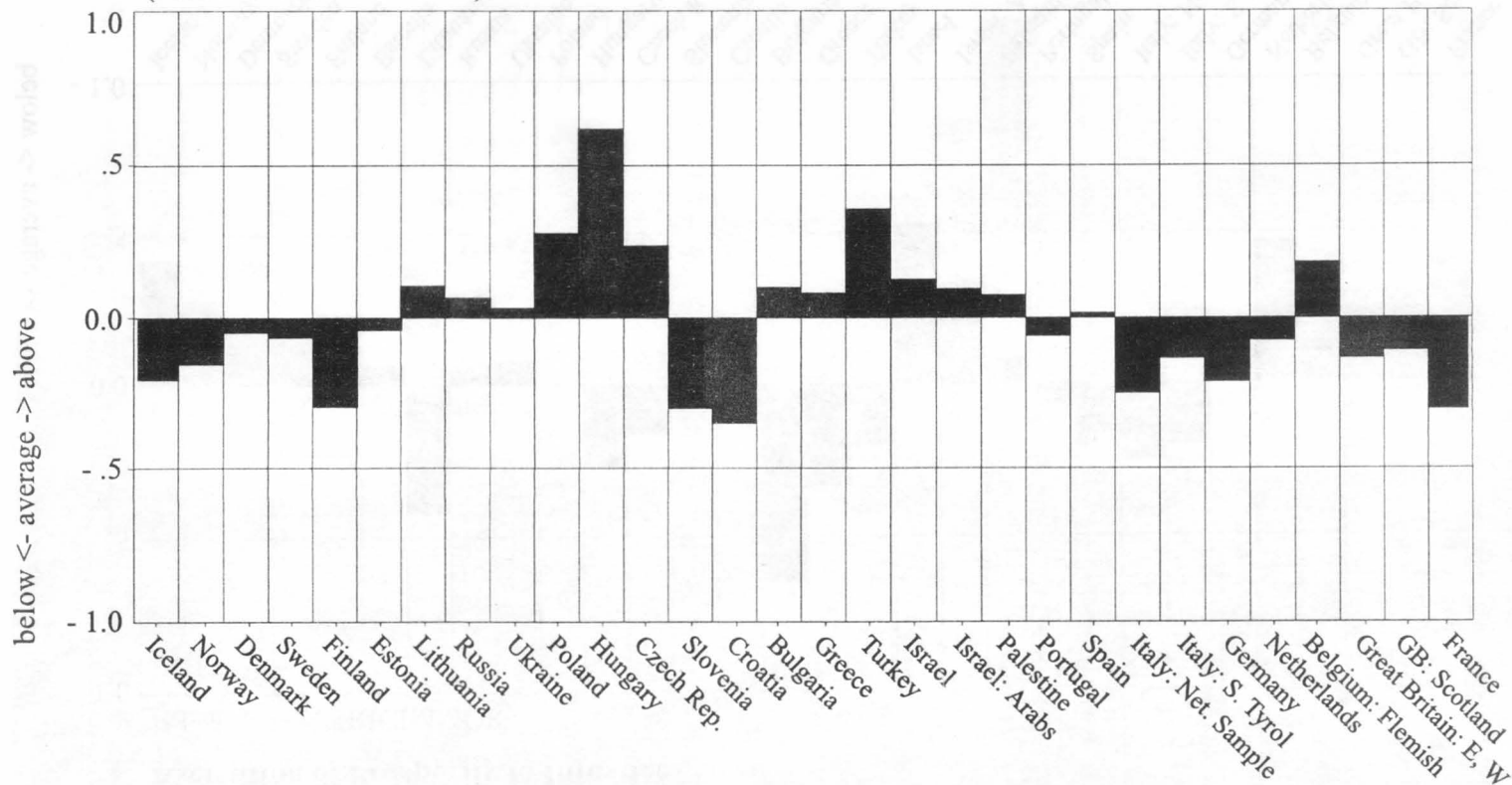
## General Motivation for Dealing with History

(Mean value of GMOTH2U)



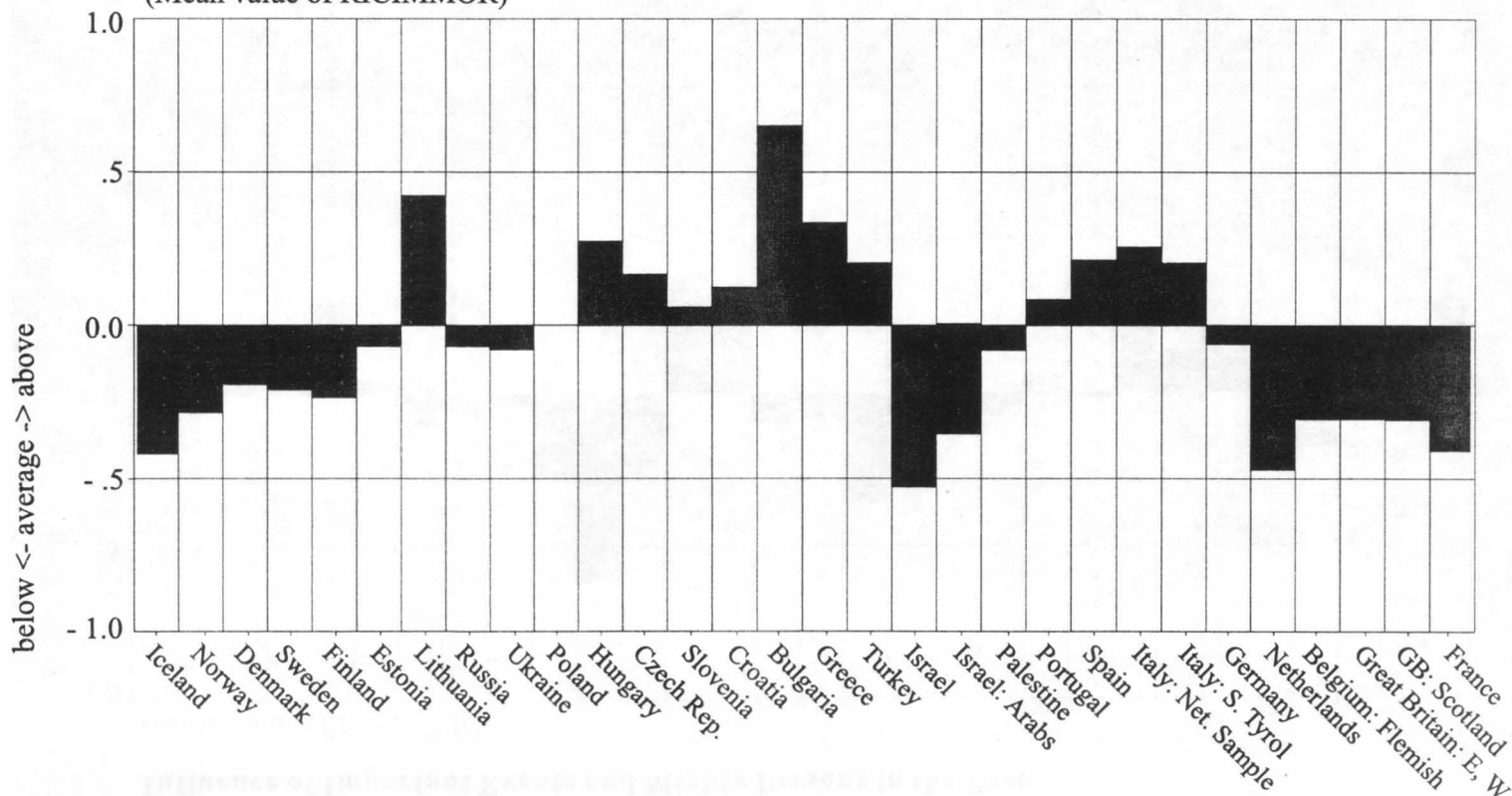
# Influence of Important Events and Mighty Persons in the Past

(Mean value of NWEVNR)



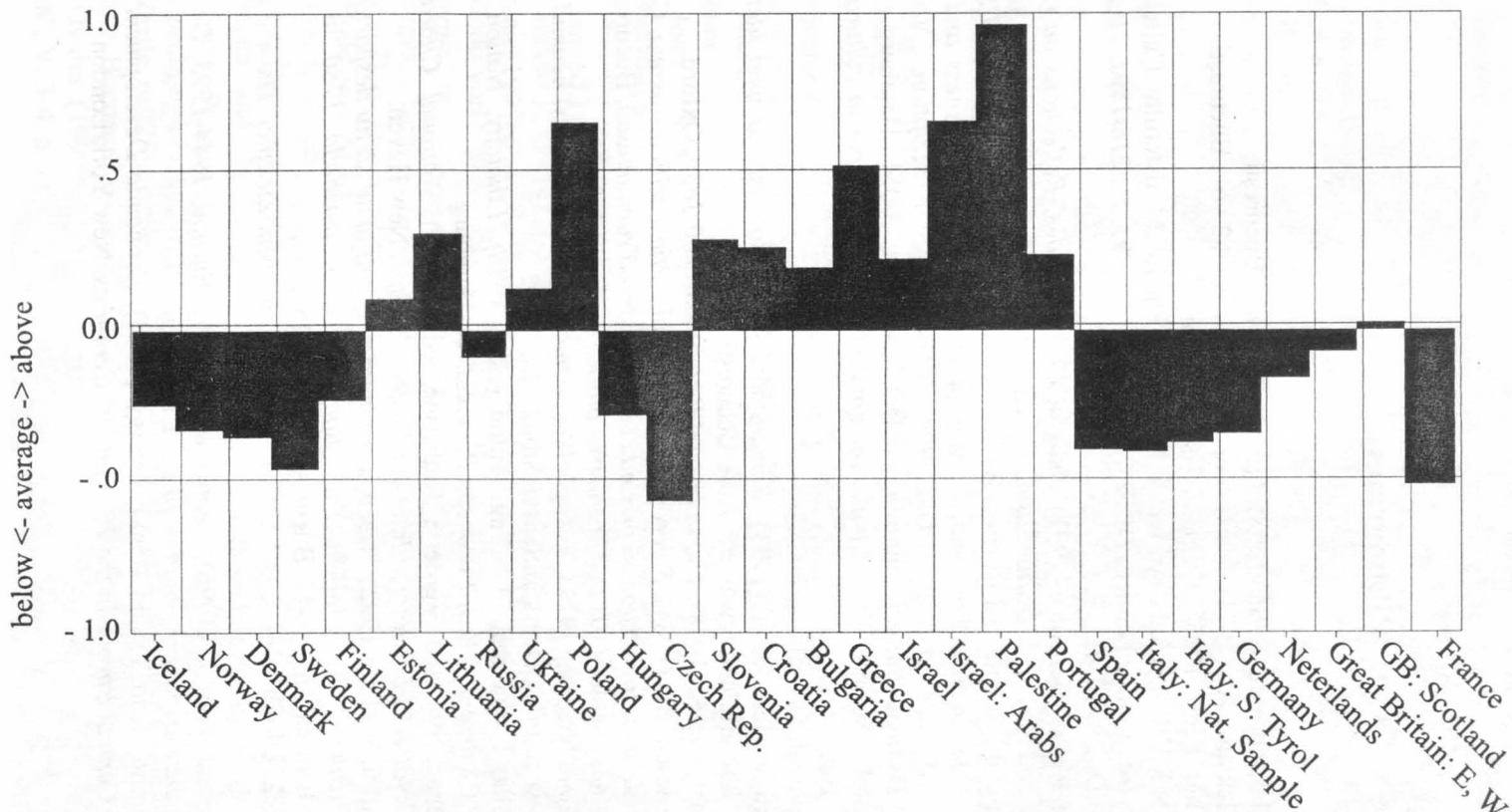
## Ascription of Prosperity to Injustice

(Mean value of RICIMMOR)



# Authoritarian Traditionalism

(Mean value of AUTTRA2R)



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