

"BABEȘ-BOLYAI" University from CLUJ-NAPOCA

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The Romanian intellectual elite in Mures County in the interwar period

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SUMMARY

The intellectual, sociological category invented at the end of the 19th Century became a very attractive theme, especially after the year 1989. The communist historiography marched more on the social problematic, neglecting the role of the intellectual in our modern society, or as it is known, modern society-the merit society through excellence had pushed forward as a main actor on the stage of history - the intellectual. Although it is a notion which does not allow itself to be tangled in a strict and rigid definition, whose scroll facilitates the understanding and the mechanisms which it was founded on. The sources from which intellectuality formed, its structure and components, the objectives which animate it represent the central pillars in the research of this "chameleonic" group.

Received, widely, as a socio-professional group, creator or mediator of culture, the intellectuals represent a category of individuals formed and crystallized over a period of time, in which the essential role is education and implicitly school. The intellectual quality is not a good that you inherit or a trait of character, but a gained attribute, which improves gradually, as you will see along the research, through years of study in and outside Romania's borders. The intellectual passes himself through a period of instruction which pivots around the relationship with education, culture, and eventually becomes the one who molds the tendencies from a certain society.

One of the most difficult stages in this research was reporting to a definition of intellectuality which could mold on the space and time of the given research and to allow the quantity approach to which I had appealed. If the placing of the research subject in a certain predetermined zone gives the thesis the character of local history, through the theme itself - the intellectuality as a social category - the thesis is written in the social history sphere as well. The osmosis between history and sociology will implicate the interdisciplinary of the analysis methods which gives new perspectives on the theme in question.

We cannot overlook the Theory of Elites, which was consolidated through the contributions of the representatives of the Italian Political and Sociological school, Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca, brought to the fundament of the elite paradigm.

Pareto, defined the elite, compare society with a pyramid, focusing on the top, where the performance individuals are found, around which groups, classes and social structures gravitate. According to him, the members of the leading class are two types : "foxes" (which lead through cunningness and are capable to manipulate the consent of the masses) or "lions" (which dominate through coercion and violence). Gaetano Mosca, same as Pareto, underlines the idea of a permanent dichotomy between elites and the masses, between an organized active minority and a disorganized majority, inert from a political point of view - " in all societies - from those whom are little developed and barely touched the done of civilization, all the way to the most advanced and powerful - two classes of people stand out : one class who leads and one who follows"¹. More than that, the studies conducted over elites are stimulated by the idea of knowledge (who are they?) but also recognition (are they really elites?)². The classical text of the Theory of Elites are, without a doubt The Mind and Society of Pareto, The ruling class of Mosca, Political Parties (Robert Michels). Besides these we add the more recent works of Burnham - The Managerial Revolution and C. Wright Mills - The Power Elite. In Pareto's opinion, a dominant group can survive only if it offers opportunities to the most well prepared persons of other origins, this way giving them access to privileges and retributions of which the elite enjoy, respectively if they don't hesitate to use force to defend these privileges and retributions. Pareto's³ irony attacks the elites which becomes humanitarian and hearted instead of being rational and cold. Pareto supports the necessity of open opportunities for all members of society, but is not motivated by pity and adversely. The expression and distribution of such humanitarian feelings would weaken the elite in her fight for privileges. As we will see after a first conceptual overview, the elitism involves a power relation between top and bottom, relation in which the elite(-s) pretend the right to control directly or indirectly the right to control the masses⁴.

¹ Gaetano Mosca The Rulling Class (Elementi di Scienza Politica), New York & London, Ed. McGraw & Hill 1939, p. 29;

² Mihai Dinu Gheorghiu, "Trei introduceri", in Mihai Dinu Gheorghiu, Mihaița Lupu (ed), Mobilitatea elitelor in România secolului XX, Pitești, Paralela 45 Publishing House, p. 21;

³ Hans L. Zetterberg, *The Rise and Fall of the Elites. An Application to theoretical Sociology*, New Jersey, Ed. Transaction Publishers, 2009, p. 2;

⁴ Viorela Manolache, *Noua elită politică din România postcomunistă*, [on line], <http://www.unibuc.ro/studies/Doctorate2008Iulie/Manolache%20Viorella%20-%20Noua%20elita%20politica%20din%20Romania%20postcomunista/rezumato.doc> ;

A relationship which describe those who produce decisions, but also prescribes those who paradoxically are separated from the masses⁵. Considered in different contexts, over historical periods, geographical regions or distinct cultures, the intellectuality consists today a study object of sociological researches, cultural or political, concerning in equal matter the sphere of historical ideas, of social classes or the education system. Because of this reason a concrete placing in a determined cultural-historical place and frame gives the most coherent perspective of analysis for a group of individuals who's identity is constantly changing in close relation with the era it's passing through. Thus, approaching intellectuality through "the lenses of history", a part of a historical process in which the actors reinvent cultural traditions, as it is proposed by the sociologist Ron Eyerman⁶, reflects with the greatest grade of accuracy, the image of a social category, otherwise, pretty hard to define. The variety of approaches has given the term an entire array of definitions, dictionaries offering the most generic approach and at the same time, without rigor giving it the etiquette "intellectual" to the person which constantly performs an intellectual work, with an appetite towards the spiritual domain. But because the mechanisms of thought are placed into action by each individual, at a certain time, regardless of the activity in question, such a definition would "intellectualize" the whole humanity.

According with the analysis made by the french historian Christophe Charle⁷, three complimentary perspectives offer a coherent specter of approaches over intellectuality. Reviewed in the sphere of sociology, the intellectual is defined on functional bases, in rapport with work division and social stratification, with an accent on the symbolic capital owned, prestige generator, offering intellectuals the aura of "boyar of the mind". The cultural perspective accentuates the role of the intellectual in this field of activity, in the hypostasis of cultural goods producer. "The creators" intellectuals appear

⁵ Ibidem;

⁶ Ron Eyerman, *Intellectuals: A Framework for Analysis, with Special Reference to the United States and Sweden*, in *Acta Sociologica*, 35, 1992, p. 33;

⁷ Christophe Charle, *Intelectualii în Europa secolului al XIX-lea*, Iași, European Institute, 2002;

even from the middle ages, once freed from the churches tutelage and aristocracy, a moment from which intellectual and artistic production begins to be autonomous in parallel with formation of a consumer public of symbolic goods⁸. But not only the cultural field consists the ground for affirmation of the intellectual. In political plan, he appears as the individual employed in the fight the defense of democracy principles and human rights, as a critical spirit, former of opinion which molds tendencies in society⁹. Such a social actor represents the ideal model of the public intellectual concretized on history's stage, for the first time, in french space at the end of the XIX - th century, with the astounding Dreyfus affair. In the "extremes century", the relation between intellectual and politics reflected in the toilsome dilemma engagement-isolation, controversy over the intellectuals option to dedicate himself exclusively to creation in his "ivory tower" or to give in to temptation of politics, diluting his own aura.

The evolution of the education system concretized through access in secondary and superior schools on merit criteria had an impact over the intellectuality who's formation is in close relationship with the schooling institutes. From this point of view, we can say that the modern intellectual is through the mean of education, in a professional relationship with culture, the image of the scholar will be seconded by the one of the professional intellectual. The marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci distinguished in this context between organic intellectuals at the top of the hierarchy with organizational functions, ideological and integrated into a social group and the category which make up the middle class intellectuality - writers, philosophers, clerics, artists - which perceives itself wrongly as autonomous and independent¹⁰ and which is transposed in our days in the middle class of specialists less present in public¹¹. Actually, the discussion on the intellectual theme it inevitably intersects with the notion of "elite" if we take into consideration that in every socio-professional category there are top elements which hold some kind of power and prestige mechanisms which would set intellectuality in a real

⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *Economia bunurilor simbolice*, Bucharest, Meridiane Publishing House, 1986, p. 32;

⁹ Edward W. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, New York, Vintage Books, 1996, pp. 11-13;

¹⁰ David Forgacs (ed.), *The Gramsci Reader. Selected Writings 1916-1935*, New York University Press, 2000, p. 153;

¹¹ Sorin Adam Matei, Mona Momescu (eds.), *Idolii forului*, Bucharest, Corint Publishing House, 2010;

"elite of elites"¹². The specialists cannot be assigned automatically to intellectuality, they represent more "the intelligence", "transmission belt" of intellectual creations¹³. At the same time, going through the biographies of the intellectuals proves that recruiting is operated precisely from this category of professionals with special studies in their domains. This is the scheme of research proposed, in which I considered that intellectuality overlaps a concentric image in which the first circle gives out the mass of secondary and superior graduates out of which later on professional intellectuals are recruited from (the second circle), out of which prominent figures dedicated to the life of the polis, consists the intellectuality in the above mentioned sense. Without a doubt, such a methodical approach risks to leave aside well known intellectuals without an educational background.

In Romanian society at the beginning of the XX- th century the true intellectual appears mostly "on paper" while in everyday life there is an abundance of semi intellectuals with bohemian attitudes. In a real pessimistic note, C. Rădulescu Motru was making the remark that true scholars, detached from the materialism of life and preoccupied with learning the truth are rare species, eventually lacking the courage to manifest themselves¹⁴.

Culture, as a result of spiritual creations, becomes the arena in which the between world wars intellectual is having his fight. This way in this thesis we have reported ourselves to the definition of the intellectual as a creator-mediator of culture, with an accent, in the last part of it, on the intellectual production between the two world wars. And because education gives the intellectual the possibility of professionalizing in report with culture, transforming intellect in a source of income, we approached, also, the intellectual professions which group specialists from different domains, without forcefully overlapping the two terms. Between these two poles - intellectual and professional - develops the field in which the social identity of the intellectual takes shape. Even if, at a certain point, the intellectual tends to become a professional, and vice

¹²Ezra Suleiman, Henri Mendras, *Recrutarea elitelor în Europa*, Timișoara, Amarcord Publishing House, 2001, p. 35;

¹³A. Sadri, *Max Weber Sociology of Intellectuals*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 69;

¹⁴C. Rădulescu-Motru, *Avem noi adevărați intelectuali?*, in *Noua revistă română*, 21, V, 1909, p. 327;

versa different audience and distinct practices will difference always these two categories.

Such a perspective allows a quantity analysis out of which will reflect the weight and the impact of intellectuality in the north-moldavian environment, even if our research is focused rather on the so called "intelligence"¹⁵, surprising less it's functions and values to which an authentic intellectual would report to.

By the way even in between world wars romanian society have been disputes which tried to establish the border between intellectuality and intelligence, as a distinction among quiet pure intellect people and the dozen intellectuals, with diplomas¹⁶ or between spirituals elites and "poor coffee shop intellectuals"¹⁷. The general conclusion does not differ much from that of Rădulescu Motru, in 1900 : few creators of ideas are eclipsed - at least numerically - by the almost intellectuals.

In our country there were many historical studies dedicated to the intellectual, especially from the university formation point of view, mobility and careers, as for example made by, in 2006, historian Lucian Năstasă¹⁸. The intellectual as a moral landmark and most of all in report to power point of view was reviewed through a book, written by Lucian Boia, which made quite a hassle *Capcanele istoriei. Elita intelectuală românească între 1930 și 1950.* ” We would say that the intellectual, especially him, should be a free man. Does not mean that he is. He is subject, like anyone, to historical conjuncture and ideological pressures. One way or another, his career is dependent on Power (even more in a authoritarian regime and without a doubt in a totalitarian one). None the less quite a few intellectuals have the fascination for Power; they feel themselves stronger, shadowed by it. In any case, the intellectual has an ability : to find each time the right arguments to justify and to be justified. Especially when it seems to him that history gave her verdict. For the intellectual the voice of history is irresistible.”¹⁹

¹⁵ An elitist group form Russia, at the beginning of the 19th Century, with educated young men that promoted - more than created the modern European Culture;

¹⁶Puiu Gârcineanu, *Intelectualitate și omenie*, in *Vremea*, VIII, 392, 1935;

¹⁷Mircea Eliade, *Simplu intermezzo*, in *Vremea*, VIII, 394, 1935;

¹⁸Lucian, Năstasă, *Itinerarii spre lumea savantă. Tineri din spatiul românesc la studii în străinătate 1864-1944*, Limes Publishing House, 2006;

¹⁹Lucian, Boia, *Capcanele istoriei. Elita intelectuală românească între 1930 și 1950*, Humanitas Publishing House, 2011;

We cannot overlook here, the psychological study of Constantin Enăchescu, ”*Tratat de Teoria Cercetării Științifice*²⁰”, research which puts an accent on the psychological and psychoanalysis for explaining "mechanisms" and "mobiles" which reside at the base of motivation for research and scientific knowledge. Man, the ideas of him, the image and his significance in human sciences are that essential "object of knowledge" around which there must be build a true theory of scientific research.

The historiography dedicated to the forming of the romanian intellectuals has proved a remarkable proportion over the last decades. The majority of the studies follow the academic journey of the romanian intellectuals at romanian universities or abroad. In the list of the most significant studies of papers reside : Alexandru Zub - *Studenti români la universitățile europene* (1980), Dan Berindei – *Studenti români peste hotare și procesul de constituire a României moderne* (1986), Elena Siupiur - *The Training of Intellectuals in South-East Europe During the 19th Century. The Romanian Model* (1987), Stelian Mândruț – *Studenti români din Transilvania la universitățile din Austro-Ungaria și Germania în 1897-1898* (1990), Florea Ioncioaia – *Tineri români și greci la studii în Franța* (1994), Cornel Sigmirean- *Formarea intelectualității românești din Transilvania* (1999), Lucian Năstasă- *Itinerarii spre lumea savantă. Tineri din spațiul românesc la studii în străinătate. 1864-1944* (2006), Victor Karady – *Cultural Dimensions of Elite Formation in Transylvania* (2008) ș.a.

The social role of the romanian school of different grades (elementary schools, seminars, high schools) do not take such a vast graphic-historical space, still being mentioned in papers which constitute important landmarks. We remind : Alexandru Tonk – *Formarea intelectualității românești din Transilvania și Liceul piariștilor din Cluj* (1968), Ladislau Gyemant – *School as a Link between the Intelligentsia and the People Regarding the Romanians of the First Half of the 19th Century* (1985) și *Elita românească din Transilvania. Evoluție comparativă. 1848-1919* (1993), Mihai Pârvulescu – *Rolul școlii bănățene în procesul de formare al intelectualității românești în secolul XIX și Școală și societate. Contribuție la cunoașterea formării elitelor românești din Banat în secolul al XIX-lea* (2003), Iacob Mârza – *Școlile superioare de la Blaj și*

²⁰ Constantin Enăchescu, *Tratat de Teoria Cercetării Științifice*, Polirom Publishing House, second edition, 2007;

rolul lor în procesul de formare al intelectualității române din Transilvania, Remus Câmpeanu – *Intelectualitatea română din Transilvania în veacul al XVIII-lea* (1999).

In this historic context I choose a theme in which to research the intellectuality from the old Mures county. One of the reasons I choose this subject for my Doctor's thesis is the fact that at the level of Mures intellectuality there is a lack of approach in such a thematic register. At the same time, Mures county, through it's ethnic and tradition oriented configuration, can produce relevant results regarding the intellectual role, which political strategists had set a place for him in between world wars period. Romania after 1918 reunited provinces with a different culture and civilization, or in this context, culture and it's bearers had a major role. In the provinces that came from old empires growth of intellectuality had to be stimulated, capable of substituting the hungarians and russians - in the Basarabian case. This way, a special politic was developed in the schooling field, in this way there were talks of a liberal strategy, thought by C. Angelescu minister. Still in the idea of developing and taking over duties of the old intellectual elites lots of intellectuals were invited from the old kingdom. The governing body and public institutions contributed to cultural development through magazines, associations, literary circles etc., a frame which generated the creation of a little known elite. The period between the world wars was by far the most prolific stage of development for the romanian intellectuality, the peak point of a national culture which will be seen later on strangled for fifty years with the installment of the communist regime. Romanian culture between world wars had all, it was a complex organism which lived, breathed and developed together with the chilling events of the twenty years preliminary to the most dark period of man kind, the second world war. Romanian culture meant in this period also science, medicine, philosophy, aeronautics, but the main idea "battle" was for the romanian intellectuality which found the power to grow from a quality point of view especially through polemics and debates in front of public opinion.

The structure of this thesis proposes at first a series of conceptual clarifications which concerns both the notion of intellectuality, but as well important aspects of local history, with it's specifics. In the first chapter entitled *Contextul cultural al României Mari*, I tried to set off the importance of the 1918 moment and the follow ups of the Great Union for the local community.

The second chapter, entitled *instituțiilor de cultură românească după 1918*, introduces the reader in the between world wars atmosphere from the main urban centre of the county - the city of Tîrgu-Mureș. The accent falls on the cultural institutions with a role in forming the masses and future cultural personalities, as well as manifestation environment of the acknowledged intellectuals. An important role in this segment was played by the Church, because of that I did an x-ray of the Church grade in the old Mures county. The main sources in playing out this picture are represented by local monographs and the local press at that time, completed with memories of the intellectuals which came out from this area and for which their birth place left a mark on them through their entire life.

The role of education in forming intellectuality is revealed in Chapter number three entitled *de învățământ – sursă primară de formare a intelectualității interbelice*. Without appealing to a false premise to sustain that every diploma holder is automatically an intellectual - although, at the time, the university or high school graduate was given this etiquette without other criteria - we must be aware that the intellectuality of the first decades of the XX - th century was recruited from the university graduates, the access of young people to university studies in romania or abroad was more accessible then in the last centuries. If the university is the nursery of the intellectual elite, secondary school system between world wars, though it's structure and objectives, constitutes that primary source, although not exclusively, of forming future intellectuals. Starting from these considerations, in this first part of the thesis I followed the presentation of the schooling network, as a nursery for the between world wars youth. The chapter debuts with a romanian between world wars secondary school diagnose, putting an accent on the challenges that the schooling system had to respond too in the context of a United Romania and the solutions proposed by the ministers of public instruction, and pointing out the main reformation role that liberal minister C. Angelescu had. I insisted particularly over two main implications of the secondary schooling system. On one side, I showed that the liberal educational politics fueled a so called fascination of the intellectualism for the youth which aspired to high social positions obtained through studies. For this reason, there was a massive overcrowding in secondary theoretical schools, which later on generated the intellectual unemployment phenomenon, amplified

in the context of the economical crisis from the 30's. On the other hand, I highlighted the utilization of the secondary school as a mechanism in unification of the joined provinces, with all the consequences which came from the centralization politics of education to which the minorities reacted loudly.

To complete the era's picture, monographs were important pieces of work and starting points, completed with statistics of between world wars schooling system. The school population was analyzed, firstly, through processing of school yearly records. The next chapter, *Intellectualii mureșeni*, it axes around between world wars professional-intellectual structures in Mures county. Well known figures of society in that time were priests, the church being one of the pillars of that time. Also, the professional intellectuals, without the equivalent with intellectuals in a restrained manner, will be part of the different categories which had taken shape from last century : jurists, teachers, medics, journalists, writers, artists etc.

In this part of the thesis will treat the problem of professionalizing intellectuality and the report between intellectuality and culture in between world wars period, going on with a few considerations of general order regarding the main intellectual categories, representative for the area in research.

Chapter 5 , *Localism creator în arealul mureșean*, debuts with the placing of local creation under the theoretical umbrella of the triad " localism, provincialism, regionalism". Defined by the literary critic Alexandru Dima in the 30's, local creator phenomenon is identified with the values of history, tradition and local creation in order to create authentic local culture through which the outskirts can contribute to the fundament of national culture. In the context after the great union, in which the capital was having centralizing politics to have e union on all levels, localism will place itself on the ground of an antagonist relationship center-outskirts. For local intellectuals, as a main actor in consolidating this phenomenon, localism will have 2 forms : on one side "the proud" exploration of the local will be generated by a complex of the left behind province, and one the other hand for those who seek literary recognition, this phenomenon will represent a launch platform, a first step towards not being part of a province. Starting from these assumptions, the chapter operates an analysis of the main

magazines in the area but also of the Association to the Romanian people's culture "ASTRA", of the Romanian intellectual circle from Reghin, etc.

The last subchapter chapter of this thesis has in sight *Intellectualii mureșeni care au adus o contribuție scrisă*. In an area with an abundant and rich book dowry, after the Great Union I can say that creating energies spark in Mures county. Setting up the Romanian schooling system in Târgu-Mureș as with the changes in the economical and administrative structure of the state have determined the formation of an intellectuality, which, besides its professional preoccupations, cultivate arts and literature. The start was made in the literary school publications *Îndemnul* (1924-1927) și *Șoimii* (1925-1929). Literature was promoted through gazettes and cultural and informational journals or political : *Ogorul* (1920-1922), *Mureșul* (1922-1938), *Glasul Mureșului* (1934-1940), *Gazeta Mureșului* (1935-1938). These were followed by publications with a wide opening towards literature such as, *Progres și cultură* (1933-1938), *Clipa...* (1936-1937), *Jar și slovă* (1937) și *Scânteieri* (1938-1940). In the pages of these publications tried out their pens teachers or students, which made a true local literary movement with certain implications in literature and nation culture : Ion Chinezu, Nicolae Sulică, Mihai Demetrescu, Traian Popa, Vasile Al. George, Nicolae Albu, Maximilian Costin, Ovidiu Papadima, V.B. Muntenescu, Vasile Netea, Eugen Nicolară, Alexandru Cenușianu ș.a. The moments and names which lead to the evolution of local literature will continue through the years after this between world wars period even if the years to follow will be very difficult ones for the intellectual elites from Transylvania.

Key words: intellectuality, elite, church, professor, Mures County, priest