

## **A Word from the Editor**

### **Reinventing Romanian Social Science – a Symposium**

Of all countries of the former Warsaw pact, Romania had a special disastrous treatment of the study of social science. The few enlightened Marxists were purged from the Communist party already in the early Stalinist years, while the members of the 'bourgeois' school of sociology, accused of close cooperation with the pre-Communist monarchy, were removed from universities, jailed or pushed to exile. Following the revolt of the miners in 1977, sociology became again a priority, its use in manipulating masses being considered of potential benefit for the regime. This led to furious recruitment among sociologists by the secret police, the Securitate. In the eighties, it was the turn of Ceausescu's policy of destruction of villages, the systematization, to generate new recruitments, as scientific evidence was needed in support of the regime brutal demolition of the traditional rural world. Political science was confined to the Party Academy, and the rest of tangent disciplines, from history to psychology, tried to evade anything 'social', as it carried the certain promise of political interference. By 1990, not only there was no practically no social science worth speaking of in Romania, but also the germs of future destruction were planted in the large number of former collaborators with the Ceausescu regime, whose main agenda was to protect themselves from their guilty past. The screening of former Securitate's files, arbitrary and incomplete, strongly controlled by secret services, exposed ones and shielded others; as the information is released at the will of the secret service, often in deficient form, the trust in such revelations is low. The status of the community is shown in the lack of publications in the global academic world even more than in the reading of Ceausescu's time bibliographies or truncated secret service files.

Despite this past, positive developments after 1990 challenged the old ossified structures of Romanian social science. Many young people obtained degrees in Western universities and some returned: even those who did not remain in close contact with journals from Romania. Journals, though uneven in quality, were founded. Chairs in social and political science proliferated in public and private universities. A veritable cottage industry of translation has started to bring a vast body of literature, from history to political science, closer to the Romanian

readers, priming authors and books of all trends, times, and qualities. Students invaded the sociology and political science departments, interested in careers in politics and the media. The new and the old coexist in tense cohabitation; not everything old is rotten, not everything new is good, but barriers from the development of a professional social science have been removed in great part and Romanians can only blame themselves if they fail to build it.

The symposium hosted in this issue of Romanian Journal of Political Science is a testimony of these times. Authors new and old, Romanians and foreigners, were invited to debate the state of the art in their disciplines in present day Romania. Foreigners were critical, 'young' Romanians, as well as Romanians returned from abroad, offensive. Differences among disciplines are great. History, where PolSci is glad to publish two excellent pieces of historians from very different generations, Neagu Djuvara and Bogdan Murgescu, seems to stagnate rather than progress, but as it started from a superior basis to sociology and political science, which had been totally subordinated to political command, it is still more professional than those. Sociology and political science are still missing essential institutions needed for becoming professional, such as:

1. an objective system of reviewing work and academic achievement;
2. a professional community with both scientific and moral authority to aggregate under one banner the few valuable social scientists lost either in the moor of the Romanian higher education transiting from 'ideology to kleptocracy' (a quote from a HESP- Open Society Institute report) or in the wilderness of the Western universities;
3. last but not least, a bibliography of peer-reviewed works published by Romanian social scientists in Romania and abroad in the last decade. The paper of Maria Larionescu published in this issue is an important step in doing this service for the field of sociology, with extensions for social psychology and gender studies.

PolSci carries only one piece on the state of the art in political science in Eastern Europe in general, by Hans-Dieter Klingemann and his collaborators. The framework is general, the story common: East European political science struggles hard to achieve professionalism and normalcy. Countries with no tradition prior to 1989, as Romania, face harder times than the rest. The Romanian community of political science is divided among old time collaborators and newcomers ranging from

fair professionals to aggressive impostors (some so aggressive that they have to write reports on the state of the discipline to grant themselves a larger space). In the absence of a clear undisputed review system the publication in Western peer-review journals remains the only indicator of quality, a clear sign of underdevelopment.

Some roots of Romanian social science prior to 1989 are worth mentioning, though. Already in early thirties, the Romanian social institute headed by Dimitrie Gusti was engaged in true social empirical research. Later, driven by the political need to provide King Charles with an alternative doctrine to growing fascism, it plunged into a grand approach to public policy seen as fully scientific and embracing all areas of national development. When the 1923 Constitution was debated, however, several points of view, often confrontational, were hosted by the Institute, opposing national liberals from the Old Kingdom to federalists from the united territories, but not only, debates which were rich and fruitful. We owe it to the most reputed Romanian publisher, Humanitas, the reprint of an excellent book, the debate on constitutional reform and to a smaller publisher the reprint of the debate on political parties and ideologies: the 'Political doctrines', replicated by SAR five years ago in our first collective book. Other, still unpublished debates hosted by the Romanian Social Institute and turned into books cover wide areas of public policy and their theoretical foundations. Some are quoted in SAR's most recent textbook of public policies. It is remarkable that the Institute was accepted by academics on all sides of the political spectrum as a common ground for debate, Gusti inviting from right-wingers to left-wingers, even if they did not enjoy the favor of the monarch. Such a tradition is worth mentioning and following nowadays, when the academic community is torn apart by petty jealousies and avoids debates with opponents, each taking refuge in a small circle of followers.

Since Romania's intellectual tradition in social science was so strongly repressed, the few personalities engaged in genuine social inquiry during the Communist years are also worth mentioning. The late Mihai Botez is the author of a samizdat book, among the very few in Romania, 'Romanians on themselves' [Romanii despre ei insisi, Litera, 1992]. The book provides an excellent testimony and analysis of mid-time Communism. Botez interviewed several cadres of the party and common party members while exiled in the Danube Delta to emerge with a theory on the growing legitimation of a regime, which had

started as being imposed by pure coercion. When Romanians voted over and over again nomenklatura characters after 1989 and declared repeatedly in polls that 'Communism was a bad idea wrongly put into practice' one ought to have remembered Botez's forecast that Communism will survive Ceausescu. A second book by Botez, on East-European intellectuals, translated into Romanian from English is also worth mentioning. So are two books by the late Vlad Georgescu, a historian at the Institute of South-East European Studies. Georgescu is the author of a 'History of Romanian Political Ideas' (Ion Dumitru-Verlag, Munchen, 1987) and of 'History and Politics', a collection of essays denouncing Ceausescu's use of history for his nationalist practices (*Politica si istorie : cazul comunistilor români, 1944-1977* München : J. Dumitru, 1983). These are first-hand authors, who also published in the West, and they ought to be mentioned.

Special attention must be given to Ghita Ionescu, the most important Romanian political scientist. Ionescu was a Professor with the LSE and later the University of Manchester<sup>1</sup>. His name is especially quoted nowadays as the father of European studies in Britain, and many prestigious scholars, from Helen Wallace to John Pinder, owe their beginnings to Ionescu's early belief that united Europe will generate a branch of political science in its own right. He was also the creator and head until his death in 1996 of the International Political Science Association Committee of European Studies. The title itself of 'Government and opposition', the LSE journal that he founded, together with his book with Isabel de Madariaga called 'Opposition' shows Ionescu's program of making opposition an institution and pushing the very formal analysis of Soviet studies of the time (indulging in long analyses of the COMECON, or content analysis of party documents) to come closer to reality by introducing the test of opposition and its role in the evaluation of a political regime. It may seem redundant nowadays for who ignores the history of both comparative politics and diplomatic language, but it took years of fierce battle to authors such as Ionescu or Raymond Aron, his closest friend and ally, to impose the role of the opposition as a major criterion to judge a political regime. Last, but not least, Ionescu's book with Ernest Gellner on populism is still the best to-date in English and very quoted in the Anglo-Saxon world. Ionescu had also, despite his old age, a hand in the invention of Romanian political science after 1989. Awarded the title of *doctor honoris causa* by the University of Bucharest in 1993, he inspired the creation of the first Romanian journal of political science, *Sfera politiciii* (The Sphere of

Politics), and the creation of the first alternative institute of public policy, the think-tank the Romanian Academic Society. From a younger generation, but also from outside Communist Romania, the work of historian of ideas and Central European historian, Vladimir Tismaneanu, is worth mentioning. Also worth mentioning is the work of sociologist Michael Cernea, currently with the World Bank, a follower in his youth of the Gusti and Henri H. Stahl school. Very few names in total, which makes them even more precious. The irony of destiny makes that Stahl, who had to fight heavy battles in the seventies and eighties to publish his work, had more followers abroad than within Romania, among others David Mitrany, Immanuel Wallerstein, Daniel Chirot, Kenneth Jowitt.

The production after 1989 is, not surprisingly, quite poor. Only five authors published books abroad, though many more chapters in edited books and journals by Western publishers were authored by Romanians<sup>2</sup>. Nuclei of empirical research started to develop in Cluj and Bucharest. New centers, as Iasi and Timisoara, have stepped in more recently. Quantity overrides quality from afar in this first phase, but the large numbers of students abroad make us hope that a catch up, even if belated, is still possible. The survival of this journal, now into its seventh year of existence, though only two under the current name (formerly Foreign Policy Review) is also proof of slow but steady progress.

## Notes and References

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<sup>1</sup> Among Ionescu's work: *Between sovereignty and integration*, edited by Ghita Ionescu. London, Croom Helm [1974]; *The European alternatives : an inquiry into the policies of the European Community*, edited by Ghita Ionescu ; preface by Roy Jenkins. Alphen aan den Rijn : Sijthoff & Noordhoff, 1979; *Populism; its meaning and national characteristics*. Edited by Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner.[1st American ed. New York] Macmillan [1969] *The new politics of European integration*. Basingstoke, Macmillan; New York, St. Martin's Press, 1972; *Opposition: past and present of a political institution*, by Ghita Ionescu and Isabel de Madariaga. London, Watts, 1968.

<sup>2</sup> The books are : Bocancea, Cristian (1998): *La Roumanie du communisme au postcommunisme*, Paris: L'Harmattan.

Brucan, Silviu (1990) *Pluralism and social conflict : a social analysis of the communist world* foreword by Immanuel Wallerstein. New York : Praeger

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Câmpeanu, Pavel (1990) *Exit : toward post-Stalinism* translated by Michel Vale. Armonk, N.Y. : M.E. Sharpe

Mungiu, Alina (1995): *România dupa 1989. Istoria unei neînțelegeri (Romanians after 1989. The History of a Misunderstanding)*, Bucharest: Humanitas, [German version from Friederich Ebert Stiftung Foundation, Intergraph Verlag, Munich, 1996]

Pasti, Vladimir (1995): *România în tranziție. Caderea în viitor*, Bucharest: Nemira; English translation: *The Challenges of Transition: Romania in Transition*, translated by Fraga Cheva Cusin, Boulder, CO and New York: East European Monographs 473, 1997