

ESSAY

Identity of Romania

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Abstract: Romania's paradox is the fact of its unremembered identity. Recalling the national identity is the biggest bet of the new generations born after the revolution of December 1989. This paper attempts to explain this paradox and to announce, eventually, a way out of this situation, as long as it's still possible.

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"A man is what he remembers about himself" used to say Nichita Stanesco, through the 70's, in an eye-catching tone contrasting the spiritual mood of the time. Spirit, in which most likely the population of Romania was forced to repress their memories that promoted their own historical roots, as known until then and convinced, through the psychic and physic theory, to accept the role of single party and keeper of national memory. Paraphrasing, we could say that a nation is also what it remembers about itself. This layer in the block of our nation's past (or people, according to father Stăniloae), hides the drama of a powerlessness coming out after the so-called revolution on December '89 and wears a name: the drama of not being able to remember who we are.

During the natural evolution of a nation, its evolution of fulfillment as a nation, comes a time in which its natural path moves from lived history to told history; More precisely, its own tome of history which will become the silent witness of a possible final judgment of nations. When I say history, I am not thinking of office history that held the evidence and affairs of noblemen; I am referring only to the concept of history which exclusively astounds the dawn of a conscience belonging to a nation, when we therefore may talk about a real national sentiment. Until that moment, the smaller or bigger communities existed only under the direct report with the hazard or alliances, the one capable of ensuring the protection of tomorrow's day. Many communities, blossoming in the dawn of

civilization, disappeared in the feculent waves of initial Babylonian mixture, without being able to fully understand all the factors that competed on the removal of those from the scene of history. Since the transgression is impossible to probe or reveal in time, miscellaneous theories (more often mystical-religious) meant to explain the incomprehensible perpetuation in history were created. It could be say that lov was born faster that it was attested in the Bible.

Rotating back to the original idea at the basis of this article, we may say that in times of peace, the safety of tomorrow which inevitably leads to the freedom of thought, of rising beyond the techniques of survival, every nation passed from stepping through history to verbalizing it, in order to become known by generation to come. This is a drive strictly human, that after a long period of survival, to let behind ourselves a sign, maybe for our own ego of withstanding what is to come, maybe from the need of a mental health to block the centrifugal impulse of forgetting our own identity. Mutatis mutandis and the people that have succeeded in passing the humiliating conditions imposed by the chaotic history of human civilization and that have succeeded in standing on their feet, have begun writing. Ever since then we remember who we are!

Human history dots in 1789 a big revolution, that of the French nation, after which the conscience of the European nations woke to life, starting the process of a generalized case history. Despite the economical, political and social gaps, the Romanian people have started to remember who they are later, at the same time as the revolution in 1848. It is then that we realized we are on an island of Latin in a sea of Slavic. We even gained in this sense a slogan to represent the guardians of the borders with the "Double monarchy" empire: "Virtus romana rediviva". Maybe it should be said again the idea of a great contemporary Romanian (N. Djuvara) that, among all the greatest nations of Europe, we have concretized the efforts of our political fight of coagulating ourselves in a single nation, concentrating exclusively on the idea of unification of the Romanian language. For us, the orthodox religion and the Romanian language represented landmarks in our conscience of being Romanian.

During the ulterior moment of the 1848 revolution, in a manner profoundly spenglerian, the Romanians passed from the stage of a nation that spoke Romanian to that of a Romanian nation. Following the rule created by O. Spengler in "The history of the west", which treats universal history as a history of great cultures, namely, of dividing culture in three phrases:

- Precultural: in which the human community is still in a primitive phase, described also as a population.
- Cultural: in which the accent falls on the high attributes of the spirit such as art, science, philosophy et al and the human community evolves from population to historic nation.
- After culture: when human communities metamorphose in nations of fellahs;

We say the Romanians made the transition towards the cultural phase, that of becoming a people-nation. We then started to fulfill the two conditions, still spenglerian, of reaching this phase: we began to be contemporary with our own culture, which had begun several centuries in our collective subconscious and which sublimely modeled us, remaining to see how huge the dispersal might have been; and we began to manifest ourselves visibly on the large scale of universal history.

As stated above, the conscience that belongs to our nation and the unique language spoken by those who lived from Tisa to the outskirts of the Danube, made us fight in order to integrate ourselves between lines until then imaginary, named after their passing in reality and over the border. Thus came our moment of historic genius, behind which there were people and political parties which represent a hard to equal landmark of the contemporary. It was called the “Great Union “on December 1st, 1918!

This settlement of ours in the limits of a border, after centuries of military and political struggle against the ottomans, the polish, Hungary and the Habsburg Empire, gave us hope in the integration of our nation in the bosom of the great European nations. During this full enthusiasm regarding our modern economic, political and social realities, we’ve remembered those who have pulled the Romanian strings of history and finally did them justice. We’ve started, from 1918 to 1922, the biggest agrarian revolution known by us so far, and not only. In a way that was unique to Europe regarding the social agreement of that period, the bourgeoisie and other noblemen agreed to divide again the agricultural lands to the peasants in order to satisfy the promise made by King Ferdinand, of appropriation of those who would participate in the First World War. Not unimportant would be the detail that the scepter of the same king, received as a gift at the Great union in 1918, was taken as a model and restyled half a decade later, and then used at the enthronement as president with full power, on March

28th 1974, of one of the greatest tyrant of our history: Nicolae Ceausescu. Through this example of historical cynicism, we could add that we had a royal communist.

Coming back to the original strand of idea, no better had we managed to proceed with the opening of the collective memory barriers and transpose it in school textbooks that the Second World War was already at our door. It happened on Dec 1st, 1939. A darkness of human condition oblivion settled on European nations and Abel was murdered again. Now, over a half century later we can say, paradoxical, two contradictory things: we were historically lucky to not vanish as a nation under the leadership of a new administrative-territorial unit in the old Russia but we were unlucky to inhale the lethal virus of communism.

If other parts of Europe, luckier than us for reasons known only by divinity, continued on the road opened by Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill, that of liberalism, through the new current of neo-liberalism founded during the “in between wars” period and theorized by Jacques Rueff and Maurice Allais, which pun competition at the basis of economical liberty and dynamics, we might have had a different destiny. Beyond the Carpati we started an experiment of social, economic and political engineering derived from the Marxist-Lenin socialism which after a wear-and-tear period, specifically the 70's, dressed the coat of the national-communist totalitarianism. When we talk about communism, the epithets and phrases are as though used from a pantheon of evil. It is difficult, after the trail of evil, to distinguish the greatest evil, from an ocean seemingly not yet exhausted, coming after the year of 1946, with the boot of the national conscious occupant. In the end, the evils are only other facades of the same black diamond. From the perspective of the Romanian nation, one of the greatest evils, because even here the malignant valences are multiple, brought by the track of Tudor Vladimirescu's division (name chosen with cynicism by other's history), was the forcing to forget our history which barely got to crystallize. Our image of the being represented by the tank that goes on its own way can be transposed cynically in this situation as well. In the perspective newly created, we have been inoculated, with the weight of a tank, a semblance of being which we had to adopt as if it was our own authentic being. The trails began to leave behind the new constituent symbols of false values. The image of the stakhovist person should have replaced the image of the humble peasant twinned with the forest; giving food to the cattle with that of cars with hoods raised up on a Sunday; that of traditional tools with handspikes and screwdrivers. Do not understand, however, that this shouldn't have been our path

as a result of completely modernized Romania; it was just that we were hooked at our own rhythm and it was necessary for us to do our own search and tasks. What would have been the point? We would have created our own identity of the XX century! We can see ourselves in the losses just as much as in the winnings. Otherwise, what could we say about posterity? That we've been lived? It cannot be conceived that you go to bed as a peasant and wake up in a working overalls eager to fulfill the five-year duties. It is inadmissible to surrender when your landmarks of national conscience are changed against your will, similarly as when you surrender your own national territory without even as much as shooting a bullet.

The new state of things was so false that, this time, we were not confronting in a just battle with our natural enemies, from which we created our own identity; we are fighting ourselves, against our own will. We were just as an organism whose immunity system is being destroyed by microscopic beings which pretends to make it healthy. We were living as in Oedipus's Greek tragedy, from a crazy perspective: King Tebei fulfilled the prophesy with good knowledge and continued the concupiscent with Iocasta as well as with Antigona. What was the stake in the battle with us? A big one: our collective memory, which hid our own identity. This is what the memorable H.R. Patapievici said in his "Politics": "the transmitting of collective memory is the act through which a community is preserving its identity" The modernization of Europe started to secrete its own poison: the ideological battle, guerrilla style, literally, to which the Romanian society in its search for physical methods of survival, answered to it by jumping in a generalized schizophrenia.

Along the lines of universal history, people and later nations which put in application the impulse of expansion beyond their own horizon based their aspirations on various theophorics concepts of some superior race that is when the ego and military genius of those in power did not intervene. Fortunately (or unfortunately), paraphrasing Heraclitus, our nature was our faith. In one of the categories presented above, destiny spared us the humiliation of times such as those after the battle at Mohacs (1526). We have paid tribute to the power of the day when the battle was swelter, not sufficient to survive in our traditional way. Or, who knows, perhaps in the divine plan of nations it was meant for us to be erased from history by a great power who wished to do so.

Despite all of this, what happened in Romania after 1945 is directly related to the history of a greater nation which saw itself being called to fulfill the wish of

god, to become a third Rome, and in another time of proletarian dictatorship. I named here Russia or the Soviet Union. The last half or more of the century, our country was positioned on an orbit of extremely Eastern leftist, that at some point in time we were so leftist that we found ourselves meeting the right side, sill leftist.

The expansionism of the great Siberia began, in Russian variant, at the horizon of a theory named in XIX century Pan-Slavism which also induced. in the same period, a Slavophil movement. We find the origins of Pan-Slavism from the XV-XVI centuries, at the same time as the Russian expansion in the area of the Baltic Sea, Black Sea, Baltic areas and south steppe of today Russia. The ideology which pushed our eastern neighbors to battle had the lively color of the Middle Ages, in which the role of the catalyst was occupied by the inheritance become symbolic since XII century, the crest of Emperor Constantin Manomah of Eastern Roman Empire, by the prince of Kiev. This expansive ideology took account of the Christian-orthodox messianism which was emitted from Moscow and which sent aspirations of a third Rome, especially after the fall of the Taringrad. The XVII-XVIII centuries brought a slight modification to the ideological perspective. In this new situation, the great eastern neighbor considered himself called to free the Christian nations from under the “pagan Turks” and “Latin Polacks” (to be known as catholic). In this order of thought, there were two expansionist-liberating projects: one developed by Ecaterina the II, also called the “Greek project, which aspired to the foundation of a Greek empire with a Russian government, and the other established by Alexander I (1801-1825), encompassing similar aims. The last plan listed is related to Romanian history on a larger context, the emulation of the battle against the Ottoman Empire is transposed in the movement led by Tudor Vladimirescu, former lieutenant in the Russian army. The resolution of this movement is known, more importantly to analyze would be the differences between the brave “Mr. Tudor” and Alexander Ipsilanti, the leader of revolutionary Greeks and former deputy of the Russian Czar. The XIX century unearths the Slavophil movement, essentially conservative, which aimed at an old styled Russia, opposite the newly created currents of the middle class, which wished for an accelerated Europeanized Russia. The traditionalist movement was theorized by N.I. Danilevski (1822-1885) in his book entitled “Russia and Europe”, although another great writer also contributed through similar ideas, Dostoievski. The pillars of this theory were orthodoxy, Russian nationalism and the tyrannical monarchy, the goal was represented by a new moral and religious impulse given to the world.

In order to achieve its goals, the movement required a strong Russia which was greater than all Slavic nations and not only. To maintain an objective tone, I must add that the Russian expansion was not the only threat to our national identity, but we also had “close calls” with the Ottoman empire, the Polish, Austro-Hungarian et al expansionism. What did the first have that the others didn’t? The crushing contingency linked to our modern and contemporary history. When we talk about contemporary history we are inevitably subjective. That is if we take into account the metamorphosis of the military expansion in that of the economical one. If we remember that even the cannons have been silenced since the capitalist markets have opened and the cartridges have become useless when the conscience is being controlled by the cold radiators.

Rotating back to the period after the end of WWII, the destiny of the Romanian nation started to flow in a direction strange to the national will. Time didn’t have more patience with us, we might say, paraphrasing Moromote. The transfer of our collective memory from the generations, who did not have the time to polish the first millennium of Romanian culture, was starting to be seriously affected by the alteration of identity symbols. Class struggle and dialectic materialism were becoming concepts that were supposed to explain human history from the origins to the success of the Bolshevik revolution. *Idola Fori* was replaced by pieces of paper. The protest was starting. The world came down to catchphrases. On the stage the Marxist-Lenin socialism charm was rising with its bastards: Leninism, Stalinism, and Maoism. Romania stopped choosing its own destiny, putting it in brackets and chose in its place the ones present at Ialta on February 1945. We were becoming Leninists in order through the combination with local laziness, to excel at Stalinism. The traditional trades and the hearths of popular Romanians passed with force in the dawn of “forgetting”, being replaced by the famous kolkhozes. Foreign investments became Soviet-Romanian societies, known better as economical hemorrhages. The liberal principles which economically raised the west and ourselves in the “between wars” period, of liberal competition, as the giver of equilibrium and economical organization and price, of the motor of economical activities were replaced by an ideology which minimized the role of the state and that of the only party, working/socialist/communist in leading the economical, social and political aspects, of stabilization of the development of the economy in a the department of a five-year plan. The natural differentiation of society, with its result on differentiating the social classes, was

replaced by the intention of forced dismembering of those mentioned, followed by an eventual equality. One of the dramas of Romanian society then, effect which did not cease to this day, was the reversal of social poles. The uneducated, poor, chameleon-like elements as aftermath of certain manners of society have become representative with a leading role. The ideal platonic society became, sublimely, absolutely ridiculous. The scale of values was turned upside down with a heavy price until present. The non-value has become the leader and the value has become the primary material of concentrated space.

One of the sustaining poles of the Romanian being, the orthodox religion has regressed so much that it has become vegetative, simply becoming an insect. The servants in sultans have changed the altar of the church with the latticed altar of the communist dungeons. Churches have been destroyed to make room for the monstrous reality of socialism and to try to break the connection with the divinity. Our brother Alexander forgot that we interiorized the eternity of our faith ever since the "daco-geti" considered themselves immortal. The arrows formerly shot to chase away the clouds which hid the divine faces, transformed in time in prayers of Christianity. The solidarity of our faith was beyond time. National dignity started its salvation through Christianity dignity.

The language, which united us once at Alba Iulia, started to be sabotaged from the inside. It was replaced with another language, which in a paradox, sounded still Romanian; it was the language of the ideological occupant translated in Romanian. It was actually the language that didn't say anything; it was the wooden language of Romanian. To learn it, a school was also invented. It was named the Stefan Gheorgiu Academy. A poet was needed such as Nichita Stanescu to show us that the Romanian language did not die and that anyone can still become a polyglot of the language, authentic I may add.

If for Lenin the official dictatorship supported the maintenance of the state as a warranty for the continuation of the political battle of physical extermination of the bourgeois class, Stalinism announced that this was not enough; it wished for the extermination of the bourgeois spirit as well. Through this mutation of the doctrines, the abuse and arbitration were making their entrance unheard of in the socio-communist space, and especially in Romania. Anyone was suspected simply because he/she was complained from personal spite, of perpetuating a belief or "unhealthy" social behavior, meaning bourgeois, and was therefore condemned to pay with deportation or jail. The wasteful son had the nerve of threatening the

integrity of his brother. Romanian society, in its majority, was at the beginning of the XX century was more of a physiocratic society than an industrialized one; one mostly rural than urban, more uneducated rather than educated, situation in which there was to come a chosen democratic evolution on the path of liberalism and a large social representation was made to follow foreign models of any cell of its identity. The social engineering experiment which was supposed to be at the basis of its acceleration on the social ladder was replaced by the criteria of obedience and the increased dose of evil which you could do to your fellow man. In order for the new political system to assure a superficial education and criteria of promotion professional schools, workplace qualifications, military and political schools were created.

Cain was crowned in Romanian society, and Hypnos contained within its wings the Romanian entity; and he called on watch out his good brother Thanasos. In order for our forgiveness to be assured regarding the loss of our identity the elysian fields were largely opened and concentrated in common grounds with diverse names: Aiud, Gherla, Sighet, Pitesti, Malmaison etc. or with diverse functions: reeducation, work camps, common holes etc.

To the pride of our memory, entered in rehabilitation after 1989, we had people that also continued with the perspective of the eternal Romania and have suborned themselves not to forget. Some sustained their fights using logic as their way, others literally, but both shared the courage. The geography of Romania never entered the stage of apostasy and has accepted our battle. Several names are chosen randomly such as Toma Arnautoiu, colonel Arsenescu or Elisabeta Rizea and are representative in this way of hundreds of other martyrs, shot merciless by the Security troupes.

After approximately 50 years of communism, destiny smiled again. We have become free. In the middle of all this, there was also a revolution, still not completely solved. The most humiliating aspect of this is the spirits of the victims which will never know their hangman. The faces of the dead from the Romanian revolution have been left as a question mark which our own coward characteristic refuses to answer. Nonetheless, walking the open road of the revolution we have succeeded in adhering to the social, political and economical structures of our western brother. The new Ialta is judging us rightfully this time. In a way we have reached on a circular trajectory, the aftermath of 1918.

This historical time necessary for us to remember started flowing again. We've reached the necessary tranquility to realize that the soviet Stalinism in combination with the national Romanian communism was on the verge of erasing the authentic historical landmarks which formed us as a nation. The weapon was not the denial of the above, but the dethroning of the senses through a fill up of ideological residue. One of the problems encountered in the department of the social post revolutionary dialog was that by denying the national symbols in order to escape from the residue of the communist ideology we woke up either completely destroying them helped by the political current or we've succeeded from an other way running, from the impulse of counterbalancing, to keep them in a non-critical way. The dear to bring forth the memories has a price unpaid, not even in half.

The meeting with our own national memory, which was held after the '89 revolution, was distorted by the ideological occupant. It is in this way that the essential challenge in the last twenty years of recovering our identity and imprinting it once and for all in the history textbook (meaning in posterity) started. The Romanians should know that they can be proud they had the strength to battle the Roman Empire, the one that the pope named "Atleta Christi" after the battle in Vaslui meaning Stefan the Great; the fact that we had the strength of launching an overnight attack under Vlad Tepes order; that we were united by Mihai the Brave; that we had a colonel who acted as general, A. I. Cuza; that we were led by Avram Iancu; and the examples could go on. To capable of rewriting history, however, we need to learn to accept both big courageous acts as well as historical losses which did not skip us: the noblemen murders, battles between the parties, the takeover of the Quadrilater, the betrayal of the allies, etc. The right to the appeal of our own past does not excuse our exaggeration, slatternly propaganda and shallow nationalism. The tone of the writing must be academic, neutral and precise. And there is one other thing to say: to record everything in a tome of truth. This will certainly makes us free!

Generations to come must known that in our small courageous deeds we were just as big as those who fought the Vikings, only that our destiny was not as visible. The Romanians were not on the scene of the big history, we did not build empires and we did not send conquistadores, but perhaps, we made a history of survival in the gun hole. And if this is not noticeable history, nothing is!

Twenty years from the fall of communism, the access to our memory must be quickly made again attending to our survivors (how many they might have been left) of the communist purgatory, collecting again in front of the Sighet Memorial, the reading and rereading of the confessions made by political convicts that already crossed in Caron's boat, and after everything is done to reread the heavy tomes in history left after the Great Union and write down clearly the deeds of the Romanians on the eternal sky of history.

We the Romanians, definitely have the destiny of the squanderer son. Therefore, I'm glad we've found each other my brothers! Let's remember that we were home!