

**La droite roumaine et la droite européenne. Evolution historique, horizon européen.**

*[The Roumanian and the European Political Right. Historical evolution, European perspectives]*

Author Radu Albu, PhD candidate. Coordinator: Nicolae Păun, Professor  
Cluj-Napoca, 2012, 647 pag.

**Abstract**

The PhD thesis begins with an introduction meant to clarify the reasons of choosing this very topic, closely connected to the Roumanian society and its political behavior in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The background reason aimed to identify the attitudes corresponding to the political Right, in this political behaviour, and to evaluate them by referring to the historical past when this Right was embodied by two parties, the Conservatives and the Liberal. In doing so, analysing the two grand political philosophies in Europe was mandatory, next to the manner they were perceived in Roumania.

The introduction also explains the methodology engaged, the use of the deductive and the inductive concepts, and additionally presents the steps taken in effectively writing the text. The thesis has three chapters.

Chapter I is dedicated to Liberalism.

This one is discussed starting with the etymology of the word, with it being mentioned in the antique Sumerian, Roman and Chinese texts. The progressively complex meanings of the term are being underlined, as well as the way it evolves in Europe under the influence of the Christian philosophy, turning into a fundamental element of a certain political, social and economic thinking built on the idea of “liberty”.

The following parts are dedicated to the meanings acquired in time by this liberty-based political and social thinking (in: “Les avatars du libéralisme”); the text brings up issues and debates concerning personal freedom, freedom and liberty as political instruments, formal and natural liberties, chronologically covering the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The next subchapters concern the development of the formal frame of freedoms and their institutional interpretation, the admission of the right to have different political and religious opinions (starting with the 16<sup>th</sup> century), next to the right to profess them accordingly. The text also discusses the rights gradually claimed by the Liberals once Liberalism became a solid ideology in the 18<sup>th</sup> century: the right to vote, secularity, pacificism and increase of trade (as instrument to increase prosperity and State wealth).

The political and economic Liberalism are thus separated (in: “Origines du libéralisme”) ; even if both are born during the Renaissance, they have different directions of evolution. Each of the two are analysed from the point of view of their origins, especially because the Renaissance was a time of impressive economic opportunities because of the geographic discoveries. In this next context, their consequences on the European economy generated a new understanding of the idea of life and work, of profit, adventure, providence, initiative, with new meanings which were to be integrated in the political and religious philosophy of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, concerning the human condition and the way it was perceived.

The text treats mercantilism from a conceptual point of view, deals with the commercial policies of the Netherlands and the manner they were picked up by the French and turned into State policy. It was a time when trade became a symbol of civilization. In this frame, the thesis underlines the building process of today’s Liberalism: accumulation of capital, increase of the bourgeoisie’s influence and weight, increase of the role played by finances, and the transformation of the liberal ideas into a political and institutional philosophy during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

For the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the names of the French Benjamin Constant, Royer-Collard, Guizot, Chateaubriand and Tocqueville are invoked ; the work of the latter, “About Democracy in America” is explored in dedicated paragraphs.

The later evolution of Liberalism is underlined by investigating its latest avatars:

- 1) the revolutionary democratism of Lamartine, with a strong influence on the 2<sup>nd</sup> French Republic as well as on the young Roumanian liberals of the 1848 generation;

- 2) the Christian democracy, a reaction of the Catholic milieu and of the Roman Church to the liberal ideology;

3) the nationalist liberalism of Laboulaye in France, of Humboldt and Savigny in Germany;

4) the constitutionalist liberalism.

In what concerns the economic liberalism, the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century will bring a certain imperial development, closely connected to the nationalist liberalism, which justified the territorial and institutional expansion of the European powers on continents and areas not yet fully explored.

The thesis continues by illustrating liberalism as economic method and political thinking in France, Britain, the USA and Italy.

The pillars of the liberal economy are also identified: personal interest ; competition ; liberty ; and the responsibility assumed by every individual. The text also stresses the weaknesses and the crises of Liberalism, generated by the political evolution of the liberal States, on one hand, as well as by the innate dilemmas of Liberalism as a philosophy.

The last paragraphs of chapter I are dedicated to the neo-liberal transformation following World War II, illustrated by the first colloquium of 'Mont-Pélerin Society' in Switzerland, in 1948.

Chapter II discusses Conservatism.

In this case, the text underlines from the very beginning the origins of Conservatism in the European negative reaction to the French Revolution from 1789, and against the ideas promoted by the French revolutionaries. Conservatism was therefore, at the beginning, a Counter-Revolution (in: "Le premier Conservatisme : La Contre-révolution").

Next, the term "conservative" would be retained by the political vocabulary in Europe, and would correspond to a political vision which was traditionalist at start, but which would later evolve into an independent, individualized political philosophy. This one was hardly welcoming towards the changes suggested by the Liberals, and was openly hostile towards the rationalist, individualist, egalitarian and utilitarian society envisaged by the Liberals, against the industrial revolution and its social consequences.

The next paragraphs are dedicated to the birth of the Conservative mind in Great Britain, insisting on the main personality illustrating it: Edmund Burke, author of "*Reflections on the Revolution in France*".

The thesis underlines the fundamental disputes between the natural and formal law, between nature and history, between the social organization suggested by the revolutionary ideas and the opposition to these. The most powerful opposition naturally comes from the French society itself.

Immediately after the fall of Napoleon one can hear the voices of Joseph de Maistre and Louis de Bonald, two French Conservatives, vocal, severe, favourable to a certain political mystique where divine Providence still has a word to say in the destiny of Man. The two will strongly influence the French Counter-Revolution.

In consequence, one must make the difference between the British Conservatism, open to reform, and a French Conservatism, doctrinary and with better defined political targets (in: “La doctrine conservatrice”). Burke, Maistre and Bonald are the founding figures of the Conservative doctrine which will guide the Conservatives in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with a criticism of the modern society inspired by – and rooted in – the Classic philosophy of the Antiquity. 19<sup>th</sup> century Conservatism valued order, a moral conception of life, natural liberties as well as considering the wealth of human experience accumulated in time.

These aspects of Conservatism are analysed through:

- 1) The ‘ultramontan’ radicalism and the French ‘ultracism’ ;
- 2) Legitimism, concerning the French dynastic succession, on which depended the country’s manner of governance (Liberal or Conservative / Reactionary).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see “Les traditions politiques conservatrices”, “Mutations du Conservatisme français au milieu du XIX<sup>ème</sup>”, “Le Conservatisme français à la fin du XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle”) one can perceive the following:

- 1) traditionalism, in connection to the respect given to the past heritage, the social order, religious providentialism, and which later turned into :
- 2) positivist traditionalism, illustrated by Hippolyte Taine and Ernest Renan, which engendered nationalist and corporatist ideas.

Differences between France and Britain can be noticed in the relationship between the Crown and the Parliament, as well as in the dialogue between tradition and progress. France will exemplify her own concept under the rule of Louis-Philippe d’Orléans from 1830 to 1848.

A certain interaction with Liberalism will allow Conservatism to become more 'rational' and to change into a nationalist Conservatism based on historical, economic and social realities, easier to assess. This type of thinking will influence Nationalism in the same proportion as Liberalism, but on a cultural scale, with an increased degree of emotion and feeling ; the best example is Maurras's *Action française*, active in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, whose program and activities do not share anymore the providentialist and transcendent considerations of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Conservatism.

British Conservatism, being more flexible, is in the same time more stable, with less changes in its approach during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (in: "La tradition politique conservatrice en Grande-Bretagne"). Disraëli is the most prominent representative. Accordingly, British Conservatism will acquire itself a cultural and historical value, rather than being reduced to its political implications from 1850 to 1900. The most visible names of this period are Benjamin Disraëli, Coleridge and Carlyle.

Towards the end of chapter II (in: "La pensée sociale conservatrice"), the thesis discusses the social considerations of the Conservatism, and its nostalgic, defensive attitude, treating society as a corpus and maintaining a certain amount of criticism directed against the business frame of mind.

Waves of renewed Conservative thinking emerged in the same period, illustrated by the social Catholicism of Frédéric Le Play and LaTour du Pin's corporatism.

After classifying the social values favoured by the Conservative ideology (authority, power, property, religion), the text enumerates the outcome of Conservatism today (in: "Sur quelques conséquences du conservatisme"). It developed a certain social spirit and generated the principles of sociologic analysis, leaving in our society a communitary understanding of association and imposing a higher responsibility by designating the human individual as heir to the life experience of the previous generations, which is a cultural heritage.

Chapter III ("Conservatisme et Libéralisme en Terre roumaine") discusses the birth and the evolution of Conservatism and Liberalism in what is today Roumania.

The chapter opens with a geopolitical perspective on the country's territory, destined to facilitate the comprehension of the way exterior circumstances influenced Roumanian society, its values, its establishes priorities, and the the way the latter were

managed. The chronological frame begins with the peace treaty of Küçük Kainardji and is focused especially on the events after 1821. It is in this aeon of European changes – mixing 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment to ideas born in the 1789 Revolution, and following the fall of Napoleon – that we have to find the origins of the Conservative and Liberal mind in Roumanian lands.

The thesis debates a few historiographic aspects considered insufficient (inadequate, deficient and unsatisfactory), especially the neglect to perceive the originality and the political innovation in the Roumanian principalities between 1774-1834 and afterwards, a process concurring to the changes through which most European monarchies underwent following the Congress of Vienna. In view of that, the next paragraphs try to identify the ultimate reasons which generated the Conservative thinking in Moldavia and Wallachia, in connection not only to the preservation of class privileges, as usually considered, but also to the concern of maintaining the international state autonomy of the two countries.

The text discusses the projects of that time, the ideas, the sympathies, the agendas elaborated by the traditional political elite of Moldavia and Wallachia, the relationship they had with foreign powers or the quality of the relationships withing this elite (in: “Les débuts du Conservatisme et du Libéralisme en terre roumaine”).

Here, a special subchapter is dedicated to Alexander Sturdza – Russian politician of Moldavian origins, who influenced and was influenced by Maistre – and to Mihail Sturdza, the future sovereign of Moldavia, both leaving traces on the early Roumanian Conservatism.

The thesis then focuses on lesser known aspects of the European political thinking and acting in the 1815-1830s, divided between Liberalism and Conservatism – a situation which generated juridical and institutional models, half-liberal, half-conservative, applied in Prusia, Austria and Rusia in different degrees, following the initiative of a few monarchs or state counselors. This kind of models was to be introduced in Moldavia and Wallachia as well. The cases of Congress Poland, of Bessarabia within the Russian empire, the naissance of Greece, the autonomy of Serbia, the creation of Belgium are examples given from a juridical, institutional and constitutional point of view, depending on geopolitics and great Powers’ strategy, which later encouraged a certain Roumanian political ideal : union of Moldavia and Wallachia, customs union (achieved in 1847), foreign monarch, neutrality and

collective guarantees by European powers. These political targets were stated in the 1820s-1830s.

On this argumentation line are analysed the “Organic Regulations” (Moldavia and Wallachia’s first modern constitution), which should be reconsidered from the point of view of the role they played. Far from being just an instrument of “social domination and exploitation” as they are usually described, the Regulations actually reform State institutions, moderately of course, and are the expression of Conservative modernization, of a political and institutional thinking opened to modernity and yet loyal to the past.

In addition, the thesis studies, from less common angles, the reigns of the 1820s-1850s, Grigore IV Ghika, George-Dimitrie Bibescu and Barbu Știrbey for Wallachia, Mihail Sturdza and Grigore V Ghyka for Moldavia. In doing so, the text underlines their political and governing principles : the temperance of Ghika, the liberal reforms conceived by Bibescu – which are compared to the French *orléanisme* – stopped by the 1848 events, and the way Barbu Știrbey oriented Wallachia’s economy towards the German Confederation and the Austrian empire, in order to increase prosperity and build reliable international alliances.

For Moldavia, the reign of Mihail Sturdza is seen as an attempt to build a modern, prosperous state, with a new national dynasty ruling, while Grigore V Ghyka’s period is seen as one of rather liberal reforms.

Therefore, the values of Roumanian Conservatism can be better defined (in: “Valeurs du Conservatisme roumain”), starting with those of the first Conservatism and ending with those of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They are in favour of continuity, of gradual reform, of preservation of the historical outcome and traditions. The Conservative positions are pointed up by some of the greatest political, literary and sociological names of the Roumanian 19<sup>th</sup> century, demonstrating the significantly cultural nature of it.

The interference with Liberalism is also mentioned, for the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century ; the text insists on the forgotten topic of the “Dynastic Issue”, of visible Legitimist inspiration, superposed to an anti-German feeling and supported, in various moments and various degrees, by European great Powers, which, at times, encouraged the replacement of the Hohenzollern by a rival national dynasty, the Bibesco-Brancovan. The Dynastic Issue was not reduced only to dynastic aspects, but had a political, strategic and economic agenda as well. The consequences of this attitude

will be noticed during the First World War, when, in order to save the country, a part of the Conservative politicians would have gladly sacrificed the Hohenzollern kings.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> part of chapter III is dedicated to Roumanian Liberalism (in: “Les Libéralismes en terre roumaine”). Once more, the emergence of this term in the Roumanian political vocabulary occurred in the 1820s. The text highlights the fact that Roumanians had a stronger attraction for this political philosophy than the surrounding nations from South-Eastern and Eastern Europe. This political stream, turned into a political party, was as complex as Conservatism was, a feature that becomes visible when one dissects the relationship between Liberalism and Nationalism in Roumania, or the one between Liberalism and the monarchy after 1866.

Liberalism creates a new generation of political leaders, proven by the membership of the party and by its supporters, by their formal, informal and governmental performance, even the international one, defined by legislative initiatives – typical for European liberalism – applied in Roumania until the end of Bratianu’s regime, as well as by the difficulties encountered when dealing with the Conservative European powers.

The thesis endeavours to have a new approach on the political principles and the leadership of I.I.C Bratianu, attempting to review the directions the party took and evolved on since the 1890s-1900s. The influence of the European social philosophy – from Germany, Britain, France and Italy – was present. A new Roumanian Liberalism was being shaped, strongly resembling Social-Liberalism, demonstrated by Bratianu’s attempted reforms at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, by his alliance with a well-defined Socialist, Constantin Stere, and by the fact that this version of socially-concerned Liberalism attracted even a part of the Conservatives.

After the First World War, the redistribution of landed property and the universal right to vote (granted to men only) ascertained this new Liberalism, which was meant to generate a new State responsibility, a new market, better citizens, projected to transform Roumania in the following decades, if political circumstances had allowed it.

The thesis’ conclusions are an echo to the introduction, insisting on the cultural self-image of the Roumanians and of their political culture ; these are altered by excessive self-critics, not fully justified but who end up reducing the perception – especially today, after 45 years of Communism – of a richer past, more nuanced, more



productive than usually believed to have been, more fertile, and capable to identify Roumanians with modern Europe, with her values and experiences.

**Key words** : Liberalism, Conservatism, Roumanian principalities, identity, Europe, institutions, economy, trade, rights, liberties, freedom, political philosophy, system of values, legitimism, social-liberalism, nationalism, traditionalism, imperialism, crisis, evolution, modernisation

## Contents

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Acknowledgements   | iii |
| Observations on the French transcription of the Romanian names   | iv  |
| <i>Introduction</i>  | 1   |
| The premises of the thesis                                       | 1   |
| <i>Chapter 1</i>   | 9   |
| <b>Liberalism</b>  | 9   |
| The Avatars of Liberalism  | 13  |
| The Origins of Liberalism  | 37  |
| <i>Chapter 2</i>   | 171 |
| <b>Conservatism</b>  | 171 |
| The first Conservatism : the Counter-revolution                  | 179 |
| The Conservative Doctrine  | 210 |
| The Conservative political traditions                            | 218 |
| Transformations of French Conservatism in the mid-19th century   | 238 |
| French Conservatism at the end of the 19th century               | 243 |
| The Conservative political tradition of Britain                  | 260 |
| The Conservative social thinking                                 | 272 |
| On the consequences of Conservatism                              | 296 |
| Conclusions on the Conservatism social theory                    | 300 |
| <i>Chapter 3</i>   | 312 |
| <b>Conservatism and Liberalism in Roumanian lands</b>            | 312 |
| The beginnings of Conservatism and Liberalism in Roumanian lands | 330 |
| The values of the Roumanian Conservatism                         | 483 |
| Liberalisms in Roumania  | 575 |
| Origins and versions of Roumanian Liberalism                     | 592 |
| <i>Conclusion</i>  | 638 |
| Bibliography   | 648 |